

HANDOUTS AT DINNER

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. . . aut collegiorum cenae, quae nunc innumerabiles
excandefaciunt annonam macelli. (Varro *Rust.* 3.2.16)

PLINY (*Ep.* 2.14.4) TELLS US THAT LAWYERS used hired claquees in blatant imitation of the organizations in the theatres:¹

sequuntur auditores actoribus similes, conducti et redempti. manceps convenitur; in media basilica tam palam sportulae quam in triclino dantur: ex iudicio in iudicium pari mercede transitur. inde iam non inurbane Σοφοκλείς vocantur (ἂπὸ τὸ Σοφὸς καὶ Καλεῖσθαι), isdem Latinum nomen impositum est Laudiceni (v.l. Laodiceni) . . .

The listeners who follow them are like performers, hired and bought. They huddle together with a middleman; in the middle of a basilica *sportulae* are handed out as openly as in a *triclinium*. They run from one court to another for the same wage. Hence these people are called not without humour “Sophocleses” from *sophos* and *kaleisthai*; in Latin the name given them is *laudiceni*.

Sherwin-White in his commentary on this passage deals only with the explanatory words in Greek in the manuscripts, which he would delete as a gloss.² One could add that Pliny would have known that *kalein* and not *kaleisthai* was required as an explanation, since the parasites shout “Sophos,” i.e., *kalein sophos*—“Hooray-shouters,” while *sophos kaleisthai* is not meaningful at all; *kaleisthai* seems to be a mistake prompted by the word *vocantur*. But it is unclear, despite Sherwin-White, why we need the Latin variant. The whole explanation looks like a grammarian’s gloss, since “Hooray-shouters” are obviously the claqueurs wanted in a law court, while “Dinner-praisers” interrupts the argument.

There is a more interesting problem. Why does Pliny find it obvious that handing out *sportulae* as bribes in a basilica should be compared to handing them

¹ The theatrical associations in Pliny’s language in this and what follows are notable, here especially the play on *actores* / *auditores*, players and audience. *Actor* means “agent” as well as “performer” or “orator” (Tac. *Dial.* 26.3); *conducti* is business language for “under contract” but applied to hired theatre claquees as early as 56 B.C. (Cic. *Sest.* 104). Pliny (*Ep.* 7.24.7) denounces the *opera theatralis* of the centumviral court.

² Sherwin-White 1966: 182: “But Stout (155) whom the OCT here follows, approved the text bracketed, quoting K. Barwick (Phil. 1936, 441 ff.) to the effect that Pliny added the explanation because of the ‘frequent . . . misunderstanding of the word σοφός as a term of applause.’ This is surely nonsense. Besides Pliny never writes pointlessly in Greek . . . But the point is made neat and clear by the Latin explanation. The Greek addition destroys the *urbanitas*.” Sherwin-White misses the joke in *Laudiceni*; “Dinner-praisers” is a Latin pun on Laodiceans, citizens of Laodicea, a type of ethnic joke known from Old Comedy: e.g., Ar. *Ach.* 605–606.

out in a dining room? One could try getting out of the problem by reading the sentence as an awkward attempt at saying: “*sportulae* are handed out to them openly as (food is) in a dining room.” But not only is that a strained reading, but the comparison then loses its force, because *sportulae* and food in dining are so different in the main area of comparison: on the one hand one is given a *sportula* individually by the patron, but in dining one takes one’s food as one chooses. Again, the food in the dining room is never called *sportula* for the obvious reason that the *sportula* has the connotation of a picnic basket, *subita conductaque cenula*,³ a substitute for a meal, and would never be given in a dining room. I think we have no option but to understand the Latin as it is translated above.

We can now focus on the problem. These claqueurs or *conducti* of lawyers would largely consist of the clients of the lawyer, their *patronus*, as Martial (6.38) confirms.⁴ Clients, the *togati*, are the first to rise and applaud their patron when he reads his poetry and to shout “Bravo” (*sophos*), because they have been well fed. Juvenal tells us that the lawyer in need of applause could use his *clientes* for the purpose, and Quintilian even cautions the would-be lawyer against breaking his speech for applause in such a manner as to give the impression that he is telling a secretary to take note of a *sportula* to be offered the claqueurs.⁵ What form did these *sportulae* take in A.D. 97, the date assigned to these letters by Sherwin-White?⁶ Certainly some of the descriptions in Juvenal and Martial suggest hot or cold meals distributed at the *salutatio*, morning or evening; but in this passage both the circumstances of the basilica and Pliny’s term *merces* indicate money, a much commoner meaning. In fact at this time the *sportula* was standardized at six and a quarter sesterces.⁷ Yet, while clients came to dinner with their patron, there is no parallel for the distribution of *sportulae* either as cash or as food in a private dining room at such a time. It would, therefore, seem to have been contrary to the dining manners of antiquity for clients present in a private *triclinium* to get cash handouts. While some guests may have appropriated

³Suet. *Claud.* 21.4. See Hug 1929: 1884. On *sportulae*, see especially the overview of Duncan-Jones 1982, whose discussion and bibliography I do not repeat. I have not found helpful for my purposes Pasqualini 1969–70, though she usefully writes out 137 inscriptions.

⁴Cf. Martial 10.10. Biville (1996: 310–318) draws attention to Petr. *Sat.* 37.9: “*babaecali*,” “those who shout *babae*,” a good parallel to “*sophos*-shouters.”

⁵Juv. *Sat.* 13.32; Quint. 11.3.131, examples taken from the standard discussion of *clientes*, Friedländer 1922: 1.225–235; more in Mayor 1881 on Juv. *Sat.* 13.32 and (for philosophers) on *Sat.* 7.44.

