

TRIMALCHIO'S ASTROLOGY:  
NAIVE SUPERSTITIONS OR INTENTIONAL JOKES?  
(PETR. *SAT.* 35. 1–5; 39. 5–12)\*

*Manibus patris*

1. Introduction

Encolpius – ironic, but at the same time apparently intrigued by the abundant *lautitiae* of Trimalchio's feast – willingly records every single detail of this extraordinary happening. His narration is a remarkably faithful representation of manners of speech, clothes, customs, interiors, etc. This 'realism' marks the *Cena Trimalchionis* out of Petronius' extant fragments and of the whole ancient literature. Apart from interest in everyday life of the host's exotic milieu, the narrator's good eye for detail also serves literary purposes: it lends some traits to Trimalchio's portrait, stressing his vanity, ignorance, bad manners and bad taste – but at the same time his gaiety, good nature, generosity and a strong, indeed headstrong, desire to amuse and amaze his guests.

The scene unfolding around the Zodiac dish (Petr. 35. 1–5; 39. 5–13) puzzles interpreters both in general and in particular. As often is the case, we are running a risk of hermeneutical *circulus vitiosus*: proper understanding of the whole scene depends upon interpreting individual astrological forecasts made by Trimalchio, which in turn are often explained on the ground of understanding his monologue as a whole. In this case, induction is to be preferred to deduction: to get the point of Trimalchio's chattering on the Zodiac, one should clarify the associations between zodiacal signs and dishes offered in ch. 35, and interpret Trimalchio's astrological forecasts for each sign in ch. 39.

The text in question is in many respects dubious and obscure, despite numerous emendations and interpretations.<sup>1</sup> Still, in my opinion, scholars

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\* My recent article "*In Virgine mulieres, fugitivi et compediti* (Petr. *Sat.* 39. 9)", *Hyperboreus* 16/17 (2010–2011) 121–130 anticipates some of the arguments and conclusions presented here. NB! To avoid confusing W. Gundel with his son, on p. 122 n. 22 read "H. G. Gundel" instead of "idem"; the correct reference for the title passage should be 39. 10. I am heartily thankful to Dr. Natalie Tchernetska for correcting the English of both articles.

<sup>1</sup> See G. L. Schmeling, J. H. Stuckey, *A Bibliography on Petronius* (Leiden 1977) 234 (index s. v. *Astrology*); M. S. Smith, "A Bibliography of Petronius (1945–1982)",

have achieved enough success in interpreting separate passages to enable us to understand the whole scene.

Of the two main studies devoted to astrological passages in the *Cena* I find the one by S. Eriksson<sup>2</sup> helpful, sound and astute. On the contrary, the thesis published by J. de Vreese,<sup>3</sup> though based upon extensive research in astrological writings, in most cases seems to miss the mark. It has been pointed out that most of the parallels cited by him refer not to the whole sign, but to particular days (which amount to 30 in each sign), and that Trimalchio is not likely to be concerned with scientific astrology.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, almost all extensive commentaries on the *Cena* after L. Friedlaender,<sup>5</sup> including those of M. S. Smith<sup>6</sup> and G. Schmeling,<sup>7</sup> are strongly influenced by de Vreese and ignore Eriksson's critique of him.<sup>8</sup>

In the present article I intend (1) to summarize and estimate opinions on single astrological passages of the *Cena*; and (2) to give some considerations to Trimalchio's astrological monologue as a whole. The latter should be considered from the following standpoint. Hitherto it has been interpreted (a) as reflecting 'professional' astrology (de Vreese);<sup>9</sup> (b) as popular or, mostly, individual superstitions mocked at by Petronius (Eriksson); and (c) as intentional jokes prepared by Trimalchio to amuse his guests.<sup>10</sup> Commentaries characterize the whole monologue rather vaguely and interpret some forecasts as jokes, some as 'professional' or popular astrology. The title question of this article has not yet been put point-blank.

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*ANRW* II. 32. 3 (1985) 1656; G. Vannini, "Petronius 1975–2004: bilancio critico e nuove proposte", *Lustrum* 49 (2007) 142–145.

<sup>2</sup> S. Eriksson, *Wochentagsgötter, Mond und Tierkreis: Laienastrologie in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia* 3 (Stockholm 1956) 38–88 (Kap. II: "Die Astrologie bei Petron").

<sup>3</sup> J. G. W. M. de Vreese, *Petron 39 und die Astrologie* (Amsterdam 1927).

<sup>4</sup> M. Korenjak, "In piscibus obsonatores et rhetores: Petr. 39. 13", *PCPhS* 52 (2006) 134; cf. similar objections of Eriksson (n. 2) 80 and n. 127 below.

<sup>5</sup> L. Friedlaender (ed., tr., comm.), *Petronii Cena Trimalchionis* (Leipzig 21906).

<sup>6</sup> M. S. Smith (ed., comm.), *Petronius, Cena Trimalchionis* (Oxford 1975).

<sup>7</sup> G. Schmeling, *A Commentary on the Satyrice of Petronius* (Oxford 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Keyer (n. \*) 127 n. 21; 130 and n. 128 below.

<sup>9</sup> E. g., Smith (n. 6) 89 stresses that Trimalchio's "pedantic accuracy in astrology" is "contrasted with his striking ignorance of literature, history, etc."

<sup>10</sup> This seems to be the view of F. A. Todd, "Some *cucurbitaceae* in Latin Literature", *CQ* 37 (1943) 101: "The whole exposition, of course, is a travesty of popular astrology, with a joke in every item". I assume that, unlike Eriksson, he attributes the jokes to Trimalchio and considers them to be intentional. W. T. Avery, "More Petroniana", *Hermes* 107 (1979) 118 likens the difficulties of astrological passages to those of the *apophoreta* in ch. 56, which suggests similar interpretation of Trimalchio's monologue.

It is especially important to draw the line between (b) and (c): they both admit humour in Trimalchio's forecasts, but for Eriksson it is the humour of Petronius, who is satirizing astrology; Trimalchio in this case being an unsuspecting adherent and imitator of astrology, who does not even realize that his horoscopes are puns. If, on the contrary, we assume that these puns are consciously made by Trimalchio, this would exclude naivety and superstition. A combination of superstitious rubbish and elaborate puns is psychologically unconvincing and unrealistic: if one is making puns at casting horoscopes, he cannot take his own words seriously.

If, therefore, some of Trimalchio's forecasts seem to be real astrological beliefs or sincere attempts to imitate astrology and some, on the contrary, look like intricate and intentional puns, only one choice is given: either at one side or at the other similarities must be regarded as coincidental and deceptive.

In view of numerous hermeneutical difficulties, it is important for the general analysis of the scene to rely on the passages with apparently plausible interpretation and to take into account the context of the *Cena*.

## 2. Astronomy and Gastronomy: Food for Reflection<sup>11</sup>

Characters and readers of *Cena Trimalchionis* encounter zodiacal signs twice: first when during the dinner an original Zodiac dish with surprisingly meager snacks is brought in (35. 1: *laudationem ferculum est insecutum plane non pro expectatione magnum; novitas tamen omnium convertit oculos...*);<sup>12</sup> secondly when Trimalchio uses the opportunity of mentioning the dish to specify all signs of Zodiac in a rather extended speech (39. 3 sqq.).

On each sign of Zodiac depicted on the round dish its anonymous arranger disposed food appropriate for the subject (35. 2: *...proprium convenientemque materiae structor imposuerat cibum*).<sup>13</sup> As we shall see, sometimes, though not always, the food is paralleled with Trimalchio's horoscopes for the sign in ch. 39.

<sup>11</sup> References to the text follow Fr. Buecheler's *editio minor* augmented by W. Heraeus: *Petronii Saturae et liber Priapeorum* (Berlin 1922). I cannot agree with E. Dobroiu ("Pour une édition du Satiricon, 2-me série", *Studii clasice* 11 [1969] 115–118), who defends the vulgarisms transmitted in *codex Traguriensis* (H) in 35, 2–5 (*bubulae frustrum, ficum Africanum, sciribil(l)ita, cicer aretinum*) as exclamations of Encolpius' illiterate table companions tacitly cited by him in his list of snacks.

<sup>12</sup> For a reconstruction of repositorium see E. S. P. Ricotti, "Il ferculum dello Zodiaco", *Rendic. della Pont. Accad. rom. di arch.* 55–56 (1982–1984) 245–264.

<sup>13</sup> E. Marmorale (ed., comm.), *Petronii Arbitri Cena Trimalchionis* (Firenze 1961) 25 rightly insists that *materiae* depends on *convenientem*, not on *structor*; thus also Friedlaender's translation (n. 5) 99.

[35. 3] *super arietem cicer arietinum* – according to Pliny *NH* 18. 12, it was called so because its peas resemble a ram's head. Whether this etymology is in fact correct, is irrelevant for the present discussion.

*super taurum bubulae frustum* – here, as is the case with Pisces, a simple identity is used.

*super geminos testiculos ac rienes* – kids and testicles are coupled with Gemini as *pair* organs; besides, Latin *gemini* and Greek δίδυμοι could be substantivized in the sense of 'testicles'.<sup>14</sup>

*super cancrum coronam* – this choice is explained by Trimalchio himself in 39. 8. De Vreese's idea that it hints at the constellation *Corona (borealis)*, which sets with the rising of Cancer, being its paranatellon,<sup>15</sup> is highly implausible, as this allusion would hardly be grasped and appreciated even by the most erudite of his guests.

*super leonem ficum Africanam* – self-evident geographical unity suffices to couple figs with Leo,<sup>16</sup> so it is hardly necessary to lay stress on the fact that figs ripen just in the middle of summer.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See, e. g., Th. Birt, "Zu Catull und Petron", *RhM* 51 (1896) 468–470 (examples of this usage are collected to defend *gemelli* = 'testicles' in Catull. 57. 6: *morbosi pariter gemelli utrique*, with comma deleted and *utrique* taken as dative); D. Sedley, "Pythagoras the Grammar Teacher and Didymon the Adulterer", *Hyperboreus* 4 (1998) 132–135.

<sup>15</sup> De Vreese (n. 3) 158–164; 238, justly objected to by Eriksson (n. 2) 82–83. The same idea had been advanced by J. Weitz in P. Burmann (Sen.) (ed.), *T. Petronii Arbitri Satyricon quae supersunt...* (Amsterdam 1743) I, 199 and J. A. G. de Salas, *ibid.* II, 149. Surprisingly, it was approved in a rather cold review of de Vreese by W. Kroll, *BPhW* 47 (1927) 905.

<sup>16</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 47 observes that *africanae* could be used as a substantive in the sense of 'lions' (he refers to *ThLL* I, col. 1261–1262). Since for designating different kinds of figs such absolute adjectives are very typical (e. g., *carica*, *caunea*), the association would then be based on homonymy, as is the case with Gemini. The idea is not new: G. Erhard (Melchior Goldast) apud Burmann (n. 15) I, 200 has even concluded from this passage that *africanae* used absolutely refer exclusively to lions. However, already Burmann rightly objected to him that *africanae* has as well been applied to panthers and tigers. In fact, it is difficult to say, what species of cats were implied by (*ferae* or *bestiae*) *africanae* and Λιβυκὰ θηρία; probably, it was a general term for large cats, including lions (cf., e. g., Cic. *Fam.* 8. 9. 3: *pantheras ... et alias africanas*; Plin. *NH* 36. 40 *accidit ei, cum in navalibus ubi ferae Africanae erant per caveam intuens leonem caelaret, ut ex alia cavea panthera erumperet*). Eriksson's assumption is thus questionable, but not disproved. For survey of historical evidence on the subject see G. Jennison, *Animals for Show and Pleasure in Ancient Rome* (Manchester 1937) 42–82; J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (London 1973) 17; 21; 82.

<sup>17</sup> As does Friedlaender (n. 5) 238 and many others.

