TRIMALCHIO'S DOMESTIC STAFF

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This paper offers two things: reinforcement of the view that Trimalchio was not an incredibly rich man and not satirised as such by Petronius; and further illumination—insofar as is possible from a comic writer—of an area of Roman social history recently opened up by other scholars.2

The very first glimpse of Trimalchio is instructive. He is advertised as lautissimus homo, horologium in triclinio et bucinatores habet subornatum, ut subinde sciat quantum de vita perdiderit (26. 9). This might appear to establish him as a fellow of unusual, perhaps unique, opulence. A clock in one's own house is striking enough; normally a slave was sent to the forum to ascertain the hour and report back.3 But a civilian trumpeter is impossible to parallel; bucinatores in inscriptions (CIL 13. 11862) and Digest (50. 6. 6) are clearly identified as military men.

Viewed coolly, this luxury is less impressive. For one thing, there is absurd duplication, a point that will recur later. With a clock in the dining room, who needed a trumpeter? Especially in an establishment so plagued with symphoniaci.4 At any rate, we never hear another word of trumpeter (or clock, for that matter) in the Cena.

The passage is not evidence for the position of bucinator in private houses. Trimalchio’s man will have belonged to his master’s troupe of cornicines who are imported into a later stage of the narrative (78. 5). His unusual role here is quite in keeping with Trimalchio’s statement (53. 12) that cornicines were one of the two greatest pleasures in life.

It is also possible that the collocation of clock and trumpeter betrays a silly attempt at keeping up with the Roman Joneses. According to Lucian (or pseudo-Lucian), Hippias 8, there were clocks that operated δύδας καὶ μυκήματος. Trimalchio’s trumpeter may have been there to create the sound effects of which his own ordinary clock was incapable.

Trimalchio now comes into view, playing ball inter pueros capillatos (27. 1). This type of comely youth recurs throughout the Cena: 31. 3: puerus


2. Notably by P. R. C. Weaver in a variety of articles, registered in the bibliography to his own invaluable Familia Caesaris (Cambridge, 1972), and by Susan M. Tregegari in three very illuminating papers to which this present contribution owes a great deal: ‘Domestic Staff at Rome in the Julio-Claudian Period, 27 B.C. to A.D. 68,’ Social History/Histoire Sociale 6 (1973), 241–55; ‘Jobs in the Household of Livia,’ PBSR 43 (1975), 48–77; ‘Jobs for Women,’ AJAH 1 (1976), 76–104.

3. See Mayor's note on Juvenal 10. 216. Trimalchio was not, however, unique in having a clock (sundial or clepsydra?) at home; cf. Cicero, Ad fam. 16. 18. 3; Digest 33. 7. 12.

4. See later for these; cf. M. S. Smith’s edition of the Cena (Oxford, 1975)—hereafter referred to by name only—with regard to 28.5.
Alexandrinis; 34. 4: duo Aethiopes capillati; 41. 6: puer speciosus; 60.8: tres pueri candidas succincti tunicas; 68. 3: puer Alexandrinus; 74. 8: puer non inspeciosus. Given their initial contrast with senem, it may not be too fanciful to suppose that they serve partly to remind Trimalchio of his own youth: *cum adhuc capillatus essem, nam a puero vitam Chiam gessi* . . . (63. 3).

Their presence is no sign of unusual luxury or depravity. Seneca (*Ep.* 95. 24) waxes eloquent on the *puerorum greges* and *agmina exoletorum* in private households. Indeed, Trimalchio is relatively modest. Apart from the first two scenes, in which several boys are required to make up the ball game and attend to a number of guests, the *capillati* enter either individually or only in twos and threes.5

Two *spadones* also participate in the ball game (27. 3). Again, it is worth noticing the small number, albeit there may be a further reference at 53.10: *iudicum inter cubicularios*—that is, if *cubicularius* at this period connotes eunuchs.