⁶Friedländer (1922: vol. 4, Appendix xiv) adds to his earlier evidence, with a detailed discussion of the *sportula* in the age of Martial and Juvenal (though the translation in the English edition is inaccurate). He points out that there were considerable differences between the two: e.g., in Juvenal women and notables are attested as accepting the meagre handouts, and they could do so in the evening rather than the morning.

⁷Martial 3.7.1 with Friedländer 1886: *ad loc.*

napkins or cups,⁸ the *apophoreta*,⁹ which could more legitimately be taken away, cannot be in Pliny's mind. Nor is he thinking of the eccentric generosity which handed to guests gold silverware or slaves or even the furniture, none of which could remotely be described as *sportulae*. Pliny must be referring to *sportulae* in a dining room as something normal, and in the society in which he moved there was no parallel for an allegedly common habit of disbursing money, let alone picnic baskets, at private dinner parties to guests. In fact, we have no evidence for a private *triclinium* being used for such payments even at other times. The common opinion—though this is a desperately debated issue—would be that the *triclinium* belongs to the more private part of a Roman house, while the distribution of *sportulae* belongs to the public part, especially the *vestibulum* and *atrium*.¹⁰ But Pliny said *in triclinio* because that seemed to him more normal than *in atrio* or *in vestibulo*, which would have been immediately intelligible. The problem, therefore, is that Pliny regards as normal something which all our evidence leads us to regard as abnormal.

PREVIOUS SOLUTIONS

Friedländer of course had noted the passage, but took it to mean without real justification that the lawyers also rented non-clients,¹¹ and so did not deal with our problem. But he also noted in another connection three related facts. Nero had changed the old method of distributing public largesse from *cenae rectae*, i.e., recumbent dining, to *sportulae*, handouts (Suet. *Nero* 16).¹² Second, Domitian changed the method back from *sportulae* to the more expensive *cena recta* (Suet. *Dom.* 7). Third, he also noted that Martial in Book 3—and only in Book 3—three times (3.7, 14, 30) suggests that *sportulae* for *clientes* had been generally abolished

⁸ Catullus 12.3 with Fordyce 1961: *ad loc.*

⁹ Stüber 1986; Leary 1996: 4–7. Athenaeus gives examples of wild extravagance from Hellenistic times: e.g., 128c, 466b, 540c. Cleopatra even gave away the sideboards and *klinai* to the guests: Ath. 148a.

¹⁰ Grassigli 1997.

¹¹ Friedländer 1922: 1.229, n. 14 = Friedländer 1907: 1.198, 14 with note at 4.400: “persons who were not clients were of course hired for this purpose,” citing this passage of Pliny.

¹² Mrozek (1987: 38) suggests that the formal dinner was expensive and led to the theft of cutlery. The public *cena recta* was originally republican, often attached to spectacles: *Diz. Epigr.* s.v. *Epulum* cites Cic. *Pro Mur.* 75; Val. Max. 7.5.1 for the funerary banquet of P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus in 123 B.C. The best description is Livy 39.46.2 of the funerary banquet of L. Licinius Crassus in 183 B.C., with the forum full of *triclinia* apparently in tents for an *epulum*. Add Sen. *Controv.* 9.2.9: *quid? si, per deos immortales, nullo sollemni die populo inspectante in foro convivium habuisses, non minuisses maiestatem imperii nostri? atqui quid interest convivium in forum an forum in convivium attrahas?* Note the useful index of *convivia publica* in ILS 5.908–912, and Friedländer 1922: 1.98–103. Pliny *NH* 32.20 divides dining into *convivia publica* and *privata* and *cenae ad pulvinaria*. For a list of religious public *convivia* in Rome, see Piccaluga 1965: 61–62, citing *inter alia* Tert. *Apol.* 42: *non in publico Liberalibus discumbo*. See now D'Arms 1998 for Caesar's dining of the people.

and *convivia* substituted, and this could have lasted only a short time. But Friedländer went no further than to assemble this information. It was left to Hug to make a further deduction.¹³ He now combined our passage in Pliny—whose difficulty he recognized—with Martial and Suetonius to suggest that the renewed public banquets of the *cena recta* type, reintroduced by Domitian, led to a new and short-lived fashion for handing out private *sportulae* in the form of meals in private dining rooms, and it is this new fashion to which Martial in Book 3 and Pliny are referring. For a brief period then under Domitian, Hug argued, clients could expect to get their *sportula* in their patron's *triclinium*.

I do not think that this solution, though attractive, bears examination. This brief—and probably unworkable—fashion in the time of Domitian for *convivia* instead of *sportulae* for clients, as Friedländer saw, is dated only to 87, the date of Martial's third book, and need have no relevance to Pliny or his world in 97, when Domitian was already dead. Further, the three poems of Martial demonstrate the opposite of what Hug wanted, for they make the clear assumption that *sportulae*, i.e., the usual handouts of six and a quarter sesterces, had been abolished altogether in favour of proper meals. Indeed the text of Martial 3.30 is *sportula nulla datur: gratis conviva recumbis*. There is no *sportula*, there is only a free meal instead of it. Otherwise, the vast majority of Martial's and Juvenal's poems describe *sportulae* as a cash handout in the normal way. One does not, therefore, have evidence for the handing out of *sportulae* in dining rooms in either 87 or 97.

