

Neronian phenomenon comes from Bartsch (1994). Huskinson's (2002–3) article on Antioch mosaics is very useful for explaining the relation between theatre, decor, and theatrical behavior. She draws on several discussions of the relation between theatrical spectacle and dinner parties, by D'Arms (1999), Jones (1991), and Rosati (1983/1999), all of whom (the last exclusively) draw on Trimalchio's dinner party.

A good example of traditional attempts to reconstruct Trimalchio's *domus* can be found in Bagnani (1954). Later discussions of the building and its art play much more with its role in reflecting wider themes of the episode. On Trimalchio's home as the Underworld see Bodel (1994). Elsner's (1993) article offers an inspiring analysis of the later episode of Encolpius and Eumolpus in the art gallery and discusses its relation to contemporary practices of viewing and describing art.

Petronius's *Satyrica* and the Novel in English

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Introduction

Though scholars hotly debate the point at which the novel emerged (or re-emerged) in Europe as a recognizable literary form (cf. Doody 1996), that date is sometimes placed (for example, by the influential McKeon 1987) in the second half of the seventeenth century, the very period in which the fullest version of the Latin text of the *Satyrica* was published (1669), to complete the work we have today, and in which the first vernacular translations appeared (for example, the English version of Burnaby in 1694). But the *Satyrica* had already excited novelistic imitation in English a century previously, in Thomas Nashe's colorful *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), a picaresque tale with a prosimetric frame and a wide range of literary pastiche and parody, which certainly shows the influence of Petronius (see Kinney 1986: 341–3, 357–8). In the seventeenth century some imitation of Petronius is evident in the Latin fictions of John Barclay (*Euphormionis Lusitani Satyricon*, 1603) and Walter Charleton (*Matrona Ephesia*, 1659), while in the eighteenth century Petronian material can be found in the earlier parts of the novels of Smollett (see below); but it was in the nineteenth century, when the novel in England reached its highest prestige and importance as a literary form, that the influence of the *Satyrica* and Petronius begins to be extensive. In what follows I shall trace the reception of Petronius and his novel through examining some fictional successor versions of one of its key episodes, the *Cena Trimalchionis*, and conclude by considering several novels (one written a century ago by a Nobel Literature laureate and two written in the last 30 years) in which Petronius himself and his novel appear as subject matter.

Labyrinth are not simply theatres or sanctuaries, any more than the rooms of the mythic panels in the House of the Vertii are meant to copy civic art galleries. To privilege any one model is to miss the deliberate conflation of influences and their recycling into painting's own fantastic language.

The preoccupation with fantasy and the rejection of reality, and the somewhat ironic use of illusionism as a vehicle to portray that, is perhaps the best link between "real" domestic space and art and those of Trimalchio. Fantasy offers scope for invention and manipulation. The extent to which Trimalchio's fantasy takes a hold on his guests is shown throughout the *Cena*: the painted dog mistaken for a real one (and then becoming the real Scylax by the end) and the labyrinth from which they cannot escape. His whole household is activated to keep it all going: slaves, food, art – none are what they seem, and his audience has no choice but to humor him as it waits for the emergency services to arrive.

As much as this argument might seem in danger of making Trimalchio a sophisticated master of domestic space rather than a vulgar upstart, there is still plenty of room for going wrong. The power of wall-painting and domestic space in impressing guests and visitors lies in the fact that fantasy is limitless. Only Trimalchio would dull the fantasy by making it explicit, by only seeing the possibility of faking reality. While most other homeowners create fantastic concoctions of other worlds, most of Trimalchio's fantasies are of himself. Neither is he willing to let the viewer's imagination run with the images they see. By over-explaining his paintings and cups, just as he does all his jokes and party turns, he closes down all ambiguity (Tanner 1979: 52–6). The stamps that flaunt the weight of the silver (§31.10) and his insistence on weighing Fortunata's jewelry (§67.7) show off his wealth but also expose its limitations.

Conclusion

Trimalchio's *domus* is a sealed box in which he can be king of his castle. His aspirations, through impotence, are turned inwards. His authority can only exist within this *domus*-gone-wrong, within the fantasies he creates through manipulation of the visual world around him (Andreau, *FREEDMEN IN THE SATYRICA*, p. 119, also stresses the insularity of Trimalchio and his circle of friends). And perhaps this really shows the disaster of Trimalchio's *domus*. The whole point, to repeat the phrase, of heterotopic space is that its otherworldliness only works as a temporary retreat from reality. Domestic space

provided spectators with space in which to reconfigure themselves for their grand entrance back onto the public stage. The cleverest players are those who manage somehow to play off the two worlds, to legitimate fantasy with reality and bolster reality with fantasy. The Trimalchios of the Roman world mishandle their relationship with their art, putting themselves directly into the display and trapping themselves in their own private, solipsistic worlds. Trimalchio's whole existence is wrapped up in his house; in fact he only really exists on the walls of the house (or on the reliefs of his tomb). His house; does not partake of the social penetrability for which the *domus* was designed: his guests are fellow freedmen and just as impotent outside each other's walls. This, of course, is why Trimalchio looks forward to his funeral and lives in a house that has become a kind of tomb (Bodel 1994). Death will allow him to get his public memorial (see the chapter by Hope, *AT HOME WITH THE DEAD*). Meanwhile, these enervated men must stay in locked rooms: as Ganymede says, men are lions at home, foxes outside (§44.14). Once Encolpius and crew escape, we know full well that they will never find their way back. Like the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey* (and see Vout, *THE SATYRICA AND NERONIAN CULTURE*, and Richlin, *SEX IN THE SATYRICA*, for some more Odyssean parallels), whom Poseidon punishes for hosting Odysseus by throwing up rocks around their island, the reward for Trimalchio's hospitality to these particular lost travelers is to disappear forever.

