

# TRIMALCHIO AS *DELICIAE*

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WHEN TRIMALCHIO'S BANQUET is resumed with new food and attendants, a particularly attractive slave-boy engages the attention of the master of the household (*Sat.* 74.8). The prolonged kiss the latter bestows, however, also arouses the jealousy of his wife. In the ugly scene which follows, the enraged Trimalchio initially threatens to exclude Fortunata from all the provisions set down for his funeral and memorial. When Habinnas and Scintilla attempt to intervene, he seeks to defend his conduct: the slave is particularly thrifty and that alone was the reason why he kissed him—for his frugality, not because of his physical attractions (75.4: *puerum basiavi frugalissimum, non propter formam, sed quia frugi est*). Indeed, Trimalchio claims, it is through thrift that he himself has got where he is today, rising from boy-slave to become his master's heir:

*sed, ut coeperam dicere, ad hanc me fortunam frugalitas mea perduxit. 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 [femina] ipsimi [domini] annos quattuordecim fui. nec turpe est quod dominus iubet. ego tamen et ipsimae [dominae] satis faciebam. scitis quid dicam: taceo, quia non sum de gloriosis. ceterum, quemadmodum di volunt, dominus in domo factus sum, et ecce cepi ipsimi cerebellum. quid multa? coheredem me Caesari fecit, et accepi patrimonium laticlavium.* (75.10–76.2)

This passage has provoked considerable scholarly interest recently, beginning with M. D. Reeve's suggestion that Trimalchio was his master's *deliciae* not "for fourteen years" (accusative of extent, a construction which would commonly be replaced by an ablative in this period), but "at fourteen."<sup>1</sup> This explanation was in turn rejected by T. Wade Richardson, who objected that such an interpretation would literally suggest that Trimalchio was his master's favourite for only one year if Reeve's argument that fourteen should be seen as indicating the age of puberty and the end of a *deliciae*'s career was to be accepted.<sup>2</sup> It would be preferable, therefore, Richardson argues, to accept the traditional interpretation that Trimalchio was his master's *deliciae* up to the age of fourteen years. Since then J. Bodel has attempted to bolster Reeve's argument by emending the text to <ad> *annos quattuordecim*, arguing that fourteen is the biological and juridical limit for boyhood set in the ancient world. The propriety of emendation of

<sup>1</sup>M. D. Reeve, "A Change in Trimalchio's Life," *Phoenix* 39 (1985) 378–379, adducing *Anth. Lat.* 15 SB. Bodel (below, n. 3) also cites *Hor. Carm.* 4.1.6 as a parallel.

<sup>2</sup>T. Wade Richardson, "Further on the Young Trimalchio," *Phoenix* 40 (1986) 201.

the passage in order to resolve the ambiguity is perhaps uncertain, but the rest of Bodel's argument is important for the understanding of Trimalchio's career and the nature of the *deliciae* in Roman society. In the passage cited above, so Bodel argues, Trimalchio is making it clear that, although he had originally come to his master's attention as a sexual plaything, he had ceased to be a *deliciae* at the onset of puberty, a maturity which has been hastened by the application of lamp-oil.<sup>3</sup> Bodel had also suggested that the use of the candelabrum as an "unusual reminder of an unsavory period of his life" links the career of Trimalchio with that of Clesippus Geganius as described by Pliny the Elder (*HN* 34.11-12).<sup>4</sup> In all these interpretations of the passage, the sexual role of Trimalchio as *deliciae* has been stressed. However, as I intend to show, this aspect of Trimalchio's career, his service as his master's "pet," can easily be exaggerated and there are other inaccuracies in previous examinations of Trimalchio's career which either call into question or require considerable adjustment to the analyses which have so far been offered.

It will be simplest to begin with a discussion of the *deliciae* in Roman society, since there is often confusion over the nature of the role.<sup>5</sup> The custom of the rich maintaining slave children for entertainment appears to be an especially Roman development, whatever its antecedents, and can first be clearly detected in Augustus' household.<sup>6</sup> The known ages of male "favourites," as represented by funerary inscriptions, vary from two years (*CIL* VI 7104) to eighteen years old (*CIL* VI 17149).<sup>7</sup> They were treated as pampered pets and the very young are sometimes depicted as disporting themselves naked but bejewelled—presumably in clement weather (*Dio* 67.15.3; *Herodian* 1.17.3). It is clear that the major function of such *deliciae* or *pueri delicati* in wealthy households was ostentatious display and, since the rich in Roman society would often deliberately control their fertility, these slave children could also serve as child-substitutes. In this fashion these "pets" satisfied an emotional need, just as small animals do in modern Western societies.<sup>8</sup> But as they grew older, their emotional development

<sup>3</sup>J. Bodel, "Trimalchio's Coming of Age," *Phoenix* 43 (1989) 72-74.