The *cenae rectae* which emperors abolished and restored were occasions when there were public *triclinia*, like the Republican *epula publica*, and of course in such places additional *missilia* and anything else could at times be distributed by emperors or indeed any other person with money. Statius (*Silvae* 4.2) describes such an imperial occasion in some detail. At the opposite end of the scale, Petronius' Trimalchio (71.9–11) wished *triclinia* to be recorded on his tomb as one memento of his largesse,¹⁴ but this parody is capable of several interpretations, and cannot be used as evidence. Even if P. Lucilius Gamala did dine all the citizens of Ostia on 217 *triclinia*,¹⁵ and Julius Caesar allegedly all the male inhabitants of Rome on 22,000 *triclinia*,¹⁶ it is at first difficult to see how Pliny at this period

¹³ Hug 1929: 1883–86, esp. 1884–85: "Durch die obenerwähnte Wiedereinführung der *cena recta* an Stelle der *sportula publica* durch Domitian wurde auch bei der privaten Sportel die Einladung zur Tafel Uebung statt des Geldgeschenks, vgl. Plin. *Ep.* XIV 4 *sportula in triclinio*. Diese Neuerung . . .," based on Martial 3.7, 3.14, and 3.30. His source is Friedländer 1886. The question was raised also by Toller (1889: 77).

¹⁴ To set out the details of one's tomb in this way was perfectly normal, as one can see from, for example, *ILS* 8379, the "Testament of the Lingon," on which see Woolf 1998: 167, and the testament of T. Praxias, mentioned below, n. 61. But in Petronius there are insoluble difficulties in the relation of *epulum* to *triclinia*.

¹⁵ *ILS* 6147.

¹⁶ Plut. *Caes.* 55.2; cf. Suet. *Iul.* 26–27; D'Arms 1998: 38.

can be comparing such rare banqueting of the people in the theatre, forum, or imperial palace to bribery in the lawcourt.¹⁷

COLLEGIAL DINING

These public feasts, however, do suggest a solution that removes the anomaly. We must assume that Pliny could not have been thinking of the private house, no matter how obvious this connection may seem to us, but of some other *triclinium* where *sportulae* were regularly and openly handed out. Recently a brief account has been published of the interesting building that housed the Augustales at Misenum. It contained a large and luxurious *triclinium* which was called the *triclinium Constantiae*, as we learn from the name set in the surviving floor mosaic.¹⁸ Bollmann (1998) has now collected from archaeological and epigraphical evidence over seventy probable *scholae* or seats of *collegia*, in which she rightly includes the Augustales, from Italy alone. It is well known that *collegia* in general and magistrates in particular were given to communal dining, and Ausbüttel, the last authority to write on them, discusses these *convictores, qui una epula vesci solent*.¹⁹ In fact it is clear from archaeology that one of the main functions of these societies, even the misnamed “funerary” colleges, was communal dining, as Waltzing pointed out in his monumental study of the professional corporations a hundred years ago.²⁰ Many inscriptions also make clear that distribution of *sportulae*, nearly always money, by benefactors, often on their birthday, was a common feature of these college feasts, but also of other similar gatherings. What remains to be proved is that it was normal for these distributions of money to take place in a *triclinium*, and that the *divisio* of *sportulae* and dining were simultaneous.²¹ But the difficulties of proving this can be illustrated from an inscription of a *collegium* in Antinum.²² It specifies that

¹⁷ For these, see the commentary of Vollmer (1898) on Statius *Silvae* 1.6; Marquardt and Mau 1886: 1.209; Friedländer 1922: 1.98–103.

¹⁸ de Franciscis 1991: esp. 45 and photos 65 and 66 for the *triclinium* inscription (= *AE* 1993, 478): *Q. Baebius Natalis August(alis) immun(is) triclin(ium) Constantiae sua peg(unia) stravit et dedicavit*. Bollmann (1998: cat. no. A50) inexplicably omits this inscription. The excavation is now under water.

¹⁹ Ausbüttel 1982: 55. For a list of inscriptions regarding the distribution of *sportulae*, *ibid.* 56, n. 36, but it does not deal with the problem addressed here. Pudliszewski (1992) deals briefly with public banquets in Spain on the basis of twenty-seven inscriptions.

²⁰ Waltzing 1895–1900: 1.392; Bollmann 1998: 37–39; it is a criterion for her identification of a *schola* that there be a place for communal eating.

²¹ We have, therefore, to disallow as evidence such remarks as *divisio fiat et epulentur* (*CIL* X 1880). Though the Arval brothers distributed *sportulae* apparently at the end of every meal, I have, like Bollmann (1998), considered that they are too different from ordinary *collegia*: see, however, Pasqualini 1969–70: 273–274.

²² *CIL* IX 3842 = Toller 1889: no. 231 = Waltzing 1895–1900: no. 1566. Many other details will remain obscure, e.g., whether a monetary *sportula* could be considered part of a *profusio*: cf. *CIL* X 107 = Laum 1914: no. 31.

nine *sestertii* are to be given to the decurions while they are dining (*epulantibus*) and six to the *seviri Augustales* when they dine, and twelve to the members of the college when they dine, and three to the urban plebs when they dine. All are supposed to be *epulantibus*, but can one, therefore, conclude that all are reclining as in a *triclinium*, or that all are dining in exactly the same fashion?

SPORTULAE AND EPULUM: FOOD OR MONEY?

It is rare for the precise circumstances of distribution to be mentioned in the hundreds of relevant inscriptions, and in addition we soon become aware that the terms for public largesse are notoriously unclear, depending on both place and time. For example, we know that *sportulae* can mean either money or food, but usually we cannot tell, since the meaning "food" extends to "money for food" from the first century A.D. Likewise *epulum* and *epulae* can mean distributions of food and of money for food, though of course in those inscriptions which refer to simultaneous distribution of *epula* and money, we can be safe in assuming that *epulum* will mean only "food."²³ *Epulum*, therefore, can come to mean the same as *sportula*, and just money, as it seems to mean in Petronius (*Sat.* 45) and several inscriptions.²⁴ Indeed there are examples where even the word *cena* seems to mean no more than *sportula*.²⁵ It is easier to determine a hierarchy in the types of donation: so, for example, a *cena* was more honourable than *epulum*, which did not at first necessarily have wine and bread attached to it, and *epulum* in turn even more prestigious than *crustulum et mulsum*, so that in such cases there was obviously a real difference in the terms.²⁶ Equally, where different words were employed for handouts to different groups on an inscription, all we can say is that *cenare* was better than *vesci*, and *vesci* was better than *epulari*, but it is impossible to be certain if a *triclinium* was involved. For our purposes, it is clear enough that a meal given *in tricliniis*, i.e., a *cena recta*, was the most prestigious of all such donations, especially when accompanied by a further handout of money. It was banquets and *convivia* like these that were specifically forbidden to candidates for office by the *Lex Ursonensis* as a means of gaining public influence.²⁷ Not surprisingly, as Mrozek shows, *cenae* were primarily for the decurions, but also occasionally for the Augustales, and, very rarely, for the people.²⁸

²³ Toller 1889: 78.

