

of the prosecution, he was no longer just the great-great-grandson of a consular, but rather the son of a consular.

In fact, in order to make historical sense of the *De Finibus* passage, one would have to argue not only that Torquatus received no benefit, but also that he had no *prospect* of receiving a benefit. This could be the case only if: (a) the law under which the trial was held offered no *praemia* to successful prosecutors; (b) there was no likelihood that the prosecution would be successful; or (c) that Torquatus was not in a legal position to be offered a *praemium*. Proposition (a) is unlikely, since *ambitus* laws were relatively lucrative in terms of rewards.²⁰ Proposition (b) is unlikely to be correct since we know that the prosecution of Sulla was successful. Proposition (c) is also unlikely to be correct, especially if Berry is right that he was the *nominis delator*, since that role would make him the logical recipient of any rewards.²¹

Therefore, if Berry is right that the younger Torquatus did receive a *praemium* as a result of this trial, then the *De Finibus* should not be used as a historical source for the details of the trial back in 66 B.C., since the existence of a *praemium*, or just the prospect of one, is inconsistent with the philosophical argument advanced by Cicero. Even if Berry is wrong about the *praemium*, and Torquatus did not receive a formal legal reward as a result of his participation in the trial, he certainly did benefit politically from its outcome, and so Cicero's *exemplum* does not stand up to historical scrutiny. Since the *De Finibus* should not be used to establish historical details about the trial, it cannot help us to decide whether the younger Torquatus had served as *nominis delator* or as *subscriptor*. For if we cannot press the passage to establish what a literal interpretation of it clearly implies—that the younger Torquatus neither actually received, nor had any prospect of receiving, a significant benefit for taking part in the prosecution of Sulla in 65—by the same token we cannot press it to tell us definitively whether he was *nominis delator* or *subscriptor*.

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20. See my article, "Praemia," 28–29.

21. Note, however, that a *subscriptor* could be in a position to receive a *praemium*, at least under some earlier statutes (see n. 14 above).

EUERGETIC SELF-REPRESENTATION AND THE INSCRIPTIONS AT SATYRICON 71.10

At *Satyricon* 71.9 the vainglorious Trimalchio calls for the decoration of his funerary monument with specific details from his own life. Among the scenes to be portrayed is a feast (*epulum*) that he once sponsored, a depiction meant to serve as a perpetual reminder of his great wealth and magnanimity (Petron. *Sat.* 71.10–11):

scis enim quod epulum dedi binos denarios. faciantur, si tibi videtur, et triclinia. facias et totum populum sibi suaviter facientem.¹

1. Like much of the Petronian text, this passage contains interpretive difficulties, particularly concerning the term *triclinium* (see note 15 below). The text is that of K. Müller and W. Ehlers, eds., *Petronius, "Satyricon"* (Munich, 1983).

The passage has been variously interpreted as a municipal dinner at a cost of two *denarii* per head, as a distribution of cash accompanying a feast, and even as a banquet of Trimalchio's fellow *Augustales*.² The balance of scholarly opinion, however, lies heavily in favor of a public feast, an interpretation further reinforced by recent suggestions of an affinity between Petronius' account and funerary iconography from first-century Italy that has as its primary goal euergetic self-representation within a festal context.³

Even so, links between the text itself and the actual characteristics of public feasting have gone unnoticed, a curious oversight given that the *Satyricon* has typically provided valuable insight into everyday life during the first century A.D.⁴ A comparison of this passage with 133 honorary inscriptions of public feasts given by elites on all sorts of occasions in municipal Italy under the Principate reveals that *Satyricon* 71.10 utilizes a lexicon of banqueting nearly identical to that found in the epigraphic testimony.⁵ Such evidence offers a further socio-historical context in which to appreciate and evaluate both Petronius' novel and municipal Italian life during the first century.

At the outset, it is essential to bear in mind that Petronius is writing complicated satire, and that the distorting mirror of the *Satyricon* was not always meant to reflect real life. One must proceed cautiously, therefore, when reading the novel as evidence for the *Realien* of Roman culture.⁶ Even so, several terms within this passage have a clear basis in historical reality. Of chief importance is *epulum*, the most com-