<sup>4</sup>J. Bodel, "Trimalchio and the Candelabrum," *CP* 84 (1989) 224-231.

<sup>5</sup>The most lucid discussions of the entire phenomenon of the *deliciae* (including the synonyms *delicium* and *delicatus*) are those of A. Mau (*RE* 4 [1900] 2435-38, s.v. *deliciae*) and W. J. Slater ("Pueri, turba minuta," *BICS* 21 [1974] 133-140).

<sup>6</sup>*Plut. Ant.* 59; cf. *Dio* 48.44.3. The *concupinus* of Catullus' epithalamion (61.123) may in fact be a Republican example of a *deliciae*; so too Camerus in Catullus 55 and the *pupulus* in Catullus 56. Varro (*apud Non.* 141.13) describes a contemporary luxury market at Capua for such children.

<sup>7</sup>*CIL* V 1405 may also be an eighteen-year-old *deliciae*. *AE* 1957 no. 217, a fifty-year-old *delicatus*, appears to be exceptional (cf. Seneca's *delicium*: *Ep.* 12.3).

<sup>8</sup>Examples of the emotional attachment formed between master or mistress and *deliciae* are common; apart from funerary monuments, there are also a number of examples in the commemorative poetry of Martial (e.g., 6.28, 29) and Statius (*Silvae* 2.6, 5.5).

was retarded by the necessity of their continuing to provide entertainment in their role as children. The absurdity of their condition can be seen in Petronius' own description of Trimalchio's own *deliciae*, Croesus: despite no longer being a young child (he is described as *vetulus*), the youth is transported in a hand-cart (*Sat.* 28.4) and is later shown in a ridiculous light, attempting to force-feed his puppy and petulantly starting a fight between it and his master's guard-dog (*Sat.* 64.5–13).

The physical maturing of these pampered slaves, in contrast with the emotional retardation demanded by their function in the household, would have led to an anomalous situation. Whereas before the age of ten they would be unlikely to attract sexual attentions, in their youth they would be at their most physically attractive.<sup>9</sup> Neither children nor fully adults, they might be retained as *deliciae* until the ceremonial shaving of their beard acknowledged the transition from childhood to manhood, a ritual which could occur as late as the age of twenty-one.<sup>10</sup> But sexual development meant that there was a clear ambiguity as to whether a *deliciae* was a "toy-boy" in the sense of Enid Blyton's Noddy or in the less innocent sense of "gigolo."<sup>11</sup> It would be mistaken to interpret the known cases of sexual use of favourite slaves as isolated examples of perversion.<sup>12</sup> Yet it would be equally erroneous to suggest that it was a regular step for *deliciae* to become

<sup>9</sup>Strato (*Anth. Pal.* 12.4) suggests that the normal age for an *eromenos* would be between twelve and seventeen; this is supported by Artemidorus' interpretation of the dream of having sexual intercourse with one's son: if the child is under five, it is a very bad omen, portending death for the child; if under ten, this premature sexual act is a prediction of sickness for the son; for a child over ten years, the dream is harmless (1.78). Research in modern western societies has shown that paedophiles are frequently people of low self-esteem and influence: if these findings are relevant to the ancient world, few heads of Roman households would fit such a profile.

<sup>10</sup>For the celebration for the cutting of the beard of the master's *amatus*, cf. Juv. 3.186 with Courtney's note *ad loc.*; for the practice of allowing youthful down (*lanugo*) to develop into a full beard before the first ceremonial shaving, see E. Eyben, "Antiquity's View of Puberty," *Latomus* 31 (1972) 677–697, at 692. The shaving of Trimalchio appears to have been a major event in the household if the *pyxys aurea non pusilla* in which his beard is stored (*Sat.* 29.8) dates from the original dedication of his beard. It would appear from the recorded ages of *deliciae* on inscriptions that their careers would normally end around the age of eighteen. Favourites retained past that age would appear to be retained as adult sexual partners and would receive the disapproving label of *exoleti*.

