

Death in the *Cena*

criticism:

see Courtney 2001: 95-6.

Bodel, J., 'Trimalchio's Underworld', in *The Search for the Ancient Novel* ed. J. Tatum (Baltimore, 1994), 237-59

Frangoulidis, S. 2008. 'Trimalchio as Narrator and Stage Director in the *Cena*: An Unobserved Parallelism in Petronius' *Satyricon* 78' *Classical Philology*, 103.1: 81-87

- Trimalchio = obsessed with death and death = an important theme in the *Cena*: see e.g. 26.9 (clock); 34 (servant brings in a silver skeleton and T utters verse); 42-3 (funeral attended by Seleucus). Courtney (2001: 96) notes that death is in the thoughts of the characters (e.g. 46.3) and that short-life expectancy in antiquity would make topic relevant but striking number of thoughts about death in the *Cena*.

T's interest in death may not be that unusual- one can find the image of the skeleton on an ancient Roman mosaic – but Trimalchio seems unusually obsessed, as we can see in chapter 71 where Trimalchio has his will brought in and gives detailed instructions for how he would like his tomb to look (which is OTT).

- death also evoked by figuring of T's house as underworld (see Bodel 1994)

dog at 29 +72.7 like Cerberus: "The dinner becomes a funeral feast, a deadly labyrinth (plus hungry Minotaur), an underworld guarded by a Cerberus and exited via the gate of dreams," n14 "Petronius' Cerberus is painted on the dining room wall, but it is just as scary as the real thing: and like the real thing, it is encountered both on entering and leaving this hell (see Sat. 29.1 and Sat. 72.8–9, where Giton, like Aeneas, throws the dog food as a distraction): does Encolpius hallucinate again at 72? Also like Aeneas in Aen. 6, Encolpius and Giton are forbidden to leave the house by the door through which they entered: *alia intrant, alia exeunt* / 'Enter by one door, leave by another' (72.10)" (Rimell 2002: 186)

29 evokes *Aen.* 6.20-36 (Aeneas admiring work of Daedalus, including picture of labyrinth in temple compound of Apollo of Cumae before his katabasis; nb T's house as labyrinthine). See Bodel 1994 238ff.; "...the scenes painted on Trimalchio's wall, which trace his rise from slavery to social prominence as a wealthy freedman, suggest that Encolpius is entering a house of the dead." (Bodel 1994: 240); Bodel maps against biographical art e.g. (rare) scenes of *venalicia* (tombs of freedmen)

"It is, however, typical of Trimalchio's failure to distinguish between the artistic conventions of life and death that he not only decorates his tomb like a house but decorates his house like a tomb. 40 (Bodel 1994: 243)

n40. "Not surprisingly, the structures exhibit many of the same decorative features: a clock (26.9, 71. I I); Trimalchio on a tribunal (29.5, 72.9); gladiatorial games (29.9, 72.6); emblems of Trimalchio's maritime ventures (30.2, 71.9)." (Bodel 1994)

- to what uses is theme of death put? Humour? Characterization? Is there a link between T's fear of death and eating? ("It is noteworthy that there are direct links between thoughts of mortality and luxurious feasting" Courtney 2001: 96). T's materialistic and big spender tendencies= linked to fear of death and social insecurity? What does death as explored in T's construction of tomb suggest about his character? Signs of wishing to exert control beyond the grave (as in instructions)? Construct an image not possible in life? "T. is concerned that his funeral should not appear to be that of a freedman but of a knight, or senator... or even a god. He is as rich as a god, but his social status is that of an ex-slave, an image he would love to shed in death." (Schmeling on *ego gloriosus efferi*). Frangoulidis explores how theatricality illustrates T's attempt to control death and posterity through material wealth.