

A CHANGE IN TRIMALCHIO'S LIFE

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tam magnus ex Asia veni quam hic candelabrus est. ad summam, quotidie me solebam ad illum metiri, et ut celerius rostrum barbatum haberem labra de lucerna ungebam. tamen ad delicias ipsimi annos quattuordecim fui; nec turpe est quod dominus iubet. ego tamen et ipsimae satis faciebam. scitis quid dicam; taceo, quia non sum de gloriosis. (Petronius 75.10–11)

I CAN NOW PROVE what I have long suspected, that interpreters misunderstand *ad delicias ipsimi annos quattuordecim fui*. Any commentator who understood it would comment on it, but none that I have consulted does. Translators certainly misunderstand it: "still, for fourteen years I was the old boy's fancy" J. P. Sullivan (Penguin 1965), and similarly, e.g., W. Burnaby (London 1694), W. Heinse ("Rome" 1773), L. Friedlaender (Leipzig 1891), M. Heseltine (Loeb 1913), A. Ernout (Budé 1922), P. Thomas (Brussels 1923), W. Arrowsmith (Ann Arbor, Mich. 1959), W. Ehlers (Munich 1965), E. Castorina (Bologna 1970).

By Petronius' day "for fourteen years" was *annis quattuordecim*: 57.9 *annis quadraginta servivi* (Hermeros), 86.7 *aliquot horis spatiatu*s (Eumolpus), 90.3 *minus quam duabus horis mecum moraris* (Encolpius), 102.11 *sed finge una die victos posse durare* (Encolpius); Sen. *Tro.* 910–911 *pator hoc olim iugum annis decem captiva*, *Apocol.* 6.1 *cum illo tot annis vixi*, *Ep.* 104.28 *viginti et septem annis pugnatu*m est.¹ When Seleucus at 42.5 says *quinque dies aquam in os suu*m non coniecit, literary standards at any period would have called for *quinque diebus*, because the negation turns duration into time within which: Plautus *Bacch.* 422 *nego tibi hoc annis viginti fuisse primis copiae*; Ter. *Ad.* 520 *ut triduo hoc perpetuo prorsu*m e lecto nequeat surgere, 527 *ego hodie toto non vidi die*; Cic. *Rosc.* 74 *Romam multis annis non venit*, *Ad Att.* 4.7.2 *multis annis civis nemo erat mortuus*; Livy 32.3.5 *multis annis sese Italiam non vidisse*.² Trimalchio's

¹Cf. A. W. Ahlberg, *Durative Zeitbestimmungen im Lateinischen* (Lund 1906), where page 55 concerns Petronius; E. Löfstedt, *Philologischer Kommentar zur Peregrinatio Aetheriae* (Uppsala 1911) 51–56 (53 "Bei Vell. Pat. und Val. Max. . . . ist die Entwicklung so weit fortgeschritten, dass fast überall der Abl. steht; ebenso natürlich bei Petronius"); W. Kroll, *Die wissenschaftliche Syntax im lateinischen Unterricht* (Berlin 1925) 35 ("Auf den Grabin-schriften der Kaiserzeit ist . . . *vixit annis tot* das Übliche, *annos tot* das Selterene").

²Ahlberg (12) makes heavy weather of the passage from Plautus. The passages of *Adelphi* are often quoted, wrongly, as early examples of ablative for accusative; *perpetuo* and *toto* also make a difference, as Ahlberg and others observe. The section on *annis* in *TLL* 2.117.44–59, to which I owe the examples from Cicero and Livy, is a ragbag and begins with an

accusative has been attributed, as I attribute Seleucus', to his linguistic freedom or to the occasional survival in colloquial speech of earlier usages;³ but there is a better explanation. He means "at 14;" I now have the parallel I was hoping for:

*vitam vivere si cupis beatam
et votis Lachesis dabit senectam,
annos ludere te decem decebit,
viginti studiis dabis severis,
triginta pete litium tribunal*

—and so on to 100 (*Anth. Lat.* 28 Riese). Shackelton Bailey's note on line 3 in his edition (Leipzig 1982) reads "*annos . . . decem*] I.e. decem annos natum; et eodem modo *viginti* ceterosque numeros intellege."

When speakers in Plato's *Symposium* daydream of lifelong devotion, they expect it to be spiritual (183e, 192c–d). Trimalchio's master, like Trimalchio himself, exploited his authority and was surely an ἐραστής πάνδημος; such a lover οὐδὲ μόνιμός ἐστιν, ἅτε οὐδὲ μονίμου ἐρῶν πράγματος· ἅμα γὰρ τῷ τοῦ σώματος ἀνθει λήγοντι οὐπὲρ ἥρα οἴχεται ἀποπτάμενος. Even Trimalchio might have hesitated to boast that he had remained a *puer non inspeciosus* (74.8) for fourteen years. Transferred to his age, the number is just right: *secundum iura publica duodecim annus in femina et quartus decimus in puero definit pubertatis aetatem* (Macrob. *Sat.* 7.7.6). As the rest of his autobiography has only one date, and that in a fortune-teller's prediction (77.2), the removal of fourteen years leaves no gap.

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unwarranted expansion of *ann* at Plautus *Bacch.* 22 (from Charisius); cf. Ahlberg 13–14 and W. M. Lindsay, *Notae Latinae* (Cambridge 1915) 7–8.

³Ahlberg 55; H. Petersmann, *Petrone urbane Prosa* (Vienna 1977) 98–100.