²⁴ Toller 1889: 79; Friedländer 1906: 266 on Petr. *Sat.* 45; cf. 71; Mrozek 1987: 34, 41; Fora 1996: 54. Wesch-Klein (1990: 33, 37) wants to deny this.

²⁵ Toller 1889: 80; Mrozek (1987: 41) gives examples where decurions get *sportulae*, and lower groups get an *epulum*.

²⁶ Mrozek 1987: 42.

²⁷ *Lex Ursonensis* 132; Crawford (1996: 1.453) adds that the two terms amount to the same thing, and refers us to Cic. *Mur.* 67: *prandia vulgo data*.

²⁸ Mrozek 1987: 37, n. 19. But even here the language can be unclear: *populus* and *plebs* like δῆμος can mean the general membership of any corporate group.

MODALITIES OF HANDOUTS

Despite these terminological obscurities, we can prove with some certainty that it was common for money to be handed out in a *triclinium* during meals, whether they were held in an open air setting or in a *schola*.²⁹ Several inscriptions are known where we can assert that this was so, and several others where it is practically certain.³⁰ One has long been published (*CIL* XII 530 from Aquae Sextiae):³¹

[. . . /sevi]r Aug(ustalis) corp(oratus) . . . / . . . um HS XXX (milia) n(ummum) dedit / [ex quorum] usuris XV k(alendas) Decembr(es) / [quotannis] sportulae vescentib[us] . . . divi]derentur . . .

Another inscription is more recent. It is an honorary decree set up at Fabrateria Vetus (Ceccano in Frosinone province) by the *sodales iuvenes* for a duumvir whose *nomen* Flavius alone survives.³² Among his good works the following is reported: . . . ob cuiu[s] dedicat(ionem)] sing(ulis) discumbentib[us] dedit (sestertium) . . .]. The *iuvenes sodales* are awarded their *sportula* while reclining at dinner, and only then; and the inscription goes on to say that the *sportulae* are to be distributed to the *sodales* every year on the patron's birthday from his legacy.³³

²⁹ Bollmann (1998: cat. no. A30) gives the best known example, the *Casa dei Triclini* at Ostia. Flambard (1987: esp. 239) shows how the banquets of the *Lex collegii Aesculapii* (*ILS* 7213) are to be held in a *solarium tectum in quo populus collegii epuletur*, a "terrasse couverte."

³⁰ See the list in Toller 1889: 79: "Sunt enim epigrammata quae doceant interdum 'epulantibus' vel 'discumbentibus' pecuniam divisam esse," with seven examples: *CIL* IX 3842 (Antinum) = Toller 1889: no. 231; *CIL* IX 1618 (Beneventum) = Toller 1889: no. 444 = no. 10; *CIL* X 6073 (Formiae) = Toller 1889: no. 276; *CIL* XII 530 (Aquae Sextiae) = Toller 1889: no. 431; *CIL* XIV 2795 (Gabii) = Toller 1889: no. 429; *CIL* IX 3160 (Corfinium) = Toller 1889: no. 71 = no. 228; *CIL* X 5849 (Ferentinum) = Toller 1889: no. 456. "Sometimes donors combined the two practices by providing a dinner as well as a cash handout. The evidence is occasionally ambiguous, and leaves it uncertain whether a figure refers to a cash gift made on the occasion of a feast or to the cost per head of the feast itself. The cash *sportula* could evidently sometimes be used for a feast." So rightly Duncan-Jones 1982: 139 with evidence. He cites (140) the Arval Brothers in A.D. 118: [hoc a]nno sportulis cenatum est denari(i)s cente[nis]: *CIL* VI 32374, lines 220–221; cf. Pasqualini 1969–70: 273–278. I have omitted these inscriptions because the Arvals are so different from the normal college.

³¹ Toller 1889: no. 431; Laum 1914: 187, no. 99. In *CIL* IX 5376 [vescentibus] is a supplement only. In *CIL* XI 4391 (Ameria), *epu/lantes in perpetuum divider(etur)* must be wrong: read possibly *epu/lantib(us)*; cf. *CIL* XI 4404, which would then be an apparent example of what we want. But we could think of it as a mistake for *epul/um . . . divideretur*, and it is not clear from this and other examples that the money to be divided up among the diners is not in the form of food. See de Kisch 1979: 264–269.

³² *AE* 1979, 140.

³³ A fragmentary inscription from Ferentinum (*CIL* X 5849 = Toller 1889: no. 456 = *ILS* 6269) cannot be certainly restored, but is of the same kind. *CIL* XI 4395 = Waltzing 1895–1900: no. 1876 from Ameria has *qui ob statuae dedicationem dedit iuve/nibus s(ingulis) HS XXX n. / adiecto pane et / vino epulantibus*. Waltzing (1895–1900: 1.305) took this to mean that "la somme est destinée à payer le reste du repas, la viande, si les confrères veulent organiser un festin." Something similar would be meant by *CIL* V 7920 = Waltzing 1895–1900: no. 610 (Cemenelum), where *sportulae* are given to the

The reason why the word *vescentibus* or *epulantibus* or other terms, with or without the addition of *singulis*, is used in an inscription where *sportulae* are donated is precisely to specify beyond question how and when the money is to be distributed.³⁴ Each diner separately is to be given the money while they are there (*praesentibus*) and dining. Whether the diners use the money or part of it to pay for their dinner is irrelevant, at least in cases like this.³⁵ We find that instructions are given about the disposal of *sportulae* allotted to those who fail to show up.³⁶ The donor, we infer, wants his largesse to be seen under fixed conditions, which he specifies. Only when the designated people were dining and/or lying down was the money given them.