Possession of eunuchs has been taken to indicate pretension to imperial grandeur.6 An unnecessary inference. True, both Claudius and Nero were notoriously addicted to individual eunuchs,7 and before them, personages of the order of Maecenas and Livia had included members of the breed in their retinues.8 However, Trimalchio displays no particular affection for his *spadones*, which suggests that imperial or quasi-imperial (in the case of Maecenas) passions are not being satirised.

Freedmen of Acte and Poppaea are epigraphically attested as eunuchs (*CIL* 6. 8847, 8954). Admittedly, these are both women of the court of Nero. However, the diatribe of Juvenal against women *quas eunuchi inbelles ac mollia semper/oscula delectent* . . . (6.366–78) is sufficient proof that eunuchs were not restricted to imperial households.9

In the bathroom, three *iatraliptae* are found drinking Falernian and quarrelling (28. 3). Another small number. We also notice that they do not give Trimalchio the benefit of their skills. Although berated by the elder Pliny (*NH* 29. 2. 2) in the course of his attack on Greek medicine, his nephew was very concerned to reward an Egyptian freedman called Arpocras, whose *iatraliptic* skills had helped to save his life (*Ep.* 10. 5). In Pliny's case, the masseur was called in from outside; he had been manumitted by his former owner, the

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5. It is quite unnecessary to suppose with R. B. Steele, 'Literary Adaptations and references in Petronius,' *CJ* 15 (1920), 280, that Petronius intends a reference to Nero's Alexandrian claqueurs mentioned by Suetonius, *Nero* 20. 5.

6. By Smith, on 27. 3.


8. Seneca, *Ep.* 114. 6 (Maecenas); *CIL* 6. 4238 (Livia—fragmentary).

9. Cf. Juvenal I. 22 (*cum tener uxorem spado duce* . . .). Before rushing to condemn Trimalchio and real-life Romans for trafficking in cruelty, etc., we should pause to remember that eunuchs were born as well as made, a distinction reflected in Roman law (*Digest* 23. 3. 39).

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foreign lady Thermuthis. It is not clear from Petronius whether or not the bibulous trio actually belongs to Trimalchio.\textsuperscript{10}

Trimalchio leaves the bath in a litter, \textit{praecedentibus phaleratis cursoribus quattuor} (28. 4). This modest number stands in contrast with the \textit{grex cursorum} depicted in the mural of Trimalchio’s career (29. 7). Curores are abundantly attested in both literature and inscriptions; they tend to be Numidians.\textsuperscript{11} Their functions were various, though Juvenal (5. 52) thought it too much to have wine served by a \textit{cursor Gaetulus} at Virro’s house. Nero was attended on journeys by a \textit{phalera Turba atque cursorum}.

By comparison, Trimalchio’s entourage is very small-time.

Along with his master goes a \textit{puer vetulus lippus}. This is presumably Trimalchio’s \textit{deliciae} Croesus, who appears later (64. 5), described as \textit{puer lippus}. Assuming a further equation with the \textit{cicaro meus} who is to be portrayed on his tombstone (71. 11), Trimalchio does not have much of an erotic retinue. Nor is it a question of his being "kinky" for ugly boys: he is quick to smother a \textit{puer non insipientus} with kisses when the latter comes in with a new relay of waiters (74. 8). Rather is it a token of the cheeseparing owner. To be in the fashion, a man needed to display a \textit{deliciae} and a deformed \textit{scura}.

Croesus fulfills both functions. to have him ride on a miserable \textit{chiromaxium} is a further mark of economy.

Trimalchio goes off to the sound of music, provided by a single musician playing in his ear with a miniature set of pipes (28. 6). Music is a constant feature of the \textit{Cena}. But there was nothing odd or ostentatious about this. The well-to-do had had their own musicians since Cicero’s day (\textit{Pro Milone} 55). Martial once exasperatedly asks: \textit{quid optimum sit quaeritis convivium? in quo choraules non erit} (9. 77). Encolpius’ comment \textit{pantomimi chororum non patris familiae triclinium credere} (31. 7) merely exposes his own social ignorance.

At Trimalchio’s door there stands an \textit{ostiarius} (28. 8). In earlier days, and perhaps in more old-fashioned houses in Petronius’ time, he would have been attached to the door post by a long chain.\textsuperscript{14} There is a hint of this in Seneca’s definition of the \textit{ianitor as mancipium extremum} (\textit{De Ira} 3. 37. 2).

