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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

An Archaeological Commentary
on Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*:
the House, the Dining Room and its Contents

BY

Cindy A. Want

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts

IN

Classical Archaeology

Department of Classics

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 1995



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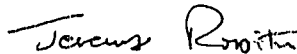
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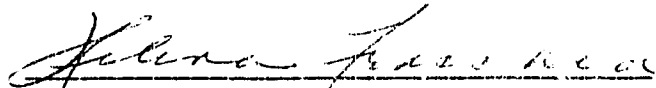
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "An Archaeological Commentary on Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*: the House, the Dining Room and its Contents" submitted by Cindy A. Want in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Classical Archaeology.




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December 8, 1994

In loving memory of my grandfather, A. H. J. Want, and my
uncle, H. Zieglemeier.

Abstract

The *Cena Trimalchionis* is part of a larger work of fiction called the *Satyricon* written by Petronius. The *Cena Trimalchionis* describes a dinner-party given by the wealthy freedman, Trimalchio. Since the dinner-party is set in Trimalchio's home, the story gives us a glimpse of the house and, dining-rooms, dining-room furniture and tableware of a wealthy Roman ex-slave. The *Cena Trimalchionis* is, however, a satirical work of fiction and we must be careful in using this work as an illustration of how a Roman, or even a Roman freedman, lived.

Petronius uses certain terms to refer to, and describe, a house feature or object. These terms are used by other contemporary authors and would have been familiar to Petronius' audience. From the descriptions provided by Petronius and other Latin authors it is possible to find parallels to Trimalchio's house, dining-rooms, dining-room furniture and tableware in the remains and finds from Pompeii and other late Republican and early Imperial sites. Taken individually most of Trimalchio's possessions are not remarkable by early Imperial standards. When one considers all of Trimalchio's possessions together, one is confronted by a picture of excessive wealth.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The *Cena Trimalchionis* is part of a larger work of fiction called the *Satyricon* written by Petronius. The *Cena Trimalchionis* describes a dinner-party given by the wealthy freedman, Trimalchio. Since the dinner-party is given by Trimalchio in his home, it gives us a glimpse of the house and possessions of a wealthy Roman ex-slave. The *Cena Trimalchionis* is, however, fiction and we must be careful in using this work as an illustration of how a Roman, or even a Roman freedman lived. Petronius is writing a work of satire and might be exaggerating in his description of the wealthy freedman and his house.

It is my intention to examine Petronius' description of Trimalchio's house, his dining-rooms, his dining-room furniture and his tableware and to assess Petronius' picture in light of relevant archaeological evidence. I will examine Petronius' use of terminology and compare this to other contemporary authors' usage of these words in order to obtain a better idea of what Petronius means. I will then compare the descriptions to archaeological remains and finds.

I hope to discover whether Petronius is describing features and objects that were commonly used during his day and to provide, where possible, archaeological parallels to the features and objects mentioned in Petronius' story. As I plan only to examine the literature for descriptions of rooms and objects, it is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss the literary aspects of the *Cena Trimalchionis*.

Organizational Framework

In the remainder of the introductory chapter, Chapter 1, I discuss the identification of the author of the *Satyricon* and the date of the work. This is followed by a brief description of the *Satyricon* and the character of Trimalchio, and then a discussion of the geographical setting. This narrows down the search for archaeological evidence to a more certain time period and a more specific location.

Chapter 2 is a discussion of Trimalchio's house. Here I discuss passages and terms in Petronius' text which refer to features of Trimalchio's house and which help to provide a description. These are then compared to descriptions and terms which other contemporary, or roughly contemporary, authors use to describe houses. Having discussed the literary evidence I then examine parallels from sites contemporary with Petronius.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of Trimalchio's dining-rooms. As in Chapter 2, I examine the terms and passages which contribute to descriptions of Trimalchio's dining-rooms and compare these to the literary and archaeological evidence.

Chapter 4 is a discussion of the furnishings and tableware which are used at Trimalchio's dinner-party. I will group the tableware and furnishings by form and function and then discuss the literary and archaeological parallels.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the presented evidence and an overview of the conclusions reached by this investigation.

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 I will provide the Latin word which refers to a feature or an object from the text and a definition of this word. Next a discussion will follow concerning how Petronius uses this word in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. Following that will be a discussion of the use of the word in other late Republican and early Imperial texts. I will then attempt to identify this word in relation to the

archaeological remains.

The Date and Author

The date and the identity of the author of the *Satyricon* were long subjects for debate. Since K. F. C. Rose's 1971 book, *The Date and Author of the Satyricon*, it is now generally accepted that the *Satyricon* was written in the reign of Nero, by his *arbiter elegantiae*, T. Petronius Niger.¹ Rose argues further that the *Satyricon* was written between A.D. 62-65, and that Petronius died in the spring of A.D. 66.²

The Petronii gained prominence under the Julio-Claudian dynasty. By the time Petronius began his career the family was well established and Petronius was a wealthy man.³ Our best source for Petronius' life is Tacitus (*Annals*, 16.18-19). According to Tacitus, Petronius led a life of refined luxury. He slept all day and at night he concerned himself with his duties and pleasures of life. He was made proconsul, and later consul of Bithynia. He proved himself to be capable of carrying out these posts with energy and ability. On his return to Rome he reverted back to his old life style of pleasure and vice and was admitted into the circle of Nero's intimate associates as the Emperor's *arbiter elegantiae*. Nero counted on Petronius' opinions on matters of luxury and taste.

Through his position with the Emperor Petronius incurred

¹K.F.C. Rose, *The Date and Author of the Satyricon*, Leiden, 1971. See also N.W. Slater, *Reading Petronius*, Baltimore/London, 1990, p. 7. Slater accepts Rose's arguments, he also points out that resistance to Rose's conclusions is neither large, nor convincing. See Slater, p. 7, note 8.

²Rose (1971), pp. 58-59.

³Slater, pp. 7-8. See also G. Bagnani, *Arbiter of Elegance*, Toronto, 1954, p. 51 ff. for a history of the family.

the jealousy of Tigellinus, who accused him of being a friend of Scaevinus. Tigellinus bribed a slave to become an informer and arrested most of Petronius' household. Petronius went to Campania in order to meet with Nero, but was stopped at Cumae. Any chance of reconciliation with Nero must have been lost as Petronius was forced to take his own life. He died as he lived. After he slit his wrists, he had them bound so that he might enjoy the company of his friends, some entertainment, a meal, and even a nap before he died. In his will he described Nero's most shameful excesses and named Nero's female and male partners. After he sealed this account, he broke his signet ring so that it would not be used against anyone else.⁴

The Satyricon

The *Satyricon* is the humorous tale of the adventures of a fictional character, Encolpius. According to Walsh, the title of the work was intended to alert the reader that it was a "derisive account of lascivious behaviour, infused with satirical elements."⁵ Much of the work is parody.⁶ It is possibly a parody of the *Odyssey*. Whereas Odysseus is pursued through a number of adventures by the angry god Poseidon, Encolpius is pursued through his adventures by Priapus, a fertility god usually represented with an enormous phallus.⁷ It was a lengthy work and, perhaps, had as many as twenty-four

⁴See Rose (1971), pp. 55-59, for a more detailed account of Petronius' life.

⁵P.G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel*, Cambridge, 1970, p. 70.

⁶Slater, p.11.

⁷See Slater, p.12; and J.P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius*, Bloomington, 1963, pp. 76-80, and pp. 92-93 for the *Satyricon* as a parody of the *Odyssey*.

books to match the number of books in the *Odyssey*.⁸ Today little more than an eighth of it survives and the remaining fragments are from books 15 and 16 and possibly from book 14.⁹

The text is full of lacunae and the *Cena Trimalchionis* is the best preserved portion of the work. The *Cena Trimalchionis* has been argued to be a parody of Nero and his court.¹⁰ In the *Cena Trimalchionis* the main character, Encolpius, his young lover, Giton and his friend, Aschyltus have already met up with a teacher of rhetoric, Agamemnon. Through Agamemnon they are invited to a dinner-party at a wealthy freedman's house, Trimalchio. Trimalchio is a former slave who inherited a fortune from his master (76.2-3). He is both a businessman involved with trade (76.3, 76.8) and the owner of vast estates (37.8-9). Trimalchio is a vulgar ex-slave whose social and cultural pretensions cannot hide his lack of education and refinement.¹¹ The *Cena Trimalchionis* is the story of this dinner with Trimalchio and his friends.

⁸Slater, p.12.

⁹See Slater p.12, p.18; see also Walsh p.73 ff. for a discussion on the length and on the plot outline.

¹⁰See Walsh, p.70; Slater, p. 11; and Rose (1971), p. 77 ff. for the *Satyricon* as a parody of Nero.

¹¹D'Arms *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1981, p.115 and p. 120.

Geographical Setting

The geographical setting of the *Cena Trimalchionis* has been a subject of much debate. There are, however, some clues in the text which can help us locate which town Petronius had in mind as the setting for this part of the work. From the text we know that the town was on the sea (81.1, 90.2). It was almost certainly in Campania, for there are numerous references to this region. For example, the towns of Capua (62.1), Cumae (43.8, 53.2), Baiae (53.10), and Pompeii (53.5-6) are all mentioned in the text.¹² It would seem that Petronius had an estate in Cumae, for he stopped there after he failed to reconcile himself with Nero.¹³ Trimalchio himself owns estates at Cumae, Baiae and Pompeii (53.2-10).

Walsh suggests that this part of the work is set in an unnamed city on the Bay of Naples. He proposes that Petronius deliberately refrained from identifying an actual town as the location for the *Cena Trimalchionis*, and that the town in which the *Cena Trimalchionis* takes place is a "composite creation."¹⁴ Rose, however, points out that in all other surviving episodes in the *Satyricon* Petronius seems to have named the town in which each is set. Therefore, it is probable that Petronius did name the town where the *Cena Trimalchionis* is set and that the name has been lost like so much else of the *Satyricon*.¹⁵

The standard view is that the town which provides the

¹²See K. F. C. Rose, "Time and Place in the *Satyricon*", *TAPA*, 1962, 403.

¹³J. D'Arms, *Romans on the Bay of Naples*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1970, pp. 219-220.

¹⁴Walsh, pp. 75-76.

¹⁵Rose (1962), p. 404.

backdrop to the *Cena Trimalchionis* is Puteoli, a port town on the Bay of Naples.¹⁶ Puteoli matches the description we read from the text. The town where Trimalchio lives is a large center with an amphitheatre (45.4-5). The fact that Encolpius loses his way twice (6.3, 79.2) not only attests to its size¹⁷, it may also be a comment on Puteoli's "chaotic" street plan, or lack thereof.¹⁸ We learn from Petronius that Trimalchio's town has a harbour (99.5, 101.9). We also hear that it is administered by *aediles* (44.3m 53.9), and that it has that status of a *colonia* (44.12, 57.9, 76.10).¹⁹ The *vigiles* mentioned at 78.7 could refer to those instituted by Claudius at Puteoli.²⁰

Despite being referred to as a *graeca urbs* (81.3), Trimalchio's town is a Roman with Roman institutions. It is important not to be swayed by the term *graeca urbs*; after all, as Rose points out, Rome itself is referred to as a *graeca urbs* (a "Greek city") by Juvenal.²¹ Rose gives a very simple argument for Puteoli: "Therefore, the proof is relatively simple: the town is too busy and important to be Cumae, and Naples was not a *colonia* until Antonine times."²²

Puteoli is, as Frederiksen states, a natural choice for

¹⁶See Rose (1962); Frederiksen, *Campania*, 1984, p. 352; Sullivan, *The Satyricon*, 1968, pp. 46-47; D'Arms (1981), p.106.

¹⁷Rose (1962), p. 404.

¹⁸Frederiksen, *Campania*, 352.

¹⁹For a more detailed argument for Puteoli, see Rose (1962), pp. 402-405; and Sullivan (1968), 46-47.

²⁰Suetonius, *Divus Claudius* 25.6. Rose (1962), p. 405, n.9, credits L. Freidländer, *Index Lectionum Acad. Albert.* 4 (1860) 3-4.

²¹Rose (1962), p.404; Juvenal, 3.60-61.

²²Rose (1962), p.405.

the setting of a story about a wealthy freedman, who came from Asia when he was a boy (75.10), in the early Imperial period.²³ A *colonia* was sent to Puteoli, in 194 B.C.. By the early Empire Puteoli, as Rome's principal port, had become "one of the largest and most important towns in Italy, and one of the greatest ports in the Mediterranean."²⁴ As a result of its overseas trade, there were a large number of foreigners and therefore foreign influences. It was probably the largest slave port in Italy and it also had a large number of freedmen.²⁵ This was a town where there were many chances for making quick profit; opportunities for social mobility were plentiful. The epigraphical evidence attests to the numerous social opportunities open to ex-slaves.²⁶

Despite its foreign influences, Puteoli was quite Roman in a number of respects. It had received an Augustan colony and a number of its institutions were based on the Roman model. For example, it was divided into *regiones* and had a Forum Augustum with a temple to Mars Ultor.²⁷

Puteoli was not only Rome's principal port and thereby influenced by Rome and foreign traders and slaves, it was also the chief town of Campania.²⁸ As a result, it was part of Campania's social and economic unity and we have evidence of

²³Frederiksen, p.324.

²⁴Frederiksen, p.319.

²⁵Frederiksen, p.322.

²⁶Frederiksen, p.322.

²⁷Frederiksen gives more example of how it was modelled on Rome, p.331.

²⁸Frederiksen, p.321.

there being close ties between Puteoli and Pompeii.²⁹

²⁹See Frederiksen's discussion of the wax tabets found at Murecine, near Pompeii, pp.320-321. These tablets not only give insight into the trade of goods but also show the close ties between the two towns.

