

magistrate. But this corresponds to nothing in the Greek situation: if we asked Cydippe's fiancé who gave him the right to visit her sickbed and to express his timid endearments (21.197–8), he would reply 'Cydippe's father, who betrothed her to me'.

Finally, it may not be too fanciful to suggest<sup>19</sup> that Ovid would have had practical experience as a magistrate of dealing with disputes over such matters as usufruct and access. He was a member of the Centumviral Court (*Tristia* 2.93–4) and also acted as a single *iudex* to settle private cases (*ibid.* 95–6). Cicero (*De Oratore* 1.173) gives an ironical list of the issues which came before the centumviri. Although this does not contain rights of way or usufruct, many similar, and no less irksome, matters are included:

...causis centumviralibus, in quibus usucapionum, tutelarum, gentilitatum, agnationum, adluvionum, circumluvionum, nexorum, mancipiorum, parietum, luminum, stillicidiorum, testamentorum ruptorum aut ratorum, ceterarumque rerum innumerabilium iura versentur.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> In the spirit of Kenney, *YCS* 21 (1969), 243, 248, 256.

<sup>20</sup> I am grateful to Professor E. J. Kenney and Professor R. G. M. Nisbet for comments on earlier drafts of this article; also to Dr Paul Thompson (see n. 3 above).

#### FROM *HARENA* TO *CENA*: TRIMALCHIO'S *CAPIS* (*SAT.* 52.1–3)

'habeo scyphos urnales plus minus...quemadmodum Cassandra occidit filios suos, et pueri mortui iacent sic ut vivere putes. habeo capidem quam reliquit patrono <meo> rex Minos, ubi Daedalus Niobam in equum Troianum includit. nam Hermerotis pugnas et Petraitis in poculis habeo, omnia ponderosa; meum enim intellegere nulla pecunia vendo.'

Trimalchio is such an established figure of fun in the *Satyricon* that commentators have been content to note the myths that he jumbles together in his description of his tableware here, without going much further. Clearly his *scyphoi* portray Medea and her dead children, not Cassandra, and we assume that he can recognize gladiatorial fights when he sees them.<sup>1</sup> Heretofore lacking is any discussion of what scene was actually represented on the *capis* he acquired from his patron and whether the reader of the *Satyricon* is meant to be able to decode the scene which Trimalchio so flagrantly misinterprets.

In a recent discussion of this passage I raised but did not adopt the suggestion that the scene portrayed might be Daedalus enclosing Pasiphae in the wooden cow, prior to her encounter with the bull.<sup>2</sup> I would like here to advocate that notion more forcefully and argue that this image was fresh in the reader's mind. In doing so I take it as established that the *Satyricon* was written by Petronius Arbiter under the emperor Nero.<sup>3</sup> This visual allusion may also establish more precisely a terminus post quem for the composition of this passage of the *Cena*.

<sup>1</sup> Commentators' interests in the cups have centred on whether the gladiator Petraitis constitutes a reference datable to the reign of Nero: e.g. H. T. Rowell, 'The Gladiator Petraitis and the Date of the *Satyricon*', *TAPA* 89 (1958), 14–24 and *contra* Martin Smith, *Petroni Arbitri Cena Trimalchionis* (Oxford, 1975), ad 52.3.

<sup>2</sup> N. W. Slater, *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore, 1990), 217 n. 7. I now suspect that we are meant to imagine the workmanship of the *capis* as crude enough to make Trimalchio's mistaking a cow for a horse at least plausible. The reference to King Minos may then do double duty: to remind us by association of the Minotaur story and to suggest that the decoration is archaic and therefore not so naturalistic in execution.

<sup>3</sup> K. F. C. Rose, *The Date and Author of the Satyricon* (Leiden, 1971).

In A.D. 57, Nero constructed a vast wooden amphitheatre in the Campus Martius, which finds mention in Suetonius, Calpurnius Siculus, and Tacitus. Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.31, declines to discuss the amphitheatre as unworthy of his attention, but his manner of doing so – and the fact that it is the first item mentioned for this year – tells us that the structure and the events staged within it evoked great interest at the time:

Nerone iterum L. Pisone consulibus pauca memoria digna evenere, nisi cui libeat laudandis fundamentis et trabibus, quis molem amphitheatri apud campum Martis Caesar extruxerat, volumina implere, cum ex dignitate populi Romani repertum sit res inlustres annalibus, talia diurnis urbis actis mandare.

Suetonius is more forthcoming. His *Life of Nero* 11–12 details a wide variety of entertainments at the emperor's Ludi Maximi, including events in the amphitheatre, an extraordinarily splendid and luxurious structure, if we accept the witness of Calpurnius Siculus.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to gladiatorial fights (though not to the death) featuring senators and equites<sup>5</sup> and mock naval battles, events in the amphitheatre included a Greek troupe of ephebes performing *pyrrichae*, two subjects of which Suetonius reports. One dealt with Icarus, and the unfortunate title performer fell near Nero's couch, spattering the emperor with blood:

Icarus primo statim conatu iuxta cubiculum eius decedit ipsumque cruore respersit. (*Nero* 12.2)

Doubtless this sensational moment lingered for a long time in the public consciousness, and it is therefore not surprising that some have seen this incident behind the moment in the *Satyricon* when a boy acrobat falls on Trimalchio, injuring his arm (54.1).<sup>6</sup>