*super virginem steriliculam* – Scaliger’s *codex Leidensis* (L) and some early editions read *stericulam*, which has been explained as derived from ὑστέρα or ὑστερικά (μέρη) by aphaeresis of the first vowel (a sow’s womb).<sup>18</sup> *Steriliculam*, the reading of *codex Traguriensis* (H), was plausibly defended by Scheffer as diminutive from (*vulva*) *sterilis*, a womb of a saw that has not yet farrowed (cf. Mart. 13. 56. 1: *vulva de virgine porca*).<sup>19</sup> This perfectly suits for Virgo and was justly supported by Buecheler, Heraeus<sup>20</sup> and most of the commentaries.<sup>21</sup>

[35. 4] *super libram stateram, in cuius altera parte scriblita erat, in altera placenta* – this solution is often blamed as too flat, but what could be a truly elegant choice?<sup>22</sup>

*super scorpionem pisciculum marinum* – it is very natural to suggest that fish of the same name was placed on Scorpio: hence Scheffer’s <*scorpionem*> and Studer’s <σκορπίον> or <scorpium>. The ‘scorpion-fish’ (edible according to Athen. 7. 320 d–e, cf. Plin. *NH* 32. 151) could have easily disappeared by haplography.<sup>23</sup> Some editors bracket the words

<sup>18</sup> Starting with Reinesius in Burmann’s edition (n. 15) I, 200–201.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* It is important that sometimes *sterilis* is used as a substantive, e. g., *ALI* 199 Riese 90: *Me sterilem Niobe, linguam Philomela roga(n)t me*; Cels. 2. 24. 2: *...vulvae sterilesque*; Apic. 7. 258: *vulvae et steriles*. Therefore Reinesius, arguing against Scheffer, wrongly objected to the ellipsis of *vulva*.

<sup>20</sup> W. Heraeus, *Kleine Schriften* (Heidelberg 1937) 102–103; cf. 26 n. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Exceptions are G. Alessio, *Hapax legomena ed altre cruces in Petronio* (Napoli 1960–1961) 336–337, who hesitates between the two readings, and C. Pellegrino (ed., comm.), *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon* (Roma 1975) 71, who, following Alessio, marks *steriliculam* with a crux.

<sup>22</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 69 sees here a blatant astrological naivety: “Die Wage mit den Kuchen könnte vortrefflich als ein Symbol für Trimalchios Astrologie dienen. Er stellt die zwei Kuchen in astrologischen Zusammenheit mit der himmlischen Wage nur aus dem Grunde, dass sie die runde Form der Wagschalen haben!” I am not sure that the form of the cakes is relevant here, but above all I strongly doubt that the choice of snacks displays any astrological conceptions: it can simply be a matter of culinary design!

<sup>23</sup> Smith (n. 6) 75–76 acknowledges *pisciculum marinum* as a gloss and postulates a lacuna after *scorpionem* (followed by K. Müller, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon reliquiae*, [Munich–Leipzig 42003] 28), but in his opinion “*super scorpionem scorpionem* would be too inane even for this context”; Smith also finds difficulty in diminutive *pisciculum* applied to a scorpion-fish and thinks of “some smaller scorpion-like fish”. The latter is hardly correct, since (1) diminutive does not necessarily denote something of a smaller size; besides, *pisciculus* is used by Petronius in 3. 4, as was noticed by J. Öberg (ed.), *Petronius, a new critical edition* (Stockholm 1999) 9, who suggests *super Scorpionem pisciculum <illum> marinum*; (2) a *rascasse*, which is usually

*pisciculum marinum* (or at least one of them) as a gloss, which is plausible: the clarification is trivial and the following repetition (*locustam*) *marinam* would lack stylistic elegance.<sup>24</sup>

*super sagittarium oclopetam*<sup>25</sup> – I do not know if any other hapax in ancient literature has given rise to so many explanations as *oclopetam*: a synopsis of all emendations and interpretations given, often ingenious, would be bulky enough for a small monograph,<sup>26</sup> yet a reliable decision has not been attained.<sup>27</sup> The root *oclo-* might indeed suit for Sagittarius in view of the following 39. 11.

*super capricornum locustam marinam*<sup>28</sup> – the words *in quo cornua erant* added after *capricornum* in H are an obvious gloss. Spiny lobster's

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identified with σκορπίος, is indeed small: see D'Arcy W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Fishes* (London 1947) 245–246; E. de Saint-Denis, *Le vocabulaire des animaux marins en latin classique* (Paris 1947) 103–104.

<sup>24</sup> St. Gaselee (*A Collotype Reproduction of that portion of Codex Paris. 7989...* [Cambridge 1915] 17–18; idem, “Petroniana”, *CQ* 38 [1944] 77), deleting *pisciculum marinum* as a gloss, substitutes it not with scorpion-fish, but with *locustam*, which should hint at *Locusta* (*Lucusta*), the famous poisoner of Nero's reign. This transposition of *locusta* from Capricorn to Scorpio, which compels to further changes in the text for Capricorn (Gaselee himself proposed inedible *capri cornua*, the reading of L for *capricornum*), found some support among other scholars, see n. 28.

<sup>25</sup> *oclopetam* H, *odopetam* L; “*odopetam* H” in Pellegrino's apparatus ([n. 21] 71) must be a misprint.

<sup>26</sup> For bibliography see Buecheler, *Kl. Schr.* (n. 27) III, 303, n.\*; H. Stubbe, *Die Verseinlagen im Petron* (Leipzig 1933) 160; Heraeus [n. 20] 98–100 n. 3; Schmeling, Stuckey (n. 1) 237 (index s. v.); Smith (n. 1) 1656, Vannini (n. 1) 142–143.

<sup>27</sup> Unless it is an odd coincidence, important for the hapax is the racehorse's name *Oclopecta* (A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* [Paris 1904] 384; 546 [index s. v.]), which has been derived from ὄπλοπαίκτης (‘armiluser’) by J. Vendryès (“*Oclopecta*”, *MSL* 13 [1904] 231) and from *oculum* πῆξι by Buecheler (“Eine Verbesserung Petrons”, *RhM* 58 [1903] 624–626 = *Kleine Schriften* [Berlin 1915–30] III, 303–306), who took it to designate an unknown fish or shell-fish, like *op(h)thalmias* or *oculata*. Buecheler argued for a hybrid, because in Latin compounds connecting vowel should normally be *-i-*, not *-o-*, but *oclo-* has also been explained as ablative (A. Nehring, “Parerga zur lateinischen Wortforschung”, *Glotta* 17 [1929] 127–134, who refers to *cornupeta*).

<sup>28</sup> Gaselee's transposition of *locusta* to Scorpio (n. 24) is therefore unnecessary, however witty it might seem to have *Locusta*'s ‘namesake’ on the sign of *venenarii et percussores* (39. 11). Still, it was supported by K. F. C. Rose and J. P. Sullivan (“Trimalchio's Zodiac Dish (Petronius, *Sat.* 35. 1–5)”, *CQ* 18 [1968] 180–184; they put forward resemblance between scorpions and lobsters without mentioning the allusion to *Locusta*) and B. Baldwin (“A Note on Trimalchio's Zodiac Dish”, *CQ* 20 [1970] 364, laying stress on *Locusta*; that the analogy with *Locusta* had already been proposed by Gaselee escaped him, as T. W. Richardson notes: “A Further Note on Trimalchio's Zodiac Dish”, *CQ* 22 [1972] 149). S. J. Bastomsky (“Petronius,

long antennae were called *cornua*, which provided an uncommon analogy with Capricorn (cf. Plin. *NH* 9. 95: *cornibus inter se dimicant*; Arist. *HA* 590 b 28–31; Ael. *HA* 9. 25).<sup>29</sup>

*super aquarium anserem* – Two explanations have been offered: (a) epithet *aquaticus* (*aquatilis*) applied to geese, ducks and other waterfowl (Plin. *NH* 8. 101; 10. 29; cf. *Priap.* 61. 11: *aquosus anser*); (b) geese’s gagging as portending bad weather and storms (Theophr. *De sign.* 39, Arat. 1021; cf. Plin. *NH* 18. 363). The first one, flat as it might seem, is safer, while the connection between geese and water based on weather saying about storm, in particular rain, is far-fetched; besides, word associations are more typical for Trimalchio’s allusions to Zodiac.<sup>30</sup>

*super pisces duos mullos* – as is the case with Taurus, this choice is straightforward: two fishes represent the common depiction of the sign.

So, the main principles of the Zodiac dish are play on words, metonymy and metaphorical associations of different complexity.

Gaselee and de Vreese<sup>31</sup> believed the choice of ‘Zodiac snacks’ to be strongly connected with the following astrological forecasts, which seems disputable. Notable are parallels between *testiculi* and *colei* (39. 7); spiny lobster’s *cornua* and *quibus cornua nascuntur* (39. 12); and, possibly, also between *cicer arietinum* and the obscure *arietilli* (39. 5, if this emendation is correct) as well as between the obscure *oclopeta* and *strabones* (39. 11).

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Satyricon 35, 4: Some Possible Emendations”, *Emerita* 37 [1969] 367–370) and Carmela Picheca (“Petronio, *Sat.* 35, 4”, *Atene e Roma* 22 [1977] 53) rightly dismissed the transposition and consequential emendations as unnecessary. Smith (n. 6) 76 is right that Rose and Sullivan have little ground to assume that both roots of Capricorn must have been played upon (they suggest *super Capricornum caprum* [= κάπρον, ‘boar-fish’] *et cornutam*).

<sup>29</sup> This escaped Rose and Sullivan, the lack of connection between lobster and Capricorn being for them an argument for the transposition of *locusta*. The correct explanation with reference to Pliny, given by Eriksson (n. 2) 48 and Bastomsky (n. 28), had already been that of older scholars: see Burmann’s edition (n. 15) I, 203–204. Smith (n. 6) 76 wrongly identified *cornua* with claws: a langouste (spiny lobster), as opposed to a usual ‘lobster’, has long spiny antennae and no claws at all (*cornua* is naturally applied to long objects *on the head*, not to the claws).

<sup>30</sup> A Russian reader would recall the popular saying *как с гуся вода* (lit. ‘like water off a goose’), which corresponds to Eng. *like water off a duck’s (goose’s) back* and similar expressions in other languages. An expression like this, had it been attested in antiquity, would provide a more subtle allusion than the simple fact that geese like water; cf. ὄνος ὕεται (Cephisodor. fr. 1; Cratin. fr. 56 K.–A. [Phot. *Lex.* 337. 19 Porson = *Suid.* ο 394]).

<sup>31</sup> Gaselee, *A Coll. Repr.* (n. 24) 35; de Vreese (n. 3) *passim*.

These parallels could be regarded as hints designed to clarify the analogy of forecasts with Gemini, Capricorn, Aries and Sagittarius respectively, but none the worse as coincidences, which could be attributed to mere chance or to the limitedness of human imagination. The description of Aquarius and Lion has nothing in common with the food chosen; other correspondences are confined to the name of the sign itself. In any way, as parallels between food and forecasts are not systematically drawn, I would not push them forward too far.

Does the zodiacal dish display Trimalchio's superstition and belief in astrology? For Eriksson it shows Trimalchio's astronomic ignorance: having seen the parts of human body attributed to different signs of Zodiac (the so-called μελοθεσία), he "was struck by the brilliant idea: the foodstuffs, the most important thing in life, must also be related to stars".<sup>32</sup> According to Eriksson, this invention of Trimalchio was designed by Petronius as satirizing the astrologers' tendency to link all natural phenomena (land, plants and minerals) with stars.<sup>33</sup>

Eriksson came to this idea in sharp controversy with de Vreese, who tried to interpret Trimalchio's zodiacal forecasts as echoes of real astrological conceptions and pored over numerous astrological writings in search for parallels;<sup>34</sup> rightly criticizing him for obvious lack of humour and overestimating Trimalchio's intellectual abilities, Eriksson draws a distinction between popular ('Laienastrologie') and 'professional' astrology. This distinction is legitimate, and it is very probable that Petronius was ironical about astrology, but there are no reasons to explain the Zodiac dish by postulating of such a peculiar, indeed unparalleled, way of Trimalchio's thought.

A much simpler explanation is that the Zodiac dish itself, like other dishes in the *Cena*, was no more than a game, a kind of exquisite culinary design aimed at laying the table in the most manifold, resourceful and

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<sup>32</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 70; cf. 77–78. Commenting on Manilius' melothetic passages and depictions of human body parts linked with zodiacal signs, W. Gundel referred to Trimalchio's dish as ascribing signs of Zodiac to different "animals and plants" ("Textkritische und exegetische Bemerkungen zu Manilius", *Philologus* 81 [1925] 309 n. 1; F. Boll, C. Bezold, W. Gundel, *Sternglaube und Sterndeutung: Die Geschichte und das Wesen der Astrologie* [Leipzig – Berlin 41931] 137). Eriksson (n. 2.) 77 rightly specifies that these are not animals and plants, but dishes. For Eriksson this difference illustrates the absurdity of Trimalchio's dish (which, in his opinion, was indeed inspired by melothetic depictions). Still, I cannot see why the distribution of foods on zodiacal signs is to be derived from any astrological belief rather than from mere fun; cf. n. 22 above.