Tacitus, by contrast, bears witness to the arrogance of porters (\textit{Ann.} 4. 74. 6; cf. 6. 8. 10). Hence, when Trimalchio divulges later on (77. 4) that he has furnished his door keeper with a \textit{cellam perbonam}, we may see either an odd generosity to a menial position or the placating of a notoriously arrogant class of slave.

\textsuperscript{10} For an example of a master who has his own masseur, cf. Plutarch, \textit{De San.} 13b.

\textsuperscript{11} Seneca, \textit{Ep.} 87. 9; \textit{CIL} 8. 12905; \textit{Digest} 32. 99. 5.

\textsuperscript{12} Suetonius, \textit{Nero} 30. 3.

\textsuperscript{13} On the subject of \textit{deliciae} and cognates, cf. the admirable article by W. J. Slater in \textit{BICS} 21 (1974), 133–40. References to the presence of deformed creatures in imperial and other households are assembled in (e.g.) Becker’s \textit{Gallus} (English version, 210–1). For deformed \textit{scurae} at court, cf. Tacitus, \textit{Ann.} 12. 49. 1 (Paelignus, under Claudius); 15. 34. 3 (Vatinius, under Nero).

\textsuperscript{14} See Suetonius, \textit{De rhet.} 3: \textit{L. Voltaclius Plotus servisste dicitur atque etiam ostiarius vetere more in catena fuisse}; cf. Ovid, \textit{Amor.} 1. 161; \textit{ianitor, indignum, dura religare catena.}
One of the original jobs of the porter was to keep an eye on outgoing slaves, a function here advertised by the notice *Quisquis servus sine dominico iussu foras exierit, accipiet plagas centum* (28. 7). It was also his responsibility to keep out unwanted callers, to which end he normally had a stick and a dog to employ when needed.  

Trimalchio's man has neither. Although there are both pets and hunting dogs within the house (64. 6; 40. 2), he must make do with a *canis pictus*. Although paralleled by mosaics from Pompeii, this could be a tribute to Trimalchio's parsimony, or his easy-going attitude to callers.

And instead of having his *arundo* at the ready, the porter is casually shelling peas into a silver dish. Unless they are for his own use, this is no job for an *ostiarius*. It is the mark of a *mean* owner to have slaves doubling in more than one role. We have already noticed how Juvenal's tight-fisted Virro employed Gaetulian *cursores* as wine waiters. When Cicero excoriates Piso for his wretched household, he picks out this aspect: *idem coquus, idem atriensis* (In Pis. 67). This will not be the only occasion on which Trimalchio appears guilty of the same thing.

There has been some discussion as to why the *ostiarius* should be wearing green clothes with a cherry-red belt. It could of course be simply a jokey way of emphasising the colourful atmosphere of Trimalchio's establishment, without deeper meaning. Alternatively, it was worn to distinguish the *ostiarius* from a less prestigious attendant. The notion that it identifies the door keeper as a partisan of the Greens seems ruled out by Trimalchio's own hostility to that faction. Unless very tolerant, an owner who calls another slave *prasinianus famosus* (70. 10) is hardly likely to have allowed the hated colour to have been advertised at his own front door.

An *atriensis* is also on hand (29. 9) to explain Trimalchio's murals to Encolpius. The title is commonly mistranslated as "porter". In the middle Republic, an *atriensis* had been responsible for the *atrium* and the gold kept there. By Cicero's day, slaves under this title were simply *qui tergunt, qui ungunt, qui verrunt, qui spargunt*. The younger Pliny classifies them collectively along with *topiarii* and *fabri* as necessary expenses. This decline in status makes the later joke (53. 10) of having another *atriensis* exiled to Baiae all the funnier.