Further Reading

For a general introduction to different types of Roman housing, see Barton (1996). Wiseman's (1987) influential article demonstrates the importance of the *domus* in providing a public face for its owners. Edwards (2003) has a useful chapter on the morals of building. Wallace-Hadrill (1994) has done most to pursue the sociological importance of domestic space and decoration, swapping emphasis from the literature of Rome to the archaeological remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum (see also Hales 2003). Petersen (2006: 123–62) addresses assumptions of freedman taste in interior decor.

Discussions of Roman domestic art have shifted over the last decades from formal analysis to more interpretative modes. Bryson (1990) and Elsner (1995: 49–87) provide exciting ideas about wall-painting's tendency to fantasy and subversion. Leach's (2004) major study of wall-painting is the first to break away from traditional, formal categorization and includes a whole chapter on the theatrical style. The turn to see theatricality as a

examined here) is, again, a good example. The room we have been discussing is visible in the distance, straight ahead from the front door. Once inside, however, the viewer is encouraged to look anywhere but back outside as the overpowering paintings on the three surrounding walls envelop you and draw you into their colonnades and precincts. The plan of the house, which seemed simple and uncontested on the way in, becomes much more immersive once inside. Like Trimalchio, the owner of this house has used artifice to make a labyrinthine pretend world in what is actually a rather straightforward house.

If these spaces have anything to do with the theatre, it is not because they copy real theatres, but because domestic art and space, like the theatre, seem to evoke different worlds, transporting the viewer to a world beyond normality (and Trimalchio's guests are certainly beyond that). In exploring Greek tragic theatre, Rehm has adopted a term from Foucault with which to name this kind of space – it is a “heterotopia,” a world outside normal conventions that, by virtue of that distance, can be critical of those conventions (Rehm 2002: 19–34). The term might sound scarily like a word Trimalchio has garbled in one of his declamations, but its meaning is actually not too hard to grasp: what it could mean for us is the potential of domestic space and decor to fashion a space beyond the everyday outside world which allows hosts and guests the chance temporarily to escape that world and reinvent themselves. Domestic art creates a fantasy world where the boundaries of normal life are called into question.

Reality and Fantasy, Deception and Naturalism

Of course, unlike the more naïve viewers of art and spectacle in the *Satyricon*, most party-goers in the House of the Labyrinth were not fooled by the *trompe l'oeil* (lit. “deceives the eye,” that is, illusory) architectural vistas opening around them. Even though they are deliberately painted to look real, guests were not regularly gashing their heads trying to walk through the painted gateways. Encolpius is clearly a fool, and his friends realize it, for nearly breaking his leg in trying to escape the painted dog (§29.1–2).

The bruised Encolpius raises an important point. When you consider the ridiculousness of being scared of a painted dog then the whole idea of mistaking art for reality seems pretty silly. All of a sudden it is not just that Trimalchio manages to bumble his go at art criticism by seeing life in

corpses, but that he should see life in art at all. The very notion that art could/should be reality, an idea uttered not only by the characters but by such establishment figures as Pliny the Elder, is called into question. While Trimalchio and Eumolpus pontificate about life-like art, Petronius is having a laugh at their expense. Illusionism in art might be a high point of artistic endeavor but it is not the sole, or even main aim of the artist. Similarly, recognizing naturalism is only a preliminary viewing response (Bryson 1990: 17–59). The power of art lies precisely in realizing its artifice so it can break free from, or comment on, the constraints of reality. Apart from Encolpius's rookie response at the beginning of the evening, the spectators at the dinner party are constantly aware of the artifice of what they see. The further joke is that even while showing confidence in the life-like qualities of art to be a ridiculous position, the crew of the *Satyricon* are all too fond of bewailing the decline of that life-likeness and blaming the decadence of their age as the cause (§88; Elsner 1993).

In their criticism, as in their praise, the characters of the *Satyricon* echo perennial commonplaces of art appreciation. Indignant moralists-cum-art critics like Vitruvius likewise blamed an immoral present for a decline in art, a decline they saw manifested most clearly by a preoccupation with the unreal and fantastic. When he attacks the fantastic elements of contemporary wall-painting, Vitruvius suggests that, in turning away from reality, painters have turned from the “truth” (Vitruvius *De arch.* 7.5.3–4; cf. Hor. *Ars P.* 1–5). Elsner understands this insistence on “realism” as a “rejection of subversion,” of the “unreal and anti-realistic” (Elsner 1995: 57). In fact, in deriding the “unnatural,” Vitruvius's criticism turns out to be not so far removed from Seneca's assessments of luxury villas, which also defy nature, reveling in artifice to experience new imaginative heights.

While we're sniggering at Trimalchio and Eumolpus, however, we might want to realize that the joke is also on us. Perhaps we too should consider our own imbecility for reading Pliny or Vitruvius at face value. Like Trimalchio, art historians have traditionally been preoccupied with naturalism, and it is not so long ago that attempts to explain the “decline” of naturalism in terms of moral decline finally died out. We still live with a legacy that dismisses post- or non-classical art – art that does not look as real as Myron's cow – as slightly soiled. In taking the representation of reality as the ultimate goal of art, Pompeian wall-paintings were similarly interpreted in terms of the reality they imitated: a stage set here, an art gallery there. But the joke of naturalism turns out to be in using illusionism precisely to create the fantastic and unreal. The frescoes in the House of the