<sup>33</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 77.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. n. 8 above and n. 127–128 below.

artistic manner. Astrology being in fashion, it was a good way to show off the party planner's high class. Of course, Trimalchio's further illiterate comments, pretending to show his being an expert in astronomy, are in comic contrast with any idea of refinement, just like his phrase-mongering on history and mythology (48. 7; 50. 5 – 52. 3; 59. 3–6), but it gives no ground for blaming the design of the dishes, whether it was developed by Trimalchio himself or by his anonymous chief cook.

Already Pithoeus<sup>35</sup> noticed that the astronomical dish is paralleled in Alexis apud Athen. 2. 60 a–b (fr. 263 K.–A. 5–10):

...ἀλλὰ παρετέθη  
 ὑπερηφάνως ὄζουσα τῶν Ὠρῶν λοπάς,  
 τὸ τοῦ πόλου τοῦ παντὸς ἡμισφαίριον·  
 ἅπαντ' ἐνήν τὰ κεῖ γὰρ ἐν ταύτῃ καλά,  
 ἰχθῦς, ἔριφοι, διέτρεχε τούτων σκορπίος,  
 ὑπέφαινεν ῥῶν ἡμίτομα τοὺς ἀστέρας.

Unlike most commentaries, Eriksson does not consider this parallel relevant on the ground that “in Alexis it is not talked of astrology and the dish has no astrological depictions of constellations.”<sup>36</sup> Still, the dish described in Alexis is also a model of the stellar sky (even though of the northern hemisphere only), on which some constellations are represented – there could well have been others apart from Pisces, the ‘Kids’<sup>37</sup> and Scorpio<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Apud Burmann (n. 15) I, 198.

<sup>36</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 78. It is not clear, whether the figures of these constellations were molded of food or depicted on it or symbolized by comestibles, as W. G. Arnott believes (*Alexis. The Fragments: A Commentary* [Cambridge 1996] 732). One would naturally think of two fishes for Pisces and a ‘scorpion-fish’ for Scorpio, but ἔριφοι is problematic in this context. Maybe, constellations of the dish were partly symbolized and partly depicted.

<sup>37</sup> Note, that the Kids is not a zodiacal constellation, so that Arnott (n. 36) even admits the possibility of confusion with Capricorn, falsely ascribing this view to H. G. Gundel (“Zodiakos”, *RE* 10A [1972] 602–603); quite the contrary, Gundel defends ἔριφοι = ‘Haedi’ against K. Kerényi, who had suggested confusion with Aries (“Die religionsgeschichtliche Einordnung des Diskos von Brindisi”, *Röm. Mitt.* 70 [1963] 95; Gundel referred to vol. 69 by mistake). Schmeling (n. 7) 127 translates ἔριφοι as “Capricorn” without comment.

<sup>38</sup> διέτρεχε can also give historians of astronomy cause for discussions unless they get more indulgent to cooks and admit that the disposition of culinary ‘constellations’ on the dish did not necessarily have to be matched with celestial map. In any way, P. Wouilleumier’s assumption (“Les disques de Tarente”, *RA* 35 [1932] 60 n. 6) that “the importance given (here) to Scorpio seems to imply the absence of Libra” (i. e., with Scorpion’s claws instead) is unfounded.

mentioned in the text. It is this symbolism in gastronomy that the passages of Petronius and Alexis have in common.<sup>39</sup>

That in the extant fragment of Alexis astrology is not being talked of only proves that culinary symbolism of this kind could be purely ornamental. Likewise, the arrangement of snacks on the Zodiac signs in the *Cena* resulted neither from superstitious belief in astrology nor from any common or singular astrological conceptions, but from the host's pursuit of refinement and his love for punning riddles<sup>40</sup> and culinary stunts, as well as other dishes in the *Cena*. Suffice it to mention the dish playfully concealed beneath the Zodiac one, which included a winged Pegasus-hare and the four Marsyases with wine-skins pouring *garum* on the 'swimming' fishes – and was also accompanied by puns (35. 7: *hoc est ius cenae*<sup>41</sup> and 36. 5, 7: *Carpe! Carpe!*); the 'emancipated' boar (*aper pilleatus*) in 40. 3; a rollicking play on words at the handout of presents in 56. 8–9; and a helmeted boiled calf hacked up by the 'furious Ajax' in 59. 6–7.

"*Nihil sine ratione facio*" Trimalchio proudly remarks on the Zodiac dish explained as a model of the universe in 39. 14. This pragmatic interpretation of a philosophical motto (cf., e. g., Sen. *De benef.* 4. 10. 2), can be applied to the whole of his feast, a carefully planned and well-rehearsed performance.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Smith's conclusion (n. 6) 74–75 that since an astrological dish had already been attested in Alexis, Trimalchio's dish lacks originality, which is meant "to emphasize the pretentiousness of Trimalchio's dish even more than Encolpius' naivety", is too rash. This accords well with his conception of Encolpius as an incompetent narrator (cf. *ibid.* xx with n. 2), but after all, Encolpius' remark on the novelty of the dish (35. 1) does not necessarily imply that Trimalchio was its *πρῶτος εὐρετής*.

<sup>40</sup> This is the view of Rose and Sullivan (n. 28 above). E. T. Sage in his favourable review of de Vreese (*CPh* 22 [1927] 311–313) admits: "Even after reading de Vreese I still believe that the choice of dishes is determined in part, though only in part, by Trimalchio's tendency to make puns (e. g., *super arietem cicer arietinum* in xxxv. 3)."

<sup>41</sup> *ius* L, in H. See W. T. Avery, "*Cena Trimalchionis* 35. 7: *hoc est ius cenae*", *CPh* 55 (1960) 115–118. Friedlaender (n. 5) is one of the few who, following Reiske, prefer *in = in<itium>* and delete *hoc est in<itium> cenae* as a gloss.

<sup>42</sup> Trimalchio's 'stage-managing' of the feast has been pinpointed by many scholars. See, e. g., É. Thomas, *Pétrone* (Paris 1912) 143–150 (p. 150: "Pendant tout le festin comme dans les préparatifs, les occupations du tous, les entrées, les sorties, tous les mouvements sont réglés comme ceux d'acteurs au théâtre"); G. N. Sandy, "Scaenica Petroniana", *TAPhA* 104 (1974) 329–337.

## 3. “Who is who?”

In ch. 39 Trimalchio reveals the real destination of the Zodiac dish. Of course, his dinner could not be confined to *cibi viles* (35. 7): “*Sic notus Ulixes?*” he playfully wonders (39. 3);<sup>43</sup> by that moment the cosmic dish has already been disclosed to be just an intellectual ‘condiment’ to the meal. Now Trimalchio uses the opportunity to deliver a speech on the constitution of the universe (39. 5–15).

As often happens in the *Cena*, Trimalchio’s monologue betrays the abyss of his ignorance. His speech is lavishly larded with vulgarisms (*caelus, dii, cornum; prae* with acc.; hapax *expudoratus*) and colloquialisms (*taurulus, copo* etc.). Which is worse, his idea of astronomy turns out to be grotesquely vague (*caelus hic, in quo duodecim dii habitant, in totidem se figuras convertit... totus caelus taurulus fit*). Nonetheless, Trimalchio’s cosmological lecture is rooted in some commonly widespread religious or astronomical notions of the time, even though oversimplified or distorted in his discourse.

Thus, syncretic beliefs in the twelve Olympian gods patronizing the twelve zodiacal signs (*tutela*) did really exist.<sup>44</sup> The heaven’s rotation compared to a millstone (*sic orbis vertitur tamquam mola*) is attested in Theodoretus of Cyrrhus<sup>45</sup> and must have been a popular cosmological metaphor. Its comparison with an egg (*terra mater ... quasi ovum corrotundata*), originating in Orphic doctrines of the World Egg and ancient cosmogonies, was also not uncommon to philosophical writings.<sup>46</sup>

Before we take a closer look at Trimalchio’s astrological forecasts we may assume that (1) since the majority of them are clearly motivated by plays on words or common metaphorical associations, all forecasts should have a similar explanation; and (2) since almost all these describe people, it is unlikely that some of them would imply animals or plants (cf. n. 133 below).

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<sup>43</sup> In my opinion, the remark “*quid ergo est? oportet etiam inter cenandum philologiam nosse*” refers to the preceding quotation from Virgil, though many scholars take *philologia* to be more than ‘literary studies’ and refer it to the following speech on astronomy.

<sup>44</sup> See, e. g., H. G. Gundel (n. 37) 569; O. Weinreich, “Zwölfgötter”, in Roscher’s *Lexikon* (1924–37) VI, 820–827. Weinreich (*ibid.* 827) has no good reasons to assume that the twelve gods were depicted on the dish along with the signs.

<sup>45</sup> H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin 1879) 329 b. This and the following observation I owe to Dmitri Panchenko, whom I thank for the discussion of my report on this question in 1999.

<sup>46</sup> See J. Haussleiter, “Ei”, *RLAC* 4 (1959) 734.

[39. 5] ‘...*et modo fit aries. itaque quisquis nascitur illo signo, multa pecora habet, multum lanae, caput praeterea durum, frontem expudoratum, cornum acutum. plurimi hoc signo scholastici nascuntur et arietilli.*’ *laudamus urbanitatem mathematici* – Cattle and wool were indeed associated with Aries in astrology (cf. Manil. 4. 124 ff. and de Vreese [n. 2] 219 ff.), but the following words seem to be a sort of *παρὰ προσδοκίαν*, which undermines the prestige of Aries children and, to my mind, even suggests that they have a lot of wool *on*, along with a ‘thick head’ (stupidity or pushiness), a ‘shameless forehead’ and a ‘sharp horn’.

Specifying of this category as rhetoricians, which is usually thought of as a hit at Encolpius and his friends, has been scarcely commented upon. The point is probably in comparing rhetoricians to rams.<sup>47</sup>

*Cornum acutum* is sometimes explained as hinting at the famous sophistic syllogism on having horns<sup>48</sup> that became a standing joke (cf. Luc. *Dial. mort.* 1. 2, Mart. Cap. 4. 327).<sup>49</sup> Still, I find it unlikely: (1) *acutum* would then be pointless; (2) this particular allusion of *cornu* would diverge from *caput* and *frons*; (3) the joke is unlikely to be relevant for Trimalchio and his uneducated audience. A simple metaphor is more probable: a ‘sharp horn’ suggests ‘butting’ in rhetoric duels.

As for a ‘shameless forehead’, rams seem to have been regarded as impudent, probably because of lust (cf. Manil. 4. 508 ...*solvatque pudorem* and de Vreese [n. 2] 225–26<sup>50</sup>), but why and in what sense shamelessness

<sup>47</sup> E. T. Sage, “Notes on Apuleius”, *CPh* 22 (1927) 311–312 cites an important parallel from Apuleius (*Met.* 1. 9), where a witch is said to have turned a lawyer into a ram. The other two transformations mentioned in Apuleius were that of the witch’s unfaithful lover into a beaver (thought of as prone to self-castration) and of her rival inn-keeper into a frog. A. Borghini, “Gli avvocati, gli eruditi, e l’ariete: alcune convergenze (a proposito di Apul. *Met.* I 9, 4 e di Petronio *Sat.* XXXIX 5)”, *Annali della fac. di lettere e filos. di Bari* 29 (1986) 57–62 remained unavailable to me.

<sup>48</sup> D. L. 7. 82; 187; Com. adesp. 149 K.–A.; Luc. *Symp.* 23; Sen. *Ep.* 49. 8; Quint. *Inst.* 1. 10. 5; Gell. 16. 2. 10; 18. 2. 9.

<sup>49</sup> V. Ciaffi, *Struttura del Satyricon* (Torino 1955) 49 with n. 48, supported by Chr. Stöcker, *Humor bei Petron* (Erlangen–Nuremberg 1969) 71–72. Cf. n. 63 below.

<sup>50</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 80–81 keenly observed that Firm. Mat. 8. 6. 4 *sunt enim austera facie, proluxa barba, obstinata fronte*, cited by de Vreese ([n. 3] 226) and repeated in many commentaries, is related not to Aries, but to Haedi, its paranatellon. No less reasonable is his heavy irony ([n. 2] 82) against de Vreese’s astrological excursus ([n. 3] 221–224) on why and how Aries was connected with the head (e. g., Aries being the “head” of the Zodiac, i. e. the first of Zodiac signs, which is irrelevant here): of course, ram’s hard forehead is and was commonplace, as *aries* = ‘battering ram’ shows; however, *petro*, adduced by Eriksson thereby, is not a case in point, since its precise meaning and etymology are obscure and paronymological connection with *petra* (Fest. 207 M) could refer to the ram’s tough meat rather than forehead.

is assigned to rhetoricians? In antiquity the forehead, due to its ability to blush, was indeed regarded as the place of shame,<sup>51</sup> which resulted in a number of idioms corresponding to Eng. ‘brazen face’,<sup>52</sup> such as *frons attrita* and *frontem (faciem) perfricuisse*<sup>53</sup> and, less often, *frons dura (os durum)*.<sup>54</sup> This quality could be particularly appropriate for rhetoricians, be it due to impudent behaviour in litigations (cf. Cassiod. *Var. ep.* 3. 52. 9: *impudenti fronte litigare*) or to a combativity required in public debates. Thus Quintilian (*Inst.* 6. 4. 11) condemns impudence in controversies: *sunt enim quidam praeduri in hoc oris, ut obstrepant ingenti clamore et medios sermones intercipient et omnia tumultu confundant...* and prescribes to repel it firmly, but keeping a civil tongue, which is not a *res animi iacentis et mollis supra modum frontis*. It was *mollitia frontis* that prevented Isocrates from speaking in public (Plin. *Epist.* 6. 9. 26).