Chapter 2

In order to get a clearer idea of the type of house Petronius had in mind for Trimalchio, it is necessary to examine his terms for the various parts of the house. By comparing Petronius' use of these terms to those of his contemporaries, we can arrive at a better understanding of what they mean. Once definitions are established these terms can be identified with reference to excavated houses.

When discussing Trimalchio's house, it is important to remember, as Bagnani points out¹, that Petronius is not necessarily describing an actual house that existed at Puteoli; Trimalchio's house serves as a backdrop which emphasizes his character. As a backdrop it gives the economic and cultural setting, as well as the architectural setting, for Trimalchio and his guests.² That is not to say, however, that Trimalchio's house is merely a fanciful creation of Petronius' imagination. Petronius is describing a type of house that existed in his day; a type of house his audience would be familiar with and a type of house with which a person like Trimalchio would be associated.³

Puteoli lies under the modern Italian town of Pozzuoli and therefore it is difficult to find parallels in the houses there. We can, however, look for parallels in the houses at Pompeii. The volcanic eruption of A.D. 79 preserved a good number of houses which date to the time of Petronius. It is,

¹Bagnani, "House of Trimalchio", *AJP* 75, 1954, p. 17.

²S. De Maria "Dati sull'Architettura ed Aspetti del Paesaggio Urbano nel *Satyricon* di Petronio," *Studi in Onore di Ferrante Rittatore Vonwiller*, Como, 1980, p.142.

³Bagnani, "House of Trimalchio", p. 17.

in my opinion, the best place to look for houses or house features that best correspond to Trimalchio's house. For not only are there a large number of well preserved late Republican and early Imperial houses at Pompeii but the town had close ties with Puteoli and was part of the same social and economic unity.⁴

Can parallels be found in the houses at Pompeii? Perhaps the easiest way to tackle this question is to go feature by feature and compare the ones mentioned in the text to the ones which have been excavated at Pompeii.

Porticus

Trimalchio boasts of having two *porticus marmoratos* (77.4) that is, two marble porticoes. A *porticus* can refer to a number of things: a colonnade; a gallery; a porch; and a piazza. Cicero uses the word *porticus* to refer to the colonnade at his brother's villa (*Q.fr.*3.1.1). Juvenal also uses this word to refer to a roofed colonnade (7.178). Petronius, Cicero and Juvenal are all referring to colonnades in private houses. It is likely that they are referring to peristyle colonnades which surround a courtyard on three or four sides.

At Pompeii peristyles became a common luxury from the third century B.C. on.⁵ The peristyles were added to the characteristically Etrusco-Italic atrium house. The back wall of the *tablinum*, which was usually directly across the internal courtyard (the *atrium*) from the entrance and was the room where the master of the house met his clients, was opened up to the peristyle. Sometimes the *tablinum* was omitted

⁴M. Frederiksen, *Campania*, London, 1984, pp.320-321.

⁵A. Boethius, *Etruscan and Roman Architecture*, London, 1970, p.74.

altogether and the peristyle opened directly off the *atrium*. The peristyles often had a garden in the centre and a variety of rooms could open off it overlooking the garden, such as dining rooms, banqueting halls, *exedra*, libraries, bedrooms, living rooms and service areas.⁴

In Pompeii there are a number of houses which have more than one peristyle colonnade. The Casa del Fauno (Fig.1) has two peristyle courtyards. The first peristyle garden (36) has been dated to the early second century B.C..⁵ It is a rectangular peristyle, seven Ionic columns by nine, with a garden in the center. In the center of this garden there is a small pool with an ornamental vase.⁶ Opening onto this peristyle was a dining-room (*triclinium*) (35) and an *exedra* (37) which was separated from the peristyle by two columns. It was in this *exedra* that the famous Alexander mosaic was found.⁶ The second peristyle (39) is rather spare; eleven doric columns by thirteen. Dining rooms also open off of it; an *oecus* (banqueting hall) (42) and a *triclinium* (25). There is one extra *ianua*, or entrance, with a *cella ostiarii* (46) and gardener's rooms.

The Casa del Citarista, one of the largest houses in Pompeii, has three peristyles with a variety of rooms and *exedrae* opening onto them.¹⁰ The Casa dei Vettii has two peristyles. One is a large peristyle garden which is entered through the main hall, *atrium*, of the house which has been

⁴A. Boethius (1970) p.154-5.

⁷ A. De Vos and M. De Vos, *Pompei, Ercolano, Stabia*, Roma, 1982, p.162.

⁸W. F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*, New York, 1979. p.33.

⁹See De Vos and De Vos, p.164 for more detailed descriptions.

¹⁰De Vos and De Vos, p.86.

considered typical of the prosperous merchant class.¹¹ In the northeast corner there is an entrance to a small garden with a peristyle on three sides. Looking on to this garden are two rooms, one of which appears to be a *triclinium*, the other is smaller but could also be a dining room. So it would seem that Trimalchio's house is not unusual in the number of its *porticus*.

Trimalchio modifies his description of his two *porticus* with the adjective *marmoratos*. *Marmoratos* is the accusative plural masculine of the past participle of the verb *marmoro*, *avi*, *atum*. According to Lewis and Short this verb means I) to overlay or incrust with marble, i.e. pave with stones or II) to make a kind of plaster out of marble ... hence *marmoratum*, i, n., a covering for walls or floors made of pounded marble and lime.¹²

From this definition we can assume that Trimalchio means either that the floor of the *porticus* was paved in marble, or that there was marble veneer in the *porticus*, or that the columns were covered with marble stucco; but that is as specific as the text gets.

We do see marble used in the houses of Pompeii in the ways mentioned above. *Opus sectile* is a type of marble pavement that is found at Pompeii. It consists of different coloured marbles cut into various shapes and arranged on floors, walls and table tops in decorative patterns. *Opus sectile*, although more common in Herculaneum, is rare in Pompeii and is usually found in the middle of *triclinia* floors.¹³

Marble facing on the columns or marble panelling in the

¹¹Jashemski (1979), p.21.

¹²Lewis and Short a Latin dictionary, 1907.

¹³Richardson, p.432.

walls of the porticus were also options open to Trimalchio.¹⁴ Trimalchio could also be referring to the stucco on his columns and on the walls of his *porticus*. Vitruvius (VII.3.6-7) recommends, for a good quality stucco 7 coats, the last 3 coats were to be of plaster with sand and marble. He describes how splendid the columns would be when they were polished and the colour was laid on with the last coat. The columns of Cicero's brother's *porticus* were also polished and stuccoed (*Q.fr.3.1.1.*). Many of the walls in Pompeii had painted plaster walls and we can see an example of stuccoed columns in the large peristyle in the Casa dei Vettii.¹⁵

The text gives us no clue as to which one of these Trimalchio had. He may have had all three. In my opinion a man as ostentatious as Trimalchio would have chosen marble facing or veneer. Marble in a private house was considered to be extravagant.¹⁶ Trimalchio's use of marble would attest to his wealth.

Cenatio

At 77.4 Trimalchio also boasts of having 4 *cenationes*. *Cenatio* means dining room or dining hall. At least two of Trimalchio's dining-rooms are *triclinia* (73.5). As I plan to discuss dining-rooms in my next chapter, I will merely comment on the number of dining rooms here.

That Trimalchio has more than one dining-room is not surprising; many Pompeian houses had more than one dining-

¹⁴J. P. Adam, *La Construction Romaine*, Paris, 1989, p.247-8.

¹⁵Jashemski (1979) p.35.

¹⁶A. Wallace-Hadrill, "The Social Structure of the Roman House," *PBSR LVI*, 1988, p.64-66 - Boethius, p.156

room.¹⁷ A house might have a winter and a summer dining-room or several dining-rooms that took into account not only the weather but the size of the dinner party.¹⁸ The Casa di Meleagro apparently has 6 dining-rooms and banquet halls,¹⁹ as does the Casa dei Vettii.²⁰ So it would seem that the number of *cenationes* in Trimalchio's house is not unusual.

susum cenationem

In the same passage (77.4) Trimalchio mentions an upstairs feature. What exactly he has upstairs is not entirely clear as the different manuscripts do not agree. It could be a *cenatio* (that is another dining-room), a *cellatio* (a row of little rooms), or even a *lavatio* (a bathroom). *Cellatio* is less likely since the word appears nowhere else in Latin.²¹

A number of the houses at Pompeii had second storeys. In the Casa di Meleagro, there are two staircases. One is in one of the rooms flanking the entrance. It seems to have led to a store room upstairs.²² Perhaps this is what is meant by *cellatio*. There is a second story *cenaculum*, or loggia, over

¹⁷Richardson, p.240

¹⁸Bagnani, "The House of Trimalchio," p.18; Vitruvius VI.iv.1.

¹⁹See E. La Rocca, A. De Vos and M. De Vos, *Guida Archeologica di Pompei*, Verona, 1976, p.287, and Richardson, p.319 for description.

²⁰See La Rocca, De Vos and De Vos, p.269, and Richardson, p.324-32, for description.

²¹See M.S. Smith, *Cena Trimalchionis*, Oxford, 1979, p.210.

²²Richardson, p.319.

the *tablinum* or over the Alexander *exedra*. The suburban Villa dei Misteri also had a second storey *loggia*²⁴. For the most part, the second storeys in Pompeii did not survive as well as first storeys but it is entirely likely that some contained a *cenatio*.²⁵

Cubicula

Trimalchio also tells us that he has *viginti* (twenty) *cubicula*. A *cubiculum* can be a bedroom or a room to rest and recline in. It can also be a more intimate room to carry out business and to meet people.²⁶ Pliny the Younger refers to *cubicula* for day and night use (*Ep.*1.3.1). He also mentions that in one of his villas there is a large *cubiculum* which could also be used as a *modica* (moderate-sized) *cenatio* (*Ep.*2.17.10).

It is difficult to define a *cubiculum* precisely. It doesn't seem to correspond directly to our word "bedroom". Trimalchio, however, in the same passage does modify one *cubiculum* with *in quo ipse dormio* ("in which I myself sleep"). It isn't certain whether this *cubiculum* should be counted with the twenty *cubicula* mentioned above.

Cubicula in Pompeian houses could be very richly decorated. For example, in the Casa di Pinarius Cerialis there is a modest *cubiculum* which is illusionistically enlarged by the grandiose theatrical decorations on the walls painted in 4th style. These centre on the mythological

²³Richardson, P.126.

²⁴Richardson, p.172.

²⁵J.P. Adam, p.333. The Roman word for a second storey, *cenaculum*, derives from the earlier Roman practice of eating in the upper storey.

²⁶Wallace-Hadrill, p.92-3.

character Iphigenia.²⁷ Depending on one's definition of *cubiculum* and *cenatio*, rooms 5, 28, 31, 32, 10, 8, 10, 13 and 15 of the Casa del Fauno (fig. 1) seem to be *cubicula*. These are on the ground floor only so there would have been more on top.²⁸ In all there could have been 10-15 *cubicula*. In the suburban Villa dei Misteri, there are at least 6 *cubicula* not including the two *diaetae* which had generous windows and alcoves for couches or beds, and this is only the first floor.²⁹ It would seem that Trimalchio has a relatively large number of *cubicula*.

Cella Ostiarii

The *cella ostiarii* (77.4) can be translated as the doorman's room. At Pompeii the *cellae ostiariorum* are often found, not surprisingly, next to the house entrance, or even constructed as part of the entrance. There is a very good example of a *cella ostiarii* at the Casa del Fauno (fig.1, 46). As one enters the small vestibule leading into the second peristyle from the street, and just to the left, there is a small room which is part of the entrance itself, a room fit for an *ostiarius* ("hall porter" or "doorman").

Sessorium

At 77.4 Trimalchio says he has a *sestorium viperae huius* ("a *sestorium* for this viper"). *Sestorium* is an uncommon word. It can mean a stool or a chair, or a habitation,

²⁷La Rocca, De Vos, p.133

²⁸Casa del Fauno (La Rocca, De Vos and De Vos, p.264-267)

²⁹(21,20,19,3,46,47) (Richardson p.355-359) See also La Rocca, De Vos and De Vos for plan.

dwelling.³⁰ Petronius text provides the only example of this word being used to refer to a habitation. In my opinion, "sitting-room" might be an appropriate translation since *sestatorium* comes from the verb *sedeo* ("to sit"). This could mean that Trimalchio's wife Fortunata (to whom *viperæ* refers) has her own *cubiculum*, as Trimalchio does. In the Casa dei Vettii there is a service quarter which is surrounding an *atrium*. In the south-east corner of the atrium there are stairs leading to a gallery that gives onto a nicely decorated room. Richardson suggests that this room was a women's sitting-room from which the lady of the house could supervise the house work.³¹ In the Casa di Meleagro, there is a room which opens onto part of the service area. This room had mosaic floors and wall paintings on polished white plaster walls. Richardson points out, this room is too elegant to be part of the service area. He suggests that this is a morning room.³² I, however, would like to suggest that it is a *sestatorium*.

Hospitium

Hospitium in this case seems to mean guest quarters. Trimalchio tells us that his *hospitium* could hold 100 guests (*hospites*), although it is important to remember that the [C] ("one hundred") was added.³³ Without the [C] it would just say a *hospitium* that holds guests.

Hospitium is not commonly used to refer to guest

³⁰Lewis and Short give the translation as "habitation" but cite Petronius 77.4 as the only example of this translation.

³¹Richardson, p.325

³²Richardson, p.319

³³See text in M. S. Smith, p.49 and note on p.210.

quarters. It more usually refers to an inn or hospitality. Cicero seems to be using the word *hospitium* to refer either to guest quarters or an inn in *De Senectute* 84. He writes, ...*et ex vita ita discedo tamquam ex hospitio, non tamquam e domo*;...("and so I leave life as if it were a guest house (or inn) and not a home")

At the Casa di Panza there are small independent complexes along the east side of the house. These each have a small atrium off which five or six small rooms open. The largest of these complexes communicates with the house.³⁴ Perhaps this is what Trimalchio means by a *hospitium*. A separate complex for guests which is still in communication with the house. It seems that a *hospitium* that could hold a hundred guests would be very large indeed. But then Trimalchio was very rich.