2. On the passage as evidence for a cash handout accompanying a banquet, see P. Perrochat, *Pétrone, "Le festin de Trimalcion"* (Paris, 1962), at 71 (*epulum*), and J. P. Sullivan, trans., *Petronius, The "Satyricon" and Seneca, the "Apocolocyntosis"* (New York, 1986), 85. On the other hand, two of the most reliable English translations render Trimalchio's feast as a municipal banquet at two *denarii* per head: P. G. Walsh, *The "Satyricon"* (Oxford, 1996) and W. Arrowsmith, *"Satyricon" of Petronius* (Ann Arbor, 1959). On the feast as one for *seviri Augustales*, see L. Pepe, "Sul monumento sepolcrale di Trimalchione," *GIF* 10 (1957): 300. Pepe's restrictive interpretation depends primarily upon the well-known inscription of the college of Aesculapius and Hygia (*CIL* 6.10234 = Dessau, *ILS* 7213), in which the membership is termed as *populus*. Even so, the phrase *totus populus*, as found in the Petronian text, never occurs in collegial inscriptions; furthermore, the reading seems to be at odds with Trimalchio's aim of portraying himself as a friend of the masses, a strategy most notably on display in his distribution of cash to the people in the scene immediately preceding the banquet: "et me in tribunali sedentem praetextatum cum anulis aureis quinque et nummos in publico de sacculo effudentem" (71.9).

3. J. Whitehead argues convincingly for parallels between Petronius' account and communal banquets as depicted on funerary monuments from the Italian municipalities of Amiternum, Este, and Ancona, as well as on the painted tomb of Vestorius Priscus at Pompeii. See "The 'Cena Trimalchionis' and Biographical Narration in Middle-Class Art," in *Narrative and Event in Ancient Art*, ed. P. Holliday (Cambridge, 1993), 311. C. Compostella cites much of the same sculptural evidence in "Banchetti pubblici e banchetti privati nell'iconografia funeraria romana del I secolo d.c.," *MEFRA* 104 (1992): 659–89.

4. For several instances of Petronius' drawing upon real life in order to suit his own artistic needs, see Sullivan, *"Satyricon" and "Apocolocyntosis,"* 25. In addition, for further context on Neronian period dining, see the essays of J. D'Arms and P. Schmitt Pantel in *Symptica: A Symposium on the Symposion*, ed. O. Murray (Oxford, 1990); J. Goddard in *Reflections of Nero*, ed. J. Elsner and J. Masters (Chapel Hill, 1994); and the essays in W. Slater, ed., *Dining in a Classical Context* (Ann Arbor, 1991) and O. Murray, ed., *In Vino Veritas* (Rome, 1995).

5. John F. Donahue, "Epula Publica: The Roman Community at Table during the Principate" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1996), appendix 1: 170–90, 193–98.

6. Although not the focus of this paper, a comprehensive understanding of Petronius' literary strategy would have to take into account, for example, his choosing within this passage to combine the representation of a feast (in the context of Trimalchio's own *cena*) with other images (Trimalchio himself, Fortunata, the sundial, etc.), and how the image of the *epulum* functions within a projected sculptural representation that is only ever realized as *ecphrasis* within Trimalchio's dinner party. On Petronian *ecphrasis* and the complexity of the text, see F. Zeitlin's classic papers, "Petronius as Paradox: Anarchy and Artistic Integrity," *TAPhA* 102

monly attested Latin word for a public banquet, both in Rome and municipal Italy.⁷ Although the epigraphical sources never specify the items that comprised an *epulum*, a convention that Petronius, too, follows in his description of Trimalchio's banquet, it generally occupied an intermediate position within a well-defined hierarchy of public meals, with the quality of the fare typically dependent upon the social status of the recipients. On the one hand, it was not always as elaborate as a formal dinner (*cena*), as is evident at Auximum during the second century, where a certain L. Praesentius Paetus L. Attius Severus, a patron and *duovir* of the *colonia*, once offered a *cena* to the *coloni*, but an *epulum* to the *populus*:

L. Praesentio L. fil(io) | Lem(onia) Paeto | L. Attio Severo | praefecto coh(ortis) I Afr(icae) | c(ivi) R(omano) eq(uiti) iudici selecto ex | V dec(urri)s pr(aefecto) Auximi pat(rono) col(oniae) | aedili Ilvir Anconae | Vibia L. f(ilia) Marcella | flamina Augusta | marito omnibus exem|plis de se bene merito | et in dedic(at)ione statu(ae) | *cenam colon(is) et epul(um) pop(ulo) ded(it) | l(oco) d(ato) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)*⁸

At the same time, the *epulum* was always more desirable than a simple handout of cash (*sportula*) or of sweet wine (*mulsum*) and cake (*crustulum*); this was made clear in the case of the *vicani* of Visentium in the first to second centuries, who enjoyed an *epulum* while the *populus* received *crustulum et mulsum*:

Virtuti Visenti | sacr(um) | M. Minati M. f(ili) Sab(atina) Galli | Ilviri i(ure) d(icundo) quinq(uennalis) | Maternus f(ilius) patris | sui h(onoris) c(ausa) et ob dedica(tionem) honorariam | *vicanis epulum popu(lo) crustulum et | mulsum dedit*⁹

Such evidence offers a starting point for placing Trimalchio's banquet within a broader historical context. While not as generous as a *cena*, his *epulum* still represented a significant gift, easily exceeding the minimum donative of bread and wine, or a cash handout. As such, it further illuminates Trimalchio's character and public persona and suggests, not surprisingly, that, in creating the freedman's festal iconography, Petronius himself was well aware of the distinctions among public meals.

A second link to contemporary festal practice is Trimalchio's rendering of the banquet as *epulum . . . binos denarios*. As confirmed by the divergent translations mentioned at the outset, it is not entirely certain whether the phrase means "a banquet and a cash handout of two *denarii*," or "a feast worth two *denarii* per person." The epigraphical record has preserved this same ambiguity. Typical is an Italian inscription from Forum Sempronii (second to third centuries):

(1971): 631–84 and "Romanus Petronius," *Latomus* 30 (1971): 56–82. See also: F. Jones, "Realism in Petronius," *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* 4 (1991): 105–20; J. Elsner, "Seductions of Art: Encolpius and Eumolpus in a Neronian Picture Gallery," *PCPhS* 39 (1993): 30–47; and J. Bodel, "Trimalchio's Underworld," in *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, ed. J. Tatum (Baltimore, 1994).

7. Donahue, *Epula Publica*, app. 1: 170–90, 193–98.

8. *CIL* 9.5841. The emphasis in this inscription and in others in this note is my own.

9. *CIL* 11.2911 = *ILS* 3796a. Exceptions, of course, were common. At Antinum during the second and third centuries, one particular patron of a college displayed his affection for the group by offering it an *epulum* valued at a higher rate than every other group of beneficiaries, including the town council (*CIL* 9.3842). In general, see E. Ruggiero, "epulum," *Diz. Epigr.* (Rome, 1961), 2142–43.

L. Maesio M. f(ilio) Pol(lia) | Rufo proc(uratori) Aug(usti) | trib(un)o mil(itum) leg(ionis) XV | Apollinaris trib(un)o | coh(ortis) mil(itia) Italic(a) volunt(arii) | quae est in Syria prae(fecto) | fabrum bis | municipes et incolae ob merita eius quod annona kara frument(aria) | denario modium praestitit earumque dedicat(ione) Rufus *epulum dedit* | *decurionib(us) singul(is)* HS XXX *sex viris et Augustalib(us) sing(ulis)* HS XII *plebi sing(ulis)* HS IIII¹⁰

Here, it is unclear whether Rufus is offering a banquet and a cash handout worth thirty *sesterces* per person to the decurions, twelve *sesterces* per person to the *Augustales*, and four *sesterces* per person to the *populus*, or a feast worth the amounts corresponding to each social group. The evidence is simply unclear; we can only surmise that the meaning would have been more readily apparent to the ancient reader.

Nevertheless, in the case of Trimalchio's feast, if *epulum . . . binos denarios* is meant to recall a feast worth two *denarii* per person, the dinner, at eight *sestertii*, falls at the high end of data that record benefactors as typically paying from between two *sestertii* and eight *sestertii* per person to sponsor such banquets during the Principate.¹¹ Given the fact that at Pompeii, for instance, the daily cost of living for the lower orders was about two *sestertii* per person during the first century, or that half a *sestertius* was sufficient for one person to obtain bread for a day, the value of Trimalchio's meal becomes readily apparent, and surely would have been so to his readers.¹² At the same time, we cannot exclude the possibility that Petronius' depiction recalls a banquet and a cash handout, a gift that surely would have been even more attractive to the *populus*.¹³ Whatever its true nature, amid an overall portrait that tends to emphasize Trimalchio's use of wealth for personal pleasure and show, the banquet epiphany offers a rare glimpse into his public generosity. We can now perhaps see why a benefaction of this sort would have been so eagerly memorialized.

Clearly, we must not overlook an element of satire in all of this. Trimalchio, after all, frequently confuses the norms of public and private, a characteristic that is most apparent in the decoration and layout of his house.¹⁴ Consequently, his banquet can certainly be seen as yet another opportunity for Petronian spoofing of a popular

10. *CIL* 11.6117. Note the monetary amounts in the accusative (HS . . . = *sestertios* . . .), similar to Petronius' account, and the distributive use of *epulum*. For additional testimony, see *CIL* 2.2011, 5489, 9.2553, 3171.