Another inscription from Fabreria Vetusta shows Flavius Proculianus rewarding his colleagues because they have set up a statue of Ceres to him, their patron; he feeds them and gives them fifty sesterces each as they recline (*discumbentibus*).³⁷ One has to conclude that these are two different but related acts that took place on the same occasion. Another inscription from the same place has very similar details, but this time the reclining colleagues only get two sesterces.³⁸ More detail is brought out by an inscription from Corfinium, where a fund called the Mammiana is to be set up from the interest on which the people may be able to receive the *divisio* on the benefactor's birthday.³⁹ What this means is made clear by the further explanation that he gave to the decurions as they reclined (*discumbentibus*) and their children thirty sesterces, twenty each to the *seviri Augustales vescentibus*, and eight to the people *epulantibus*.

We now see what is meant by an inscription from Beneventum, where the *pagani*—the citizens of the district—are to be banqueted in a *porticus cum apparitorio* specially built by their benefactor Sabinus, and this is to be repeated

magistrates and the *collegiis*, and *recumbentibus* / *panem et vinum praebebat*. The money was given them for the food. Waltzing (1895–1900: 1.304) translates *recumbentibus* as “s’ils dinent” unnecessarily.

³⁴ Toller 1889: no. 79. Even Mommsen had at one time argued that the municipal *sportula* was invariably intended for feasting, which, as Duncan-Jones (1982: 140) points out, is not possible.

³⁵ Wesch-Klein 1990: 33–37, esp. 33, n. 85 arguing that *visceratio* and *epulum* are not a “Geldbetrag.” Duncan-Jones (1965: 306) had affirmed unwisely: “The number of cases where there is room for confusion between feast and cash distribution is small.”

³⁶ This is set out most clearly in the *Lex collegii Aesculapii*, ILS 7213, lines 16–17: the *sportulae* of wine and bread of those who do not come to the *divisio* are to be sold and divided among those present.

³⁷ CIL X 5654 = Waltzing 1895–1900: no. 1748: *statuam posuerunt quibus ob [de]dicati/onem sing. pavit et ded[it ei]s discun/bentibus HS L n. et donavit . . .*

³⁸ CIL X 5657 = Waltzing 1895–1900: no. 1749 (Fabreria vetus): . . . *ob cui[us] dedicatione si[n]g. discumben[t. V.] [dedit] HS II et donavit eis HS II [m. n.] . . .*

³⁹ CIL IX 3160 = Toller 1889: no. 71 = no. 228 = ILS 6530: . . . *qui . . . statim / splendidissimum ordinem liberosque et coniuges eorum sed et populum public. / epulantes maximo cum gaudio exhibaravit. // . . . obtulit decurionibus et universo populo HS L mil. nummum / quae Mammiana vocentur, ex cuius summae usuris die natalis eius VII idus Febrar. / divisionem percipere possint. // . . . item dedit/ decurionibus discumbentibus et liberis eorum singul. HS XXX nummos, seviri. Augustal. / vescent. singul. HS XX nummos . . . plebei universae epulantibus singulis HS VIII nummos . . .*

annually through a foundation.⁴⁰ This unique inscription indicates that the portico is to serve as a sort of theatre, in which the diners could be viewed by those outside who could admire the benefaction, whereby a meal becomes a “procession and theatre” as Plutarch says.⁴¹ Bollmann considers it evident that the porticoes of the *scholae* functioned as dining places.⁴²

Many inscriptions that do not mention *sportulae* nonetheless refer to another aspect of the public dining of magistrates. Consider a testament from Spoletium: while the decurions are dining publicly, money is handed out to the *municipes praesentes*.⁴³ Exactly the same division between diners and *praesentes* is probably to be found in an elegant second-century inscription recording a benefaction by the patron of the *collegium fabrum* of Narbo.⁴⁴ The annual interest is to be divided by the college on his birthday between the *epulantes* and *praesentes*, two separate groups: i.e., those dining and those presumably standing around to watch, *honestissimo habitu*, in the most honourable manner, perhaps well dressed and well behaved. These *praesentes* are different from the diners who are *praesentes* above, but such a scene still fits admirably Pliny’s description of handouts. A difficult inscription from Formiae makes it clear that twenty sesterces are to be given to the decurions while they are dining publicly in broad daylight: *decur. in luc. publice / vescentib. sing. HS XX n. / dedit*.⁴⁵ We see the same care being taken to ensure that the donation is visible to spectators.⁴⁶ Likewise a Ferentinum decree is enlightening for our original question. It is a decree of a *collegium of dendrophori* honouring their patron.⁴⁷ Instead of the usual *epulantibus* or *vescentibus*, we read that the handout of money and other things is to take place among the *triclinia*

⁴⁰ CIL IX 1618 = ILS 6507 = Laum 1914: no. 29 = Toller 1889: no. 444: ... *paganis communib. pagi Lucul(li) / porticum cum apparatorio et compitum a solo pecun. / sua fecerunt et in perpetuum VI id. Iun. die natale / Sabini epulantib(us) hic paganis annuos (denarios centum viginti quinque) dari / iusserunt.*

⁴¹ The Athenian magistrates sometimes dined in a stoa, with a curtain: Hyperides fr. 139 Blass; cf. Oakley and Rotroff 1993; Plut. *Mor.* 528b exaggerates: σύνδειπνον, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ πομπὴ καὶ θέατρον.