Theatricality

The effect of the merging of these elements is that reality and representation seem to collide repeatedly in Trimalchio's house (Slater 1990: 57). At one point, as Encolpius is served by singing slaves, he cottons on to what is happening: "You would think you were in the chorus of the pantomime not the *triclinium* [dining room] of a *paterfamilias*" (§31.7). It is not difficult, in reading through the episode, to see many links to the theatre and other spectacles. On one level there is the actual theatrical entertainment, singing, acting, acrobatics; on the other there is the "staged" nature of all the events during the meal, which draw on sets, props, and actors for effect. Many critics have recognized Trimalchio's domestic set-up to be essentially theatrical, and several articles have demonstrated that such performances are typical of the ritual of Roman *cenae* (for example, D'Arms 1999), where host and guests play up to their social roles. Here we move from theatre to "theatricality," a mode of behavior and of representing the world. Such "putting on" has come to be closely associated with ideas of Neronian decadence and insincerity (Bartsch 1994; Leach 2004: 114–21), qualities which then are seen to be mirrored in the *Satyricon* (the effect of circular argument as to the text's "Nero-ness" again coming into play; see Vout, *THE SATYRICON AND NERONIAN CULTURE*, for a sophisticated analysis of the relationship between Neronian Rome, the Petronian text, and this theme of theatricality).

As much as this theatrical turn suits the literary construction of the *Satyricon* (Courtney 2001; Panayotakis 1995), the idea of the theatre was perennially popular in Roman houses, so much so that Vitruvius (*De arch.* 7.5.2) mentions it as a standard theme of interior decor. Alongside scenes that seem to show plays in production, many commentators have viewed paintings, like that on a wall from the House of the Labyrinth showing a colonnade receding behind curtains into the distance (fig. 10.4), as "theatrical": huge painted sets, which seem to show cityscapes or sanctuaries opening up behind the "real" wall. Much ink has been spilt on considering how accurate these sets are, pondering which real theatres they could have been copied from, and even using these paintings to recreate Roman theatres (Lehmann 1953; Little 1971). More recently, though, a link has been made between the "stagey" paintings and the "theatrical" nature of domestic behavior. Such fads are not confined to the Neronian period and not even to Pompeii; the best discussion of theatre scenes in Roman houses is actually about mosaics in Antioch (Huskinson 2002–3), but is incredibly useful in showing how

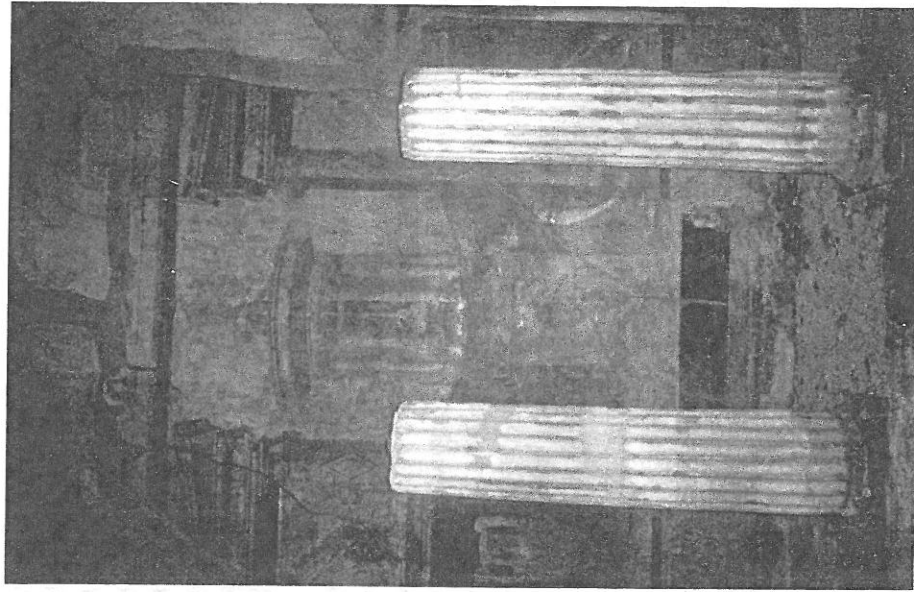


Figure 10.4 A wall of the 'Corinthian *oecus*' in the House of the Labyrinth, Pompeii. (Photo: Hales.)

domestic interiors merged with the use of space, just as Trimalchio's hunt spills off his soft furnishings into the dining room. The apparent collapse of representation and reality is a nice way of understanding the painting in the House of the Labyrinth too, where real columns in the room mirror the pretend ones in the fresco.

In Trimalchio's house, space, art, and behavior are all brought together to create an atmosphere of confusion and disorientation. In fact, Pompeian interiors seem to aim at similar effects. Ironically, the House of the Labyrinth (named after the mosaic labyrinth in a neighboring room to the one

More palatable to us, perhaps, are the panels of Greek myth, which may be supposed to reflect an owner's (and our own) cultural fluency and awareness of artistic tradition. The Vettii themselves fielded scenes of Pentheus, Pasiphae, and Ixion. And is it only we who are obsessed with the link or were the Vettii, too, told confidently by the decorators that their panel of the baby Hercules strangling snakes was a copy of an original by Zeuxis, one of the grandest Old Masters? The elder Pliny's *Natural History* (35.61–6) contains a brief description of the Zeuxis painting, vague enough to convince some of the close likeness of the Vettii's version. The desire to show off Greek mythology and to do so using Hellenistic templates is an exceedingly popular practice in Roman houses, in the minor arts as well as on the walls. Trimalchio attempts to parade his expertise throughout the party, mangling the myths on his silverware (§52.1–2). His house is properly appointed for the pursuit of such learning: he makes sure we know that he has (presumably much underused) Greek and Latin libraries (§48.4).