11. In addition to this passage, nine inscriptions from municipal Italy preserve banquet costs for the *populus*: *CIL* 9.2553, 3838 (HS 2); 9.3842, 5085, 11.6117, *AE* 1976.176 (HS 4); *CIL* 11.5372 (HS 6); 9.3160 = *ILS* 6530, 5189 (HS 8).

12. Cost of living at Pompeii: S. Mrozek, *Prix et rémunération dans l'Occident romain, 31 av. n.è.—250 de n.è.* (Gdansk, 1975), 31–32; cost of bread: *Les distributions d'argent et de nourriture dans les villes italiennes du haut-empire romain* (Brussels, 1987), 103.

13. This possibility suggests itself through the gift of a certain Sextus Petronaeus Valerianus of Antinum in the second to third century (*CIL* 9.3842): "ob cuius dedicationem dedit *decurionibus aepulantibus sing(ulis)* HS VIII *nummos seviris Aug(ustalibus) aepulan(tibus) sing(ulis)* HS VI *nummos collegio s(upra) s(cripto) aepul(antibus) sing(ulis)* HS XII *n(ummos) plebi urbanae aepul(antibus) sing(ulis)* HS IIII *n(ummos).*" Here, the cash gift may have been in addition to the banquet, although we cannot rule out the possibility that it may have been offered for the dinner itself. For similar testimony, see *CIL* 9.1618 = *ILS* 6507, 3160 = *ILS* 6530, 10.5849, 6073 = *ILS* 6284, 14.2795 = *ILS* 272.

14. See, e.g., the elaborate wall painting of Trimalchio's career at *Sat.* 29 and Bodel, "Trimalchio's Underworld," 241–43.

social institution. Nevertheless, a third term, *triclinia*, brings us back to historical reality once again. A standard component of traditional descriptions of public feasts, *triclinia*, like *epulum*, sometimes admits of more than one interpretation, typically either “dining tables” or “dining halls.”¹⁵ Regardless of these differences, the point remains that the term signifies the location at which feasting took place. At the same time, as a purely practical matter, it is difficult to imagine that a wealthy freedman like Trimalchio, or any non-fictional Roman of wealth for that matter, would have routinely possessed dining halls sufficient to accommodate a town-wide banquet. In this instance, “dining tables” appears to be a more realistic interpretation. Here too, we find historical precedent, most notably in Plutarch’s account of 22,000 τρίκλινα set up at Rome in 46 B.C. as part of an *epulum* for the people in celebration of Caesar’s recent triumphs. Although the number raises immediate suspicion, there is nothing to suggest that the practice itself was out of the ordinary; in fact, several later inscriptions that mention *triclinia* in a banquet context seem to reduplicate this custom on a smaller scale.¹⁶

A final etymological tie between Trimalchio’s feast and historical reality concerns the designation of the recipients, here rendered as *totus populus*. Although this term does not appear in the historical record, it recalls the standard inscriptional characterization of beneficiaries as *universus populus*, or simply, *populus*. Such terminology, however, is not as inclusive as it seems to suggest. Several inscriptions record the granting of meals to recipients “of both sexes” (*utriusque sexus*), the relative rarity of which formulation implies that the inclusion of women at banquets was exceptional, a display of generosity so novel that the festal sponsor felt it worthy of special mention.¹⁷ That women did not participate as a rule in such feasts is further suggested by those instances in which they are known to have dined separately from men on the same occasion. When Tiberius entertained the senators and knights at Livia’s commemoration of a statue to Augustus in 14, for example, his mother was placed in charge of entertaining the wives. Likewise, at the municipal level, on the day when her husband was fêting the men of Veii with games and a feast, Caesia Sabina offered a banquet to women of every rank within the town.¹⁸

Similarly, based on the few instances in which they are mentioned at feasts, children seem to have been largely excluded from such festivities as well. In some cases an especially beneficent donor might include them, as during the time of Trajan when the wife and daughter of a freedman gave an *epulum* not only to decurions, *Augustales*, and *plebs* of Nepes in Italy but also to their children. On the other hand, a banquet from Ferentinum suggests that it was only boys who were the traditional

15. *Triclinia* as tables: R. Bracht Branham and D. Kinney, eds. and trans., *Petronius, “Satyricon”* (Berkeley, 1996) at 71.10; as dining halls: Walsh, *Satyricon*, Arrowsmith, *Satyricon*, and Sullivan, *Satyricon and Apocolocyntosis*. Based on a conjectural emendation by Bücheler in the *apparatus criticus* of his *editio maior* (Berolini, 1862), L. Pepe argued for *tricia*, a pergola used in funerary feasts. However, the reading is at odds with the highly public nature of the scene depicted. See “Una Lectio Difficilior in Petronio (71,10 Tricia);” *GIF* 17 (1964): 322.