At the end of 77.4 Trimalchio tells us that his house has many other features to recommend it (*multa alia sunt*).

Piscina

We know that in the centre of one of his peristyles is a *piscina*. At 72.7 Encolpius and Ascyltus are being lead through the courtyard to the *ianua* (door) through which they first entered. They are so surprised by a chained dog that Ascyltus falls into the *piscina*. *Piscina* could refer to a fish pond or a pool. It is more likely, however, that *piscina* means pool here.

Martial uses the word to refer to a swimming pool in a public bath (3.44.12-13). Pliny talks about an ornamental *piscina* at one of his villas which is a pleasure to see and to hear (*piscinam...strepitu visuque iucundam*) (*Ep.* 5.6.23). Pliny's use of the word seems to be closer to Petronius use

³⁴Richardson, p.123.

since both writers are talking about *piscinae* in private homes.

Piscinae, that is ornamental pools, were often found in the centre of porticoed gardens. In the time of Augustus, the aqueduct was added to Pompeii. This allowed more water to be available for gardens. Thus pools and fountains were introduced into the gardens.³⁵

In Pompeii, *piscinae* could come in a variety of shapes: square, rectangular, round and semicircular. They also came in a variety of sizes.³⁶ As mentioned above, the Casa del Fauno had a small pool in the centre of its first peristyle. In the Casa di Meleagro (VI.ix.2) there is a large pool (3.55 x 5.73 x 1.77 m) in the peristyle garden. This pool took advantage of the increase in the availability of water. In the centre a jet of water rose and another one cascaded down the eight little steps at the west end of the pool. The size and depth of the pool suggested to some that this pool contained fish.³⁷ At one point the Casa di Citarista had a very large pool in the middle peristyle. It was 10.8 x 3.5 x 1.4 m deep. It was later filled in and a smaller semicircular marble pool was made.

Bybliothea

Trimalchio tells us that he has two *bybliothecae* (48.4). *Bybliothea* can refer to either a collection of books, or a bookshelf, or a library. The text gives no clues as to which

³⁵W.M.F.Jashemski, "The Campanian Peristyle Garden", *Ancient Roman Gardens*, W.M.F.Jashemski and E.B. MacDougall (eds.), Washington, 1981, p.39

³⁶Jashemski (1979), p.34.

³⁷Description p.33 Jashemski (1979); Richardson, p.320.

of these meanings Petronius had in mind.

Pliny the Younger (*Ep.*2.17) says that he has an *armarium* ("cupboard") inserted into the wall like a *bibliotheca*, which could refer to a library or a bookshelf. Whereas Vitruvius (6.4.1) definitely sees *bibliothecae* as separate rooms within a house. Considering Trimalchio's wealth and ostentation, it seems likely that he is talking about two rooms that serve as libraries.

I believe that Trimalchio is referring to a library, that is, a special room set aside as a library. It seems that there is a library in the Casa del Menandro. There is a room off the peristyle with a second style pavement. This pavement marked where large pieces of furniture were to go. The furniture was replaced with shelving and some scholars believe that this room is a library.³⁸

Balneum

Balneum means either bath, bathroom or bath suite. What we know about Trimalchio's *balneum* from the text is that in the same room there is a *labrum* which the dinner guests are running around (73.4), and a *solium* big enough for two (73.5), since Encolpius and Ascyltus soak in at the same time. We also know that it used to be a *pistrinium* ("bakery") (73. 2).

Vitruvius relates that Archimedes discovered the displacement of water while he was in the *balineum*, soaking in a *solium* (9.10). Vitruvius is using the words in the same way as Petronius, with *balineum* (an alternative spelling for *balneum*) meaning a bath house, or suite, and *solium* meaning a bathtub. Cicero writes to Atticus that he is preparing his *balineum* for guests (*Att.* 2.3.4).

In the early imperial period, private baths became more common. It was quite common for a private bath to have more

³⁸Richardson, p.160.

than one room.³⁹ The bath in the Casa del Fauno had two rooms, an *apodyterium* ("dressing-room") and a *caldarium* ("hot room"). The Casa del Labirinto, on the other hand had a three room *balneum* consisting of an *apodyterium*, a *tepidarium* ("warm room") and a *caldarium*. There are a large number of two and three room *balnea* in Pompeii. A *balneum* might only have two rooms, one is almost certainly a *caldarium*.⁴⁰

Only one room of Trimalchio's *balneum* is mentioned. It contains a *labrum* and a *solium* and I would assume that Encolpius is describing the *caldarium*, since both these are found in connection with the *caldarium*.⁴¹ A *labrum* is a low basin on a pedestal often placed in an apsidal niche with a window. These basins could be made out of stone or metal, they are often made of bronze or marble. Vitruvius tells us (5.10.4) that the *labrum* in public baths stands in a *schola* ("waiting area") with enough room for the bathers to stand around it. A *solium* is a bathtub, much like present day bathtubs.⁴² It would be the tub in which one would immerse oneself or soak. The *solium* could be built into *caldarium* or movable.

There are a number of *balnea* at Pompeii that have both a *labrum* and a *solium* in the *caldarium*. For example, the Casa del Centurio and the Casa del Menandro both seem to have *balnea* similar to Trimalchio's.

The *balneum* of the Casa del Centurio was renovated in the last phase of Pompeii, that is, after the earthquake of

³⁹Richardson, p.399.

⁴⁰E. Fabricotti, "I bagni nelle prime ville romane," *Cronache Pompeiane* II, 1976, discusses the private bath suites at Pompeii in detail.

⁴¹I. Nielsen, *Termae et Balnea: the Architecture and Cultural History of Roman Public Baths*, Aarhus, 1990, pp.157-158.

⁴²Nielsen, p.157.

A.D.62. In the *caldarium* there are two niches; a apsidal one for the *labrum* and a rectangular one for a movable *solium*. This *caldarium* shares a wall, and heat, with the *culina* ("kitchen"). The *balneum* of the Casa del Menandro is late Republican or early Imperial. At the time of the eruption it was being renovated.⁴³ The *solium* was built into a platform in a niche and therefore was permanently in its place. There was a semicircular niche for the *labrum*. The text does not give us any clue as to whether Trimalchio's *solium* was movable or not. We can guess, however, that it was a *solium* made for one person to soak in, and that Trimalchio's is quite large.⁴⁴ At 73.3 the text has Encolpius and Ascyltus soaking in a *solium* which had been prepared for Trimalchio himself.

Pompeian baths are usually near or attached to kitchens. This allowed one furnace to be used for both heating the baths and cooking.⁴⁵ Although we cannot tell where Trimalchio's *balneum* and *culina* (kitchen) are, it is likely that they are near to each other.

Culina

Culina is a term which refers to the kitchen. Only one mention is made of the *culina* in Petronius' text. At 47.13 the cook goes to the kitchen to cook a pig. Vitruvius says that, in a farmhouse, the *culina* should be built near the bath. Martial also uses the word to mean kitchen (3.2.1-5).

Houses at Pompeii often had kitchen courtyards. For

⁴³Fabricotti, p.88-89.

⁴⁴Most of the *solium* seem to be about the same size as our bathtubs.

⁴⁵Richardson, p.399.

example, the Casa di Meleagro had a kitchen courtyard with a hearth platform.⁴⁶ In the Casa dei Vettii there is a service quarter arranged around an *atrium*. In the northwest corner of the atrium there is an entrance to a kitchen courtyard which has a large hearth.⁴⁷ The examples of kitchen courtyards are too numerous to list here.⁴⁸

Atrium

It is surprising that, although Petronius mentions an *atriensis* (presumably a slave in charge of the *atrium*), he never mentions an *atrium*. The atrium-house was the standard house of wealthy Romans down to the first century B.C.. The *atrium* had been the physical and social center of Roman houses.⁴⁹ According to Bagnani, we should consider the *in medio* at 29.9 as a reference to the *atrium*.⁵⁰ It is entirely plausible that this is a reference to the atrium. In fact it is possible that the word "*atrium*" was contained in this passage as parts of the passage are missing. But it is also possible that Trimalchio's house did not have an *atrium*.

In the late Republican/early Imperial period life began to be centered around the peristyle. As mentioned above, aqueducts gave a greater availability of water for gardens. This led to ornate pools and fountains in the peristyles of

⁴⁶Richardson p.319.

⁴⁷Richardson p.325.

⁴⁸ For example, Richardson: Casa della Nozze d'Argento, p.156; Casa del Fauno, p.124; Villa dei Misteri, p.173, p.357. All of these kitchen courtyards are located near or adjoining balnea.

⁴⁹ J.B.Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture*, Harmondsworth, 1981, pp.185-6; Boethius, p.154.

⁵⁰Bagnani, "The House of Trimalchio," p.19-20.

houses. The *atrium* started to lose its importance and eventually was reduced to a mere light well and corridor.⁵¹ In Pompeii we can see the effect of this trend on a number of houses. In many houses, for example the Casa dei Vettii, the *tablinum*, once a very important room in the *atrium*, reduced to an entrance to the peristyle or even omitted altogether. The *atrium* loses so much importance that it can even be omitted, as in the Casa di Iasone.⁵²

Floor Plan

We cannot tell the floor plan of Trimalchio's house from the text. The text, however, does imply that the guests enter into the peristyle and walk around it until they arrive at the dining-room (29.5-30.1). This peristyle seems very large. At 29.5 the painting at the end of the peristyle (*in deficiente porticu*) and at 29.6 Encolpius says that there is a group of runners and their trainer in the *porticus*. It would seem that he means Trimalchio's real *Porticus* and not one painted on the wall. The implication that the guests have passed through the entrance and straight into the peristyle is reinforced at 72.7-10 when Encolpius, Ascyltos, and Giton try to leave the party. Giton leads the other two "*per porticum*" (through the peristyle) to the same door through which they had entered.

That there is more than one entrance shouldn't surprise us. A number of houses at Pompeii have more than one entrance; for example, the Casa del Fauno and the Casa del Citarista. A number of houses, like the Villa dei Misteri, also had an entrance leading directly onto the peristyle. In the entrance to the Casa del Fauno there is an *ostiarii cella* and if one walks around the peristyle, one will reach a

⁵¹Ward-Perkins (1981), p.186.

⁵²See Richardson, p.223.

dining-room.

Cusuc to Templum

At 77.4 Trimalchio also tells us that his house used to be a *cusuc*, but now it is a temple. A *cusuc* could be translated as a hut.⁵³ At 73.2 he tells us that his *balneum* used to be a *pistrinum* (a bakery). It would seem that Trimalchio took a smaller house and added on to it and he incorporated other buildings into the renovations. This was not unheard of at Pompeii. As has been noted above, the Casa dei Fauno was added on to the peristyles at later times. The Casa di Citarista was originally two houses. In the first century B.C. it was combined to make one of Pompeii's larger houses. There is some evidence that the inhabitants of the Casa del Citarista were of servile origins like Trimalchio.⁵⁴ The Casa di Spurio Messoro was "clearly put together from bits and pieces of other buildings".⁵⁵

⁵³See M. S. Smith, p. 209.

⁵⁴De Vos and De Vos, p.86-87.

⁵⁵Richardson, p.222

CHAPTER 3

Most of the action in the *Cena Trimalchionis* takes place in *triclinia*. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to discuss the dining-room in more detail. As in the last chapter, it is best to look to the text for references to the dining-rooms first, then to compare these with the remains from Pompeii.

Cenatio

At 77.4, Trimalchio tells us that he has four *cenationes*. *Cenatio* means a dining-room or dining-hall. As mentioned above, in the last chapter, Pliny the Younger refers to a large *cubiculum* which could be used as a moderate-sized *cenatio* (*Ep.*2.17.10). Seneca talks about the trend of cooking in the *cenatio*, which was popular in his day (*Ep.*78.23). Juvenal, in explaining how much money a man will spend on his house, describes the luxury of *cenationes*, with pillars of African marble, and built to catch the winter sun (7.183). These references seem to indicate that a *cenatio* can be big or small, modest or lavish. A *triclinium*, of which Trimalchio has two (73.5), is a particular type of *cenatio*. As the name implies, a *triclinium* has three couches; two couches parallel to one another and the third joining them to make a U-shape. Trimalchio evidently includes the two *triclinia* when he mentions his four *cenationes* in 77.4 since he does not mention his two *triclinia* when he is talking about how grand his house is.

Dining and Dining-rooms

The main meal of the day was the *cena*. Formal *cenae* could start at about three o'clock in the afternoon and last until late at night.¹ During the *cena*, Romans reclined on dining-couches to eat. They are lying at an angle, with one elbow supported by a cushion.² Trimalchio and his guest are doing the same since at 31.3 the narrator says *discubuimus*, "we reclined".

Wealthy Romans often had more than one dining-room in their houses. A house could have different dining-rooms for different seasons. Vitruvius recommends that winter dining-rooms face west, spring and fall dining-rooms face east, and summer dining-rooms face north (VI.iv.1 - 2). There could also be dining-rooms for different occasions. For example, large banqueting-halls for formal and more public dinners, and small dining-rooms for more intimate dinners.³ Pliny describes that his Tuscan villa has a *cenatio* for everyday use and for dining with close friends. He also has a *triclinium* for larger, more formal dinners (Ep.5,6,19-23). Dining-rooms could have different numbers of couches. Outdoor dining-rooms were common in Pompeian gardens.⁴ These outdoor dining-rooms often have masonry couches. Wooden couches were also used outside, but few of these have been found.⁵ In addition to *triclinia*, a number of *biclinia*, with two couches, instead of three, have been found, and a *stibadium*, a semi-circular couch, has also been found.⁶ Some outdoor dining-rooms had

¹U. E. Paoli, *Rome: Its People, Life and Customs*, Bristol, 1963, p.97.

