

LISA HAGELIN : *Homo inter homines sum* – The importance of age for freedmen’s construction of masculinity in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome.

May the bones of my patron rest well; he wanted me to be a man among men, (*Patrono meo ossa bene quiescant, qui me hominem inter homines voluit esse*), Petron. *Sat.* 39.4.

These are the words of the famous freedman Trimalchio, expressing that he is now able to enjoy the good life and that he is part of society, he is “a man among men”. But what does this “a man among men” mean and why was it important for a freedman to be seen as a man?

In the Greco-Roman world the slave was seen as a boy and manumission was perceived as a maturity process, where the manumitted slave could be seen as coming of age. This article examines how age can be used as a means to study how Roman male freedmen were positioned in relation to the ideal Roman masculinity and how this positioning can be seen as an expression of (gender) identity and status. The article addresses these questions by doing a critical close reading of a sample of Late Republican and Early Imperial Roman textual, iconographic and epigraphic sources, applying masculinity theory and drawing on modern conceptions and constructions of masculinity. As a key concept to discuss the material, Connell’s concept “hegemonic masculinity”, as an ideal and normative masculinity, is used.

The article provides conclusions on why age was important for Roman freedmen. It is also pointed out that, as a phenomenon, Roman freedmen are interesting when studying intersections of age and gender, because they illustrate the way age can be perceived as a social category.

**Mots-clés :**

Age – Roman freedmen – Slave – *Puer* – *Capillatus* – Petronius – Seneca – Social age – Gender – Hegemonic masculinity – Manumission – Manhood