<sup>11</sup>The ambiguous sexual attraction of the *delicatus* is particularly well portrayed in Statius' consolatory poem on the death of Flavius Ursus' fifteen-year-old favourite, Philetas (*Silvae* 2.6, esp. 38 ff., with Van Dam's commentary on the passage). The more innocent role of the *delicium* as a source of amusement, a play-thing, is underlined in Plutarch's description of Octavian's slave, Sarmentos: ἦν τῶν Καίσαρος παιγνίων παιδάρion, ἃ δηλίκια Ῥωμαῖοι καλοῦσιν (*Ant.* 59.4) and Philostratus' use of the term ἄθυρμα for Herodes Atticus' Indian slave, Autolecythus (*Vit. Soph.* 1.8.3).

<sup>12</sup>So T. Wiedemann, *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire* (London 1989) 30, downplaying "occasional references to the sexual exploitation of children by pervers" and declaring that "pederasty was not acceptable to the Romans." Seneca's attack on

their masters' sexual partners.<sup>13</sup> While the frequency of uncritical references indicates that most Romans would not be shocked or even surprised by the practice,<sup>14</sup> to suggest that this was a regular custom for the head of the household to take sexual advantage of the *deliciae* ignores the master's own free choice in selecting sexual partners from among all the slaves in his household and seems to assume an almost monogamistic view of ancient sexuality. A *deliciae* who was also an *eromenos* would be only one of many potential sexual partners for the master. It is significant that in the *Satyricon* Fortunata's jealousy is not aroused by Trimalchio's official "darling," but by the prospect of a rival for her affections in the form of one of the serving slaves. Any slave, male or female, might attract the master's attentions and there would be no chance of refusing his advances.<sup>15</sup>

With this in mind, it should now be possible to analyse Trimalchio's early career as he narrates it himself. He would have entered his master's household as a slave imported from Asia at a comparatively young age. That is indicated by his account of measuring his growth daily against the candelabrum and his habit of rubbing his chin with lamp-oil to encourage the growth of a beard.<sup>16</sup> It is quite likely that Trimalchio had been

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the abuse of young slaves stems from a rejection of contemporary extravagance as much as concern for their sexual exploitation (*Ep.* 95.24: *transeo puerorum infelicitum greges, quos post transacta convivia aliae cubiculi contumeliae expectant. transeo agmina exoletorum . . .*)—cf. the remarks of K. R. Bradley on Seneca's attitude: "Seneca and Slavery," *CI Med* 37 (1986) 161–172. The suggestion by T. Wade Richardson ("Homosexuality in the *Satyricon*," *CI Med* 25 (1984) 105–127, at 121) that Trimalchio is apologizing for an inappropriate display of sexual desire, since he is too old to be chasing young boys, lacks any firm support.

<sup>13</sup>So P. Veyne in P. Ariès, G. Duby (eds.), *Histoire de la vie privée* 1 (Paris 1985) 90. The use of *puer delicatus* as a technical term for a homosexual slave, as by S. Lilja, *Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Helsinki 1983) 16 ff., appears to be the result of modern efforts to create a typology of slave characters, not a reflection of Roman usage.

<sup>14</sup>Catullus' *concupinus* (61.123–124) may be a sexual partner who is to be set aside when the master forms a permanent heterosexual relationship with his new bride, but he is also seen as a childlike figure, making no economic contribution to the household (*iners*) and playing with *nuces* (cf. Suet. Aug. 83). On the other hand, Herodian's description of Commodus' favourite, Philocommodus, sharing the emperor's bed (1.17.3) is of dubious value as evidence since the passage is modelled closely on an incident involving a *delicatus* of Domitian (Dio 67.15.3) otherwise lacking in sexual undertones.

<sup>15</sup>A. Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore 1987) 119, draws attention to the absence of any protection under the law for Roman slaves of any age against sexual abuse by their masters. R. MacMullen, "Roman Attitudes to Greek Love," *Historia* 31 (1972) 484–502, at 491, perhaps sums the matter up most succinctly: "slaves as instruments of pleasure [were] seen almost as non-beings, whether male or female."