The reason for Trimalchio's excessive display is perhaps made a little clearer at this point. He is also all too well aware of the cultural and monetary worth of art itself. Posing as a connoisseur he likes to spout his knowledge: the history of Corinthian bronze, for example (§50). The socially loaded practice of appreciating fine art will be demonstrated later in the sequence, when Encolpius and Eumolpus muse on the paintings in a provincial art gallery that has a (suspiciously) impressive roll-call of featured artists: Zeuxis, Protogenes, and Apelles among them (§83–90). Eumolpus, taking on the role of tour guide, turns out to be as idiotic as Trimalchio, garbling the biographies of these artists, making the notoriously prolific and financially savvy sculptor Lysippos (Plin. *HN* 34.37) into a tortured artist dying in poverty over one statue (§88.5). An important feature of both their attempts at art criticism is their eagerness to stress the illusionistic effects of classical art, such naturalism being a quality we too admire (Elsner 1993). Eumolpus does not get it quite right when he says of the great classical Athenian sculptor Myron that his works were so good they captured the soul of their subjects (§88.5; in fact, this was said to be the one thing at which he failed), but he is groping for the common idea that Myron's statues were incredibly life-like. In the *Greek Anthology* there are plenty of epigrams that emphasize this quality: the cow that is so convincing it attracts the attentions of bovine admirers; the athlete who appears to breathe and strain on his starting line (*Anth. Pal.* 9.734; 16.54). Trimalchio, too, makes sure we know he can see naturalism when he sees it. Rounding up his misinterpretation of his cups, one of which shows what he insists is

Cassandra slaying her sons, he moves on to stylistic analysis: of the figures of the dead youths, he is moved to declare that their corpses are fashioned so skillfully, you would think they were alive (§52.1)!

Hunting

One popular aspect of domestic decoration that is conspicuously missing from Trimalchio's house is garden painting. The representation of the natural world, often in very unnatural places, was very popular. Hunting scenes, in particular, are seen all over Pompeii: animals hunt each other in the House of the Cēii, and humans hunt animals in the House of the Ancient Hunt. Very similar iconography surfaces in Trimalchio's dining room in the form of embroidered couch-covers that are brought in during the meal, depicting hunters carrying spears and nets: familiar accoutrements for the none-too-sporting Roman hunt (§40.1). The embroidered representation of the hunt is not the end of the theme – in a few seconds hounds, hunters, and even a (ex-) wild boar are coursing round the dining couches. The theme is enacted by the household as the dish itself, the dead boar, recreates its own autobiography and, in effect, turns up to its own funeral, just as Trimalchio will try to do later on. This piece of theatre is reminiscent of other reported dinner scenes, particularly a much earlier example reported by Varro (*Rust.* 3.13.2–3) to have taken place at the villa of Hortensius, where a slave played the part of Orpheus, whistling up a whole host of animals.

The episode, including these often overlooked antimacassars, brings together all elements of the *domus*: the space of the dining room, the decor that embellishes it, and the behavior of its occupants all become caught up in the same pursuit. Some clue to the overlap is provided by the slave responsible for all the horrid party food: Daedalus, a man who can make a pigeon out of lard (§70.2), is deliberately meant to remind us of the mythic Daedalus's role as master inventor of craft, of space (most obviously the labyrinth to which the whole *domus* will shortly be likened; cf. Morgan, PETRONIUS AND GREEK LITERATURE, p. 36), and also of naturalistic art. According to Diodorus Siculus (4.76), Daedalus was the first artist to create statues that were so life-like they could move, that is to say that he was the first to invent naturalistic art (to make life out of marble) and so to achieve the effects held in such high esteem by Eumolpus and Trimalchio.

autobiography, draws attention to his sexual service as a young slave). Just in case we fail to get it, the artist has included written descriptions and has reinforced his point by calling on the gods to make cameo appearances: Minerva herself leads Trimalchio into Rome, Mercury helps him on the path to success, and Fortune with her cornucopia and the Fates spinning out his generous life thread share the dais with him (§29.3–6).

It is not at all unusual to find these deities called on by "tradesmen": Minerva and Mercury are ten-a-penny in paintings in *tabernae* ("shops") in Pompeii and, equally, some homeowners do not shrink from invoking wealth, whether via the Vettii's Priapus or simply a message in the floor (as in the entrance to House VII.i.46): "Well, hello profit!" The seal of Vettius Conviva included a *caduceus* (Mercury's wand). Art and autobiography might meet in other ways, such as the large mosaic jars (daubed with slogans: "The best sauce in town!") found in the *atrium* of a smart yard on the edge of town, complete with a spectacular sea view and private baths. Perhaps inevitably, it has been suggested that this is the home of the famous *garum* sauce (fish sauce) magnate of Pompeii, Scaurus (Cooley and Cooley 2004: 165–6). Sullivan (1986: 195) wonders if the Scaurus whom Trimalchio later namedrops as a house guest (§77.5) might be that very entrepreneur. This forms another good example of how we might choose to characterize the taste of someone who makes a living from processing pickled fish guts (Vout, *THE SATYRICA* AND *NERONIAN CULTURE* p. 109, offers some very different suggestions as to who this Scaurus might be; Andreau, *FREEDMEN IN THE SATYRICA*, p. 118, offers further discussion of the professions and statuses of the freedmen at the *cena*).