²Paoli, p.94.

³K. M. D. Dunbabin, in *Dining in a Classical Context*, Ann Arbor, 1991, p.124.

⁴Dunbabin, p.124.

⁵See Jashemski (1979), p.346, note 1.

⁶*Ibid.*

special water effects. In the Casa Dell' Efebo there is a *nymphaeum* fountain at the back and water runs between the couches of a *biclinium*. Water also runs between the couches of the outdoor *biclinium* in the Casa di Loreio Tiburtino.⁷ As we can see from the remains at Pompeii, there were a great variety of dining-room designs that Trimalchio had to choose from. We cannot know whether Trimalchio had an outdoor *triclinium* or *biclinium*, nor can we tell the size of his *cenationes*. The text does not make it clear. We do know, however, that two of the four *cenationes* were *triclinia*. (see above)

Trimalchio's Triclinia

Petronius does not give us a detailed description of the two *triclinia* in which Encolpius dines at Trimalchio's. We can, however, tell a few things about the first *triclinium* in the text. For example, we know that it is large. In addition to Encolpius and his friend Ascyltus (with Giton acting as their slave), there are twelve guests, excluding Habinnas and Scintilla who are late comers and Trimalchio's wife, Fortunata, who does not join the party until Habinnas and Scintilla arrive. We also know it is large enough for a group of musicians to play in, but we cannot tell the size of this group (34.1 and 36.1). In fact it is large enough for a variety of entertainment to take place. At 36.1 four dancers (*tripudiantes*) run in to the dining-room to help serve the food. At 53.11 acrobats arrive to entertain the guests. There are at least two acrobats; a man and a boy. The boy climbs a ladder and jumps through a flaming hoop. At 59.3 a

⁷Dunbabin, p.124; Casa Dell' Efebo, Jashemski (1979), p.92-93; Casa Di Loreio Tiburtino, E. Salza Prina Ricotti, "Forme Speciali di Triclini", *Cronache Pompeiane*, V, 1979, pp.105-130.

group of actors enters to perform scenes from Homer.⁸ This *triclinium* is also large enough for each guest to have his own table (34.5). The text implies that all of these people and activities are contained within the *triclinium* which is shut off from the rest of the house by *valvae*, or double folding doors.

In the *triclinia* of Pompeii, the movable couches were made of wood and other materials that rarely survived." Therefore, *triclinia* are identified by their layout, by the wall paintings and pavements, or by cuttings in the walls for dining couches.¹⁰ In the outdoor *triclinia* which remain it is usual for each of the three masonry couches to be large enough for 3 diners, thus the *triclinia* could hold nine people.¹¹ The identifiable indoor *triclinia* of Pompeian houses are normally only large enough for one set of couches that would hold a total of nine diners and only one table in the middle for all diners.¹²

There are, however, a few larger dining-rooms at Pompeii. The Casa del Labrinto (VI.11.9/10) and the Casa del Meleagro each have a room very like the Corinthian *oecus* described by Vitruvius (VI.iii.9), which has an internal row of columns along three sides. The Casa della Nozze d'Argento has a tetrastyle *oecus* with a vaulted ceiling over the central area. According to Richardson, this room is clearly a dining-room. He says that the architecture, decoration and pavement define the area for service and entertainment in the lobby in front

⁸See C.P. Jones, "Dinner Theater" in *Dining In A Classical Context*, pp.185-198, for a detailed analysis of the various performances at Trimalchio's *cena*.

⁹Dunbabin, p.123.

¹⁰See Dunbabin, p.121; See Dunbabin p.138, note 13. In the Casa dei Dioscuri (iv.9.6/7) there are cuttings for couches.

¹¹Jashemski (1979), p.90.

¹²Dunbabin pp.123-124; 6m X 4m is a maximum size for *triclinia*.

of the area for the dining couches.¹³ The *oecus* of the Casa del Labrinto measures 6.70m X 6.80m; the one of the Casa del Meleagro measures 6.57m X 5.82m and the Casa della Nozze d'Argento's *oecus* measures 10.75m X 5.28m. Dunbabin points out that in all three rooms the distance between the columns is not very great and leaves only ca. 4m X 3.5m for the couches.¹⁴ The text of Petronius, however, does not mention any columns within the *triclinia*.

In the Casa del Menandro (1.10.4) there is a very large rectangular room without an internal colonnade.¹⁵ It measures 11.5m X 7.6m but there is no indication of the layout of the couches so it is possible that the room had other functions.¹⁶ At the Casa dei Dioscuri there is a large room at the east end of the peristyle which measures 9m X 7.5m. Dunbabin suggests that this room could have been a Cyzicene *oecus*. Like the Cyzicene *oecus* described by Vitruvius (VI.3.10) it is large enough to hold two sets of couches facing one another, but it seems more likely that this room had one *triclinium* which faced onto the peristyle.¹⁷

Although Petronius does not refer to Trimalchio's dining-room as an *oecus*, (not many Latin authors do), the decorations in a number of the rooms which are similar to the *oeci* described by Vitruvius indicate that they were used for dining with three couches. The large size of Trimalchio's dining-room would suggest that it is comparable to some of the large *oeci* found at Pompeii. *Oecus*, the Latin version of the Greek οἶκος, is a word only found in Vitruvius and Pliny. *Oecus* can

¹³Richardson, p.156.

¹⁴Dunbabin 124, see p.138, note 18 for the measurements.

¹⁵Largest at Pompeii, Dunbabin, p. 124.

¹⁶See Dunbabin, p.139, note 19.

¹⁷Dunbabin, p.139, note 20.

refer to a large hall in a house. Of the Corinthian, tetrastyle and Egyptian *oeci*, Vitruvius says that they have the same proportions as a *triclinia*, but are more spacious (VI.3.8). In his description of the Egyptian *oecus*, Vitruvius says it resembles a *basilica* more than a *triclinium* (VI.3.9). Thus Vitruvius seems to assign the same function to both words - that of a dining-room with three couches.

Camera and Lacunaria

Petronius refers to the ceiling of Trimalchio's *triclinium* as a *camera* (40.1). He also refers to the ceiling of Trimalchio's bath as a *camera* (73.3). Both Vitruvius (5.10.3) and Seneca (*Ep.* 86.6) refer to the arched or vaulted ceilings of a bath house as *camerae*. Cicero speaks of the *camerae* at his brother's villa (*Q.fr.*3.1.1) needing to be changed and Pliny the Elder uses the word *camera* to describe the ceiling of a furnace which is presumably arched (*Nat.* 34.101). It would seem that *camera* refers to a vaulted or arched ceiling.

The ceiling of Trimalchio's house has *lacunaria* which can be moved. At 60.1-3 the *lacunaria* open and gifts for the dinner guests are lowered into the dining-room. *Lacunar* is used to refer to ceilings or ceiling panels by a number of Latin authors. Cicero relates that Dionysius of Syracuse hung a sword from his *lacunaria* over Damocles' neck. (*Tusc.* 5.62). Vitruvius talks about the *curva lacunaria*, or the curved ceiling panels of the Corinthian *oecus* (VI.111.9). Trimalchio is not the only person recorded in Latin literature to have movable *lacunaria*. According to Suetonius (*Nero* 31), Nero also had movable ceiling panels that could be opened and through which gifts could be dropped onto guests, just like Trimalchio's.

We can see a good example of a dining-room with a vaulted ceiling in the tetrastyle *oecus* of the Casa della Nozze

d'Argento, but there are no surviving examples of movable ceiling-panels over the dining-rooms in Pompeii. Richardson, however, suggests that it is possible that the Corinthian *oecus* in the Casa di Meleagro had such ceiling-panels.¹⁸ The ceiling of this room does not survive, but Richardson points out that Vitruvius states (6.3.9) that Corinthian *oeci* should have arched ceilings (*curva lacunaria*). There are stairs which lead up behind the east wall of this *oecus* which seem to lead to its roof. If the *oecus* has a curved ceiling, then it is unlikely that they lead to a room, as the floor of the second storey room would be curved. He suggests that they may have led to a door or opening in the lunette that would have existed on the back wall from which gifts or flowers could be made to descend on the diners. Boethius, to the contrary, says, "Like the Casa del Labrinto at Pompeii, the Corinthian *oecus* had barrel vaults and side rooms with flat ceilings to allow walking above them under the open sky".¹⁹ Therefore, although we can not know whether the stairs behind the *oecus* in the Casa di Meleagro led to *lacunaria* which could be opened, it is a possibility.

Oecarium

At 30.1 Encolpius says that he and the other guests arrive at the *triclinium* in the first part of which there is a *procurator* receiving accounts (*in cuius parte prima procurator rationes accipiebat*). The dinner guests try to enter the *triclinium* but are stopped by a slave begging them to help him ask for mercy from a certain *dispensator* counting

¹⁸Richardson, p.156.

¹⁹Richardson, pp.155-156.

money in an *oecarium*.²⁰ *Oecarium* is based on the rare Greek diminutive of οἶκος, οἰκᾶριον.²¹

In Pompeii there are numerous examples of banqueting-halls or *triclinia* which communicate with each other and are paired with a smaller room. The smaller rooms are usually right beside the larger dining-rooms. In the villa dei Misteri (fig. 2) there are a couple of these pairings. The *triclinium* with the famous Dionysiac frieze (5) communicates with a smaller room (4), which has two niches for couches at right angles. In order to get from the *tablinum* (2) to the *triclinium*, it is necessary to pass through room 4.²² This pattern can also be seen in the Casa del Fauno (fig. 1). In the second peristyle there is a *triclinium* which opens onto the peristyle. This *triclinium* (25) can also be entered through room 43.²³ The same kind of pairing of a *triclinium* and a smaller room also occurs at the Casa dei Vettii (fig. 3), in the smaller of the two peristyles.²⁴

Richardson calls these smaller rooms attached to larger *triclinia*, which are found in a number of Pompeian houses, "ladies' dining-rooms".²⁵ There is often a niche for one couch

²⁰The text here is corrupt. The editor of the text that I am using, M.S. Smith, prefers *in oecario* at 30.9. Some, however, prefer *in precario*. For example, G. Bagnani and J.C. Dumont, "Le Decor De Trimalchion". I am convinced by M.S. Smith's argument for Heraeus's suggestion of *in oecario*, "Those who keep it *in precario* H are forced to give it the unlikely sense in a place where requests are listened to". p.64

²¹See Liddell and Scott, A Greek - English Lexicon, revised by H.S. Jones, Oxford, 1940

²²Richardson, p.175; La Rocca, p.344.

²³Richardson, p.170; La Rocca, p.264.

²⁴Richardson, p.328; La Rocca, p.269.

²⁵*Ibid.*

as in the Casa della Nozze d'Argento,²⁶ or even two couches as mentioned above in the Villa dei Misteri. Wallace-Hadrill disagrees with Richardson's labeling of these rooms. He considers them to be *cubicula* for the master of the house and his most important, invited, guests. He points out that Roman ladies reclined with their husbands²⁷ and it is important to remember that Fortunata, Trimalchio's wife, was expected to dine with Trimalchio and his guests.²⁸ Whatever the purpose of these smaller rooms attached to the larger *triclinia* or *oeci*, it seems likely to me that they are the same as the *oecarium* in the *parte prima* of the *triclinium* to which Encolpius refers. And, given Vitruvius' use of the word *oecus* as a *triclinium* or banqueting-hall, *oecarium* is an apt name to describe a smaller room connected to it.

Valvae and the Second Triclinium

At 65.3 there is a knock on the doors of the dining-room (*triclinii valvas*). *Valvae* are double or folding doors. Vitruvius talks about the *valvae* of a Cyzicenc *oecus*. Vitruvius tells us that these *oeci* look out onto views and have folding doors in the middle (*valvasque habent in medio*) (6.3.10). When talking about his Laurentine villa, Pliny says that his *triclinium* has *valvae* and windows not smaller than *valvae* all around so that there are three views of the sea

²⁶Richardson, pp.156-157.

²⁷Wallace-Hadrill, p.93, note 147: Wallace-Hadrill says that Richardson is basing his assertion that these smaller rooms beside the larger dining-rooms are "ladies dining-rooms" on a misreading of Isidorus xx.11.9 and Valerius Maximus ii.1.2. Wallace-Hadrill says that these passages recall 'ancestral' Roman habits: "...They used to sit, but now they lie to eat with the men."

²⁸67.1 "*sed narra mihi, Gai, rogo, Fortunata quare non recumbit*"?

from the *triclinium* (Ep. 2.17.5). In Ep. 5.6 19 he also talks about *valvae* in connection to the *triclinium* of his Tuscan villa, and in the same letter (at 5. 6. 38) Pliny describes a *cubiculum* which is extended by *valvae*.

It seems quite common, then, to be able to close the dining-room with these doors. Since these doors were made of wood, little survives of them. There is, however, a house in Herculaneum which has a preserved wooden screen, the Casa del Tramezzo di legno. This wooden screen separated the *tablinum* from the *atrium*. It has two double shutters, or doors, on the right and left; the middle part of the screen was damaged during the excavation and is now missing.²⁹

If Trimalchio's *triclinium* is attached to a smaller room (whether it is a ladies' dining-room or a *cubiculum*) which Petronius calls an *oecarium* because of its proximity to the *oecus* or *triclinium*, it is possible that the whole dining suite is closed off from the rest of the house. The smaller of the two peristyles in the Casa dei Vettii and the dining suite in it can be closed off from the rest of the house by doors, the *valvae*, mentioned at 65.3, could be doing this.