*Multa pecora* and *multum lanae*, in my opinion, still requires explanation, as *praeterea* suggests these to be attributes of both *scholastici* and *arietilli*, along with *caput durum*, *frons expudorata* and *cornum acutum*.<sup>55</sup> If I am wrong and there lies no unnoticed pun in *multa pecora* and *multum lanae*, Trimalchio’s description of Aries still shows signs of intentional humour, which lies in the unexpected transition from cattle-handlers (naturally associated with the sign) to uncomplimentary comparison between rams and rhetoricians.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Noteworthy is Pers. 5. 103–104: *exclamet ... perisse frontem de rebus* (imitation of Hor. *Ep.* 2. 1. 80: *clament periisse pudorem*) and schol. ad loc.: *templum enim pudoris est frons*.

<sup>52</sup> For examples see *ThLL* VI. 1357. 33 ff. (s. v. *frons*).

<sup>53</sup> A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (Leipzig 1890) 130 (§ 631); M. T. Sutphen, “A Further Collection of Latin Proverbs. II”, *AJPh* 22 (1901) 129 (= R. Häußler. *Nachträge zu A. Otto...* [Darmstadt 1968] 160); E. B. Mayor (ed., comm.), *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal II* (London 1900) 286 (ad 13.242).

<sup>54</sup> O. Jahn, *A. Persii Flacci satirarum liber* (Leipzig 1843) 197; Fr. Marx, *C. Lucilii carminum reliquiae II* (Leipzig 1905) 156 (ad 417); Mayor II (n. 53) 41 (ad 8. 189). Contrary to Otto (n. 53) 59 n. \*, Smith (n. 6) 103 and Schmeling (n. 7) 168, I would take Petr. 43. 3 *durae buccae* in the same sense, not as ‘a rough tongue’; cf. Eng. *to have the cheek (the face) to do smth.*

<sup>55</sup> If *scholastici* were taken as ‘rhetoric teachers’, *pecora* could be the crowds of stupid students. As for *lana*, can it hint at income (proposed by A. Verlinsky)? Or at the habit of wearing a woolen scarf for sore throat (*focale*) in declamations? Cf., e. g., Mart. 4. 41. 1: *quid recitaturus circumdas vellera collo?*; 6. 41. 1: *qui recitat lana fauces et colla revinctus...* Quintilian was strongly against such practice (*Inst.* 11. 3. 144: *...focalia ... sola excusare potest valetudo*); Gell. 11. 9. 1 and Plut. *Dem.* 25 of Demosthenes simulating angina.

<sup>56</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 56–57; 74 regards *scholastici* as a “secondary forecast”, which has no connection with the sign itself, being just linked to the “primary” one; my objections against this approach: Keyer (n. \*) 127–128.

*Arietilli*, the emendation of Reinesius and N. Heinsius (*arieti illi* H)<sup>57</sup> has not yet been satisfactorily explained. One possibility would be to take it literally; it would mean that Trimalchio, modeling a universe *en miniature*, was weird enough to cast horoscopes for animals as well. Nevertheless, the passage in question gives no more ground for this assumption than *bigae et boves* of Gemini and *cucurbitae* of Aquarius (horoscopes for plants would be perhaps too bizarre). It is easier to suggest that each of them designates some kind of people. The 'studs' (i. e. 'lechers')<sup>58</sup> has several advantages over the rest of interpretations:<sup>59</sup> (1) the rams' connection with lust can be traced in antiquity; (2) modern languages offer parallels for that; (3) *caput durum* and *cornum acutum*<sup>60</sup> can be applied to lechers in the obscene sense, impudence being also to the point;<sup>61</sup> (4) the obscene sense of *cornum acutum* would explain the

<sup>57</sup> The only examples are *cicer arietillum* in Col. 2. 10. 20 and *a(r)retillum* ἀμπελόπρασον (wild leeks) in *CGL* II. 24. 33; III. 88. 54 et saepius. Reiske suggested *aretalogi* (supported by A. Kiefer, *Aretalogische Studien* [Freiburg i. Br. 1920] 12). More probable paleographically is W. S. Watt's *arioli* ("Notes on Petronius", *C&M* 37 [1986] 174) and Alessio's (n. 21) 20–22 *aretuli illi* (the meaning of *aretuli* would still be obscure). Alessio's idea of homophony between *aretuli* and *rhetores* (as well as in the case of *in piscibus... rhetores*, see n. 121 below) is to be rejected: the phonetic resemblance is too weak, very few would be quick-witted enough to discern this pun in the synonym *scholastici*, and, last not least, rhetoricians seem to be linked with Aries because of *caput durum*, *frons expudorata* and *cornum acutum*: intricate play on words in addition would overcomplicate the matter.

<sup>58</sup> A. Bartalucci ("Gli *arietilli* in Petronio, *Sat.* 39, 5", *SCO* 16 [1967] 281–285), citing Ov. *Fast.* 4. 771 *sitque salax aries*, Lucil. 534 M. *aries ... quantis testibus!* and Ribbeck<sup>3</sup> II, 365 *arietem... testitrahum* along with *AP* 11. 318 (see p. 291 with n. 130 below); on the same lines are Smith (n. 6) 89: "possibly some obscene sense lies hidden" and B. Baldwin, "Editing Petronius: Methods and Examples", *ActClass* 31 (1988) 42 referring to Eng. *ram* ('lecher').

<sup>59</sup> The most popular explanation 'Schafköpfe', i. e. 'students of rhetoric', *scholastici* being their teachers (de Vreese [n. 3] 228–234 and many others) is invented ad locum. Friedlaender (n. 5) 244 cites, with a query, the proverb Κριὸς τροφεὶ ἀπέτισεν (Zenob. 4. 63, of ingratitude). M. L. Wagner ("*Arietillus* bei Petronius", *Humanitas* 3 [1950/51] 375–378) suggests 'cuckolds', but the words that he is referring to (It. *becco*, *pecoro*; Fr. *bouc*, *bélier*; Sp. *cabrón*) have possibly developed this meaning from the metaphor of cuckolds having horns, which did not exist in antiquity (see p. 285 with n. 100 below).

<sup>60</sup> A 'sharp horn' might seem strange in this sense, but sharp instruments and weapons abound in Latin and Greek metaphors for *mentula*: see J. N. Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London 1982) 14–24 (e. g., Pompon. 69: *coleatam cuspidem*; 126–127: *compingam terminum in tutum locum*; [Lucian.] *Asin.* 10 ὄξειαν [scil. λόγχην]); κέρασ = 'penis' in Archil. 247 West and *AP* 12. 95. 6 (cf. *ibid.* 22); *caput* was usual for 'glans penis' (*ibid.* 72).

<sup>61</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 16 supports the obscene sense of *frontem expudoratum*, *cornum acutum*, referring it to Encolpius and Ascyltus.

singular. However, such word usage being unattested in Greek or Latin, the hapax remains obscure.

Of greater significance for the whole scene is the remark “*laudamus urbanitatem mathematici*.” Usually it is interpreted as a sarcastic hint at Trimalchio’s ignorance or bad taste.<sup>62</sup> Yet, it is important that *urbanitas* in the *Cena* always refers to Trimalchio’s witticisms,<sup>63</sup> and in other extant fragments of Petronius (7. 1; 24. 2; 109. 8) it also implies humour, merriness or wit (admittedly, *urbanus* in 16. 4 and 116. 5 implies a wider sense than ‘witty’), which suits the context. Even though the precise meaning of the joke might have escaped us, the abrupt transition from “much cattle, much wool” to “thick head” etc., as well as the rhetoricians’ comparison to rams, obviously has humorous connotations, and, considering Trimalchio’s love for puns, this humour is likely to be intentional. The irony of Encolpius’ remark is thereby not cancelled: only that it lies in the epithet *mathematicus* and not in *urbanitas*.

[39. 6] ‘*deinde totus caelus taurulus fit. itaque tunc calcitrosi nascuntur et bubulci et qui se ipsi pascunt* – Eriksson is certainly right that ‘kicking’ is an obvious play on *calcitrare*, which is a typical habit of oxen (he cites Col. 2. 2. 26), and in a figural sense could be applied to a man, being strongly associated with the idiom *calcitrare contra stimulum* et sim.<sup>64</sup>

De Vreese goes further and suggests a hint at the fact that in astrological tradition Taurus (as well as Gemini and Cancer) rises and sets hindforemost.<sup>65</sup> In his opinion, “das astrologische Publikum, das diesen

<sup>62</sup> Thus B. Halvonik, “The Ethos of *Urbanitas* in the *Satyricon*”, in: C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History XII* (Brussels 2005) 323: “sophistication”; cf. P. Habermehl, *Petronius, Satyrica 79–141: Ein philologisch-litterarischer Kommentar*. Bd. 1: *Sat. 79–110* (Berlin – New York 2006) 470 (ad 109. 8): “... ‘Stil, Raffinesse’ (39, 6), öfter jedoch die ‘Schlagfertigkeit’, den ‘Witz’ des Städters (24, 2; 52, 7), und, wie hier, dessen Frucht, den ‘Scherz’ (cf. 7, 1; 36, 7).”

<sup>63</sup> 36. 7 (of *Carpe! Carpe!*): *ego suspicatus ad aliquam urbanitatem totiens iteratam vocem pertinere...* 52. 7: *excipimus urbanitatem iocantis...* Cf. 48. 5: ‘*quid est pauper?*’ – ‘urbane’; W. Heinse’s translation of 1773: “Wir bewunderten seine witzige Mathematik”. P. Siewert, *Textkritische Bemerkungen zu Petronius* (Frankfurt an der Oder 1911) 14–15 and Chr. Stöcker (n. 49) 72, n. 1 rightly insist that *urbanitas* here refers to a witticism. However, Siewert’s emendation of *arieti illi* into *Arieti<ni> illi* (i. e., a vulgar form for *Arretini*, the inhabitants of Arretium) and V. Ciaffi’s reference to the syllogism on horns supported by Stöcker (see n. 49 above) are not convincing.

<sup>64</sup> See Otto (n. 53) 331–332 (§ 1693).

<sup>65</sup> De Vreese (n. 3) 86–90, citing ‘*aversum ... Taurum*’ in Manil. (1. 264 et saepius) and referring to Atlas Farnese and ‘*planae sphaerae*’ listed by Io. Moeller, *Studia Maniliana* (Marburg 1901) 29.

astrologischen Exkurs las" would grasp the allusion: "sie hatten es von klein auf in der Schule auf den Globen gesehen" (p. 90). It is true that Taurus was often called *aversus* in Manilius and other Latin astrological texts,<sup>66</sup> but Trimalchio is extremely unlikely to possess that knowledge. Rams butt, bulls kick – it need not be more complicated than that.

F. A. Todd insists on metaphorical connotations of *bubulci*, citing Iuv. 7. 115 ff. *surgis tu pallidus Ajax / dicturus dubia pro libertate bubulco / iudice*; but he is hardly right that there "*bubulco* is pointless unless it denotes stupidity":<sup>67</sup> the reference is made to low social origin and, consequently, poor education of the judge rather than to his mental abilities. The passage does not prove that *bubulci* could be used to designate 'yokels' on the whole, though its offensive connotations of dirty labour are self-evident (cf., e. g., Sen. *Ep.* 47. 15 *quasi sordidioris operae ... ut puta illum mulionem et illum bubulcum*).