<sup>16</sup>Bodel (above, n. 3, 73, n. 7) has sought to resuscitate a suggestion by Reinesius, published first in 1666, that the application of lamp-oil to promote the growth of hair was a known folk-remedy. In fact, Reinesius believed that Petronius was here revealing

purchased with an eye to his service as a *deliciae*, a practice reported by Statius.<sup>17</sup> The depiction of Trimalchio as a *capillatus* at the slave market in the portrayal of his career (*Sat.* 29.3) and his account of his early life of Chian luxury (*Sat.* 63.3) suggests that this was indeed the case. But it is the interpretation of the next sentence in our passage which is crucial. The main objection to Reeve's interpretation of *annos quattuordecim* as indicating that Trimalchio became his master's *deliciae* "at fourteen" is not, pace Richardson and Bodel, that it would make his career far too brief. As I shall show, to regard fourteen as the age of puberty in the Roman world is optimistic—Trimalchio could have continued to serve for several years after this as his master's pet. Rather, the major difficulty is that there is no evidence elsewhere in our sources for the assumption of the role of child-substitute at such an advanced age. The retention of a *deliciae* past the age appropriate to his function is understandable on sentimental grounds; the employment of an over-aged slave to fulfil the position is much less probable.

Bodel's emendation of the text to *ad annos quattuordecim* would have more to recommend it if indeed the age of puberty was always set at fourteen in the ancient world.<sup>18</sup> But this was not the case: we need to distinguish between legal and medical definitions of puberty and the phenomenon as actually observed in real life. Ancient authors such as Galen (6.387) knew full well that puberty could occur over a range of ages. Fourteen is only a minimum age and at Rome eighteen was the legal age for *plena pubertas*,<sup>19</sup> while Aristotle (*Hist. An.* 7.1 582a) admits full puberty as late as twenty-one. It would be easy to cite numerous sources, without coming to any clear conclusion. However, this is all really a red herring. As Eyben has shown (above, note 10, 695–696), the ages set for transition between youth and adult status have more to do with numerical symbolism based

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a special medical expertise. But the passages adduced (Alex. Trall. *Febr.* 1.2; Aetius 1.100) are hardly evidence that this was a popular belief: Alexander recommends the use of lamp-oil for the treatment of certain fevers, and while lamp-oil is an ingredient in one of Aetius' cures for the mange (*alopecia*), it would appear to be a binding-agent for such bizarre ingredients as *adepts ursinus* (bear's-grease, the active ingredient in Pliny's recommended poultice in *HN* 28.163), mouse-droppings, and sedge-froth. Clearly Trimalchio thought lamp-oil was beneficial and it is possible that it was a folk remedy to promote beard growth, but there is no real medical evidence for its use in this fashion. It is just as likely that the lamp-oil is mentioned as evidence of Trimalchio's impoverished status at the time—to obtain oil, he needed to raid the ready supply of low-grade lamp-oil in the household (cf. *Juv.* 8.35), rather than anoint himself with quality unguents.

<sup>17</sup>*Silvae* 5.5.66–69, contrasting the poet's houseborn favourite: *non ego Pharia de puppe loquaces / delicias doctum sui convicia Nili / infantem lingua nimia salibusque protervum / dilexi*.

<sup>18</sup>Macrob. *Sat.* 7.7.6 and the passages cited by Bodel (above, n. 3) 73, n. 5.

<sup>19</sup>*Inst.* 1.11.4; *Dig.* 1.7.40.1, 34.1.14.1. Censorinus (7.3) sets full puberty at seventeen.

on hebdomads than with any actual empirical data. There is no reason, then, why Trimalchio's career as *deliciae* should not have extended over fourteen years from early childhood to age seventeen or eighteen, ages well-attested for such favourites. Furthermore, I believe that there is a deeper and older misconception which underlies Bodel's emendation—this is revealed when he suggests that Trimalchio, embarrassed by being used as a sexual plaything, has used lamp-oil to produce the early growth of his beard and a premature end to his career as *deliciae*. If *ad delicias* had not been glossed in our text as *femina* and paraphrased in Burmann's commentary as *muliebria passus sum*, would it have been assumed that Trimalchio's function as a favourite was mainly sexual? This assumption probably owes more to Juvenal's depiction of the *exoletus* Naevolus (Sat. 9) than to Petronius' writing. The defensive remark by Trimalchio that what the master orders is no disgrace (*nec turpe est*) is as likely to refer to the embarrassment of being an infantile object of entertainment, held in similar regard to the dwarfs, imbeciles, or other "freaks" who could liven up wealthy Roman households,<sup>20</sup> rather than to shame at his sexual exploitation.<sup>21</sup> I would not insist that Trimalchio's relationship could not also have developed into a sexual liaison at some stage. Certainly, Trimalchio implies that his attraction to his mistress was not simply Platonic. But his initial role need not have been sexual and, if he became *ad delicias*<sup>22</sup> at a young age, it is unlikely that he would have possessed a physical attraction in his master's eyes until some years later. Furthermore, it is noticeable that Trimalchio is careful to attribute his success not to exploiting his sexuality, but to his native intelligence and thrift. These qualities, which he claims to see in the *puer speciosus*, are what led to his assuming responsibility in the household and being selected as a worthy heir to his master's fortune. The fourteen years spent as *deliciae* are thus merely incidental to his later and more responsible role in the *familia*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Domitian's pet dwarf: Suet. *Dom.* 4.2; *nani*: Suet. *Tib.* 61.6; *pumili atque distorti*: Suet. *Aug.* 83. There was a special market at Rome for *terata*: Plut. *De curios.* 10.