To conclude this examination of Trimalchio's *triclinia* I would like to turn to the other of Trimalchio's *triclinia* in which some of the action the story takes place. Other than the fact that we know it exists because Encolpius says that the diners enter another *triclinium* after they have a bath (*aliud triclinium*, 73.5), we know little about it. All we can say for certain is that it must be large because the same number of guests and slaves that were in the first *triclinium* presumably fit into the second *triclinium*.

²⁹Adam, p. 333.

Chapter 4

Tableware and Dining-Room Furnishings

Since the *Cena Trimalchionis* is the story of a dinner party, it contains a number of references to tableware and furnishings. The *Cena Trimalchionis* can help shed light on the types of tableware and furnishings that were in use in the house of a wealthy Roman in early Imperial times. We must, however, keep in mind that Petronius is writing a comedy and that Trimalchio's tableware and possessions, like his house, are used to illuminate the comic character of the millionaire freedman. In order to examine the contents of Trimalchio's house and compare them to the archaeological remains and writers, I have decided to limit my study to only those objects which are connected with dining or which are part of the dining-room furnishings. Therefore, I have excluded references to religious objects, jewellery, clothes, and gifts for the diners. By limiting my study to dining-room furniture and to objects used for the serving or eating of food, I hope to be able to compare them to the contemporary written accounts and artifacts of the late Republic and early Empire.

Drinking Cups

The *Cena Trimalchionis* contains a number of references to drinking cups. At Trimalchio's table three different words are used to refer to his drinking cups: *calix*; *poculum*; and

scyphus. One of the problems with the ancient sources is that although they might record the function or the decoration of a cup, they do not often describe its shape. Another problem with many of the words concerns how they may have more than one meaning. Thus, it can be difficult to determine what types of vessels Petronius is referring to with the usage of a particular word.

calix, icis, n. a cup, goblet, drinking- vessel; a vessel, dish or pot for food.

Petronius uses this word three times in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. At 52.4 a slave drops a *calix* on the floor. No mention is made of its form, function, or decoration. At 73.5 the narrator describes the *calices* that are laid out in the second dining-room. These *calices* are described as *fictiles inauratis*, that is, ceramic cups overlaid with gold or gilt. At 74.10 Trimalchio throws a *calix* into Fortunata's face. Presumably this *calix* is one of the ones described at 73.5. Although the materials and decoration of some of Trimalchio's *calices* are described at 73.5., Petronius' text does not make explicit the form or function of Trimalchio's *calices*. And at 52.4 we are not even told what material the *calix* is made from. It is possible that Petronius means either a dish or pot for food. Ovid uses the word *calices* with this sense in *Fast.* 5.509. In *Tusc.* 3.19.44 Cicero uses the word *calix* to refer to a drinking-cup.¹

Similarly, Horace (*Sat.* 2.6.68) also uses the word to refer to a drinking vessel (wine-cup), *siccat inaequalis calices conviva*. From the text it is not possible to tell exactly which meaning Petronius intends when he uses the word *calix*. In my opinion, wine-cup seems more likely, considering

¹*huic calix mulsi impingendus est, ut plorare desinat aut aliquid eius modi?*

the amount of drinking Trimalchio and his guests are doing.

Daremburg states that the Latin word *calix* is identical to the Greek κύλιξ, "wine cup".² Hilgers is not sure about this identification and suggests κάλυξ, "the cup of the flower", as a possible root.³

Since the identification of the word *calix* is in some doubt, it is difficult to assign a form to it. There is, however, a painting in the Tomba di Vestorio Prisco, Pompeii, which depicts a set of silver drinking cups on a side-table. Toward the front of this table are two cups that are similar in form to the Greek κύλιξ (fig. 4, a).⁴ It is possible that Petronius means a drinking cup in the form of a Greek κύλιξ when he writes *calix*. An alternative to this form is given by Hilgers who says that it is a deeper handle-less vessel with a short foot (fig. 4, b).⁵ Hilger also, in his plates, the silver vessels from the Casa del Menandro, tentatively identifies the cups which look like *scyphi* but are taller and with a taller foot or stem as *calices* (fig. 4, c).⁶ He also tentatively identifies some of the cups from the Boscoreale treasure as *calices*.⁷ In all three of the above examples, the material for the *calices* is silver, even in the painting. Thus, it is not unlikely that a person such as Trimalchio would have silver *calices* and that the material of the *calix*

²Daremburg, p.850

³W. Hilgers, *Latienische Gefässnamen*, Düsseldorf, 1969, p.44.

⁴ See Hilgers (1969), p.45, fig. 17 for an example of a κύλιξ. A photograph of the painting from the Tomba di Vestorio Prisco can also be found in Hilgers, Plate 5.

⁵Hilgers (1969), fig. 18, p. 45.

⁶Hilgers (1969) Plate 4, 5;6.

⁷Hilgers (1969), Plate 2, 25;26 and 64.

mentioned at 52.4 is silver.

As mentioned above, Trimalchio has *calices fictiles inaurati*. *Fictilis* is an adjective meaning "made of clay." *Inauratus* comes from the verb *inauro*, "to cover with gold." It would appear that Trimalchio has ceramic *calices* with gold decoration applied to them. Although ceramic drinking cups are common, a general search of the literature indicates that no clay cups with gold decorations have been found. There are, however, examples of cups of other inexpensive materials enriched with gold decoration from the early Imperial period. For example, cups were found at Stabia in the Villa di Persio or, otherwise named, the Villa dei Vasi di Ossiana. These cups are of black glass to imitate obsidian and are decorated with an Egyptian motif with inlays of malachite, lapis lazuli, red and white corals and outlined with inlays of gold wire.

Poculum, i n. this word can mean a cup or its content.

In the *Cena Trimalchionis* *poculum* appears twice. At 50.1 Trimalchio gives a *poculum* to the cook. At 52.3 he describes *poculi* which are decorated with the likenesses of gladiators. It would appear that the gladiator *poculi* are silver because at 52.1 Trimalchio says, "*in argento plane studiosus sum*". It is unclear what the *poculum*, which is given to the cook, is made of. It is presented to him on a *lanx corinthia*.

The word *poculum* is used by many other first century A.D. authors to mean drinking-cup. For example, Horace speaks of *ardentis Falerni pocula*, "cups of strong wine" (*Sat.* II, 11, 19). Seneca also uses *poculum* to refer to a wine-cup, *poculum infuso cape gentile Baccho* (*Thy.* 982)."

According to Maria Anecchino, a *poculum* is a one-handled

⁸See also Verg., A. 8.274, Juv. 5.127 and Mart. 9.25.5 for only a few other examples of the word *poculum* used to refer to a drinking-cup by first century A.D. authors.

mug like those found at Pompeii and Herculaneum, which are about 10 to 15 cm high and whose forms vary somewhat.⁹ Hilgers identifies as *poculi* two handleless silver beakers from the Casa del Menandro (fig. 4, d.).¹⁰ There are also surviving examples of cups adorned with gladiator motifs. H. T. Rowel discusses some mold-blown glass cups with gladiator motifs. He points out that, although most might be content with glass, Trimalchio, as an indication of his wealth, has his fashioned in silver.¹¹

Scyphus, i m. A large two-handled drinking vessel, goblet.

The *scyphus* is mentioned a number of times in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. At 52.1 describes silver *scyphi urnales plus minus* decorated with mythological scenes. At 56. 7-8 gift-raffle tickets are passed around to the guests in a *scyphus* and at 54.2 a distressed Fortunata still has one in her hands. Trimalchio calls for *capaciorem scyphum* ("a larger cup") at 65.8.

The word *scyphus* is used by other late Republican and early Imperial writers to mean "drinking-cup". For example Cicero (*Fam.* 7.22), Martial (8,6,11) and Seneca (*dial.* V 14,2; *Ep.* 78, 23) all use *scyphus* to refer to a drinking-cup, particularly a wine-cup. When Trimalchio calls for *capaciorem scyphum* at 65.8, Petronius seems to be echoing Horace (*Epod.* 9.33), *capaciores adfer huc, puer, scyphos et Chia vina*.

The *scyphus* has been identified as a two handled cup

⁹M. Anecchino, "Suppellettile Fittile da Cucina di Pompei," *L'Instrumentum Domesticum di Ercolano e Pompei*, Roma, 1977. p.111; p.116, fig. 2, 17; 2, 18; 2, 19.

¹⁰Hilgers (1969), Plate 4, 25;26.

¹¹H.T Rowel, "The Gladiator Petraites and the Date of the *Satyricon*," *TAPA*, 1958.

with a bowl-shaped body. Often the handles are semi-circular with flat tab-like flanges on the top of the handles, and occasionally on both the top and the bottom of the handles (fig. 5, a.). The *scyphi* can have a low ring-base or a taller foot.¹² The forms of the *scyphus* are distinctive but do vary.¹³ At Pompeii *scyphi* made of ceramic, glass, and silver have been found.

Out of the three types of drinking-cups mentioned in the *Cena Trimalchionis*, only two seem to be used by the diners. We know that Fortunata and Trimalchio are using *scyphi* in the first dining-room, so it is possible to assume that the rest of the diners are also using *scyphi*. The text is ambiguous as to what the cups used by the diners in the first dining-room are made of. We can guess that they could be made of ceramic, or more likely, silver or glass. Silver cups are not uncommon at Pompeii. They come in a variety of forms and with a variety of types of decoration and motifs.¹⁴ Glass *scyphi*, probably from Rome, which date mid to late 1st century B.C., can be found in the Corning Museum of Glass.¹⁵ Ceramic *scyphi* have also been found at Pompeii¹⁶ Thus far ceramic cups with

¹²See D. E. Strong, *Greek and Roman Gold and Silver Plate*, London, 1979, p. 134, Fig. 27, c for a *scyphus* with a foot and Fig. 27, e and f for *scyphi* with ring bases. Hilgers seems not to be sure whether the *scyphi* with taller foot bases should be called *scyphi* or *calices*.

¹³For examples of variations in the forms of *scyphi* see D. E. Strong, *Greek and Roman Gold and Silver Plate* (London, 1979), p. 134, Fig.: c; e; f. See also Hilgers, *Lateinische Gefässnamen* (D'üsseldorf, 1969), p. 76, Figs.: 65; 66; 67; 68.

¹⁴see Strong (1979), p.133.

¹⁵S. M. Goldstein, *Pre-Roman and Early Roman Glass in the Corning Museum of Glass*, Corning (New York), 1979, p.140, 141.

¹⁶see *Instrumentum Domesticum*, tav. X, 22.

gold decoration have not been found at Pompeii. Vessels have been found, however, that suggest that the use of gold, or other precious materials, to decorate a vessel of less costly material was, at least, in practice in the early Empire. Yet, it would seem that this practice was uncommon.

Plates and Trays

As is the case with drinking-cups, Petronius uses a number of words to refer to the plates and trays which are used to serve the food in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. Petronius uses five words to refer to the plates and trays: *lanx*; *promulsidare*; *gustatio*; *paropsis*; and *repositorium*.¹⁷ The most significant problem with these words is that it is difficult to tell some of them apart by the descriptions of their forms or functions. After I discuss the meaning of *lanx*, *promulsidare*, and *gustatio*, I will examine these terms together with respect to possible parallels from artifactual remains.

Lanx lancis. f. A metal dish, plate, tray, charger.

Before the guests arrive at the *triclinium*, at the entrance to the house, they see a slave, the *ostiarius*, cleaning peas in a silver *lanx* (28.8). Whether these peas are for the dinner guests or for the *ostiarius*' own dinner is

¹⁷The word *ferculum* can refer to a dish on which food is served or a course of a meal. Petronius uses this term a number of times: 35.6; 36.2; 39.1; 39.4; 41.9; 60.7; 66.3; and 68.2. In almost all of the cases he uses it to refer to a course and not a piece of tableware. The only time *ferculum* is used to refer to a piece of tableware is at 36.2 ([*scilicet in altero ferculo*]). this, however, appears to be an explanatory gloss. See M.S. Smith, p. 77.

unknown. At 31.10, there are two lances which cover the *asellus Corinthius*. These lances have Trimalchio's name and the weight of the silver inscribed on the rims. There is a *lanx Corinthia*, that is a *lanx* made out of Corinthian bronze, on which a cup is to be given to the cook (50.1). At 59.6 a boiled calf is brought into the dining-room on a *lanx ducenaria* (presumably a *lanx* weighing 200 pounds), and at 70.6 a slave collects shellfish with a *lanx* and passes them around to the guests.

Many Latin authors of the late Republic and Early Empire use the word *lanx* to refer to a tray upon which food is served. For example, Horace uses *lanx* to refer to a tray upon which a boar is served, *curvat aper lances* (*Sat.* 2, 4, 41). Juvenal also uses the word *lanx* to refer to a serving tray (5, 80).¹⁸

Of Trimalchio's lances we can tell for certain that two are made of silver (28.8; 30.10) and that one is made of "Corinthian bronze", and alloy of gold, silver and copper.

gustatorium, ii, n. a dish or tray on which hors-d'oeuvres. *gustatio*, were served.

In the *Cena Trimalchionis* this *gustatorium* is used only once at 34.1, *gustatoria... a choro cantante rapiuntur*. The *gustationes*, the hors d'oeuvres, however, are referred to or implied in a few places in the text. At 31.8 the *gustatio* is brought into the dining-room which includes a *promuisidare* (see below) with an *asellus Corinthius* which carries olives as well as dormice on *ponticuli* and a silver *craticula* with food on it. At 33.3 the dinner guests are still eating the *gustatio* (*gustantibus... nobis*) when a *repositium* with more food is brought in. At

¹⁸See also Mart. 2, 43, 12 and 7, 48, 3; Sen. *Ep.* 119, 5 for the use of the word *lanx* to refer to a tray.