*Qui se ipsi pascunt* is most often taken as 'self-supporting', which could be a playful hint at the guests of the party.<sup>68</sup> Since, however, many of Trimalchio's forecasts are pointedly negative, indeed insulting (see p. 293 below), one may wonder if the obscene sense of *pascere* was implied.<sup>69</sup>

[39. 7] '*in geminis autem nascuntur bigae et boves et colei et qui utrosque parietes linunt*' – *boves* presents two difficulties: (1) the word refers to animals, not to men; (2) it would seem natural to associate them with Taurus, like *bubulae frustum* in 35. 3. The usual explanation is that oxen are yoked in pairs; then both *bigae* et *boves* would be based on the same analogy. I find it suspicious,<sup>70</sup> but, having no better solution, I only insist that if this

<sup>66</sup> See Housman, *Manilii Astronomicon liber secundus* (London 1912) vii; Hübner (n. 78) 102. Scaliger considered the relevance of Taurus' rising hindforemost for poetry high enough to emend Ov. *Met.* II, 80 *aversi cornua Tauri* in *aversi...*, which was supported by A. Bouché-Leclercq, *L'astrologie grecque* (Paris 1899) 134–135 n. 3, but rightly objected to by Housman (ad Manil. 1. 264) and R. G. Getty, "Some Astronomical Cruces in the Georgics", *TAPhA* 79 (1948) 28.

<sup>67</sup> Todd (n. 10) 102.

<sup>68</sup> Sometimes it is interpreted *in malam partem*, the stress being laid not on *ipsi*, but on *se*, which I find less plausible (as if it were *se ipsos*); thus, e. g., W. D. Lowe (transl., comm.), *Petronii Cena Trimalchionis* (Cambridge 1905) 42, citing 38. 9 *non vult sibi male*. Similarity of this idiom with *Ezech.* 34:2 *Vae pastoribus Israel, qui pascebant semetipsos*, noted by Burmann (n. 15) I, 235 and Eriksson (n. 2) 57, must be a coincidence. Eriksson (*ibid.* 57; 74) denies any connection between *qui se ipsi pascunt* and Taurus: for him it is a "secondary forecast" (see n. 56 above).

<sup>69</sup> See Adams (n. 60) 138–141 ('eat'); 141: "There was obviously a long-standing popular association between oral sexual acts and feeding."

<sup>70</sup> So did Th. Sinko, "Petroniana", *Eos* 15 (1909) 12–13, who concluded that in this case either *bigae* or *boves* had to be a gloss; instead of that he suggested *biga<mi>*.

reading is correct, *boves* have to imply human beings (strongmen? dullards?), not real bulls or oxen. If Trimalchio would reckon with animals and plants, their representation among his forecasts would have to be more substantial than the three possible *arietilli*, *boves* and *cucurbitae* (cf. n. 133 below).

*Bigae* is usually taken metaphorically, as ‘yoke-fellows’, which is possible, as well as ‘workhorses’, but not certain.

*Colei* is clearly motivated by the word-play on *gemini* (see above on 35. 3 *testiculos*; cf. a similar astrological pun in *AP* 5. 105. 4 καὶ κύνια καὶ διδύμους). It can be interpreted either as ‘real men’ (‘ballsy’; cf. 44. 14 *si nos coleos haberemus* and *Pers.* 1. 103) or as ‘lecherous’. The latter is preferred by Adams, who cites *Mart.* 12. 83. 2 *omnes quem modo colei timebant* (of a *derisor hirnearum*), which would then hint at the risk of rupture owing to lechery.<sup>71</sup>

It has been also noticed that in modern Italian ‘coglioni’ designates fools;<sup>72</sup> this deserves attention, but, having no parallels in ancient languages, its relevance for the passage in question seems improbable.

*Qui utrosque parietes linunt*, on the contrary, has good parallels in ancient Greek and Latin in the sense of ‘to be on both sides of the fence’.<sup>73</sup> Sometimes it is interpreted here in obscene sense,<sup>74</sup> which is possible, but far from certain.

[39. 8] *in cancro ego natus sum. ideo multis pedibus sto, et in mari et in terra multa possideo; nam cancer et hoc et illoc quadrat. et ideo iam dudum nihil supra [super Buecheler] illum posui, ne genesim meam premerem* – As has been said above (p. 267 with n. 15), the wreath is laid on the Cancer owing to Trimalchio’s self-conceit, which accords with his flattering description of this sign, somewhat egocentrically reduced to him alone. To explain it by the constellation of Corona would be misleading.

As is the case with other forecasts, the connection between Cancer and Trimalchio’s wealth is motivated by idiomatic word play (*multis pedibus*

<sup>71</sup> Adams (n. 60) 66. Todd (n. 10) 101–102 n. 6 prefers simply ‘*hirneosi*’. H. Blümner’s emendation *consules* < *cōses* (“Kritisch-exegetische Bemerkungen zu Petrons *Cena Trimalchionis*”, *Philologus* 76 [1920] 337) is justly objected to by de Vreese (n. 3) 106 n. 4, as overlooking the possibility of a metaphorical interpretation.

<sup>72</sup> Wagner (n. 59) 378; A. Stefenelli, *Die Volkssprache im Werk des Petron im Hinblick auf die romanischen Sprachen* (Wien – Stuttgart 1962) 63.

<sup>73</sup> *App. prov.* 2. 2 = *Apostol.* 6. 37: δύο τοίχους ἀλείφειν ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπαμφοτεριζόντων καὶ διὰ μέσου χωροῦντων ἐν μάχαις ἢ φιλίαις. *Cic. Fam.* 7. 29. 2: *duo parietes de eadem fidelia dealbare*. This idiom Eriksson (n. 2) 58 also regards as a “secondary” forecast: see n. 56 above.

<sup>74</sup> Wagner (n. 59) 378; de Vreese (n. 2) 109; Smith (n. 6) 90, comparing 43. 8 *omnis Minervae homo*.

*stare*, 'to be on one's feet')<sup>75</sup> and popular imagery (the Cancer's dwelling both on land and sea).

The absence of food<sup>76</sup> on Trimalchio's own sign is explained by the double meaning of the word *premere*: (1) 'to weigh upon, lie heavy on' (literally); (2) apparently, 'to hang over, threaten'.<sup>77</sup> Surely, this remark flaunts the host's command of an astrological term, *genesis*. It is not easy to decide, whether this use of *premere* implies a playful coquetry being a pretext for placing a wreath, or a true superstition. Though in other cases I am prone to interpret Trimalchio's play on words as intentional puns, this one does look very much like a superstition based on a metaphorical reconsideration of everyday life.

It is noteworthy, that Trimalchio's own wealth, which he associates with Cancer, finds a striking parallel in Manil. 4. 166 ff., where Cancer is explicitly linked with profiting merchants and money-lenders (*attribuit varios quaestus artemque lucrorum* etc.).<sup>78</sup> Most of the other parallels between Trimalchio's forecasts and astrological tradition, cited by de

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<sup>75</sup> For similar expressions implying a 'sure footing' cf. Quint. 12. 9. 18: ...*in iis actionibus omni, ut agricolae dicunt, pede standum est* (which is usually taken to imply investment in many branches of farming) and Ap. Rhod. 4. 1165–1166: οὐποτε ... *τερπωλῆς ἐπέβημεν ὄλω ποδί*. That *Suid.* ο 190 explains ὄλω ποδί as ὄλη δυνάμει and Apostol. 12. 63 (= Arsen. 39. 12) as ἐπὶ τῶν ταχέως ποιοῦντων, ὁμοία τῆι Ὀλω ῥυτῆρι only shows that these expressions acquired a different meaning when used with the verbs of motion and expressing the idea of energetic movement, like ἀμφοῖν τοῖν ποδοῖν (Ar. Av. 35) etc.

<sup>76</sup> *Nihil supra (super) illum posui* is universally taken to refer to the food. Schmeling (n. 7) 154 suggests that "the garland ... presumably runs round the edge of the compartment without touching the sign itself". Th. Studer, "Observationes criticae in Petronii Coenam Trimalchionis", in: idem, *Gymnasii Bernensis Lectiones...* (Bern 1839) 8–9 pointed out a difficulty that usually goes unnoticed: *iam dudum* can hardly refer to this particular case, but rather implies that Trimalchio has long been doing so (cf. Forcellini, s. v. *dudum*: "*iam dudum* ... significat rem inceptam ac nondum desitam"). Trimalchio probably means that he got used not to lay anything (edible) on Cancer. Studer, however, insists that *nihil supra illum posui* cannot refer to food at all; therefore he emends *coronam* to *carcinum* and interprets the words metaphorically ("nihil umquam se maioris fecisse cancri signo"), though admitting that *ne genesim meam premerem* alludes to literal meaning. Studer's interpretation of *ne genesim meam premerem* escapes me: it seems to contradict his own emendation; but his idea to interpret *nihil supra illum posui* metaphorically as well as literally deserves deliberation.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Manil. 4. 464–465: *tu ... Nemeaee ... quarta sub parte premis*. Eriksson (n. 2) 71 with addenda cites Lucan. 1. 655–656 and Sen. *NQ* 7. 4. A good parallel for that is an obsolete Russian verb *довлеть*, which properly means 'to suffice', but owing to paretymological associations with *давить на ч.-л.* ('to weigh upon smth.') came to be used in the sense of 'to hang over, threaten' (*довлеть над ч.-л.*).

<sup>78</sup> For some additional parallels from astrological writings see, apart from de Vreese, the indispensable study of W. Hübner, *Die Eigenschaften der Tierkreiszeichen*

Vreese, either refer not to the whole of the sign or appeal to some very common analogies, which might be used for jokes and astrological theories independently. This case is less trivial.

Manilius' motivation for linking Cancer with merchants seems to be manifold: first and foremost, Cancer's *tutela* was Mercury; of significance might also be that Cancer was an aquatic and a tropical sign, and even that days in summer are longer than nights.<sup>79</sup> Eriksson regards this passage as the only possible evidence of Trimalchio's astrological knowledge,<sup>80</sup> but stresses that the merchants' relation to Cancer would then be based on simple calendar notion, Mercury being the sign's *tutela*.<sup>81</sup>

We have little evidence for popular astrological notions of the time, and it is hard to disprove the supposition that some of them linked Cancer with merchants,<sup>82</sup> whether it is due to the sign's *tutela* or to its metaphorical connotations pointed to by Trimalchio. Still, this particular resemblance between Trimalchio and Manilius, remarkable as it might seem, can be explained as pure coincidence. After all, Manilius equally links merchants with Aries (4. 124 ff.) and seafarers with Pisces (4. 273 ff.). Besides, linking Cancer with merchants is far from universal: e. g., a general horoscope for Cancer in Firm. Mat. 5. 1. 10 stresses the sign's slowness and deliberation instead of wealth.

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*in der Antike: Ihre Darstellung und Verwendung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Manilius* (Wiesbaden 1982) 550.

<sup>79</sup> Hübner, *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 73. He goes as far as to suppose that Petronius deliberately let Trimalchio reduce the forecast for Cancer to his own person, in order to avoid the forecast "*mercatores nascuntur*", as it would make similarity with Manilius too evident. I agree with A. Collignon, *Étude sur Pétrone: la critique littéraire, l'imitation et la parodie dans le Satiricon* (Paris 1892) 269–273 that in general Petronius had no need to consult with Manilius and was hardly inspired by him: some incidental similarities – Gemini, Cancer, Leo and Scorpio (by some mistake he adds Sagittarius) – can be imputed to common analogies used independently.

<sup>81</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 73. W. Hübner, "Manilius als Astrologe und Dichter", *ANRW* II. 32. 1 (1984) 264 n. 432, cites 39. 8 ("born under Mercury's sign") among other passages that presumably attest Trimalchio's individual worship of Mercury; but some of them are very controversial, like "fond of green, the colour of Mercury" (27. 2; 28. 8; 64. 6; cf. 70. 10, 13) or "has the biggest ring on his little finger" (the one dominated by Mercury, 32. 3). Of course, Trimalchio regarded Mercury as his patron (the picture in 29. 3, 5 is eloquent enough), but whether he treated him as his zodiacal *tutela* is uncertain. I am not convinced that Trimalchio and his illiterate guests were supposed to know Olympic patrons of each zodiacal sign.

<sup>82</sup> Thus Friedlaender (n. 5) 244; idem, "Zur Cena Trimalchionis", in: *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte und gr.-röm. Alterthumskunde: Festschrift zu O. Hirschfelds 60. Geburtstag* (Berlin 1903) 9.

[39. 9] *in leone cataphagae nascuntur et imperiosi* – These allusions are self-explanatory, as is the case with Scorpio. Astrological parallels are abundant, but it is significant that Trimalchio (obviously, on purpose) casts this horoscope in a scornful manner, in order to make it uncomplimentary: a common, less biased, ‘astrologer’ would probably say “vigorous and powerful”.<sup>83</sup>

[39. 10] *in virgine mulieres et fugitivi et compediti* – I have supported Eriksson's explanation of *fugitivi* as ‘*quae amatores fugiunt*’ and suggested that *compediti* is a pun on *compedes* = ‘anklets’ (Plin. *NH* 33. 152, cf. Petr. 67. 7), which hints at women's love for excessive ornaments.<sup>84</sup> De Vreese's idea that the Virgin is connected with *nodus anni*, repeated in most commentaries, is to be rejected.