As Trebbiari observes, the *atriensis* had lost ground to the *dispensator*. In Trimalchio's pictorial biography, the artist has shown how the hero *ratiocinari didicisset, denique dispensator factus esset*. Trimalchio may have been promoted

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15. For the stick (*virga or arundo*), Propertiuss 4. 7. 21; Seneca, *De const. sap.* 14. 1; Petronius, *Sat.* 98. 1. For guard dogs, Suetonius, *Vit.* 16.
16. See Smith's note; it is just possible that Petronius has the artificial guard dogs of Hephæstus in Homer, *Od.* 7. 91 f., in mind.
18. Thus, only one of Livia's staff so identifies himself (*CIL* 6, 3942), albeit we hear of several in the household of the Statili *CIL* 6, 6239-42, 6215). Could it be that the position was particularly diminished at the imperial level?
from a lower financial grade such as arcarius. The eminence and functions of a dispensusator are too familiar to detail here. In Trimalchio’s own household, this functionary is encountered aureos numerantium (30. 9). On balance, a reasonable activity for such an official, albeit perhaps a trifle obvious, viewed symbolically. However, Juvenal’s gambler takes his dispensusator along with the arca to the game (Sat. 1. 90–2). It is worth noting that Trimalchio’s steward, probably a slave, is superbus, owns slaves of his own, and also vestimenta cubitoria.

A little earlier (30. 1), the guests had seen a procurator at the entrance to the dining room. Commentators have wondered whether or not this term is employed synonymously with dispensusator here. Probably not. The procurator is a well-attested grade for both imperial and private establishments. This latter point is important. Trimalchio must not be presumed to be aping the imperial household. That, in real life, could get a man into fatal trouble, as Torquatus Silanus was to find out in 64! The term procurator, however, in a private domestic context, is as old as Plautus.

Contrary to some editors, this official was superior to the dispensusator. Recognition of that may help both enhancement of Petronius’ subtle humour and resolution of a small textual point. Given his status, it is bizarre that a procurator should be receiving accounts at the entrance to the dining room. Especially as the dispensusator appears to have his own little office or annex.

Trimalchio has got the grades confused; he would be a mortal offender of civil servants!

Appreciation of the niceties of Roman domestic organisation may assist with another textual item. As they attempt to enter the dining room, the guests are held back by a call of dextro pede! from a puer qui supra hoc officium erat positus (30. 5). This phrase was deleted by Fraenkel on the grounds that it recurs (with the change of supra to super) at 56. 8, in the context of a recital of the apophoreta.

The phrase should in fact be retained. More than one jest is involved. The point of dextro pede is to have Trimalchio’s dining room treated as a temple;

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19. See the first two of Treppiari’s articles, cited in the first note.
21. See Smith’s notes to 30. 1, 9.
22. For liberti et procuratores in private houses, CIL 6. 9830–8.
23. Tacitus, Ann. 15. 35: Torquatus had been dubbing his top freedmen ab epistulis, a rationibus, etc.
25. E.g., Smith on 30. 9.
26. That is, accepting Herennius’ in aecario for the in precario of H, as does, for example, Smith, or else following Müller’s in praecoxine (cf. Pliny, Ep. 2. 17. 10, for this noun). Bücheler and others read in ario, but it is perhaps hard to see why this should have been corrupted into in precario (unless this latter can mean “a place for requests to be heard”). Anyway, a steward in the atrium would be about as bizarre as his superior at the entrance to the dining room.
27. The phrase was restored by Müller to his second edition, and is defended by J. P. Sullivan, “Interpolations in Petronius,” PCPS N. S. 22 (1976), 101.
Vitruvius (3. 4. 4) prescribes the right foot as the one that must touch the first and last step of a temple first. The boy, then, functions as an acolyte in the present secular context.

Secondly, it may be observed that, by the standards of the palace and of genuinely important households, Trimalchio’s house is remarkably easy to get into. The previous discussion of ostiarius, dog, and stick is pertinent here. There is no sign of any usher (rogator) or the ab admissione who screened guests. The boy in question represents, in addition to the temple motif, a silly attempt by his master to conceal his lack of regular expert staff.