<sup>21</sup>Trimalchio's reaction to his master's *delicatus* in 63.3 is almost certainly not negative. He describes the slave who was perhaps his predecessor as "a pearl" (*margaritum*) and "possessing every grace" (*omnium numerum*—M. S. Smith's attempt in his Oxford commentary to show this as a wrestling metaphor and double entendre is unconvincing, given the use of the same complimentary term in 68.8 and *CIL* XIII 10027.225). Only the corrupt *caccitus* in the text (where Rönsh's conjecture *zacritus* makes good sense) causes any ambiguity.

<sup>22</sup>*ad delicias* is normally explained as *ad* + accusative of purpose; this is plausible, but the particular use of the construction in such examples as *ad valetudinem* (*CIL* VI 9085) and *ad manum* (*CIL* VI 9523, for the more usual *a manu*) suggests that Trimalchio is giving his task a semi-official status in his master's household.

<sup>23</sup>Bodel objects that the number fourteen must be more than indicating the extent of service, an interpretation which he describes as inept. Yet, given the Romans' tendency

There now only needs to be assessed the suggestion of Münzer, revived by Bodel, that Trimalchio's career should be seen as an echo of that of Clesippus Geganius.<sup>24</sup> The history of Clesippus is narrated by Pliny the Elder (*HN* 34.11–12) as an anecdote popularly associated with Corinthian lamps. Although Pliny's account is written in a confused style, it was satisfactorily elucidated by Gronovius.<sup>25</sup> A valuable Corinthian candelabrum was being sold by auction and to spice up the bidding the auctioneer threw into the lot a slave called Clesippus. This man was a hunchback who had been working as a fuller. He would have been hideous in smell (from the fuller's trade) and in appearance, so the "sweetener" for the buyer of the lamp must have been regarded as something of a joke.<sup>26</sup> Gegania, a lady from one of Rome's oldest patrician families, bought the candelabrum nevertheless and Clesippus as well. When exhibiting the lamp to her friends she also had Clesippus displayed naked. While this may have evoked revulsion from her guests, it awoke in the mistress, Pliny informs us, an unnatural passion. Clesippus became her partner in bed, then in marriage, and, after her death, her heir. While alive, he revered the lamp which had led to his good fortune, and when he died, his magnificent funeral monument remained as testimony to Gegania's social disgrace.

Bodel (above, note 4, 225) suggests that "when Petronius had Trimalchio tell his tale of the lampstand, he expected his readers to remember the other, more famous story associated with Corinthian lampstands." On examination, however, the parallels are not particularly close. In the *Satyricon*, Trimalchio draws attention to a lampstand to indicate that he was once a small boy in the household who had later grown into a man. There is no necessity to associate the lamp with any sexual incident in Trimalchio's life as Bodel does through his suggestion that the application of lamp-oil was the *deliciae*'s attempt to escape an unsavoury relationship with his master.

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to view the development of their lives as occurring in groups of seven years, it is not unreasonable for Trimalchio to treat his service through boyhood and youth as extending over two hebdomads. As there is good evidence that many in the ancient world had only an approximate knowledge of their own ages (R. Duncan-Jones, "Age-Rounding, Illiteracy and Social Differentiation in the Roman Empire," *Chiron* 7 [1977] 333–353; *Structure and Scale in the Roman Economy* [Cambridge 1990] 79–92), the figure need not exactly correspond with precise dates in his life. After all, Petronius is seeking verisimilitude rather than the construction of the exact social history of his most famous freedman character. Trimalchio's own almost neurotic insistence on precise control of time (*Sat.* 26.9: *lautissimus homo, horologium in triclinio et bucinatorum habet subornatum, ut subinde sciat quantum de vita perdidit*) hardly inspires confidence in his actual awareness of the periods of his life.

