

This paper studies the relationship between the *Cena Nasideni* from Satire 2.9 of Horace and the *Cena Trimalchionis* from the *Satyricon* of Petronius. A close reading of both passages reveals many similarities. The two dinners have many details in common—guests, food, and events—but power lies in the hands of different characters. In the *Cena Nasideni*, the guests are the protagonists as well as the characters in control of their situation. In the *Cena Trimalchionis*, the guests are again the protagonists but the host is firmly in control. The power of the guests in the *Cena Nasideni* conveys the secure and optimistic feeling of Romans under the new regime of Augustus. The feeling of helplessness felt by the characters in the *Satyricon* reflects the helpless feeling of life in Rome under Nero, in an age where traditional figures no longer held authority and social turmoil shook the empire. A comparison of these two literary dinners demonstrates the great change in worldview experienced by Romans in a span of less than a century.