*Mulieres* (if not adopting Jac. Gronovius' *mulierosi*), be it interpreted as ‘effeminate men’ or otherwise, could hardly refer to all women literally.

*in libra laniones et unguentarii et quicumque aliquid expendunt* (coni. Burmann, *expediunt* H, Buecheler) – Burmann's emendation seems to hit the mark and is justly accepted by most of the editors.<sup>85</sup> Unlike other four expressions with *qui* in Trimalchio's speech (for Taurus, Gemini, Sagittarius and Capricorn), this one does not seem to have any proverbial sense, which, as Eriksson justly observes, makes this horoscope somewhat flat in comparison to the others.<sup>86</sup> Note, though, a humorous contrast, also pointed out by Eriksson: butchers and perfumers are referred to in the same breath.

[39. 11] *in scorpione venenarii et percussores* – Formidable view of Scorpio is amply paralleled in astrological writings, which is hardly surprising. That such associations were common beyond ‘professional’ astrology is clear from Hor. *Carm.* 2. 19. 17–18: *Scorpius ... formidolosus, pars violentior natalis horae*.

*in sagittario strabones, qui holera spectant, lardum tollunt* – The most plausible connection between Sagittarius and squint is the one defended

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<sup>83</sup> It is hardly surprising that these common analogies were relevant for astrologers, but de Vreese (n. 2) 110–126, as usually, overcomplicates the matter, pointing out that Leo was the house of sun at summer solstice and that  $\alpha$ -*Leonis* was called Βασίλισκος or *Regulus*. It is this pedantry that is justly criticized by Eriksson.

<sup>84</sup> See n. \*.

<sup>85</sup> Ov. *Ars am.* 1. 421–422 *institor ... expedit merces*, cited as early as by Burmann (n. 15) I, 237, is hardly relevant, as it provides no satisfactory analogy with *Libra*.

<sup>86</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 62. This flatness can be accepted, though it might as well be tempting to suspect a gloss or to suggest idiomatic sense of *expendere* (e. g., ‘those who pay for their mistakes’).

by Eriksson: archers close one eye and aim not directly at the target.<sup>87</sup> Eriksson justly objects to de Vreese that this obvious feature makes irrelevant the half-faced depictions of Sagittarius, referred to by him, to say nothing of Babylonian and Egyptian double-headed ones.<sup>88</sup>

It is to be admitted that de Vreese indicated curious parallels for Sagittarius being associated with eye troubles in astrological tradition, above all in Manilius.<sup>89</sup> Most scholars tend to explain these by the half-faced images of Sagittarius,<sup>90</sup> but Eriksson may be right that the obvious need of closing one eye while aiming at the target might have been relevant for astrologers as well as for Trimalchio.<sup>91</sup> Be that as it may, there is no need to make Trimalchio an expert in astrology, ‘professional’ or ‘popular’. The resemblance between him and Manilius can be a matter of coincidence: astrologers and Trimalchio either had different motivations for linking Sagittarius with eye troubles, or alluded to the same obvious association independently.

What is more important, Trimalchio’s specifying remark on the ‘squint-eyed’ alludes to an idiom, which makes this horoscope look like a joke rather than a real superstition: the poor fellows turn out to be sly dogs! This ironical reinterpretation of the ‘squint-eyed’ displays obvious humour, which can hardly be unconscious:<sup>92</sup> no wonder de Vreese has not found any convincing astrological parallels for that.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 64–65. He cites W. Waters (ed., comm.), *Petronius, Cena Trimalchionis* (Boston 1902), but in fact this explanation was already offered in Burmann’s edition (n. 15) 237.

<sup>88</sup> De Vreese (n. 3) 71 ff.

<sup>89</sup> De Vreese (n. 3) 79 ff.; cf. Hübner (n. 78) 584; 193; 478–479 with n. 84–85. Noteworthy is Manil. 2. 259–260: *...lumina Cancro / desunt, Centauro superest et quaeritur unum* and 4. 565–567, where the face wounds of military leaders are exemplified by Hannibal. Other instances are less striking: the examples from *CCAG*, cited by de Vreese, associate eye troubles with the arrow, and the examples from Firmicus Maternus refer to particular days.

<sup>90</sup> Thus commentaries on Manil. 2. 260 by Scaliger ([Heidelberg <sup>1</sup>1579] 84, [Leiden <sup>2</sup>1600] 133–134, [Strasbourg <sup>3</sup>1655] 123), Th. Breiter ([Leipzig 1908] II, 54) and Housman (*M. Manilii Astronomicum liber secundus* [London 1912] 27). Scaliger<sup>2–3</sup> and Breiter admit that not all sidereal depictions of Sagittarius are half-faced.

<sup>91</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 64 n. 2. Hübner (n. 78) 479 considers it difficult to determine whether Scaliger’s or Eriksson’s explanation is correct.

<sup>92</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 65 with n. 1, citing Lucil. 704 Marx and Varro *Men.* 176, remarks that *strabo* often has ironic metaphorical sense, ‘the one who gives greedy sidelong glances’. Does it not speak for conscious irony rather than astrological naivety?

<sup>93</sup> Firm. Mat. 8. 14. 3 and 27. 6 on theft, cited by him ([n. 3] 82), refer to particular days; examples for Sagittarius being a σῆμα δίσωμον or διφνός ([n. 3] 75–78) have nothing to do with squint or theft – they refer to the centaur’s being a horse and a human at once.

Friedlaender took *qui holera spectant, lardum tollunt* literally,<sup>94</sup> but in view of the other relative clauses with *qui* in Trimalchio's monologue (possibly, with the exception of *quicumque aliquid expendunt*),<sup>95</sup> it is most likely an idiom. It is most natural to refer it to hypocrites,<sup>96</sup> though often it is taken to imply thieves<sup>97</sup> or envious persons.<sup>98</sup>

*in capricorno aerumnosi, quibus prae mala sua cornua nascuntur* – The baffling metaphor of ‘cuckolds’,<sup>99</sup> pace Friedlaender, has not been attested for antiquity: the lemma ad *AP* 11. 278 εἰς γραμματικὸν κέρασφορον is most probably of Byzantine origin, and the passage alluding to κέρατα ποιεῖν in Artemid. 2. 12 is considered to be an interpolation, precisely because otherwise it would be the only surviving instance.<sup>100</sup>

There are no good examples for ‘horns’ in the sense of ‘corns’ or ‘lumps’;<sup>101</sup> the obscure *Campanus morbus* in Hor. *Sat.* 1. 5. 62 is also hardly relevant here.<sup>102</sup>

Obviously, the allusion is made to a proverb otherwise unattested. Similar expressions with *cornu* / κέρας as a symbol of power or courage<sup>103</sup> make it tempting to interpret the saying as ‘those who have the power

<sup>94</sup> Friedlaender (n. 5) 245 with reference to Hor. *Sat.* 2. 6. 63: *uncta satis pingui ponuntur oluscula lardo*, which is useful as to the origin of the expression, but does not prove its literal sense.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. p. 283 with n. 86 above.

<sup>96</sup> Forcellini (s. v. *strabo*) cites Iuv. 2. 3: *qui Curios simulant et Bacchanalia vivunt*.

<sup>97</sup> Burmann (n. 15) 237; Schmeling (n. 7) 155 cites It. *collo torto*. In any way, this would imply theft hand in hand with deceit. Eriksson objects that he has not found examples for *tollere* = ‘steal’ ([n. 2] 65, n. 2), but cf. Cat. 12. 3: *tollis lintea negligentiorum*; his own explanation is “those, who are prone to prefer sweet to useful”.

<sup>98</sup> Otto (n. 53) 187 (§ 919) citing Lucil. 704 Marx.

<sup>99</sup> Buecheler's *editio maior* (Berlin 1862) 43; Friedlaender (n. 5) 245, with a query; Smith (n. 6) 91, hesitating; etc. Firm. Mat. 8. 28. 5 *adulterio cognitae sortientur uxores*, sometimes cited ad loc., is related to a particular day.

<sup>100</sup> See G. Antonucci, “Ποιεῖν τὰ κέρατα”, *Athenaeum* 2 (1924) 277–280 (cf. idem, “Ancora Ποιεῖν τὰ κέρατα”, *Athenaeum* 3 [1925] 37–39), supported by I. Caiazza, C. M. Lucarini, “Per l'esegesi di Petr. Satyr. 39, 12”, *Materiali i discussione* 57 (2006) 237–238.

<sup>101</sup> W. D. Lowe (n. 68) 43 cites Plin. *NH* 31. 9. 45: *cornea videmus corpora piscatorum*; but ‘having horns’ is different from ‘having a horny skin’.

<sup>102</sup> Pace Antonucci (n. 100) 279–280 supported by de Vreese (n. 3) 177–178 and others mentioned by Caiazza, Lucarini (n. 100) 238 n. 5, who justly object that it would be incongruent with *prae mala sua*.

<sup>103</sup> Otto (n. 53) 94 (§ 440): Hor. *Carm.* 3. 21. 18: *viresque et addis cornua pauperi*; Ov. *Am.* 3. 11. 16: *venerunt capiti cornua sera meo*; *Ars am.* 1. 239: *tum pauper cornua sumit*; Diogen. 7. 89: πρὸ τούτου σε ὄμην κέρατα ἔχειν· ἐπὶ τῶν ἀνδρείας ὑπόληψιν ἐχόντων.

(persistence) to combat their troubles',<sup>104</sup> but then *prae* would have adversative sense rather than causative, which lacks parallels. Another possibility would be to interpret the 'horns' *in malam partem*, as 'aggressiveness'.<sup>105</sup> Both explanations, put forward as early as by Otto,<sup>106</sup> are possible, but not certain: the actual meaning of the proverb may turn out to be something unexpected.<sup>107</sup>

*in aquario copones et cucurbitae* – The attribution of inn-keepers to Aquarius surely hints at their habit of diluting the wine with water, which must have been commonplace.<sup>108</sup> This forecast can in no way be taken seriously, as a real astrological belief.

The reason for linking *cucurbitae* with the sign is clear (pumpkins are watery), but the meaning of the word remains uncertain. As casting horoscopes for plants would be too singular, it must designate some kind of persons.

Some prefer to explain it with reference to *cucurbita ventosa*, an instrument for bloodletting,<sup>109</sup> but there is no evidence in favour of this metonymy, be it interpreted as 'surgeons' or 'phlebotomized'.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Caiazza, Lucarini (n. 100) 237–240; cf. n. 106.

<sup>105</sup> Otto (n. 53) 93–94 (§ 439): Hor. *Ep.* 6. 12: *parata tollo cornua* etc. (cf. n. 106); Sinko (n. 70) 13: "*homines truces*"; he cites inter alia Quint. *Inst.* 9. 3. 15: *quam magis aerumna urguet, tam magis ad male faciendum viget*, and ends up with conjecturing: *prae mala sua <bibentibus / potantibus> cornua nascuntur*.

<sup>106</sup> Otto (n. 53) 94 n. \*: "die das Unglück zu böartigen Menschen macht, oder: denen ihr Unglück Mut giebt."

<sup>107</sup> Other attempts to explain the proverb are implausible. Eriksson (n. 2) 65–66 adopts Scheffer's emendation *mole* (for no reasons, as *prae* with acc. is found in 46. 1), but refers it to the mythical creature of the Capricorn; for *cornua nascuntur* he offers no distinct explanation. Burmann (n. 15) 238 takes *aerumnosi* in active sense and thinks of oppressing tyrants.

<sup>108</sup> Mart. 1. 56; 9. 98; Buecheler, *CLE* 930 (= *CIL* IV. 3948); cf. Hieron. *contra Vigil.* 1 (*PL* 23, p. 355) *iste caupo Calagurritanus ... miscet aquam vino* (alluding to Is. 1:22) and T. Kleberg, *Hôtels, restaurants et cabarets dans l'antiquité romaine* (Uppsala 1957) 111–113; 143.