During the tumult that attends the clearing away of the gustatoria, a dish is dropped (34. 3), whereupon insecutus est lecticarius argentumque inter reliqua purgamenta scops coepit evertere. Modern editors such as Müller and Smith are tempted by Dousa’s emendation supellectarius, on the grounds that a litter-bearer would not be doubling as a sweeper in Trimalchio’s establishment, and that Encolpius could not have recognised a lecticarius as such.

The latter point could easily be countered by supposing Petronius’ dramatic realism to have slipped, or on the assumption that litter-bearers, as in the earlier case of the phalerati cursores, were recognisable by their uniform. However, there is more to it than this. The passage is a perfect illustration of the need to synthesise literary taste with awareness of historical background. At first blush, Dousa’s proposal is attractive. It is consonant with the principle of lectio difficilior eoque potior: supellectarius is elsewhere found only in the Digest (33. 7. 12). Trimalchio’s man might also be thought analogous to the a supellectile attested for Livia’s establishment.

In spite of all this, however, Trimalchio would still be made to look ignorant or parsimonious in his staff arrangements. For a supellecticarius should no more have been sweeping up than a litter-bearer. In good households, there were scapariti to do this.

Four dancers prelude the famous episode of Carpe, carpe (36. 1). The small number should again be noted. It is not clear whether they belong to the house or are part of an imported troupe of entertainers. They are not called upon to do anything more skilled than run up to the table ad symphoniam and lift off the lid of a dish. Then Carpus the scissors goes through his routine. A little later (40. 4), another carver is brought in to hack away at a boar.

There was nothing unusual in having one or more carvers; Livia and the Statilii exhibit as many as Trimalchio in their households. Seneca (Ep. 47. 6) fulminates against the profession of structor: infelix qui huic uni rei vivit, ut altilia decenter secet. Nor are Trimalchio’s carvers as dextrous as those attested elsewhere. At Virro’s table, according to Juvenal (5. 120–1), you could see

28. I ignore the other desperate emendations registered in Bücheler’s apparatus.
29. See Treggiari’s article on the household of Livia, 55 (with n. 98).
30. Attested in the Digest 33. 7. 8.
31. CIL 6. 8911, 6335–4 (bearing in mind Treggiari’s warning that structor can be ambiguous in that it may mean carver or construction worker).
structorem saltantem; Carpus, by contrast, has four assistants to provide the
dance steps! Both he and the other man do nothing more than rip and hack
(laceravit and percussit are the operative verbs), whereas Seneca’s expert per
pectus et clunes certis ductibus circumferens eruditam manum frusta excu-stit.

Trimalchio has been accused of boastfulness for his mention of more than
one medici in attendance (47. 1). This is misleading. After all, he has had
constipation for some time, and might reasonable be expected to seek a second
opinion as to a cure. Nor does he refer to the doctors with a possessive—it is
simply nec medici se inventum. True, doctors are on hand at 54. 2, where they
rush in on cue to treat the master’s bruised arm, but this not very exacting bit of
first aid could have been performed by any house slave retained for
minor ailments. There is no suggestion in the Cena that Trimalchio emulates the
imperial grandeur of a Livia, whose medical staff was large and seemingly
untypical.33

When three white pigs are ushered into the dining room (47. 8), their ages are
announced by the nomenclator. This familiar official is best known, of course,
for tipping off his master as to the names of people encountered in the street or
at a salutatio.34 In the triclinium, he had the duty of showing guests to their
places.35 Announcing an item on the menu is a duty of the nomenclator attested
by the elder Pliny.36 On this showing, there is nothing unique about
Trimalchio’s employment of this functionary. The joke may also be that the
pigs, by being introduced with their ages, are treated with the sort of respect that
was due to human guests.37

The unsurprising fact that Trimalchio has more than one cook (47. 10)
requires no commentary. Of greater interest is the revelation (47. 11) that his
staff are organised into decuriae. This has been taken as something of a joke, in
that other evidence for decuriae and decurions in urban households is restricted
to the staff of the emperor. Yet this generalisation may be refuted by a little-
noticed inscription from Pompeii: quaeres Fabium et Fallacem in decuria
Cotini.38