Almost as sensational, for Suetonius finds it worthy of record a generation later, was the performance of the other *pyrricha*:

inter pyrricharum argumenta taurus Pasiphaam ligneo iuvencae simulacro abditam iniit, ut multi spectantium crediderunt. (*Nero* 12.2)

The mythic subject in itself was scandalous enough, but the apparent realism of this performance was even more shocking and not a little absurd.<sup>7</sup> A ludicrous pursuit of

<sup>4</sup> *Eclogue* VII contains a description of the great amphitheatre and the beast shows within it which Corydon the shepherd has seen during his visit to Rome; see especially C. H. Keene, *The Eclogues of Calpurnius Siculus and M. Aurelius Olympius Nemesianus* (London, 1887, repr. Hildesheim, 1969), *ad loc.* and his Appendix, 'On *Eclogue* VII', 197–203. I continue to accept a Neronian date for Calpurnius Siculus, despite the thesis of E. J. Champlin, first stated in 'The Life and Times of Calpurnius Siculus', *JRS* 68 (1978), 95–110; cf. *idem*, *Philologus* 130 (1986), 104–12.

<sup>5</sup> Champlin 1986 (above, n. 4), 108 does cast serious doubt on Suetonius' figures for the scale of these fights, though his interpretation that they 'must surely represent an estimate of such incidents for the entire reign' is only one, and not the most likely, possibility.

<sup>6</sup> R. H. Crum, 'Petronius and the Emperors, I: Allusions in the *Satyricon*', *CW* 45 (1952), 161–8; 162. *Contra* Smith (above, n. 1) *ad loc.*, who does not accept a Neronian date. J. P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius: A Literary Study* (Bloomington and London, 1968), 126–7 and n. 4, believes that Horace, *Sat.* 2.8, the dinner with Nasidienus, is a model for much of the *Cena* and sees the collapse of the awning in Horace (54ff.) as an inspiration for the fall of the acrobat in Petronius but also considers the Nero incident a possible source as well.

<sup>7</sup> Martial seems to have seen an equally realistic performance a generation later, recorded in his:

Iunctam Pasiphaen Dictaeo credite tauro:

vidimus, accepit fabula prisca fidem.

nec se miretur, Caesar, longaeva vetustas:

quidquid fama canit, praestat harena tibi.

*Spect.* 6 (5)

One wonders if Domitian were consciously imitating the performance under Nero.

realism was visible elsewhere in the festival: Suetonius tells us (11.2) that in the production of Afranius' *Incendium*, the actors were allowed to keep whatever property they rescued from the burning building on stage. Though the incident surely says something about Nero's tastes (undoubtedly his approval was required for the Pasiphae ballet), more importantly Suetonius' account testifies clearly to widespread public reaction to and discussion of the performance.

A recent and shocking performance of the Pasiphae story was therefore in the public's visual memory as a result of Nero's Ludi Maximi. That performance had moreover a context, the great amphitheatre in the Campus Martius which was itself one of Nero's most spectacular and public achievements and had been the site of large-scale gladiatorial fights as well. The context of performance leads us back from the arena to Trimalchio's dinner table.

Petronius means his reader to read the iconography of the *capis* over Trimalchio's shoulder, as it were. The pleasure of the text here is for the reader to understand what Trimalchio cannot. Trimalchio's interpretation of the *scyphoi* shows that he mixes up the names of mythic characters, and the reader easily solves the first scene by mentally substituting the name of Medea for Trimalchio's 'Cassandra'. The *capis* is a trickier challenge, for one name (Daedalus) is correct, while two others (Niobe and the Trojan horse) are not, although the name of King Minos gives us a hint. The cups portraying the gladiatorial fights of Hermeros and Petraites, which require no correction,<sup>8</sup> supply a further clue by pointing toward the context of the amphitheatre. The fall of the boy acrobat two chapters later is an additional indicator pointing toward Nero's Ludi Maximi as the interpretive context.

Finally, while this interpretation of the scene on the *capis* should be a contribution to dating composition of the novel, it should *not* be taken as evidence for a simple equation of Trimalchio with Nero. Only within the context of an interpretation of the *Satyricon* as a whole and an understanding of its readership can we determine – if determine is the right word – whether Nero was part of the intended audience for Petronius' novel or not. Did Petronius intend Nero to be amused at Trimalchio's inability to see what was going on in the scene on his bowl, or did he think that Nero was such an egomaniac that he would not recognize himself in the lowly person of Trimalchio – or was the *Satyricon* never meant for Nero's eyes? The answers to these questions are left to the reader.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hermeros is not as well attested as Petraites, but one first-century A.D. gladiator by this name is known: see Smith (above, n. 1), *ad loc.*

<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to my colleague Garth Tissol for his helpful criticisms of this note and his suggestion of a title.

#### DUCKS' EGGS IN STATIUS, *SILVAE* 4.9.30?

The ninth and last poem in Book 4 of the *Silvae* is an amusing hendecasyllabic piece in which Statius, addressing Plotius Grypus, reproves him for having sent him for the Saturnalia a tatty, second-hand copy of a boring book in return for the fine, expensive, new volume which was Statius' present to him. The poem includes a long list (lines 23–45) of humble and/or poor-quality items, any of which, it is suggested, would have been more acceptable than Grypus' gift. Included in the list are eggs:

non enlychnia sicca, non replictae  
bulborum tunicae, nec ova †tantum,†  
nec lenes alicae, nec asperum far? (29–31)