<sup>109</sup> Friedlaender (n. 5) 109 n. 1 defended at length by de Vreese (n. 3) 192 ff., who cites two passages, where Aquarius is mentioned as one of the three signs especially favourable for bloodletting, and concludes (p. 197) that this was "undoubtedly" the ground for *in aquario ... cucurbitae*: the sign was easily associated with a cupping glass (!). At that de Vreese does not reject *cucurbita* = 'pumpkin-head': according to him, Petronius used the possibility of making a pun by choosing this word, which anyone would easily associate with Aquarius in astrology and which also means 'pumpkin-head'. Needless to say, these astrological parallels are too feeble, and *cucurbitae* could not be meant to imply bloodletting and 'pumpkin-heads' at the same time.

<sup>110</sup> Bloodletting from the head was also associated with dementia; cf. Iuv. 14. 58: *Iam pridem caput hoc ventosa cucurbita quaerat*; Petr. 90: *sanguinem tibi a capite*

The most popular explanation is ‘stupid fellows, pumpkin-heads’, which can be paralleled by Apul. *Met.* 1. 15 *cucurbitae caput*<sup>111</sup> and the title of Seneca's Ἀποκολοκύντωσις, though the interpretation of the latter as ‘turning into a fool (instead of a god)’ is not universally accepted.<sup>112</sup> The problem is that *cucurbitae caput* in Apuleius, the only reliable evidence for this connotation of pumpkins in antiquity, contains the mention of a head; that the same idea could be expressed by *cucurbita* or κολοκύντη alone remains unproved, though in view of similar slang expressions in modern languages (cf. It. *zuccone*, Fr. *cornichon*) I find it probable.<sup>113</sup>

*in piscibus obsonatores et rhetores* – *Obsonatores*, an obvious play on ὄψον (ὀψωνέω), finds a close parallel in *AP* 11. 318 (Philodemus), where the child of Pisces happens to be an ὀψοφάγος (see p. 291 below). Smith<sup>114</sup> is right that *obsonatores* implies caterers,<sup>115</sup> who purchased not specifically fish, and Trimalchio therefore refers to the cognate Greek word. Due to popularity of fish-delicacies, ὄψον and ὀψώνιον, properly ‘cooked on fire’, came to be applied first and foremost to

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*mittam*; Cels. 3. 18 cited by de Vreese (n. 3) 193–194. The meaning of *colocyntha* (*Colocyntha*?) in the Oxford fragment of Juvenal (line 6) remains uncertain.

<sup>111</sup> Todd (n. 10) 102, citing Apul. *Met.* 5. 9: *maritum ... cucurbita calviorem*, offers a bizarre interpretation for *cucurbita* here and in Apul. *Met.* 1. 15 as ‘a bald person’. The janitor's remark ‘*cucurbitae caput non habemus, ut pro te moriamur*’ in *Met.* 1. 15 implies, in his opinion, that the robbers, ready to break in from outside in the dark of the night, would not attack on his gleaming bald pate instead of Aristomenes!

<sup>112</sup> On the problem of the title and different interpretations see the indispensable review by M. Coffey, “Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* 1922–1958”, *Lustrum* 6 (1961) 245–254. For later bibliography see K. Bringmann, “Senecas ‘Apocolocyntosis’: Ein Forschungsübersicht 1959–1982”, *ANRW* II. 32. 2 (1985) 889–992; R. Roncali, “Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*: 1980–2000”, *Lustrum* 50 (2008) 319–322.

<sup>113</sup> So does W. Goldberger, “Kraftausdrücke im Vulgärlatein”, *Glotta* 18 (1930) 27, but he takes it for granted that *cucurbitae* in Petronius refers to simpletons. Todd (n. 10) 102 objected that ‘blockheads’ were already mentioned under Taurus, but his interpretation of *bubulci* is not convincing (see p. 279 with n. 67 above).

<sup>114</sup> Smith (n. 6) 91; for historical background of *obsonatores* see, e. g., C. G. Harcum, *Roman Cooks* (Baltimore 1914) 72–73.

<sup>115</sup> Pace Schmeling (n. 7) 155, who translates “those who prepare and enjoy fish (or food in general) ... as well as those who buy them.” Equally misleading is Schmeling's reference to Festus p. 221 L., on which he concludes “*obsonatores* (or similar) also means *convivae*” – the text of Festus reads: *obsonitavere: saepe opsonavere. significat autem convivari*. Both these inaccuracies go back to de Vreese (n. 3) 206–207, who cites Festus along with Ter. *Ad.* 117 and (incorrectly) Plaut. *Aul.* 295 to show that the cognate verb could imply ‘feasting’; on these grounds he implausibly suggests that *obsonator* could have the sense of ‘*conviva*’, wrongly referring to Plaut. *Mil.* 667.

fish (or seafood), and ὀψοφάγοι to frequent customers of the fish market.<sup>116</sup> Latin *obsonium*, though it also often refers to fish, seems to preserve a wider sense.<sup>117</sup> It is to stress that play on words is not typical for superstitions, and the close parallel with the scoptic epigram of Philodemus clearly suggests a joke.

The connection between Pisces and *rhetores* has puzzled scholars since Burmann.<sup>118</sup> De Vreese put forward double explanation, drawing attention to the first surviving chapters of Petronius, where (1) rhetoric is compared to cookery; and (2) rhetoric teachers to fishermen (3. 3–4),<sup>119</sup> which was supported by many scholars. However, these two metaphors could hardly be implied at the same time. The likening of rhetoric (or literature on the whole) to cookery – hardly proverbial or even widespread outside literary circles – would have nothing in common with Pisces (cf. n. 56 above on the improbability of “secondary forecasts”).

The image of rhetoric teachers ‘fishing for’ pupils, developed by Agamemnon in 3. 4, would have some connection with Pisces, but it is also unlikely to be proverbial or relevant for Trimalchio’s milieu.<sup>120</sup> The play on words *rete* and *rhetores* suggested by Alessio<sup>121</sup> would be too complicated, both phonetically and semantically.

M. Korenjak convincingly explained the passage as poking fun at *rhetores*, just as is the case with *copones*. He has shown that jokes on orators or rhetoricians unable to speak (“either at the decisive moment or even in general”) were a *topos*, and, moreover, sometimes it was the fish’s muteness that was mentioned with reference to them.<sup>122</sup> In support of this

<sup>116</sup> Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 4. 4. 667 f–668 a, Athen. 7. 276 e–f, cf. Pollux 7. 26. See Aug. Hug, “ὄψον”, *RE* 18 (1939) 759–760; cf. J. Marquardt, *Das Privatleben der Römer* (Leipzig 1886) II, 432 with n. 11 and modern Greek ψάρι (‘fish’, < ὀψάριον).

<sup>117</sup> Aug. Hug, “obsonium”, *RE* 17 (1937) 1746–1747. Marquardt (*ibid.*) puts *obsonium* in one line with ὄψον and ὀψώνιον, but cites for the Latin word only Nep. *Them.* 10. 3: *Myunta, ex qua obsonium haberet* (cf. Diod. 11. 57. 7: Μυούντα δὲ εἰς ὄψον, ἔχουσαν θάλατταν εὔιχθον). However, with regard to *obsonium* Marquardt’s remark “später ausschliesslich von Fischen zu verstehen ist” as well as Forcellini’s “et praesertim pisces” is an exaggeration: e. g., in Petr. 36. 6 and 47. 13 the word refers to meat.

<sup>118</sup> Burmann (n. 15) I, 239: “Causam non video ... Forte corrupta vox ... Haereo.”

<sup>119</sup> De Vreese (n. 3) 207 ff.

<sup>120</sup> Korenjak (n. 4) 135–136 justly points out the singularity of the metaphor. Cf. Keyer (n. \*) 130 n. 31. None the less, it was approved by Eriksson (n. 2) 68–69 and many others.

<sup>121</sup> Alessio (n. 21) 200. Cf. n. 57 above.

<sup>122</sup> Korenjak (n. 4) 136–137 referring to a sophist’s inauspicious dream of a big fish in Artemid. 2. 14 and *Akathistos hymn.* 17. 1: ῥήτορας πολυφθόγγους ὡς ἰχθύας ἀφώνους ὀρώμεν ἐπὶ σοί, Θεοτόκε. An occasional joke on the fish’s muteness, which

some eloquent examples of the proverb ἀφωνότερος ἰχθύων are to be added:<sup>123</sup>

Sext. Emp. *Adv. Math.* 2. 18: ἀλλὰ μὴν ὡς ὁ σύμπασις οἶδε βίος, οἱ σοφιστεύοντες ἐπ' ἄκρον μὲν τὴν ῥητορικὴν ἐξήσκησαν τεχνολογίαν, ἰχθύων δὲ ἀφωνότεροι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ὑπαίθρου θεωροῦνται.

Luc. *Iupp. Trag.* 14: ...ἀφωνότεροι γεγέννηταί σοι τῶν σοφιστῶν. (cf. *ibid.* 35, of philosophers in a public debate: ...τά γε ἄλλα ἰχθύων σε ἀποφανεῖ ἐπιστομίζων).

Thus, the attribution of orators to Pisces is a proverbial joke that aims at rhetors. Though a few isolated passages from technical astrological literature do associate Pisces with eloquence or garrulity<sup>124</sup> (according to Hübner, κατ' ἀντιπάθειαν<sup>125</sup>), this idea is far from being an astrological *topos*. Besides, the similarity with these isolated astrological passages is easily explained as a coincidence: these horoscopes and jokes on 'garrulous' Pisces are based on the same 'antipathic' idea. The jokes cited above and Trimalchio's unquestionable affection for puns leave no doubt that his remark was intended to be satirical and has nothing to do with professional or popular astrology.

#### 4. Naive superstitions or intentional jokes?

Now back to the title question of the article. If we leave aside obscure forecasts with unreliable interpretation, is the rest to be qualified (a) as 'professional' astrology, (b) as popular astrology or even Trimalchio's own astrological beliefs, imparted by him in earnest, but designed as a travesty of astrology by Petronius, or (c) as intentional humour of Trimalchio?

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accompanies the allegorical likening of different schools of philosophers to different fishes in Luc. *Pisc.* 51, does not, in my opinion, suggest the same idea.

<sup>123</sup> For the proverb see M. Spyridonidou-Skarsouli (ed.), *Der erste Teil der fünften Athos-Sammlung griechischer Sprichwörter* (Berlin – New York 1995) 318–319.

<sup>124</sup> The parallels are convincingly dismissed by Korenjak (n. 4) 134: those on eloquence (Firm. Mat. 8. 30. 7; Vett. Val. 1. 3. 57) refer to particular days; the others, confined to Manil. 4. 574 ff.: *garrulitas odiosa datur...* (on the first part of Pisces), Hippol. *Ref. haer.* 4. 26. 2 λάλοι, Hephaest. 3. 9. 15: γυναῖκα μάχιμον καὶ φλύαρον; 16. 5 κακὸν καὶ λοῖδορον (scil. οἰκέτην), have contrary examples that describe children of Pisces as mute or stammering.

<sup>125</sup> Hübner (n. 78) 613–614, objecting to W. Gundel, "Pisces", *RE* 20 (1950) 1781, who explains Manil. 4. 574 ff. (see n. 124) as referring to the mouth of the northern fish. In support of the antipathic idea Hübner advances melothetic distribution of legs to Fishes and cites *CCAG* V. 1. 187–188: τὸ γὰρ ἐνάντιον διάλυσιν φέρει. τὰ δὲ ἄφωνα ἐχεμυθίαις ... σαλπικταῖς ἢ αὐληταῖς κατὰ ἀντιπάθειαν τὰ ἄφωνα. Cf. *idem* (n. 81) 172 with n. 164.

De Vreese accumulated a great amount of quotations from astrological writings to prove that Trimalchio's forecasts were based on real astrological beliefs and went as far as to suppose that Petronius used his monologue to show off his own expertise in astrology.<sup>126</sup> A semiliterate phrase-monger was reinterpreted as an ardent astrologer, who scrutinizes astrological treatises to impress his guests (and Petronius' readers). This idea of Trimalchio's personality is obviously false, but de Vreese's own erudition in astrology was impressive enough for nearly all commentators of Petronius to adopt many of his interpretations.

The arguments of de Vreese are to a great extent far-fetched. Eriksson justly stresses that most of the parallels cited by him characterize not zodiacal signs, but particular degrees of ecliptic, which amount to thirty in each sign.<sup>127</sup> Those forecasts, which have good parallels in astrological sources (e. g., Aries and wool, Lion and authoritarian style, Scorpion and poison or murder, Virgo and effeminacy, Taurus and herdsmen, Libra and weighing of goods), are based on common associations and do not necessarily require expertise in astrology.

Eriksson, justly criticizing de Vreese,<sup>128</sup> treated Trimalchio's forecasts as popular ('Laienastrologie') or, rather, individual superstitions. According to him, ch. 39 is a way to satirize astrological methods, which on the whole are almost as arbitrary and ridiculous as Trimalchio's.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> De Vreese (n. 3) 8; cf. Housman's remark in n. 128 below.