A passage from Columella is instructive: Classes enim non maiiores quam
denum hominum faciundae, quas decurias appellaverunt antiqii . . . (1. 9. 7). The
context is agricultural. The joke, then, does not rest upon boasting as to sheer
numbers of slaves, which would in any case be paralleled for a privatus by a

32. Cf. Smith’s sensible note.
33. Albeit there is epigraphic evidence for family hospitals of sorts in some non-imperial homes
(CIL 6. 4475), and Seneca, De cons. sap. 13. 3, attests to the presence of medical orderlies in private
households.
34. For nomenclatores in private households during the Julio-Claudian period, cf. CIL 6.
4455, 6071, 8602, 9700.
35. Athenaeus 47c.
36. NH 32. 6. 63—a passage not noticed by Smith.
37. Martial 10. 30. 23 depicts a nomenclator summoning fish by their names!
38. CIL 4. 1604 (the Index to that volume offers no other example of decuria), a reference that
escaped even the vigilant Treggiari’s assembly of references in his Livia paper, n. 131.
passage in Seneca, but in Trimalchio’s misapplication of agricultural organisation to his urban familia. There may be some enhancement of the point later (74. 7), when Encolpius refers to a new relay of waiters as a classis.

When an errant cook is stripped for punishment, he is described as standing dolefully inter duos tortores (49. 6). This has been interpreted as one of Trimalchio’s most glaring pretensions to imperial splendour, since slaves in charge of the disciplining of fellow-slaves are not attested for private households. It is true that Juvenal’s line sunt quae tortoribus annua praestent (6. 480) probably refers to the hiring of public slaves. But who was going to punish the steward’s slave (also stripped for a flogging) earlier in the Cena (30. 7)?

In point of fact, it is unlikely that the two slaves flanking the delinquent cook were actually skilled torturers in the employ of Trimalchio. For the atmosphere of his house is pure Queen of Hearts. The cook is begged off, as are the slave who breaks a cup (52. 6), the puer who falls against Trimalchio’s arm (53. 1), and the aforementioned slave of the steward. The worst punishment we see is a box on the ears for another cup-dropping youth (34. 2).

One of Trimalchio’s notorious onomastic puns involves a maker of Corinthian plate called Corinthus (50. 4). Non-addicts of paronomasia (addicts too, for that matter) should not overlook an interesting reflection here of Trimalchio’s relative economic and social modesty. He identifies Corinthus as aerarius a quo emo. In other words, Trimalchio does not have his own silversmith. This puts him in harmony with the Julio-Claudian period: few if any silversmiths are attested for non-imperial owners.

Three related points are germane. Trimalchio’s liking for Corinthian ware merely conforms to the fashion of the early imperial period. The confining of his taste to silver is in keeping with the Tiberian prohibition on the ownership of gold plate by private citizens. Finally, the play on Corinthus’ name may also be a comment on the naming of goblets and the like after makers’ names: we hear of Theriscian earthenware cups and Mentor-made dippers from Athenaeus (470f.) and Lucian (Lex. 7).

The scene in which an actuarius recites some accounts tanquam urbis acta

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40. Although there would be nothing silly about Trimalchio having a decuria viatorum (47. 13), given that he is a businessman active throughout southern Italy (48. 2).
41. All of this is a far cry from the brutal Vedius Pollio, who had to be restrained by Augustus from throwing a slave to his muraeae for breaking a goblet (Seneca, De ira 3. 40. 2–3), which is not to overlook the crucifixion of a slave for taking Trimalchio’s name in vain (53. 3). However (the text does not make it clear), this probably happened on one of his other estates (the matter comes up during the reading of the accounts at table), and may arguably have been ordered by someone other than Trimalchio. Even if this is not the case, the evidence of the Cena is that the host was not habitually cruel.
42. For the epigraphic evidence, cf. Treggiari’s Livia article, n. 95. One or two inscriptions are ambiguous as to the smith’s status.
44. Tacitus, Ann. 2. 33.
(53. 1) would appear to be the most blatant case of imperial pretensions. It has been argued that Trimalchio's property is organised as a miniature Rome.45 There may be something in this. The sequence certainly contains what seems to be the most egregious boast of the entire Cena, namely the birth of thirty boys and forty girls at the Cumaean estate on a single day.46 That is, assuming this was the time span intended by Petronius. There is something to be said for Friedländer's view that the record covers a reporting period of some months, an argument strengthened47 by the fact that the first three items (also the most seemingly outrageous) have no temporal indication, whereas the subsequent and more plausible events are specified as occurring eodem die.

