

quotations. *Sententiae* therefore make a significant transition from performed speech to book culture. I set out to investigate a number of questions: can we retrieve the aesthetic qualities of the *sententia* which make it a desirable object; how might we connect its aesthetic qualities to the knowledge or insight that it conveys; what does the *sententia* and its excerption tell us about the dissemination of thought in imperial Rome and beyond?

For my visit to the BSR, I wanted to begin addressing these questions in relation to the elder Seneca, who collected excerpts from the declaimers of the first half of the first century AD. In thinking about the aesthetics of the *sententia* I started by considering its role as part of speech performance. This enabled me to connect the excerpted speeches with Seneca's descriptions of the declaimers' voices and physiques in the prefaces to each book of excerpts. I will develop this connection further in future research, to consider how the performed and written *sententiae* work cognitively, so that the aesthetic encounter facilitates the expression, reception and processing of thought.

In thinking about the excerption and collection of quotations I used my time at Rome to make an initial foray into the early modern books at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, to see what the presentation of the elder Seneca's texts might tell us about how his collection was received in the age of florilegia and proverb-books. This question is complicated by the entanglement in early modern understanding of the elder Seneca, his philosopher son the younger Seneca and a number of pseudo-Senecan texts. That very entanglement is in itself interesting, as it attests to a generative impulse in the extraction, collection, ordering and even invention of ancient soundbites. In future research I shall return to the reception of the elder Seneca after the 1580s, when he is established as an individual author, but will continue also to explore the way in which the elder Seneca's reception has been shaped by his assimilation to his son's texts, whose *sententiae* have a more prominent status as generalized truths.

The productive research atmosphere of the BSR, which fosters conversations between scholars and artists, helped me to generate these questions and begin to pursue them. I am immensely grateful for all I have learned here.

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*Trimalchio and the monuments: material culture, self-fashioning, and social aesthetics in Petronius' Satyricon*

Petronius' *Satyricon*, a comic fictional story of imperial date, features the most remarkable character in Latin literature, Trimalchio, a wealthy, manipulative and intimidating ex-slave from the East, who succeeded in creating a new social and cultural identity for himself. In his narrative of Trimalchio's dinner party, Petronius shows how visual and material culture associated with the Roman upper classes is appropriated by Trimalchio to ensure a superior position in the community he inhabits and to project to his dinner guests a refashioned identity and an image of power that bears traces of his cultural

memory. Nevertheless, Trimalchio is regularly ridiculed by the narrator as an uncouth multimillionaire with morbidly bad taste and risible pretensions to elevated aesthetics. This ridicule, I argue, reveals more about Roman anxieties about transgressing class boundaries and the freeborn narrator's envy and resentment for the freedman's achievements than any insight of the so-called 'freedman culture' in the early Roman empire.

I divided my working schedule at the BSR into two parts: (I) studying at the BSR library and (II) visiting museums and archaeological sites. I saw (a) Nero's *Domus Aurea* as imperial domestic space which the freedman Trimalchio aspired to, (b) the first-century BC megalographic paintings of the Via Graziosa (in the Vatican Museums) depicting scenes from the *Odyssey*, which could be paralleled with paintings of scenes from the Homeric epics described by the narrator in Trimalchio's *atrium*, (c) the tomb of Eurysaces and its inscriptions at the Porta Maggiore and the relief of the Mausoleum of the Haterii in the Vatican Museums as evidence of freedman funerary monuments to which I could compare Trimalchio's as-yet unbuilt funerary monument, (d) inscriptions pertaining to freedmen in the Archaeological Museum of Rome, and (e) public spaces and domestic architecture (houses with their mosaics) in Pompeii. Discussing these with colleagues at the BSR enhanced my research by refining the argument and adding detail and depth to it. I very much regret that in the end I was unable to visit Herculaneum and Pozzuoli — important locations for my research which I should have seen; but even with the best planning in the world I could not fit everything into my allocated Visiting Fellowship period.

I tackled different episodes from 'Dinner at Trimalchio's' according to the pieces of material culture I would see on each of my visits. For example, I worked on the funerary monument of Trimalchio (*Satyricon* 71) after I saw the Tomb of Eurysaces and the relief of the Mausoleum of the Haterii, but when I needed to work on the automata and other technological devices found in the narrative of the dinner party (for example, Trimalchio's cuckoo clock or the dish with the four figures of the satyr Marsyas, or the dish of the phallic god Priapus emitting juice) for which we do not have any surviving parallels I stayed in the BSR library and used its excellent facilities, consulting Robert Coates-Stephens for guidance when appropriate. At the BSR I wrote from scratch three papers, one of them being an 8,000-word article entitled 'Trimalchio's automata', which will be coming out in an Oxford University Press volume on *Technological Animation in Classical Antiquity*, and another being a 7,000-word paper, entitled 'Memories from Trimalchio's past', which is to be included in an edited volume on *Memory, Ritual, and Identity in Greece and Rome* (De Gruyter).

The preliminary conclusions of my investigations are (a) that there is a continuity in the architectural patterns and the domestic-decoration preferences of powerful Republican and Imperial freeborn people, on the one hand, and the freedman Trimalchio, on the other, and (b) that there is an air of power, *imperium* and sophistication about the material culture one encounters in Trimalchio's house. It is used so as to fashion an identity for a man who (as ex-slave) had no respectable past or ancestors and no roots in the aristocracy but aspired to grandeur without erasing his servile past. I argue that the narrator fails to see or identify with this aspiration and that he deliberately presents in his narrative the picture of a vulgar freedman who does his best to impress.

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