Trimalchio does not just invoke profit, he literally worships it as one of his household gods (§60.8–9). The Roman house was the focal point of a family's religious life. The household shrine (*lararium*) was home to the hearth fire of the *domus*, the household gods (*Lares*) and the familial *genius*, a common ancestral spirit that neatly avoided the specific deification of any one individual. Not for Trimalchio such ambiguities: his *lararium* features his own beard clippings (§29.8; see Richlin, *SEX IN THE SATYRICA* p. 90, on the sexual implications of these pubescent trimmings), and the golden statue that he and his guests venerate is of Trimalchio himself (§60.9). Having no offspring or ancestors, whether real or *imagine-d* (and no future: he has no children, no *familia* except his slaves), this *domus* has no *genius*, only the living owner (on the difficult status of the freedman with regard to his past ancestry and future commemoration, see also Hope, *AT HOME WITH THE DEAD*, p. 147; Andreau, *FREEDMEN IN THE SATYRICA*,

p. 120, emphasizes the importance that freedmen placed on their descendants, the lack of which further isolates Trimalchio).

This enforced self-reliance is often used to explain the self-referential mode of "freedman art" (Whitehead 1993; see also Hope, *AT HOME WITH THE DEAD*), but in appealing to the pedigree of autobiographical wall-painting, Trimalchio could point to Sulla, whose villa at Tusculum was supposedly decorated with images of his battle exploits (Plin. *HN* 22.12), demonstrating that the elite were just as much disposed to blowing their own trumpets in private space (Eck 1984; Prag 2006). Undaunted, Trimalchio's paintings likewise ape monumental relief sculpture, the kind that tells of military endeavor and civic panache and that we might more readily expect to see on the triumphal arches of Rome (Hölscher 2006). In these scenes, emperors are led into the city by Roma (helmeted like Minerva) and are accompanied on platforms or swept up to the heavens by Victory or *Aion* ("Time"), winged counterparts to Trimalchio's Mercury. Elsewhere in the house, he takes further opportunity to ape civic grandeur, hanging the rods and axes of magisterial office on the doorpost of his dining room (with the excuse of his dignity as *sevir*, §30.1), imitating men much grander than himself, whom he, in his studded ring and purple-striped napkin can only come close to emulating within his own home (§32; Vout, *THE SATYRICA* AND *NERONIAN CULTURE*, p. 105, discusses further the process of "playing up" to these grand, military roles).

Myth and Education

The next set of paintings that Encolpius sees, he has to get some help with: scenes from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* with a further, seemingly more incongruous panel showing the amphitheatre games of Laenas (§29.9). An eclectic mix of high culture and low-class entertainment perhaps? Similar eclecticism occurs again in Trimalchio's choice of silverware, the decoration of which also includes Greek myth and Roman gladiators (§52.1–3). In fact, the wall-paintings of Pompeii demonstrate the same tendency: why on earth did one homeowner think that the amphitheatre riot of AD 59 would look good in his living room? Did he have some personal connection with the riot? Had he started it? Lost a relative? Did he admire the fighters, want to recall an event that had put his town on the map, or did he just love the amphitheatre?

furniture, and sculpture, including yet another well-endowed Priapus. Such views suggest an easy, symmetrical house in which we shall know our way around. But Encolpius's experience in Trimalchio's house is not so comfortable. As soon as he is over the threshold, he is bamboozled by the layout and content of the house. The entrance hall has an *atriensis* (an "entrance keeper," whose title derives from the *atrium*), but we appear to be in a peristyle, with a colonnade and even a troupe of athletes (§29.7). Throughout the visit, the guests rely not on their own knowledge of houses but on slaves who tell them which rooms to enter and how to do so (§30.5). We are kept similarly in the dark. It is only near the end that Trimalchio offers a quick résumé of his home's features (§77.4): it has four dining rooms (*cenationes*), 20 chambers (*cubicula*) in addition to one each for himself and Fortunata, and two marble colonnades (*porticus*). Unusually in a description of a *domus*, but, of course, in line with Trimalchio's preoccupations, he also tells us something about the slave quarters: upstairs he has a row of cubicles (*cellatio*) and a really good *cella* for the *atriensis* (Andrea, FREEDMEN IN THE SATYRICA, discusses the obsession of Trimalchio with slavery and the interactions between the freedmen at the dinner party, their former slave lives, and their own current slaves). We also get to see the private baths (*balneum*) (§73). The description implies a pretty big house (those houses in Pompeii with two peristyles, like the House of the Faun, are exceptionally grand), but it is a waste of time, despite previous attempts, to reconstruct Trimalchio's house. We are not supposed to be able to: it is, as Encolpius explains, impossible to articulate, a "new kind of labyrinth," a metaphor we will examine more fully later on (§73.1).

Memory and Autobiography

If we cannot make sense of the architecture of the house, can we do any better with its paintings? Once past the dog, Encolpius first sees a series of scenes depicting the life of their host, showing succinctly everything we will later hear related about Trimalchio. He is pretty much laid bare before we start. The fresco cycle charts his life from his debut in the slave market, learning accounting, and becoming a steward to being hauled up onto a tribunal (presumably as a *sevir Augustalis*, a freedman official of the imperial cult) by Mercury (Richlin, *SEX IN THE SATYRICA*, p. 90, notes the way in which the mural, through its written labels, like Trimalchio's later