It should also be kept in mind that Trimalchio's greatest extravagances (if so interpreted) all occur in this report. According to the Digest,48 "Men often think their assets are greater than they really are. This frequently happens to people who have overseas businesses in remote parts of the world, managed by slaves and freedmen; often the business declines over a long period without their knowing it." It is possible that we are expected to see an aping of this scale of enterprise on the part of Trimalchio, whose interests are concentrated in Southern Italy. Having the accounts read at table may be nothing more than another attempt at playing the big business man49 working overtime.

Staff mentioned in the accounts include saltuarii, vilices, a circ(um)itor, a liberta and a bathman caught in adultery, a steward defending an unspecified court action, and litigation between cubicularii. This last is a realistic touch, if one may believe Seneca (Dialet. 2. 14. 1) on their arrogance. There is also the famous case of the atriensis exiled to Baiae. Such a congenial-looking punishment seems a good joke. It is possible that there is more in it. Tacitus (Ann. 13. 26) refers to the constant exiling of freedmen to Campania. At another level Suetonius (Nero 30. 5) states that Nero had convicts shipped to the Bay of Naples area to work on his building projects at Baiae and Misenum.50 Conceivably a contemporary allusion therefore.

Along with trumpeters, acrobats are Trimalchio's favourite pleasure in life, on his own admission. It is therefore very likely that the petauristarii who come in to entertain the guests (53. 11) are his own. Indeed, if the puer who falls on Trimalchio is the boy acrobat of the previous section (the text is a little uncertain), the issue is beyond doubt, since the latter is set free by Trimalchio and so must have been his slave.

46. See the notes of Friedländer and Smith for the incredible implications as to the population and food-producing capacities of the Cumaean estate.
47. Rather than weakened, as Smith maintains.
48. Digest 40. 9. 10, as translated by Crook, op. cit., 188.
49. I agree with Smith that Suetonius, Galba 12. 3 (adpostia lauatae cena ingressus eum, et ordinario quidem dispensatorium breviarium rationum afferunt . . .) is ambiguous, but Trimalchio is no Galba, and there is no need to hunt out parallels or inspirations for every Petronian joke.
To have one’s own troupe seems to have been regarded as vulgar and pretentious. Hence, no doubt, the striking absence of entertainers from the entourage of Livia. In the late Republic, Cicero had attacked the freedman Chrysogonus for maintaining his own entertainers; nearer to Trimalchio’s day, Ummidia Quadratilla’s ownership of pantomimi shocked the younger Pliny. Trimalchio’s indulgence, then, is by no means unique.

Likewise, the Homeristae who troop in later (59. 2) offer a very common type of entertainment. The joke here is mainly in Trimalchio’s response: while they talked in Greek verse, he canora voce Latine legebat librum. This may indicate that he has to follow Homer with the aid of a Latin crib, as Smith maintains, though one would have expected the Easterner Trimalchio’s Greek to have been better than his Latin. Furthermore, what sort of Latin versions of Homer could possibly have been circulating in his time?

A better explanation is that the ill-bred Trimalchio, whose lack of culture is exposed in what follows (his idiosyncratic account of the Trojan War), cannot sit still and listen to a respectable gentleman’s entertainment without soon interrupting with some irrelevances. Encolpius’ comment on the Greek converse (ut insolenter solent) suggests that he himself is not very different.

So much for Trimalchio’s staff. A word on their nomenclature will be instructive. In the course of the Cena, we see or hear mention of: Cario, Carpus, Cinnamus, Croesus, Daedalus, Dionysus, Menophila, Mithridates, Nasta, Philargyris, Stichus. An Hellenic-looking bunch, for the most part. Given their master’s origins, and the apparent Southern Italian setting, that occasions no surprise.