⁴² Bollmann 1998: 53. D’Arms (1998: 37) argues for the porticoes of Pompey’s theatre being used for dining. Contrast Price 1984: 109, n. 51: “If feasts were given there (viz. imperial sanctuaries), there was no provision of the permanent banqueting rooms known in other sanctuaries,” but (*ibid.* 140) he assumes that the porticoes which are a feature of these temples were used for religious purposes.

⁴³ CIL XI 4815 = ILS 6638 ... *HS CCX (milia), ut ex redditu III k. Sept. omnibus annis decuriones in publico / cenarent et municipes praesentes acciperent aeris octonos* ...

⁴⁴ CIL XII 4393 = Laum 1914: no. 104 = Waltzing 1895–1900: no. 2049 = ILS 7259 (Narbo): ... *ut usuras eius summae ea die / [honestissimo habitu inter praesentes et epulantes in perpetuum / [divi]datis.*

⁴⁵ CIL X 6073 = ILS 6284: I at first assumed that the term *luc* must indicate that the dining had to take place “by torchlight” like the injunction *l(uminibus)* but am now convinced that only “in broad daylight” can be meant.

⁴⁶ In CIL XIV 2795 = Toller 1889: no. 429 = ILS 272 (Gabii), the important dedication of the year 140 to the memory of Domitia Augusta, money is left, so that from the interest to the decurions present and the *seviri* as they recline there may be a *divisio* in public with equal portions. But there is no stated division of money, though I think it inevitable.

⁴⁷ CIL X 5853 = Toller 1889: no. 457 = ILS 6271 (not in Waltzing): ... *quodannis VI id. Mai. die natal. suo perpet. daretur praesent. / municipib. et incol. et mulierib. nuptis crustul. p. I mulsi bemin. / et circa triclin. decurionib. mulsum et crust. et sportul. HS X n. / item puer. curiae increment. et VI vir. Aug.*

set for the decurions and that the members of his own *triclinium*, where he usually would dine with his friends, are to get an extra handout of one sesterce.

COLLEGIAL HANDOUTS, PRIVATE OR PUBLIC?

There is no specific name for the meeting place of a *collegium*, though the word *schola* is now used as if it were. But one name that adds point to Pliny's remark is *basilica*, attested both epigraphically and archaeologically as a seat of the *dendrophori* at Rome.⁴⁸ Bollmann, unwilling to call these buildings public or private, opts for "halböffentlich."⁴⁹ But college dinners do not need to be in a semi-private *basilica*; money could be handed out in a public place, for example, in a temple,⁵⁰ or as very often at the installation of a statue, or in the forum before the statue(s) of the benefactor.⁵¹ Such occasions of course encourage festivity at open-air *triclinia* or *stibadia*, which would certainly be visible by the public, and need a *manceps* to organize them.⁵² This lends point to Pliny's use of *manceps* here. Normally the donor or his executor would arrange for the *triclinia* to be installed *de sua pecunia*, and was presumably liable for losses accordingly, but one

quibusq. u.v.e. [=?? una vescendum est] crust. / mulsum et HS VIII n.; et in triclin. meo ampl. in sing. h. HS I n. . . . The restitution of *CIL* XII 697 in *AE* 1965, 270 (Arelate) to read: . . . *epulum in XIII [trich]n(iis) XXXIII [biclin(iis) . . .* is too tentative to be used as evidence.

⁴⁸Bollmann 1998: cat. no. A4, cf. C20, with her remark p. 243: "Die Benennung des Gebäudes als *basilica* bezieht sich dabei nicht auf seine architektonische Form, sondern wahrscheinlich allein auf die Funktion des Baus als Versammlungsort."

⁴⁹Bollmann 1998: 12.

⁵⁰The well known *Lex Aesculapii et Hygiae* of A.D. 153 (*CIL* VI 10234 = *ILS* 7213; Bollmann 1998: cat. no. A2) is notoriously contaminated by additions, but while the inscription enjoins the handing out of *sportulae* in the *schola*, they are also to be distributed in a temple of Titus, where plenary meetings, but perhaps also dinners, were held, perhaps until their own buildings were completed (so Bollmann). At Ravenna the benefactors have built a temple of Neptune and there is to be a college banquet and *sportulae* there (*CIL* XI 126 cf. 132 = Laum 1914: nos. 58 and 59). The Lanuvian *Lex collegii* (*CIL* XIV 2112 = *ILS* 7212; Bollmann 1998: cat. no. A48) needs severe correction in the light of Ausbüttel 1982: 128, but the members certainly met in a temple of Antinous. The *caldam cum ministerio* recorded there as part of the elaborate dining calendar is not hot washing water, as Ausbüttel (1982: 56, n. 39) thought, but hot water for wine, as had long been seen: see now Dunbabin 1993. To her examples should be added the boiling water that a henchman of Verres (*Cic. Verr.* 1.64–76) threw over the Romanizing host Philodamos at a symposium in Lampsakos: it can only have come from an *authepsa*.

⁵¹As at Ostia: *CIL* XIV 353 = Laum 1914: no. 14: *praesentibus in foro ante statuas dividi*; *CIL* XIV 4642 + 353 = *ILS* 6148 + add. = Laum 1914: no. 14a: *praesentibus in foro ante statuas ipsius dividi*. Sometimes the time is specified, e.g., *hora secunda inter praesentes* probably before the statue; too early certainly for a normal dinner (*CIL* XIV 367). Likewise *CIL* VIII 9052 from Mauretania. Mrozek (1987: 47) gives other places for distribution. Doubtless too there was a dress code for funerary banquets: cf. *Cic. Vat.* 12.30; *Dio* 55.8.5.