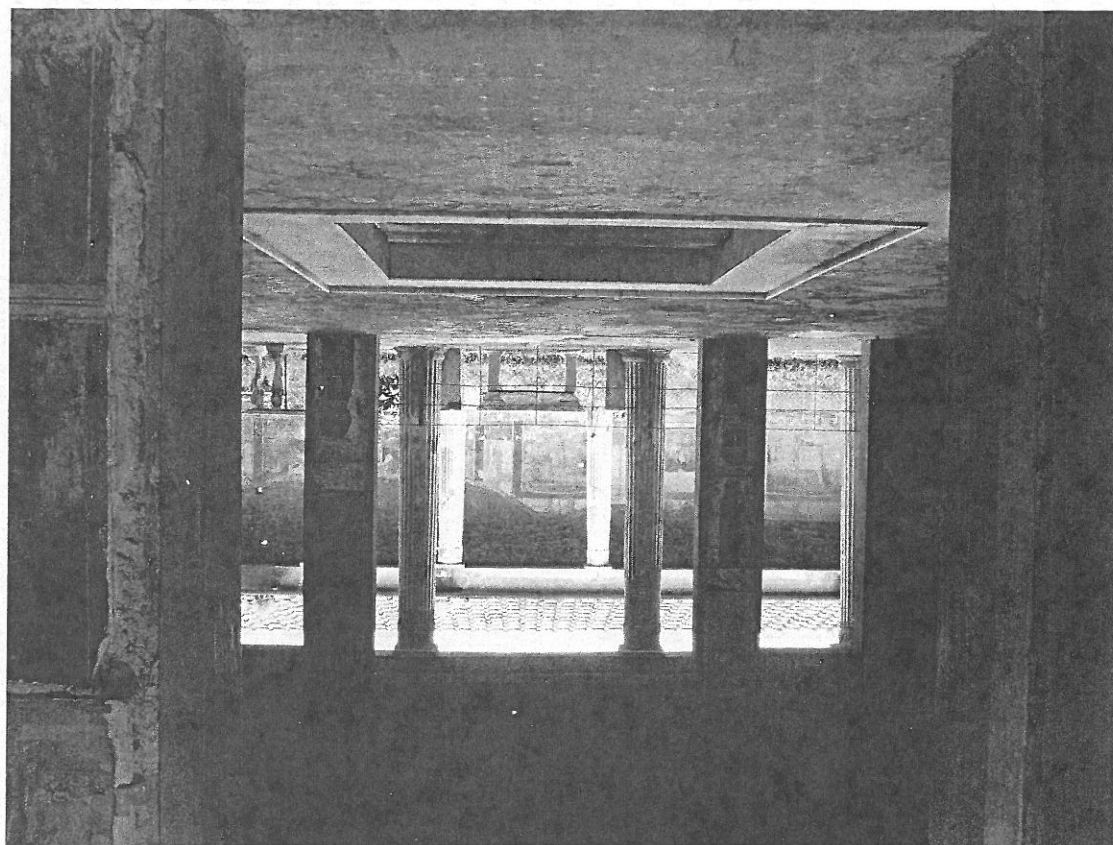


Figure 10.3 The view from the entrance through the House of the Vetii, Pompeii. (Photo: Hales.)

Given that this procession leads us to Trimalchio's front door, offering Encolpius an opportunity to describe his first impressions of the house, it is striking that we learn nothing at all about the exterior, except for the doorway. On one level, this might simply be a reflection of domestic practices as we find them in the cities of Campania, where house facades are generally plain with few, high, small windows. There are various reasons for this lack of penetrability, including climate and, not least, as we can see from the *Satyricon*, the fear of low-lives looking to move in on your property/wife/children (it was a common misrepresentation of the *domus* that guests might wander around at will: Vitruvius [*De arch.* 6.5.1] insists on it, although it is a gesture vigorously denied by more practical homeowners like Fronto [*Ep.* 5.1]). The tiny windows of Pompeian houses contrast with the tall doorways, often flanked by fake half-columns or, as in the case of the House of the Vettii, decked out with a memorable painting. Trimalchio's threshold is certainly well flagged: a brightly dressed slave shelling peas and a magpie in a cage to greet the visitors (§28.8–9). There is a strong sense of one-way traffic: a sign promises a good beating to any slave who tries to leave without permission (§28.7). In fact, it will be just as difficult for Encolpius to leave. Nobody ever leaves Trimalchio's house by the way they came in (§72.10). Trimalchio himself does not get out much, having to make a big deal of this year's two dinner dates (§30.3). The entrance is guarded by the big wall-painting of a dog (§29.1), a common feature of vestibule floor mosaics in Pompeii (most famously in the House of the Tragic Poet [fig. 10.2], which, like Trimalchio's, bears the useful advice *cave canem*, "Beware of the dog" [cf. Veyne 1963]). It is not clear whether the guard dog is intended to keep people in or out, perhaps reminding us again of the inescapable entrance to the Underworld (also on this allusion Hope, *AT HOME WITH THE DEAD*, p. 142, and Morgan, *PETRONIUS AND GREEK LITERATURE*, p. 35).

Layout of the *Domus*

Once inside, however, Trimalchio's house stops being usefully like the houses of Campania. Doorways into Pompeian houses tend to offer a straightforward view: in the House of the Vettii (fig. 10.3) we can see through the door into an *atrium* ("hall") and through to the back of the house with its beautiful peristyle garden filled with fountains, marble

Figure 10.2 *Cave canem* ("beware of the dog") mosaic in the vestibule of the House of the Tragic Poet, Pompeii. (Photo: Sophie Fox.)



what might be laughable about the representation of Trimalchio's interior decor (and the Vettii's too) is not his vulgarity of taste, made inevitable by his low status, but a rather more subtle interplay with prevailing traditions of domestic display. By exploring the remains of the Vettii house alongside Petronius's description of Trimalchio's home, perhaps we might arrive at a more productive understanding of the relationship between the two and of their relationship to prevailing Roman traditions of domestic activity, architecture, and decoration. In doing so, the interconnections between those activities, architecture, and decor, and hence the relationship between the character and behavior of Trimalchio and the extensive description of his domestic setting, may also become more apparent.