34.1 the *gustatoria* are snatched away and the diners' hands are washed for the next course (34.4).

Gustatorium is not in common usage among Latin writers. It is found in Martial (14, 88), and in Pliny (*Ep.* 5, 6, 37) *gustatorium graviorque cena*. In Pliny's letter he describes a dining-room with a marble basin. The *gustatorium* and the *gravior cena* are placed on the edge of the basin, while the lighter dishes float in the water of the basin. The references above are the only contemporary authors who use this word.

It would seem then, that Trimalchio's *gustatoria* simply refer to all of the trays and dishes used to serve the *gustatio*. Whereas, Pliny's letter seems to suggest that a *gustatorium* is one large tray.

promulsidare, is.n. a tray of dish on which hors-d'oeuvres were served.

Promulsidare is mentioned at 31.9 in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. On a *promulsidare* is an *asellus Corinthis*, a little figure of an ass made of Corinthian bronze, whose saddle-bags are used to serve olives, which are a part of the hors-d'oeuvres.

This is another fairly uncommon word. Few Latin authors use this word, and they wrote some one hundred and fifty years after Petronius.¹⁹ Cicero, however, uses *promulsis, idis, f.* to refer to hors-d'oeuvres. It would seem that *promulsis* and *gustatio* are interchangeable. If this is the case then *promulsidare* and *gustatorium* may also be interchangeable in function and form.

The *lanx* and the *promulsidare* appear to be a trays for carrying food to the table. Whereas Petronius uses *gustatorium* as a general term to refer to the trays and

¹⁹See Ulp. dig. 34.2.19.10 and CIL 10.1598.

dishes of the *gustatio*, there seems to be no clear way of distinguishing them between the *lanx* and the *promulsidare* in Petronius' use of these words. Both words seem to refer to trays by which food is brought to the table.

As mentioned above we can tell from the text that Petronius has some *lances* in silver and at least one *lanx* in Corinthian bronze. One of the *lances* weighs 200 pounds, but we are not told of what material it is made, perhaps we are to assume silver. We are also not told the material of the *promulsidare*. It could be either ceramic, bronze, or silver.²⁰ It seems likely that Trimalchio would have silver *promulsidaria* as well as silver *lances*.

Silver trays are not uncommon at Pompeii and other first century A.D. sites. For example, in the Casa del Menandro a complete service of silver plates was found. Among these is a round silver tray with two handles and diameter of 30 cm.²¹ Another example of a large tray which is dated to the first century A.D. is in Naples. It is a large rectangular silver tray 53.5 cm. long and 35.7 cm. wide.²² A similarly large rectangular silver tray was found in the Hildesheim Treasure.²³ "One exceptionally large and richly decorated dish perhaps of the first century A.D. is the so-called Bizerta dish". Its maximum length is 92 cm, it has two handles, cast separately. It is decorated in gold and electrum inlay and the rim is decorated with Bacchanalian scenes in low relief. The so-called Bizerta dish is one of the largest surviving pieces of Roman silver plate. It dates to the second half of the first

²⁰M. Anecchino, "Suppellettile Fittile da Cucina di Pompei," *Instrumentum Domesticum*, p.110 and fig. 2, 16. For examples of large ceramic trays, c. 70 cm in diameter.

²¹Strong (1979), p.148.

²²Strong (1979), p.154.

²³Strong (1979), p.155.

century A.D. or to the early first second century. Its maximum length is 92 cm. and it weighs 9 kilos.²⁴ These examples show that silver was not an uncommon material for trays in the first century A.D.. Figure 5; b,c, and d, show a few examples of silver trays which have been found at Pompeii.

Corinthian bronze, however is another matter. Corinthian bronze could refer to bronze made at Corinth, a famous centre for the production of bronze, or it could refer to a alloy to which Corinth lent its name. Pliny tells us that Corinthian bronze was an alloy of silver, gold and bronze (*NH* 34.8). According to the literature, it would seem that Corinthian bronze was used in the production of small utensils and statuettes.²⁵ Pliny tells us that it was almost as valuable as gold and more valuable than silver (34.7). Pliny also tells us that Corinthian bronze was discovered by accident when Corinth was burned at the time of its capture in 146 B.C.. Petronius parodys this story at 50.5 when he has Trimalchio say it was discovered when Hannibal captured and burned Troy.

Many Latin authors refer to Corinthian bronzes as valuable collectors items. Cicero condemns Verres greed for Corinthian bronze (*Verr.* 2.2.46, 83, 176; 2.4.1, 51, 98, 131). Pliny mentions that this was a very popular metal and that it was so sought after that Antony had Verres' proscribed because Verres refused to give up some Corinthian ware (*NH* 34.6). Seneca also attests to its popularity (*De brev. vitae* 12.2).

It is possible that Corinthian bronze is simply bronze from Corinth. But Pliny states that it is an alloy of gold,

²⁴Strong (1979), p.149.

²⁵D.M.Jacobson and M.P Weitzman, "What is Corinthian Bronze?" *AJA* 96, 1992, p.238 and p.238, note 9. See also Pliny, *Nat.* 34.7 for references to Corinthian Bronze used for small decorative household items.

silver, and bronze (NH 34.8). In NH 37.49 he mentions how pleasing this bronze is mixed with silver and gold, *In Corinthiis aes placet argento auroque mixtum*. Jacobson and Weitzman point out that not all Corinthian bronze was from Corinth and give literary evidence for a center of Corinthian bronze production at Alexandria.²⁶

No objects made of Corinthian bronze have been found. It could be that vessels of Corinthian bronze have not been recognized as such.²⁷ Debased Roman coins come close to being Corinthian bronze.²⁸ There is a bronze Roman plaque that contains very small amounts of gold and silver.²⁹ Perhaps this is what has survived of Corinthian bronze.

paropsis, idis, f. A dish for serving vegetables, fruit, etc.

Petronius uses this word twice in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. At 34.2 it would seem that on the *gustatoria*, or included under the term *gustatoria*, there are *paropsides* as one of the *paropsides* falls when the *gustatoria* are taken away. It is eventually swept up by a slave who sweeps up the silver along with the rubbish. The sentence at 34.3 (*insectus est <supel>lecticarius argentum que inter reliqua purgamenta*) suggests that the *paropsis* at 34.2 is made of silver. At 50.6 Trimalchio is describing the origins of Corinthian Bronze and describes a number of things made of this material including *paropsides*.

Paropsis is not a very common word. It is found in

²⁶Jacobson and Weitzman (1992), p.245.

²⁷Jacobson and Weitzman (1992), p.246.

²⁸Jacobson and Weitzman (1992), p.246.

²⁹Jacobson and Weitzman (1992), p.245, note 65.

Martial IX 31,18: *sic inplet gabatas paropsidesque....*
 Juvenal uses the word in connection with dining when he says,
"quam multa magnaue paropsides cenat?" (3.142).

If we are to understand that the *paropsis* which falls on the floor at 34.2 is carried on a *gustatorium*, then it would follow that a *paropsis* is smaller than the trays on which they seem to be carried. Perhaps this type of plate is the kind which Trimalchio's guests would eat from. Among the silver tablewares found in the Casa del Menandro there is a series of plates. There is one large serving dish and 16 smaller round plates with flat handles. Four are 16 cm in diameter, four are 11.1 cm, four are 10.1 cm and four are 7.2 cm. It is possible that these smaller dishes are the *paropsides* referred to at 34.2.

repositorium, ii, n. A stand, tray, or waiter on which dishes were brought to the table; a portable stand for serving courses at meals.

This word appears a number of times. At 33.3 a *repositorium* is brought into the dining-room on which is a wooden hen and pastry eggs inside a basket. At 35.2 the *rotundum repositorium* with the 12 signs of the zodiac is brought into the dining-room. At 36.1 the top of the zodiac *repositorium* is removed to reveal a better course underneath. The bottom of this *reporitorium* has figures of Marsyas in the corners (36.3). At 39.3 the top portion of the *repositorium* is called by Trimalchio the *theca, ae, f.*. A *repositorium* is brought in with a huge boar wearing a freedman's cap (40.3). At 49.1 a huge pig on a *repositorium* is brought to the table (*cum repositorium cum sue ingenti mensam sccupavit*). At 50.4, while gifts for the guests are being dropped from the ceiling Encolpius looks back towards the table there is a lacuna and then Latin reads, *Nam illic repositorium cum placentis*

aliquot erat positum...". Presumably, this *repositorium* is placed on or near the table.

This word is used by other contemporary authors. Seneca uses this word to refer to a large tray or a stand for serving food in Ep. 78.24 when he says, "...*nec in repositoio eius pectora avium (totas enim videre fastidium est) congesta ponentur*". Pliny also uses this word (PLIN. NH 28.29: "*bibente conviva mensam vel repositoium tol inauspicatissimum ivdictur*").

No mention is made of the materials used to make Trimalchio's *repositoria*. They could be made of bronze or even silver. If we are to consider the *repositoium* to be a large tray, then presumably it would be like the ones mentioned above under *lanx* and *promulsidare*. If some of Trimalchio's *repositoria* are serving stands on which dishes were taken to the table, then perhaps they are like the folding silver tripod that served as a stand for a large dish which was found in the Hildesheim Treasure.³⁰

Cutlery

cochlear, aris, n. spoon

At 33.6 the dinner guests pick up their *cochlearia non minus selibras pendentia* ("a spoon which weighed no less than half a libra" - a *libra* is a measure of weight equalling twelve Roman ounces, equal to about a 3/4 pound avoirdupois, a pound). They begin to crack the eggs made of pastry which make up the second course of the *gustatio*.

The word *cochlear* is used by a number of contemporary authors to refer to a spoon. Pliny, for example, also uses the word to refer to a spoon that is used for eating eggs

³⁰Strong (1979), p.159.

(Nat. 28.19).³¹

Although there is no evidence of their use at the table before the first century A.D., in the first century A.D. spoons were the only eating utensils in common uses. It appears that there were only two basic types of spoon in use at this time, the *ligula* and the *cochlear*. The *ligula* was a larger spoon with a pear-shaped bowl and the *cochlear* was a smaller spoon with a round bowl which was used for eating eggs and shellfish.³² The *cochlear* had a thin handle which tapered to a simple point, although occasionally the handle was ornamental.³³ According to Strong, even the poorest families had some silver spoons.³⁴ Half a pound of silver for each *cochlear* would make Trimalchio's *cochleria* larger than usual, but then Trimalchio's eggs aren't real eggs.

culter, tri,m. a knife, or short sword.

At 40.5 a slave dressed as a hunter uses a hunting knife (*venatorius culter*) to carve the boar, and at 49.9 the cook cuts open a pig with a *culter*. Trimalchio talks of the *cultri norico ferro* he has bought his cook at 70.3.

Many Latin authors of the early imperial period use the word *culter* to refer to a cutting implement for a number of different purposes. It is used to refer to fighting knives (eg. Seneca *Ep.* 87, 9) and to hunting knives (eg Mart. 4, 35, 4). It is even used to refer to a blade to cut hair (eg Plin. *Ep.* 7, 27, 12). Petronius, however, is not the only Latin author to refer to the *culter* as an implement to cut food. A rather early author to use the word *culter* in this way is

³¹ See also Mart. 8. 33. 24, 8. 71. 10.

³² Strong (1979) p.155.

³³ Strong (1979), p.155, note 3, for example.

³⁴ Strong (1979), p.155.

Plautus. In *Aul.* 417 writes, "*quis culturum habes:: cocum decet*". A little closer to Petronius' time is Varro and he writes *cultro coquinari* (*Men* 197). Both of these writers attest to the use of the *cultus* to prepare food.

Some of Trimalchio's knives are made from Norican iron. Noricum corresponds to modern day Austria. Horace speaks of a Norican sword (*Od.* i 16.9). Presumably, then, iron from Norica was in use in the early Imperial period. Roman knives were usually made of iron and commonly had bronze, wood, or bone handles. They have been found in all sizes.³⁵

Vessels for Serving Food or Drink

amphora, ae, f. a large two-handled earthenware jar for holding wine, oil, etc.

Amphorae show up twice in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. At 34.6 *amphorae vitreae* containing wine are brought to the table. *Vitreus* is an adjective meaning "of glass", so it would follow that Trimalchio has glass *amphorae*. At 70.4 *amphorae* are carried into the dining-room by slaves who had a mock fight during which they break each other's *amphorae* and shellfish pour out.

A number of Latin authors speak of *amphorae* for holding wine. For example, Martial mentions a broken *amphora* which gives off the odour of *nigri Falerni* at 11.8.7. Latin authors also attest to *amphorae* being used for holding other foods. Martial 6.93.6 has them holding *garum* (fish sauce), and both Cato (*agr.* 11.2) and Varro (*Rust* 1.54.2) have them holding grapes.

³⁵J. Liversidge, "Roman Kitchens and Cooking Utensils," *The Roman Cookery Book: a critical translation of The Art of Cooking by Apicius* by B. Flower and E. Rosenbaum (London, 1958), p.35.

We know that some of Trimalchio's *amphorae* are glass (34.6) but no mention is made of the material of the *amphorae* at 70.4. Presumably they are made of clay as we know they are meant to be broken. Metal would be too difficult to break and glass too dangerous.

Many earthenware *amphorae* have been found at Pompeii. In fact, they are the most common ceramic artifact found on Roman Mediterranean sites, both on land and in the sea. The reason for the extremely large number of *amphorae* is that they were used to store and transport common and essential commodities like wine and oil.