16. Plut. *Caes.* 55.2, in which the Greek term signifies a set of three couches used for banqueting. For evidence of Roman *triclinia* in public banquets, see *CIL* 9.1503 = *ILS* 6508, 9.4971 = *ILS* 6560, 14.375 = *ILS* 6147, 14.2793 = *ILS* 5449, *AE* 1965.270.

17. *AE* 1966.183, *CIL* 2.1267, 1378, 9.981, 3954, *ILS* 6468.

18. Tiberius: Dio 57.12; Caesia Sabina: *CIL* 11.3811 = *ILS* 6583 (2nd–3rd cent.).

recipients among such *liberi*, and that their fare could be of lesser value than that given to adults on the same occasion—in this particular case a simple scattering of nuts.¹⁹ Thus, as in politics and war, it seems the festal table was typically reserved for men, and only by exception were others invited to partake.

Lexical issues aside, a final point essential to a fuller understanding of the historical basis of this passage concerns Trimalchio's status as a priest of Augustus, for it is in this capacity that he offers the feast to be rendered on his monument. The social ambitions of this parvenu class are well documented, a reality further confirmed by widespread evidence of *Augustales* as communal banquet sponsors in Italy and Roman Spain.²⁰ In such cases, festal sponsorship was not compelled by charity but by the singular desire to enhance personal status and prestige within the community. No social mechanism served these aims more effectively than the granting of a meal, since it served not only to highlight the beneficence of the donor but also to reinforce differences in status among those present, often, as has been shown, by linking the quality of the fare to the rank of its recipients. As the epigraphic record indicates, *Augustales* were eager to exploit such opportunities and to record them for posterity. Here again, Petronius clearly demonstrates his familiarity with a popular social convention.

To sum up, the ecphrasis of a municipal feast at *Satyricon* 71.10 offers yet another instance of Petronius' fascination with feasting and food while confirming that, in death as in life, Trimalchio will remain the center of attention at a banquet.²¹ The account, although part of a complex literary strategy that often blurs the lines between fact and fiction, is nevertheless highly evocative of first-century banqueting practices and, as the epigraphic evidence suggests, points to a social custom that was eagerly incorporated into the civic ideology of the typical town. A recent essay has argued that this scene offers three referential layers to distinguish: (1) the narrative context (the *Cena Trimalchionis*); (2) the biographical datum (Trimalchio's banquet); and (3) the funerary symbol.²² To these layers we may wish to add a fourth, the historical, in order to appreciate more fully the multivalent nature of Trimalchio's boastful request.

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19. Nepet: *CIL* 11.3206 (post-98); Ferentinum: *CIL* 10.5849 = *ILS* 6269 (post-150).

20. Municipal Italy: *CIL* 9.2252, 4168, 4691, 4957, 10.1887, 11.4582, 5222, 5965, 6306 = *ILS* 5445, *AE* 1981.342; Spain: *CIL* 2.1944 = *ILS* 6914, 2100 = *ILS* 3395, 5489. Mommsen, although he did not discuss banqueting, was the first to note the similarities between the life of Trimalchio and the epitaph of an actual *Augustalis* (*CIL* 5.4482). See "Trimalchios Heimath und Grabschrift," *Hermes* 13 (1878): 115–16. On the responses to Mommsen: E. Hübner, "Zum Denkmal den Trimalchio," *Hermes* 13 (1878): 414–22; H. W. Haley, "Quaestiones Petroniae," *HSPh* 2 (1891): 13.

21. On Trimalchio's place at the banquet and the relationship between funerals and feasting: Niall W. Slater, *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore, 1990), 124; on food in the novel: Gian Biagio Conte, *The Hidden Author: An Interpretation of Petronius' "Satyricon"* (Berkeley, 1996), chap. 4.

22. Whitehead, "The 'Cena Trimalchionis,'" 311. I would like to thank the anonymous referees of *CP* for their helpful criticisms and suggestions. Any remaining errors are, of course, my own.