Importance of the *Domus*

Throughout the evening, Trimalchio and his guests demonstrate their preoccupation with the acquisition of property. Trimalchio has built his house himself, one of his first moves after making his fortune (§76.8), and he has transformed it from a *cusuc* ("shack") to a *templum* ("temple") (§77.4). Diogenes has gone so far as to put up a public notice to let the world know he will be moving from his *cenaculum*, a room over a shop, to a *domus*, a town house (§38.10). They show all the more pride in these achievements because of the barriers in the way of achieving such a change in residence (Andreau, *FREEDMEN IN THE SATYRICA*, p. 118, discusses the implications of possessing different kinds of properties). One of Trimalchio's sayings is along the lines of "He who is born in a *pergula* (booth), doesn't dream of an *aedes* (house)" (§74.14).

The importance of property to these men can be explained on two levels. Firstly, there is the visible display of wealth, a stamp on the landscape showing the freedman's financial success. Secondly, there is the implication of social presence and belonging to the community. Throughout the text we are reminded that Trimalchio's residence is a *domus*, a word that connotes not just a town residence but associated traditions of domestic life and architecture. The *domus* was imagined as a seat for the *memoria* ("remembrance") of family life, a place made hallowed by the presence of the hearth, the spirit of ancestors, and the record of familial achievement. Inside, ancestor masks (*imagines*) watched over the next generation,

admonishing and encouraging the *paterfamilias*, the living head of the household. The *domus* also provided the space wherein a family displayed itself to the outside world, home to a whole host of "public" functions, most importantly the morning *salutatio* ("greeting") and the evening *cena*. The *salutatio* was an essential element of the patron-client network that stimulated the economics and politics of Rome. Clients presented themselves to pay their respects, acknowledging their ongoing allegiance to their patron, while he reciprocated with the donation of *sportula*, a gift of food or nominal amount of money. The *cena* or *convivium*, the evening meal, was supposedly a more intimate affair to which the patron invited his friends and, as a treat, dependants to share a meal. Of course, it is the latter that allows our heroes to enter Trimalchio's *domus* and us to take a tour in order to observe how well it measures up.

Insularity of Trimalchio's *Domus*

The social importance of the *domus* is most famously expressed by the architect Vitruvius, who, at the beginning of the principate, went to some lengths to prescribe exactly how a house should be appointed so as to reconcile the *familia* ("household") with its civic surroundings and to allow the *paterfamilias* to undertake his social obligations with due dignity (Vitruv. *De arch.* 6.5.1–2). Famous statesmen of the republic had decorated their homes with their hard-won military spoils (Cic. *Phil.* 2.68; Plut. *C. Gracch.* 15.1) and chose locations in Rome that dominated the landscape, so they could see and be seen by the whole city (Vell. Pat. 2.14; Wiseman 1987). Although most sources on the importance of housing come from the late republic, at a time when houses were potent political weapons, the importance of visibility as a marker of status and wealth persisted (contrast the invisibility, for example, of life in a crowded *insula* ["tenement block"], as in Martial 1.86). Family rituals of marriage, death, and coming-of-age included processions that traveled between private and public space. It is presumably in an attempt to achieve this kind of public platform that Trimalchio makes such a show of himself in the baths and starts the *cena* with a procession following his litter to his house (§28.1–5). (Vout, *THE SATYRICA AND NERONIAN CULTURE*, p. 105, discusses the triumphal overtones of this procession, further emphasizing Trimalchio's attempt to make a public spectacle of himself.)

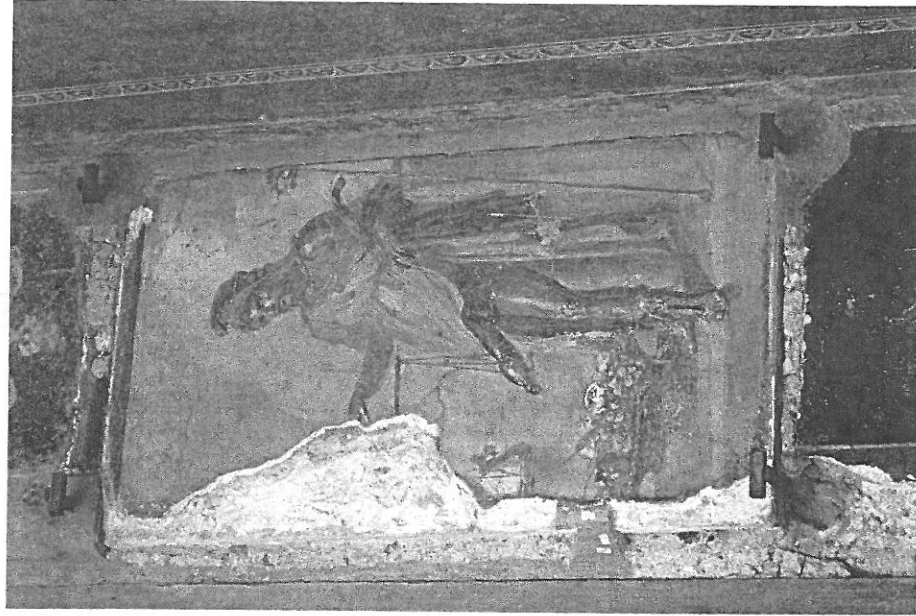


Figure 10.1 The Priapus in the vestibule of the House of the Vettii, Pompeii. (Photo: Sophie Fox.)

educated middle classes to the combination of new money, low class, and extreme power or profile is to accuse it of bad taste. The equation of freedmen and bad taste is apparently well attested in the archaeology of the Bay of Naples, on which Trimalchio's house is reckoned to have stood. The House of the Vettii in Pompeii, a lavishly decorated house, best known to visitors for its well-endowed Priapus weighing his large phallus against a big bag of cash (fig. 10.1), is usually thought to have belonged to Vettius Restitutus and Vettius Donatus, both known from their seals (Cooley and