Often the contents of an *amphora* can be determined by *tituli picti*, or labels. *Amphorae*, as mentioned above were used to hold wine, oil, *garum* (fish sauce), and fruit. Archaeology has uncovered *amphorae* which were filled with shellfish, a practice Petronius attributed to Trimalchio himself.³⁶

There are a number of types of *amphora* forms that were common in the first century A.D.. They were made all over the Empire and because of the locality of production *amphorae* come in many different forms, too many forms to list here. It is possible that Trimalchio is using locally produced *amphorae*. For example, Peacock and Williams class 7 (Dressel 21-22), is an *amphora* type that had its origins in Italy, possibly in Campania. It has a wide mouth, a broad neck, and a cylindrical body. It is possible that this type of *amphora* was used for containing fruit.³⁷ Another common type of *amphora* which was produced in Campania in the first century A.D. was Peacock and Williams Class 10 (Dressel 2-4) (fig. 6).

³⁶See D. P. S. Peacock and D. F. Williams, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy*, London, 1986, p.17.

³⁷Peacock and Williams (1986), p.96.

It was primarily used for storing and transporting wine.³⁸ Of course, Trimalchio did not necessarily have to use *amphorae* from Italy. But I do not intend to go into a detailed discussion on Trimalchio's earthenware *amphorae* as it is impossible to tell what type they are.

Glass vessels are common enough, but ones in the *amphorae* shape are not very common. One famous example of a glass *amphora* is the Blue Vase. Like the Portland Vase, the Blue Vase is an example of cameo glass. It has opaque white glass over translucent blue glass. The dark blue glass forms a background which contrasts with the white relief decoration. The Blue Vase is 31.7 cm in height and the diameter of the rim is 6.0 cm. It is decorated with cupids engaged in wine-making activities, and with masks surrounded by vines laden with fruit, flowers, and birds.³⁹

The Blue Vase is similar to another opaque blue glass *amphora* found at Herculaneum which is 28.8 cm in height. Both *amphorae* seem to be copies of the Peacock and Williams class 10 (or Dressel 2-4) type of *amphora* which has been mentioned above. The Blue Vase is said to have been found, containing ashes, in a tomb. Although it may have been used as a cinerary urn, it is more likely that it was made for the purpose of serving wine as both the shape and the decoration suggest.⁴⁰

caccabus, im. a cooking pot

In the *Cena Trimalchionis* the cook is using a *caccabus* to

³⁸Peacock and Williams (1986), p.105-106.

³⁹K. Painter and D. Whitehouse, "Early Roman Cameo Glasses," *JGS* 32, 1990, p.138-140.

⁴⁰K. Painter and D. Whitehouse, "Early Roman Cameo Glasses," *JGS* 32, 1990, p. 140-141.

cook in the dining-room (74.5). We are not told what material it is made of.

The word *caccabus* is synonymous with the word *olla*. These are generic terms meaning "cooking pot".⁴¹ Varro attests to this meaning at 1.1.5,127 when he says, "*vas ubi coquebant cibum, ab ea caccabus appellarunt*". It comes as no surprise that Apicius, the author of the only Roman cook-book to survive, uses this word through out his text. For example, at IV 2.5(125) he describes cooking asparagus and fig-peckers in a *caccabus*.⁴²

The *caccabus* can be made out of either earthenware or metal. It came in a variety of shapes and sizes.⁴³ A number of cooking pots have been found at Pompeii. In the kitchen of the Casa dei Vettii, some of these pots can be still seen on the hearth.⁴⁴

mola, ae, f. a mill.

At 74.5 Fortunata, Trimalchio's wife, is grinding pepper with a boxwood (*buxea*) *mola*. Although Petronius is not the only author to use the word *mola* to refer to grinding pepper, he is the only one to mention a wooden pepper mill.⁴⁵

⁴¹See Hilgers (1969), p.40-41, and p.124-125. See also K. D. White, *Farm Equipment of the Roman world*, Cambridge, 1975, p.179.

⁴²Hilgers gives a long list of the places in Apicius' text which contain the word *caccabus*.

⁴³ K. D. White (1975), p.178.

⁴⁴K. D. White, (1975), p.179; A. Mau, *Pompeii*, trans. by F. W. Kelsey, New York, 1899, p.267, fig. 125.

⁴⁵C. Atrius Capito mentions a *mola piperaria* (gramm. VII 93.5). See also Plin. Nat. 18.72,73.

Pepper was a popular luxury in the early Empire.⁴⁶ Since it was a luxury item it is not surprising that pepper grinders and pepper pots were made out more expensive materials, such as expensive woods or precious metals. Wooden articles for serving pepper are not likely to survive but a some silver pepper grinders and pots have. For example, some silver pepper grinders were recently found in the Hoxne Treasure.⁴⁷ Silver pepper pots have also been found in the Casa del Menandro.⁴⁸

vas, vasis, n. a container for liquids, food, etc., vessel, utensil.

At 64.10 a *candelabrum* is turned over and breaks *vasa omnia crystallina*. *Vas* is a generic term for a container which does not specify shape or size.⁴⁹ *Crystallina* is an adjective meaning either made of crystal or resembling crystal (ie. glass). Since these *vasa crystallina* do not seem to attract attention from the diners, it is possible that they are glass vessels. And since Trimalchio expresses a preference for glass at 50.7 ("*ego malo mini vitrea, certe non olunt*"), it is all the more likely. Varro uses this word as a generic term to refer to the vessels on the dining-room table (*LL* 5.125). The word is also used in this way by Plautus (*St.* 595).

A large variety of forms of glass has been found at Pompeii and Herculaneum and is now housed in the Museo

⁴⁶Luce Boulnois, *The Silk Road*, trans. by D. Chamberlain, New York, 1966, p. 56.

⁴⁷See Catherine Johns and Roger Bland, "the Great Hoxne Treasure: a Preliminary report", *JRA* 6 (1993), p.494.

⁴⁸Strong (1979), p.154.

⁴⁹K. D. White (1975), p.203.

Nazionale di Napoli. Unfortunately most of this material has not been published.⁵⁰ There are bottles, cups of all types, perfume bottles, plates, vases, and pitchers, to name a few of the types of forms of glass. Coloured glass, clear glass, and cameo glass has been found at Pompeii and Herculaneum.⁵¹ The technique of blown glass was discovered in Syria or Egypt in the second half of the first century B.C., and soon after it was adopted in Italy.⁵² Puteoli was a production center for glass that contributed to the growth of the industry.⁵³

vinarium, ii,n. a wine pot, wine flask, vessel for serving wine.

Petronius uses this word twice in the *Cena Trimalchionius*. At 70.9 Trimalchio puts perfume in the *vinarium*, and at 78.4 Trimalchio orders that some of the wine reserved for his funeral be poured in to a *vinarium*.

Although this *vinarium* is not a common word, Horace also uses it in connection with drinking: *invertunt Allifanis vinaria tota* (*Sat. II* 8.39) (where *Allifana, arum, n* are large wine-cups made at Allifae). *Vinarium* is synonymous with the word *lagoena*, and *lagoena* is more frequently used.⁵⁴

Petronius does not specify in the text what Trimalchio's *vinaria* are made of. Judging by the finds in Pompeii, Trimalchio had a choice of materials. From the House of M. Fabius Rufus there is a bronze jug with a wide trefoil mouth and a high strap handle. The join of the handle and body is

⁵⁰J. P. Morel, "La ceramica e il vetro," *Pompei* 79, Napoli, 1979, p.257.

⁵¹J. P. Morel (1979), p.258.

⁵²J. P. Morel (1979), p. 255.

⁵³J. P. Morel (1979), p.255.

⁵⁴Hilgers (1959), p.297, p.203-205.

covered by a maenad-mask. This type of jug, with similar decoration was quite widespread between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D.. Its height at the rim is 12.8 cm and its maximum diameter is 10.7 cm (base 5.5).⁵⁵ A fine clay jug was also found at Pompeii (in *insula* II, 8, 2). This jug, also for pouring wine, is similar in shape to the one above. It is 16.9 cm high and the rim and 5.2 cm in diameter at the base. It is a local production, and is very refined and elegant. It is decorated with mythological figures.⁵⁶ Trimalchio could also have had a silver *vinarium*. It could resemble the silver jug from the House of M. Epidus Primus (H. 16.8 cm; max. diam. 11 cm)⁵⁷. Glass jugs for pouring were also found at Pompeii. For example, a blue glass pouring jug was found at Pompeii (H. 11 cm; diam. max. 9 cm diam., base 4 cm). Its shape is not unlike the bronze jug mentioned above.⁵⁸

⁵⁵*Rediscovering Pompeii*, edited by L. Franchi dell'Orto and A. Varone, Roma, 1990. (cat. no. 105)

⁵⁶ *Rediscovering Pompeii*, p.209, 211 (cat. no. 131).

⁵⁷*Rediscovering Pompeii*, p.197 (cat. no. 104).

⁵⁸*Rediscovering Pompeii*, p.203 (cat. no. 114).

camella, ae, f. vessel for liquids.

In the *Cena Trimalchionis* drinks for the slaves are ordered to be mixed in a *grande camella* (64.13). Ovid is the only contemporary writer to use this rare word: *tum licet apposita, veluti cratere, camella lac niveum potes purpuream que saram* (Ovid *Fast* 4. 779).

A *camella* is possibly a large bowl for mixing water and wine that is not unlike the *crater*. Hilgers gives *obba* as a synonym for both *crater*⁵⁹ and *camella*⁶⁰. It would follow that all three words refer to vessels similar to each other in form and function, as both Petronius and Ovid imply.

A *crater* is a large vessel for mixing wine and water. *Crateres* have been found made of a variety of materials. Although the text gives no clues as to what the *camella* is made of, it is not impossible that Trimalchio had his *camella* in silver for a silver *crater* was found in the Hildesheim Treasure.⁶¹

clibanus, i, m. an earthenware or iron vessel used for baking.

At 35.6 a slave boy carries around a *clibanus argentues* ("made of silver") to serve bread.

According to Cubberley, Lloyd, and Roberts, there is little doubt that the *clibanus* was a fundamental element of the Roman kitchen.⁶² So it comes as no surprise that Apicius uses the word throughout his cookbook. The *clibanus* could be

⁵⁹Hilgers (1969), p.159.

⁶⁰Hilgers (1969), p.135.

⁶¹See Hilgers (1969), plate 3.

⁶²A. Cubberley, J. Lloyd, P. Roberts, "*Testa and Clibani: the Baking Covers of Classical Italy*," *PBSR* LVI, 1988, p.98.

used for roasting or baking meat (Apicius VII 5.5, VII 8, VIII 6.6, VIII 9). It was also used for baking bread (Plin. NH 18.105).

Despite the fact that the *clibanus* was a fundamental element of the kitchen, its precise meaning, application, and form has been the subject of much debate and few attempts have been made to identify it with the archaeological remains.⁶³ Cubberley, Lloyd, and Roberts suggest that *clibanus* is a more general term for baking covers. These are dome-shaped covers.⁶⁴ They are placed on the hearth and embers are piled on and around them.⁶⁵ In the early Imperial period these covers had a pronounced rounded dome and ranged in size from 35-50 cm in diameter.⁶⁶

craticula, ae, f. a gridiron or grill.

At 31.11 and 70.7 *craticulae agenteae* are also used to serve food.

Martial (14.221) attests to its use as a grill (*craticula cum veribus: rara tibi curva craticula sudet ofella*). Apicius also uses this word when he refers to grills for grilling meat (for example, at VII 261, VII 264, VII 266, VII 292).

These grills, made of iron, were also an important feature of the Roman kitchen. A *craticula* can be seen on the hearth in the kitchen of the Casa Dei Vettii.⁶⁷

⁶³Cubberley, Lloyd, and Roberts, p.98 and p.101.

⁶⁴Cubberley, Lloyd, and Roberts, p.103.

⁶⁵Cubberley, Lloyd, and Roberts, p.106.

⁶⁶Cubberley, Lloyd, and Roberts, p.110.

⁶⁷See Plate I, *The Roman Cookery Book*, edited and translated by B. Flower and E. Rosenbaum, London, 1958. See also D. E. Strong and D. Brown, *Roman Craft*, London, 1976, Plate 256, p.151.

Trimalchio's *clibani* and *craticulae* are made of silver. It is highly unlikely that silver vessels were commonly used for cooking. Although there have been no silver vessels found that can be said for certain to have been used as cooking utensils, there are two silver vessels found at Pompeii that show some signs of having been heated.⁶⁸

Statuettes

Trimalchio has a number of statuettes which are used in serving courses at the dinner-party. At (31.9) the text reads "*ceterum in promulsidare asellus erat Corinthius cum bisacio positus, qui habebat olivas in altera parte albas, in altera nigras*". *Asellus* means ass or donkey, which, in this case, seems to be a statuette of a donkey in Corinthian bronze. This statuette has a *bisaccium*. *Bisaccium* is a word only found here. Since *saccus*, *i*, is a bag, *bisaccium* would be a double bag or saddle-bags. At 36.3 there are *quattuor Marsyas*, presumably statuettes, from whose *utriculi* (small skins or leather bottle) peppered *garum* flows. The text does not tell us what these statuettes are made of. And at 31.10 *ponticuli ferruminati* are used to serve dormice. A *ponticulus* means "little bridge". *Ferruminati* is the perfect passive participle of *ferrumino*, "to solder, glue, or join". The precise meaning of *ponticuli ferruminati* is unclear. It could mean "little bridges soldered to a plate".⁶⁹ It seems likely to me that these are little statuettes of bridges.

Although I have been unable to find statuettes of the same figures in the same materials as Trimalchio's, examples have been found which attest to the use of statuettes to serve food. For example, in the Casa del Ephebo at Pompeii, four

⁶⁸Strong (1979), p. 145.