⁵²So Marquardt and Mau 1886: 1.209, but without citing evidence. D'Arms (1998: 39) speaks of "the growing importance of Rome's *tabernarii*, *officinatores*, and *macellarii* in the economics of large scale feasting," citing Purcell 1994: 685, but there is no direct evidence; even so the thesis remains very probable.

could avoid some risk by having the guests bring some of their own apparatus.⁵³ Otherwise a middleman would have to provide the apparatus and make sure nothing was stolen; it was an expensive and risky operation.

Lest we fail to grasp Pliny's point, we must observe that these college or official dinners could on occasion be held as *strationes publicae*⁵⁴ before admiring spectators, as we read in a legacy for the decurions and *seviri Augustales* of Gabii:⁵⁵ . . . *ita ut ex usuris eiusdem . . . decur(iones) et (se)vir(i) Aug(ustales) publice in triclinis suis epulentur* . . . , where the *suis* is worth emphasising. Another decree from the same city states:⁵⁶ . . . *decurionib(us) et sev(ir)is discumbentibus in publico aequis portionibus fieret divisio*. (These two inscriptions, however, do not mention specifically distributions of monetary *sportulae* during the public dinners.) These could of course be accompanied by various entertainments for the diners, *epulum inter spectacula*, as a dedication from Dertona specifies.⁵⁷ The elephants who wandered delicately through a set of *triclinia* full of people, according to the elder Pliny, were of course outdoors; but we cannot determine the actual size of the *triclinia*.⁵⁸ At such times, the college dinner could well be a smaller version of the imperial *cena recta*.

THE THEATRICALITY OF HANDOUTS

It was presumably the sheer visibility of *divisio*, as a euergistic act witnessed by all, that impressed Pliny and provided him with a ready parallel for his legal bribery. Certainly one could attract envy by overexposure of one's dinner parties, as Tacitus wrote of Piso (*Ann.* 3.9.3):

Among the causes of his unpopularity were his house, decorated as if for a feast, which overlooked the forum, and his dinner parties and banquets. Also nothing was hidden because of the crowded nature of the place.

⁵³ Mrozek (1987: 47) in a good discussion of *triclinia* cites *CIL* XIV 2793 from Gabii, where the decurions and Augustales have to bring their own couches. To skimp on the apparatus was not a good idea; the famous story of the goatskin coverlets and the Samian ware at the funerary banquet of P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus in 123 B.C. (Val. Max. 7.5.1) shows what ill will could result from misplaced parsimony.

⁵⁴ *CIL* X 114, where two *triclinia* with attendant apparatus are provided for the use of the Augustales of Petelia, so that they *facilius strationibus publicis obire possint*. This is described as an *onus* in what follows, and *publice epulas exercebitis* is an odd formulation, more reminiscent of a military manoeuvre.

⁵⁵ *CIL* XIV 2793 = Laum 1914: no. 11.

⁵⁶ *CIL* XIV 2795 = Laum 1914: no. 12.

⁵⁷ *CIL* V 7376 = Mrozek 1987: 26 (second century).

⁵⁸ Pliny *NH* 8.2.5; gladiators at *triclinia* are also probably out of doors. The calculations of Mrozek (1987: 52) about the number of diners per couch do not convince. Dunbabin informs me that archaeological evidence does not suggest a pattern of nine per *triclinium*. The *triclinia* (4.30–4.60 m. by 4.40–4.80 m.) at Murecine near Pompei (Bollmann 1998: 371–372, cat. no. A52) are anomalous in several ways, not least in it being apparently impossible to eat in them.

But if so, then it was worth the risk, and we are told that the emperor Gallienus dined in public specifically to win the favour of the people.⁵⁹ True, our detailed evidence of the imperial period comes largely from provincial towns; and yet it was precisely the wealthy corporations of Rome, with their large admixture of freedmen, whose processions and communal dining would be most impressive; and we do find Varro complaining in vivid language that the innumerable college dinners were sending market prices though the roof.⁶⁰ The Trimalchios of Rome were visible enough to Petronius' readers, if not to us.

GREEK PARALLELS

There is much to be learned in these matters from the behaviour of the Greeks of the imperial East, as their own city structures adapted to Roman ideas. It strikes one as most un-Greek to have unequal public distributions according to political divisions of citizens (as opposed to gender, citizenship, religious office, etc.) and indeed one begins to see this kind of inequality commonly only in imperial times. But this does not justify the neglect of the evidence. A particularly clear example of Roman influence records the verbose testament of a rich citizen of Akmonia, Titus Praxias, dated to A.D. 95.⁶¹ Amidst other precise instructions, it deals with a *dianome* at a reclining banquet (*kataklisis*) that is to take place at his tomb.⁶² Many elements in the inscription such as the Rosalia attest to the influence of Rome,⁶³ but one neglected item in particular demands attention:

... καὶ μάλιστα ἵνα μόνοι οἱ παρόντες καὶ κατακλεινόμενοι βουλευταὶ λαμβάνωσι τὴν διανομὴν ταύτην ...

Both Schmitt-Pantel and van Nijf, though mentioning this inscription, do not point out that this unique emphasis on the *praesentes* and the *recumbentes* is Roman and not Greek.⁶⁴ No other Greek inscription, unless something has escaped me, makes this same specific distinction, so common in the inscriptions of the West. In fact this inscription is even more Roman than the Latin ones, since it alone specifies the joint conditions of being present and lying down for the distribution to magistrates and, therefore, ideally illustrates what we originally

⁵⁹SHA *Gallienus* 16; cf. Cic. *Phil.* 2.16.

⁶⁰*Rust.* 3.2.16, quoted at the beginning of this article.