<sup>24</sup> Münzer tentatively suggested a free adaptation of the history of Clesippus by Petronius in his article in *RE* 7 (1910) 928, s.v. *Geganius* (3).

<sup>25</sup> J. F. Gronovius, *De sestertiis* (Leiden 1691) 310–311.

<sup>26</sup> For a similar example of auctioneer's "humour," see *Apul. Met.* 8.23–25.

This "relationship," as has been shown, is very much open to question. Furthermore, Trimalchio's lamp need not even have been bronze, let alone Corinthian—one would expect Petronius' egotistical host to mention explicitly this property if the lamp was so valuable.<sup>27</sup> Clesippus, on the other hand, would have had good reason to regard with particular affection the lamp with which he was associated in the auction. Such Corinthian ware probably featured a decorative figure which could be detached from the lamp-stand—this might even have been a Silenus which the hunch-backed Clesippus could regard as his *genius*.<sup>28</sup> His worship of his "magic lamp" is thus quite different to the attitude shown by Trimalchio's passing reference to his candelabrum. The paths to success of the two are also quite different. While Trimalchio insists that it was his thrift and intelligence which impressed his master and led to his being adopted as heir, in Pliny's account there is displayed Roman upper-class hostility to a slave who has improved his status by marriage.<sup>29</sup> As it is inconceivable, in Pliny's judgment, that a noble Roman lady should marry a slave for any sound or logical reason, there can be no explanation for the woman's choice other than uncontrolled lust. In fact, Gegania may have made a rational decision in choosing a partner so far her social inferior that she would retain effective control over her lifestyle and property, but such an account of her actions would not have appealed to male sensibilities at Rome.<sup>30</sup> There are indeed some interesting social aspirations and a concern for commemoration which are shared by Clesippus and Trimalchio, as Bodet has indicated, but perhaps the parallels are no more than might be expected between any two extremely wealthy freedmen, both exempt from the obligations to patrons so customary in Roman society. Indeed, a closer parallel for Clesippus in

<sup>27</sup>For the various types of candelabra in the ancient world, including bronze, iron, wood, and marble, see Daremberg-Saglio 869–875, s.v. *candelabrum* (E. Saglio). There might have been a further description of the lamp in the lacunose section of *Sat.* 73.5, where the furnishings of the dining room are noted, but it is more likely that in *Sat.* 75.10 Trimalchio is drawing attention to an object not previously mentioned.

<sup>28</sup>Detachable figures: D. Emanuele, "Aes Corinthium: Fact, Fiction, and Fate," *Phoenix* 43 (1989) 347–358, at 350. Sileni on candelabra: Daremberg-Saglio, *loc. cit.*, nos. 1087–88.

<sup>29</sup>In the imperial period, attempts were made to outlaw or discourage such trans-status alliances, ranging from the Augustan *Lex Julia et Papia* (*Dig.* 23.2.44) and the *SC Claudianum* of A.D. 52 (Gaius *Inst.* 1.84; Tac. *Ann.* 12.53) to the Novels of Anthemius (1, A.D. 468). Ulpian expresses a horror at such unions similar to Pliny's, when he opines that a patroness who is so degraded (*ignobilis*) that she thinks marriage with her freedman is honourable should be granted her perverse wish (*Dig.* 23.2.13).

<sup>30</sup>There is a similar inability to comprehend a woman's attempt to control her own destiny when Messalina's divorce of Claudius is regarded as evidence of an unbalanced mentality, a portrayal which develops into Juvenal's depiction of the imperial whore: C. Ehrhardt, "Messalina and the Succession to Claudius," *Antichthon* 12 (1978) 51–77; Juv. 6.115–132.



many respects may be Remmius Palaemon, who is also noted for his dubious sexual practices and whose revolutionary methods in viticulture are similarly derided by Pliny, who describes them as deriving from bravado rather than careful reasoning.<sup>31</sup>

To summarise, Trimalchio's depiction of his career in his former master's household stresses his continuous advancement from an early age through his intellectual talents, rather than by sexual attractiveness. Whether this was entirely true may be debated, but Trimalchio himself would certainly not have wished to be associated with Clesippus Geganius as depicted by Pliny the Elder. Given that any sexual aspect of his role as *deliciae* is downplayed, the traditional text of *Satyricon* 75.11 and the interpretation that Trimalchio was his master's "pet" for fourteen years needs to be retained.

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<sup>31</sup>Suet. *Gram.* 23; Pliny *HN* 14.49–50: *adgressus excolere non virtute animi, sed vanitate.*