Cooley 2004: 214–15), who are generally assumed to be freedmen brothers (Richlin also discusses the figure and phallus of Priapus, *SEX IN THE SATYRICA*, p. 83). The abundant use of fake marble, the overdecorated garden, pornographic frescoes, and the friezes showing cute cupids involving themselves in various types of manufacture and commerce have all been seen to befit the aspirant misadventures of a pair of freedmen opportunists (Trimalchio, of course, has his own pastry Priapus, §60.4). The connections freely made between the Vettii brothers, Trimalchio, their status, and their perceived chronic taste have become so pervasive that it is precisely with this pairing that the most recent study of “freedman art” begins. Lauren Hackworth Petersen uses exactly this perceived relationship in order to begin the process of refuting the assumptions commonly made about freedman taste and the relationship between the archaeologically attested homeowners and Petronius's literary invention (Petersen 2006: 5–10; see Hope, *AT HOME WITH THE DEAD*, for the problems of this equation with regards to “freedman” tombs).

For any imagined vulgar freedman new to home improvement plenty of moralistic literature unwittingly provided hints on how best to pump huge amounts of cash into a luxury home. Seneca the Younger, the man who managed to have two (not mutually exclusive) careers as both the owner of some of the most splendid villas of his age and also the Neronian era's voice of the moral minority, relies on long-established traditions of moral rhetoric to denounce the luxury villas of his contemporaries: villas that feature roof gardens and bath houses built out into the sea (Sen. *Ep.* 122.8). Notorious villas like those of Lucullus (Plut. *Luc.* 39.3) apparently provided the model for Seneca's rage, and numerous villa remains around the Bay of Naples, tottering on terraces on mountain sides and teetering on bridges over the sea, seem to suggest that maybe he had a point (Lafon 2001; Edwards 1993). What made these buildings exceptionally luxurious was not their size or expense but explicitly their displays of transcendence over the natural world. As Pliny the Elder framed it, the definition of *luxuria* was a hubristic desire to overcome and subvert the laws of nature (for example, Plin. *HN* 9.139, 33.3, 33.64; Wallace-Hadrill 1990).

In this context, Trimalchio's town house (*domus*) hardly seems a contender. None of the crimes perpetrated by the elite are here: no evidence of lavish architectural design, no vaults, apses, or marbling, nor even sculpture. Look closer, though, and the same will to alter nature is there in substance if not in scale, even if all Trimalchio can manage is a hare that looks like Pegasus. This affinity might alert us to the fact that

whose court he had served, Petronius inverted the stereotype of the elite (philosophically-derived) suicide by spending his last hours not in high-minded literary composition and philosophical discussion, but in eating, sleeping, listening to silly poems, and playfully chatting with his friends. In his will he did not flatter the emperor, but revealed Nero's terrible excesses and debauchery (Tac. *Ann.* 16.19). There is no mention of Petronius's funeral or tomb; and it is hard to imagine that these would have mattered much to him. In his death Petronius challenged elite expectations in different ways from those found in the *Satyrica*, but both his death and the work that was to be his lasting legacy highlighted central issues and ideals about living and dying in ancient Rome.

Further Reading

Whitehead's article (1993), which draws out many relevant parallels between surviving tombs and Trimalchio's tomb, is a useful starting point. Petersen's recent book (2006) takes a different approach, but places the tomb in a broader art-historical context. For the tomb in the context of the *Satyrica* and its death themes, see in particular the articles by Bodel (1994; 1999a). For a wider view of monuments, the cemetery, and funerary customs, Toynbee (1971) remains essential; and for a selection of relevant sources see Hope (2007). The cemetery and how monuments functioned on a street of tombs are usefully introduced by Purcell (1987) and Koortbojian (1996), while Carroll's book (2006) summarizes the content, role, and design of epitaphs. For the specifics of Roman wills, idealized death scenes, and Roman funerals, see respectively Champlin (1991), Edwards (2007), and Bodel (1999b).

Freedmen's Cribbs

Domestic Vulgarly on the Bay of Naples

Shelley Hales

Vulgarity and Villas

Domestic space in the world of the *Satyrica* can be dangerous. As Encolpius discovers on his visit to Trimalchio's house, art can literally bite back. The end of the episode sees a slavering guard dog barking at them so ferociously that both Encolpius and Ascylos end up in the fishpond. The painted dog they have encountered on the way in has metamorphosed into the snapping hound Scylax (\$64). They have to be rescued by the hall porter, and the dog is pacified with some tasty morsels (\$72), like Virgil's Cerberus, who guards the gates of Hades (Virgil *Aen.* 6.417–23). The allusion makes explicit that dining at Trimalchio's is a living hell.

The home in which Trimalchio entertains his guests is often seen as the height of ostentation and bad taste. Freedmen are characterized as men who come from nothing, make a fortune, and exhibit their wealth in their gaudy homes. Trimalchio's fake Corinthian bronze (\$50), latest dining-room gadgets (\$60), and autobiographical frescoes (\$29) are the equivalent of the plasma screens, chandeliers, and gigantic portraits that are paraded in the homes of footballers and celebrities who invite the audience to tour their homes in life-style TV programs and magazines. What wouldn't Trimalchio give to be paraded in this way?

Another comparison might come from a documentary reviewed by Andrew Mueller, a *Guardian* journalist, in which the cameras instead toured the homes of tyrants and dictators from Ceausescu to Hussein. "I didn't realise you could spend a million dollars in Woolworths" ("The Guide," October 8, 2005). Here, by posing as an authority on style, the speaker dissolves the threat of political tyranny, genocide, and corruption by picking apart its perpetrators' soft furnishings. The only reaction of the