⁶⁹See M. S. Smith, note on p. 67.

silver-plated, rather vulgar statuettes of vendors carrying silver trays were found. According to Jashemski, these were probably used to serve food at dinner parties.⁷⁰

In reference to Trimalchio's tablewares Petronius employs terms that are frequently used by authors of the late Republic and early Empire. He is using terms which his audience would know. These terms refer to objects with which his audience would be familiar. Not only were the objects familiar, but also the choice of materials. Trimalchio has a large quantity of silver dishes. But then large quantities of silver tablewares have been found in hoards buried by the eruption of Vesuvius. At a villa at Boscoreale a hoard of 109 pieces table-silver was found. In Pompeii itself, in the Casa del Menandro a hoard of 118 pieces of silver tableware was found.⁷¹ The Hildesheim Treasure attests to the popularity of silver tablewares in the early Imperial period even on the frontiers.⁷² According to Strong, even the poor had some table-silver and "a middle-class family of the Empire would probably have a complete set of table-silver for dining besides a quantity of show-plate acquired as heirlooms, wedding presents, and so on".⁷³ Although no piece of Corinthian bronze has yet been recognized, the literary sources attest to its use at the table. Pliny (*Ep.* 3.1.9), in a letter expressing his admiration for a certain Spurinna,

⁷⁰Jashemski (1979), p.93, fig. 149

⁷¹Strong (1979), p.125.

⁷²Strong (1979),p.127.

⁷³Strong (1979), p.124. See also A. Cameron, "Observations on the Distribution and Ownership of Late Roman Silver Plate", *JRA* 5 (1992), pp. 178-185, for the popularity of silver vessels in the late Roman period. Cameron argues that, "silver is not all that valuable" to a wealthy man of the late Roman period (p. 185).

says that this *Spurinna* uses Corinthian bronze tableware.

Furniture and Lamps

mensa, ae, f. a table.

In the first dining-room we are told that each diner gets his own table (34.5). After 34.5 the word *mensa* appears in the singular down to 68.1, when all the tables are cleared. At 73.5 we learn that the second dining-room has solid silver tables (*mensas totas argenteas*). We are not told the material of the *mensae* in the first dining-room, but since they are removed from the dining-room (68.1), it is highly unlikely they are made of stone.

The word *mensa* is used by other roughly contemporary authors to refer to a dining table. For example, Varro uses the word *mensa* to refer to the table on vessels for food are placed. He has further modified *mensa* with the adjective *escaria* ("dining"). Seneca talks about eating his breakfast without a table (*sine mensa*) (*Ep.* 83.6).

Bronze tables are represented in the finds from Pompeii. They come in a variety of types. There are rectangular tables with three or four legs, round tables with three legs and tables with a single support.⁷⁴ Animal-shaped legs were popular. This is not only attested in the finds, but also in the literature.⁷⁵ According to Strong, silver furniture was

⁷⁴G. M. A. Richter, *The Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans*, London, 1966, 110-112.

⁷⁵G. M. A. Richter, p.112. See Juvenal XI 120ff. for a description of a dinner table with ivory legs shaped like leopards.

not uncommon, although few pieces survive.⁷⁶ In the Hildesheim *Treasure* a small three-legged silver table was found. The legs of this table are shaped like animals.⁷⁷

torus, i, m. and lectus, i, m. bed, couch.

In the *Cena Trimalchionis* the words *torus* and *lectus* are used interchangeably to refer to the dining-room couches. At 40.1 covering for the couches (*tori*) are brought into the dining-room. At 67.5 Fortunata takes her place on the *torus* and at 67.12 this same couch is referred to as a *lectus*. At 70.11, Trimalchio invites his household to join the dinner-party and the guests are nearly pushed off the couches (*lecti*). *Torus* is a word for "bed", but it is not usually used to refer to dining-room couches; *lectus* is the more usual word. For example, Cicero uses the word *lectus* when he writes about how Verres exported fifty couches from Sicily. He specifies that these *lecti* are for use in dining-rooms with *tricliniorum* ("of dining-rooms") (Ver. 2.2.183).

The text provides no description of Trimalchio's couches. A good example of a late Republican/early Imperial couch is in the Museo Nazionale di Napoli.⁷⁸ It is a bronze couch which was found at Pompeii. It has a bronze frame with a curved head-board (*fulcrum*). The mattress was supported by lacings of leather or other perishable materials. Couches often had decorative head-boards and turned legs. They were often decorated with inlay of glass, bone, and other materials. Although wooden couches did exist, but only the bronze

⁷⁶Strong (1979), p.159.

⁷⁷Strong (1979), p.159. Strong does not mention what kind of animal is represented in the legs of this table.

⁷⁸G. M. A. Richter, p.106.

fittings survive.⁷⁹ Couches made entirely of silver did exist, but only stray parts of these survive.⁸⁰

lucerna, ae, f. an oil lamp.

At 64.2, Encolpius says that there seemed to be more *lucernae* in the dining-room, but there is no mention of the decoration or the material of these lamps. There are *lucernae* with bronze fishermen (*aeneoli piscatores*) on them in the second dining-room (73.5).

Lucerna is a word commonly used to refer to a lamp. Juvenal at 6.305 talks about the number of *lucernae* in the dining-room seeming to be increased. Cicero writes to Atticus that he would have written more but his *lucerna* ("oil lamp") went out (*Att.* 7.7.7.).

Oil lamps are very common finds at Pompeii and other first century A.D. sites. They are usually made of bronze or ceramic, but some silver lamps were found in a tomb and there is a gold lamp in the Museo Nazionale di Napoli.⁸¹ Oil lamps are often decorated in relief on the top and come in a variety of forms.⁸²

The *lucernae* in Trimalchio's second dining-room are not unusual in either their material or decorative motif. There

⁷⁹G. M. A. Ritcher, p.105.

⁸⁰G. M. A. Ritcher, p.106.

⁸¹Strong (1979), p.156.

⁸²We cannot know the exact form of Trimalchio's *lucernae*. There are too many different types to list here. For a detailed discussion of *lucernae* from Pompeii and other Vesuvian sites see C. Pavolini, "Le lucerne fittili del Museo Nazionale di Napoli", and N. Valenza Mele, "Le lucerne bronzee del Museo Nazionale di Napoli," in *Instrumentum Domesticum*.

is a large number of bronze *lucernae* from Pompeii and Herculaneum housed at the Museo Nazionale di Napoli.⁸³ In the British Museum there is a lamp decorated with a fisherman. The fisherman is in a boat with Icarus flying overhead. The date range for this lamp is between A.D. 30-70 and it is said to come from Puteoli.⁸⁴ As mentioned above, the text does not make clear what the *lucernae* of the first dining-room are made of. We can assume, judging by Trimalchio's wealth and ostentation, that they are made of bronze or some other more costly material.

candelabrum, i, n. a candlestick or a lamp-stand.

At 64.10 a *candelabrum* on the table is upset by a dog fight and some of the guests are burned by oil. At 75.10 Trimalchio compares his height when he first arrived in Italy to a *candelabrum* in the dining-room. Since some guests are burned by oil, it is likely that Petronius is using the *candelabrum* to refer to a lamp-stand.

The word *candelabrum* is used by a number of contemporary writers to refer to a lamp-stand. According to the literary sources, *candelabra* were made from a variety of materials. Cicero mentions *candelabra* of bronze (Ver. 2.4.60), gold (Ver. 4.65.71), and wood (Ver. 4.60). Martial attests to the existence of silver *candelabra* (14.44).

The text does not say what Trimalchio's *candelabra* are made of. Although bronze *candelabra* are represented in the

⁸³N. Valenza Mele, "Le lucerne bronzee del Museo Nazionale di Napoli," *Instrumentum Domesticum*, p.157.

⁸⁴D. M. Bailey, *A Catalogue of the Lamps in the British Museum*, London, 1975, p.160, catalogue number Q858.

finds from Pompeii and other Vesuvian sites⁸⁵, *candelabra* made of precious metals have rarely been found. An ornate silver *candelabrum* base found in the Hildesheim Treasure.⁸⁶

Petronius does not offer detailed descriptions of Trimalchio's furniture or lamps. Whereas we know that Trimalchio has bronze *lucernae* and silver *mensae*, we are not told what the rest of his furniture is made out of or how it is decorated.

⁸⁵See J. Ward-Perkins and A. Claridge, *Pompeii AD 79*, Bristol, 1976, p. 161.

⁸⁶Strong (1979), p.159.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

In the *Cena Trimalchionis* Petronius provides a humorous description of a type of house and of types of objects which a wealthy freedman of the first century A.D. might have owned. Petronius uses certain terms to refer to the features of Trimalchio's house and to his tableware and furniture. That the terms he uses were, for the most part, familiar to his audience is attested by the fact that a number of contemporary authors also use these same terms.

Although Petronius' audience may not have known a house identical to Trimalchio's, they would have recognized the features in it and would have understood that this was the large house of a wealthy man. Some of the larger houses in Pompeii contain many of the features which Petronius assigns to Trimalchio's house. For example, the house of Petronius' freedman has two peristyles, as do some of the larger houses in Pompeii such as the Casa del Fauno and the Casa del Vettii, a house apparently owned by freedmen.¹ The Casa del Citarista has three peristyles, a greater number of peristyles than that of Trimalchio's.

Petronius' audience would have also recognized Trimalchio's tableware and furniture as the type of tableware and furniture which a man like Trimalchio would own. There is a large amount of silver in Trimalchio's house. But it was

¹E. De Albentis, *La Casa dei Romani*, Milano, 1990, pp. 257-258.

not uncommon for a wealthy man to own a large amount of silver in the first century A.D..

Despite the fact that parallels to Trimalchio's house dining-rooms, and tableware can be found in the remains and finds from Pompeii and other late Republican and early Imperial sites it is important to remember that Petronius is writing fiction. Throughout the *Satyricon* Petronius satirizes a number of types of people. For example, the poet Eumolpus recites poems that cause the crowd to throw stones at him (89-90). Agamemnon, through whom Encolpius finds himself at the dinner party, is a teacher of rhetoric. He is also a parasite who flatters Trimalchio in order to get a free meal (48.5). In the *Cena Trimalchionis* Petronius pokes fun at the character of the wealthy ex-slave. Petronius intends for his audience to see Trimalchio as humorous. He is an exaggerated character.

Trimalchio is a *nouveau riche* ex-slave. The description of him is funny because he is so vulgar, ostentatious, and pretentious. Trimalchio imitates the upper classes and tries to convince his guests that he is educated and refined. But despite his tremendous wealth he fails to convince both Encolpius and the reader that he is anything other than an ex-slave. At 52.1-3 Trimalchio shows his lack of education in his description of some silver tableware. He completely garbles the myths depicted on them. According to Trimalchio these objects are decorated with scenes in which Cassandra kills her children and Niobe is shut up in the Trojan horse by Daedalus.

Taken individually the most of the items and features which have been discussed in this thesis may not be remarkable, but taken together they paint a picture of excessive wealth which would have contributed to the humour. Throughout the text Trimalchio ostentatiously takes many opportunities to show off his wealth to his guests. At 34.2 a silver *paropsis* falls on the ground and Trimalchio has it

swept away with the rest of the garbage. The fact that a slave tries to pick it up and is punished for doing so would suggest that the silver is not routinely thrown out with the garbage but that Trimalchio would like his guest to believe that is the case. Trimalchio owns a large quantity of silver tableware. As stated above it was not uncommon for wealthy households to have a large set of silver tableware. But since Petronius is exaggerating Trimalchio's character and his wealth, Trimalchio even has silver cooking utensils, such as *clibani* (35.6) and *craticulae* (31.11, 70.7). This would certainly confirm Trimalchio's wealth to his dinner guests and to Petronius' readers since silver was very rarely, if at all, used for cooking vessels.

One of the most remarkable features of Trimalchio's house is his dining-room ceiling. Here also we have proof of Trimalchio's wealth. It is constructed with ceiling panels which can be opened, allowing for gifts to be dropped into the dining-room. In Chapter 3 I argued that although it is impossible to say whether this type of ceiling existed at Pompeii it is a possibility. This type of ceiling has not been identified at Pompeii, or other Vesuvian sites, with any certainty. It is likely that this passage (60.1-3) shows Trimalchio trying to imitate the Emperor Nero who also had the same contraption (Suet. Nero 31). It is also possible that this passage satirizes the decadent behaviour of the Imperial court under Nero and the Emperors sumptuous house in Rome and his Campanian retreats such as Oplontis.²

Throughout the *Cena Trimalchionis* there are numerous references to Trimalchio's wealth. He makes certain that his guests know how wealthy he is. He does so not only by boasting as he does about his house (77.4), but also by using only the most expensive possessions and living in a most luxurious home. Trimalchio is so ostentatious that Encolpius

²De Albentiis (1990), p. 264.

becomes quite disgusted at Trimalchio's ostentation and refers to it as *putidissima iactatio* ("stinking rotten ostentation" 73.4).

The character of Trimalchio would have been familiar because he is a caricature of a wealthy ex-slave. It is significant that Petronius sets the *Cena Trimalchionis* in Puteoli, as it was a large port which provided many opportunities for former slaves. The tombstones of ex-slaves which have survived from Puteoli show these ex-slaves to be involved in the same sorts of business activities as Trimalchio.³ Thus it would be a town which would have a relatively large number of wealthy ex-slaves who, like Trimalchio, were able to increase their wealth through the opportunities which the town had to offer. Petronius knew Campania and probably knew something of its population of wealthy freedmen. Trimalchio is a caricature of a wealthy freedman. His house and possessions are exaggerated to satirize the wealth that freedmen were able to obtain in the first century A.D..

³J. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 1981, p.102.

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Figure 1. Plan of the Casa del Fauno.

Figure 2. Plan of the Villa dei Misteri.

Figure 3. Plan of the Casa dei Vettii.

Figure 4. Drinking Vessels. a. $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\lambda\iota\varsigma$ b. *calix*
c. *calix* or *scyphus* d. *proculum*

Figure 5. a. *scyphus* b. c. d. Examples of plates and trays.

Figure 6. Peacock and Williams Class 10 amphora (Dressel 2-4).