<sup>127</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 80; cf. n. 4 above. Apart from this, in his desire to link Trimalchio's forecasts to astrological tradition at any rate, de Vreese is uncritical and overzealous. Thus, admitting that the attribution of inn-keepers to Aquarius implies a playful hint at their cheating in watering the wine, he adds that Aquarius was identified with Ganymedes ([n. 3] 243) – that is, in Trimalchio's mythography (59. 4), the brother of Diomedes and Helena. A word play *Gemini – colei* is interpreted as hinting at *μελοθεσία*, even though testicles were under protection of Scorpio and not of Gemini ([n. 3] 237). The thick head of Aries, in his opinion, can also be explained only in the context of astrology: Aries was responsible for the head and was associated with its diseases ([n. 3] 222–223); cf. n. 50 above.

<sup>128</sup> Except for Eriksson, de Vreese faced critique only incidentally. Thus, Housman (*M. Manilii Astronomicum liber quintus* [London 1930] 112, n. \*) pungently remarked that his book was “designed to prove that Trimalchio was an expert and Petronius a fool”; cf. Keyer (n. \*) 121 n. 1. G. Bagnani, *Arbiter of Elegance* (Toronto 1954) 58 n. 52 supported Housman's words as “truthful”, but was more generous to de Vreese who, in his opinion, “has greatly elucidated these passages, but has made the fundamental mistake of taking them seriously” (*ibid.* 12 n. 35; likewise Todd [n. 10] 101 n. 4). N. Horsfall, “‘The Uses of Literacy’ and the *Cena Trimalchionis*: II”, *G&R* 36 (1989) 201; 208 n. 57 dismisses de Vreese as “idle fantasy” and regrets that commentaries ignore Eriksson.

<sup>129</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 75.

Yet there are strong reasons for making one step further: Trimalchio's forecasts are to be interpreted not as comic superstitions, but as his own intentional jokes.

First of all, some of the forecasts are obvious puns, and Trimalchio – the person whose puns and practical jokes abound in the *Cena* – can hardly be supposed to make them unconsciously (for Petronius to poke fun at astrology). It is much more logical to assume that these 'astrological' jokes, like many others, were prepared by Trimalchio in advance, in order to amuse his guests.

A strikingly similar example of jocular imitation of astrology (referred to as early as by Burmann) is the epigram of Philodemus (*AP* 11. 318):

Ἀντικράτης ἦδει τὰ σφαιρικὰ μᾶλλον Ἄρατου  
πολλῶ, τὴν ἰδίην δ' οὐκ ἐνόει γένεσιν·  
διστάζειν γὰρ ἔφη, πότερ' ἐν κριῶ γεγένηται  
ἢ διδύμοις ἢ τοῖς ἰχθύσιν ἀμφοτέροις.  
εὔρηται δὲ σαφῶς ἐν τοῖς τρισί· καὶ γὰρ ὀχευτῆς  
καὶ μωρός, μαλακός τ' (v. l. μαλακῶς) ἐστὶ καὶ ὀψοφάγος.<sup>130</sup>

Its similarity with Trimalchio's horoscopes (puns on δίδυμοι and ὄψον, description of Aries) leaves no doubt that the latter are also his intentional jokes.

In addition to this parallel, at least three passages can in no way be interpreted otherwise than as intentional puns, namely: *in Aquario copones* (39. 12); *in piscibus ... rhetores* (39. 12) and *in Virgine ... compediti* (39. 10). Nobody on earth could actually believe that inn-keepers are born under Aquarius, since they dilute wine. Nor would Trimalchio compare rhetoricians to mute fish for astrological reasons. Likening of female anklets to fetters has also nothing to do with astrology.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Most probably, ὀχευτῆς refers to Gemini (hinting at δίδυμοι = 'testicles'), μωρός to Aries and μαλακός ὀψοφάγος ('effete gourmet') to Pisces. Admittedly, ὀχευτῆς could also refer to Aries, and, if δίδυμοι, like *coglioni*, were used to designate fools (see n. 70 above), μωρός could vice versa refer to Gemini – but this seems unlikely. If μαλακός is a fourth category, it could be linked with Gemini in the sense of 'pathic' and with Aries in the sense of 'mollycoddle'. Burmann's attempt (n. 15) I, 234 to explain the obscure *arietilli*, *boves* and *colei* on the ground of Philodemus (as, respectively, 'venerei', 'stulti' and 'molles') is far-fetched, as is D. Sider's interpretation of μωρός and ὄψον in obscene sense (*The Epigrams of Philodemos* [NY – Oxford 1997] 172–175).

<sup>131</sup> Two of the three interpretations that most clearly suggest deliberate puns (for *in Virgine ... compediti* and *in Piscibus ... rhetores*) have been overlooked by scholars and, obscure passages left aside, their attention was drawn to those forecasts that could be regarded as 'astrologically correct'.

Further, it would be unusual for a superstition, even an individual one, to be based on word play, as is the case with *Gemini – colei* (39. 7), *Pisces – obsonatores* (39. 12) or in the use of proverbs, like *qui utrosque parietes linunt* (39. 7) and (whatever be its meaning) *quibus prae mala sua cornua nascuntur* (39. 12). In view of Trimalchio's affection for puns, it is easier to explain these passages as deliberate jokes than as actual beliefs.

Finally, two passages that cannot be fully interpreted with certainty still bear distinct marks of intentional humour. Comparing rhetoricians to butting rams (39. 5) – praised as *urbanitas*<sup>132</sup> – is a satirical attack rather than a superstition. Neither could it be said in earnest that some allegedly squint-eyed sly dogs, born under Sagittarius, 'aim at vegetables, but snap at pork' (39. 11).

It is to be admitted that some forecasts – based upon very common associations – may seem to be popular (or, partly, idiosyncratic) beliefs imparted in earnest, the more so as they are mostly paralleled in astrological writings: *multum pecora, multum lanae* for Aries (39. 5), *calcitrosi* and *bubulci* for Taurus (39. 6), large fortune for Cancer (cf. Manil. 4. 166 ff. and p. 281–282 above) and reluctance to 'burden his horoscope' (39. 8), *in leone ... cataphagae et imperiosi* (39. 9), *in libra laniones et unguentarii et quicumque aliquid expendunt* (39. 10), *in scorpione venenarii et percussores* (39. 11).<sup>133</sup>

However, it would be impossible to reconcile these seemingly sincere astrological beliefs with undeniably intentional and intricate puns listed above.<sup>134</sup> Had Trimalchio propagated that astrological lore in earnest, it could not have escaped him, a true punster, that in some cases he was making puns. Foolish astrological occultism is incompatible with jokes similar to Philodemus' scoptic epigram on astrology. This inconsistency of Trimalchio's character would contradict the psychological realism of the *Cena*.

I therefore insist that all these 'astrologically correct' forecasts were not meant seriously by Trimalchio, but display intentional humour. What

<sup>132</sup> See p. 278 with n. 63 above.

<sup>133</sup> Literal interpretation of *arietilli* (39. 5), *boves* (39. 7), *mulieres* (39. 10) and *cucurbitae* (39. 12) as, respectively, 'real sheep, oxen, (all) women and pumpkins' is to be rejected. However stupid Trimalchio might be, it would be psychologically unconvincing to make him cast horoscopes for species of cattle and even vegetables on the one hand, and make intricate puns on ὄψον and wine-keepers on the other. Most likely, we are dealing with an otherwise unattested word-usage for some kinds of people. Therefore I leave aside *arietilli* (39. 5), *bigae et boves* (39. 7), *cucurbitae* (39. 12) as obscure and *qui se ipsi pascunt* (39. 6) and *mulieres* (39. 10) as unreliable.

<sup>134</sup> Eriksson sometimes speaks of Trimalchio's "Scherz" (e. g., [n. 2] 68: "zwischen *scholastici* und *arietilli* eine scherzhafte Anknüpfung"; 70: "scherzhafte Causerie"; 71: "auf eine willkürliche und scherzhafte Weise"), but does not question whether it was intentional or unconscious, and sees no problem here.

makes these jokes look like real astrological beliefs is that they are based on hackneyed associations, which were exploited by astrologers as well as by Trimalchio – that is why de Vreese succeeded in finding many parallels to ch. 39 in astrological writings.

These common associations are usually imputed to Trimalchio's stupidity and superstitious nature. Since, however, they are intermingled with intricate puns, we should not overlook their possible humorous intent. Thus, the children of Aries, having (in accordance with astrology) much cattle and wool, are suddenly reinterpreted as rhetoricians compared to rams: both satirical attack and *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* suggest a joke. *Laniones* and *unguentarii*, naturally linked with Libra, are playfully contrasted.

Other 'astrologically correct' forecasts share the humorous tendency that has been surprisingly overlooked by scholars. Trimalchio glorifies his own sign ('*ne genesim meam premerem*', be it interpreted as genuine or assumed fear, gives a pretext for crowning it with a wreath), whereas almost all forecasts for other signs are scornful or offensive. Thus *calcitrosi, bubulci, cataphagae et imperiosi, venenarii et percussores* – at first sight displaying naive astrological beliefs – are deliberately used by Trimalchio to disparage all zodiacal signs in contrast with Cancer. This panorama is supplemented with equally unflattering *colei, qui utrosque parietes linunt, fugitivi et compediti, strabones* and *aerumnosi* (jokingly specified as, respectively, *qui holera spectant, lardum tollunt* and *quibus prae mala sua cornua nascuntur*).

The only scholar who seems to notice this disparaging tendency is Eriksson, who believes that in this way Petronius is satirizing Trimalchio's social milieu.<sup>135</sup> Still, this depreciating manner of forecasts could hardly be unconscious; more probably, it was a humorous intention of Trimalchio, his *urbanitas*: everyone involved is given a whipping, while he himself is pointedly flattered.

Along with disparaging of singular zodiacal signs, Trimalchio makes satirical attacks on groups of people: inn-keepers are blamed for their notorious 'water-bearing', rhetoricians for being 'mute as fish', and women for putting 'chains' on themselves.

Thus, both zodiacal dish and astrological speech contribute to the 'stage-managing' of the feast; neither of them is meant to display Trimalchio's naivety or liability to superstitions. The zodiacal tray turns out to be a model of the universe *en miniature*; the speech on astrology is an elaborate performance designed to amuse the guests with a set of intricate puns, similar to the handing out of the *apophoreta* in ch. 56.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Eriksson (n. 2) 72.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. n. 10 above.

Of course, Trimalchio does show himself a complete ignoramus in astronomy – as well as in history and mythology; but it would be wrong to watch his ‘forecasts’ for some blatant absurdities or to disclose him as an adherent of some especially ridiculous beliefs. Petronius is mocking at his funny solecisms and blunders in astronomy, but it is Trimalchio himself who is making jokes about Zodiac.<sup>137</sup>

It would be wrong to infer that Trimalchio is satirizing astrology – rather he is using it as material for jokes and exquisite culinary design. Whether he in fact believed in astrology or not,<sup>138</sup> his zodiacal forecasts are to be understood as intentional humour and cannot be used as a source for popular astrological superstitions of the time.

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Trimalchio’s zodiacal forecasts in ch. 39 do not indicate his liability to astrological superstitions, being a set of intentional jokes similar to the handing out of the *apophoreta* in ch. 56. Likewise, the foodstuffs assigned to zodiacal signs in ch. 35 aim at exquisite culinary design and are not to be imputed to simple-minded occultism.

Характеристика знаков зодиака Трималхионом в гл. 39 состоит из тщательно подобранных острот и каламбуров, сравнимых с раздачей подарков в гл. 56, и не говорит о его приверженности астрологическим суевериям. За распределением закусок по знакам зодиака в гл. 35 также стоит не простодушный астрологический оккультизм, а стремление к изысканности кулинарного дизайна.

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<sup>137</sup> In a way, the narrator’s total irony is aimed at Trimalchio’s jokes, too, but rather at their excessiveness and ‘stage-managing’ than quality.

<sup>138</sup> The account of the omniscient *mathematicus* in 76. 10 – 77. 2 suggests that he did, but on the whole his superstitions often (as in 28. 3; 30. 5; 74) seem to be a part of the show. For de Vreese (n. 3) 16 the tablet calendar in 30. 4 indicates Trimalchio’s interest in astronomy, for Eriksson (n. 2) 41–42 – his liability to astrological superstitions. Still, this sophisticated device might just follow the fashion and tickle the host’s vanity, like all the interior of the atrium; it proves his love for astronomy no more than depictions from Iliad and Odyssey his love for Homer.