One must guard against the temptation to exploit homonyms as a means of dating the Satyricon. Grimal, for instance, was confident that Carpus was meant to remind the readers of Nero’s libertus of that name (CIL 6. 143). But the name is commonly attested in inscriptions. On the same reckoning, we should relate Philargyris to Livia, since she had a medical orderly of the same name?

In somewhat the same vein, the agnomen Maecenatianus claimed by Trimalchio (71. 12) need not inevitably connote the minister of Augustus. There was a Maecenatianus on the staff of Livia, and there will have been others in real life—not all can have been rich and effeminate patrons of the arts in emulation of the Maecenas.

51. A point made by Treggiari in her Livia paper, 56.
53. Trimalchio is surely not part of the archaist movement, conning the works of Livius Andronicus, Ennius, and so on.
54. Encolpius’ subsequent criticism of the poor quality of Habhinna’s slave’s rendition of Virgil (68. 5) required no great expertise or judgement. It did not take much to realise that Aeneid verses are not a normal feature of the Aeneid, and the shaky volume of the reader’s voice reflected a fault normally corrected at elementary school (Quintilian 1. 8. 1).
55. How far a Greek name indicates Greek blood is, of course, a tricky question; cf. J. Griffin’s important article, ‘Augustan Poetry and the Life of Luxury,’ JRS 66 (1976), 93, n. 147.
56. ‘Note à Pétrone,’ RPh 15 (1941), 19.
57. Livia also had a calculiator by the name of Menophilus (CIL 6. 3939).
It may briefly be subjoined that the names of Trimalchio's slaves are common enough. Even the more outlandish-looking ones are at least paralleled: a Mithridates, for instance, is epigraphically attested—he was a *pistor*! 58

We have seen the sort of staff Trimalchio had. It is worth considering what he does not have (making due allowance for the occasional lacunae in the text of the * Cena*). The apparent absence of any children reduces the number of menials needed by him and his wife. The latter, Fortunata, seems oddly short of help. She bustles around the dining room during the meal (37. 1), counts the silver (67. 1), and even helps a cook by grinding pepper (74. 5). To some extent, she may be intended as a parody of the good * domina* represented by Livia—responsible for the wool and so on. But she may also reflect the tight-fisted approach of her husband towards domestic staff. We have already noted how short Trimalchio is in many areas of service. It can be added that there is a striking absence of women—no female slaves and no female entertainers are in view. Which may be one reason why Fortunata attempts to dance! Similarly, Habibnas' inept slave is the nearest we get to a *lector*. Finally, in view of the obvious humour Petronius could have extracted from it, one ought to emphasise the absence of a * prae gustator*.

This paper presumes the correctness of the orthodox dating of the * Satyricon* to Nero's reign. It also takes for granted that there are detectable allusions to contemporary people and fashions. Great restraint must nevertheless be exercised in the hunt for specific references to Nero and the imperial lifestyle. 59 There is little or nothing in Trimalchio's household that is particularly unusual or extravagant. Rather is the reverse more often true. Trimalchio is a vulgarian who, socially and culturally, gets things wrong. With regard to staff, he is economical, constantly cutting corners by having slaves double up on their functions and the like. In this, he is to some degree a literary type: from Cicero's Piso to Juvenal's Virro, his sort of domestic economy is an object of derision. 60

Finally, it may be observed that the picture of Trimalchio thus achieved is reasonably consonant with the statement of Plutarch (* Moralia* 60e) that flatters reproach profligate and extravagant spenders with meanness and sordidness, as Titus Petronius did with Nero.

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58. *ILS* 742a. Of all the names, that of Dionysus is the most suspect, but it is clearly in for the pun on Liber, and need be no more than a crude play on the common Dionysus.

59. See the long register assembled by a sensibly cautious Rose in his *Date and Author of the Satyricon*, 82-8.

60. Cp. Seneca's condemnation of the elaborate households of the *iuh*, *Ep.* 47. 6-8.
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