⁶¹Ramsay 1901: 273–274. Neither Schmitt-Pantel (1992: 277), nor van Nijf (1997: 161), who refers to her, notices that this has been edited and published since as *IGRR* IV 661 = *SEG* XIII 542 with further bibliography = Laum 1914: no. 123, discussed most recently by Price (1984: 89–91).

⁶²For money as *dianome*, see Wörrle 1988: 123–124.

⁶³For Rosalia, cf. L. Robert at *Bull. ép.* 1973, 392: “La mention des Rosalies témoigne d’une influence romaine tout à fait caractérisée.” See now Kokkinia 1999: 215. (Robert’s promised treatment of this inscription apparently never appeared.)

⁶⁴As n. 61 above. The βουλευταὶ are to be equated with decurions; διανομή is *divisio*; κατακλεινόμενοι, which should have attracted attention by its uniqueness, is a translation of *discumbentes*. I confess that this entire article owes its origin to an investigation of this inscription.

sought. Though this inscription is unique, a near parallel exists from Iasos,⁶⁵ where the *strategoi* set up before the Kaisareion a second stele to the wealthy tax agent and benefactor Potens, who was not a Roman citizen, but perhaps even an Italian slave; this second inscription mentions, like the first, 100,000 *denarii* of his expenditures, including a donation of “twenty-five *denarii* per *triclinium*” to the boule and the *synarchia* on Claudius’ anniversary.⁶⁶ This is the first example known to me of the distribution of specific cash *sportulae* to Greek magistrates dining in *triclinia*;⁶⁷ it is significant that this is an imperial celebration, presumably in or near the Kaisareion, and it demonstrates that this Roman habit was already well entrenched in the East by the time of Claudius. It may be in fact the earliest recorded example of a magistrate’s *cena recta* with cash *sportulae* anywhere.⁶⁸ But since it is exactly what Pliny was assuming in his criticisms of lawyers’ bribes, we have to believe that the general public of the Roman Empire, both East and West, was well accustomed to the spectacle of their political leaders reclining in public and openly accepting cash handouts from wealthy businessmen, who have left us the proof of their unabashed generosity in so many inscriptions. Some scholars maintain that decurions ate at the public cost, so that these donations would be a relief for the public purse;⁶⁹ but, while it would be pleasant to believe it, there seems to be no solid evidence for this assumption.

CONCLUSION

The modern spectator of the political scene may well feel a certain bemusement at what appears to be the antique naiveté of the ceremonies we have described, but Pliny’s equation with bribery suggests that many of the ancient bystanders will also have had suspicions about the innocence of this cash distribution. Plutarch the moralist certainly disapproved, while Pliny and Trajan worried about the

⁶⁵ SEG XLIII 717 = AE 1993, 1531. A nice parallel from the time of Commodus is *I.Eph.* 23, where every member present of the gerousia gets a drachma as well as dinner from the foundation of Nikomedes, if I understand the Greek ἔξωθεν correctly.

⁶⁶ The translation in AE gives wrongly “à l’occasion du banquet 25 deniers par personne,” but the Greek says τῶι τρικλίνῳι ἀνὰ δινάρια / ké, which shows clearly that several Roman *triclinia* are meant.

⁶⁷ Schmitt-Pantel (1992: 277) gives a list of epigraphical attestations for κατακλίνειν in public banquets. Cf. van Nijf 1997: 161.

⁶⁸ Mrozek (1968: 166–170) argued that *sportulae* with specific sums are mentioned in Italian municipal contexts from A.D. 120 onwards until the second half of the third century A.D.; so too Fora 1996: 68. The Greek material is ignored; but see the excellent summary by Quass (1993: 303–317 and index B, s.v. *Verteilung*). There is no study of *dianome* in the Greek East that matches those for the West; until that is done, we cannot have a clear idea of how the imperial cult and *sportulae* were related.

⁶⁹ Wesch-Klein 1990: 35, citing Garnsey 1970: 244; Stahl 1978: 52 and n. 136; see already Liebenam 1900: 237–238, 240. But everything depends on how one translates and emends Fronto *Ep.* 2.7; Wesch-Klein (*loc. cit.*) confuses *publicae cenae* (“öffentliche Mahlzeiten”) as giving the right (“das heisst das Recht”) to “meals at public cost.” But *publicae* means only “in public”!

excesses of the Greeks.⁷⁰ But there is another aspect to be considered. The Romans civilize the upper classes with *convivia* among other things, said Tacitus cynically of Britain, and the uninformed call this *humanitas* even though it is really a sign of their servitude.⁷¹ From this point of view, *convivia* of a certain type do indeed romanize as well as civilize. True, these honest citizens as they dined—and accepted their handouts—were perhaps not immediately aware that they were displaying *humanitas*; but they had every reason to help advertise the generosity of civic patrons, so fundamental to the working of the state. Nor were the benefactors shy about their role, since it was only by such open distributions that they could convince the community of their generosity; and so Pliny could properly assume that handouts of largesse would readily be visible in *triclinia*.⁷²

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⁷⁰ *Mor.* 802d; cf. Quass 1993: 303. Duncan-Jones (1982: 138–139) in a brief but good discussion cites Pliny *Ep.* 10.116 for "official suspicion of municipal *sportulae*"; Trajan in his answer worries about private donations involving corporations, and *sportulae* becoming a *divisio*. A *dianome* in the time of Antoninus Pius needed imperial permission: *I. Stratonikeia* 1025.

⁷¹ *Agr.* 21, with Woolf 1998: 54–70.

⁷² I wish to thank Bridget Day and Guy Chamberland for their help. K. M. D. Dunbabin has dealt with the iconographical evidence for public dining in her Jackson Lectures, to be published by Harvard; it confirms the customs addressed here. Since this article was written much that is germane to its thesis has appeared; in particular I should like to cite D'Arms 1999.

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