

In and Out: Food, the Body, and Social Hierarchies in Roman Households

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**Abstract**

In and Out: Food, the Body, and Social Hierarchies in Roman Households

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Providing a distinct window into the social and political developments of the early Principate, my dissertation takes up various lived experiences in domestic settings to probe Roman notions of embodiment. It offers a close study of Roman attitudes towards the digesting body and the domestic practices associated with its needs. My research reveals how numerous activities related to basic somatic functions became the markers of a person's place in Roman society. The house is the primary locus of my dissertation because this dynamic environment both enabled the continual (re)enactment of social hierarchies grounded in attitudes about nutritional and excretory needs and permitted temporary threats or resistances to common practices. My work makes two interlinked arguments. First, an underlying acceptance of hierarchical social relationships colored Roman authors' thoughts about the proper functioning of and practices associated with digestion. Second, these assumptions influenced not only the design of domestic technologies and locations assigned to preparing, eating, and excreting food, but also the daily orchestration of human activity within Roman homes. After an introduction that relays the methodologies employed throughout the work, I begin with an exploration of elite imaginings of the alimentary canal and its reflection of various writers' contemporary socio-political values. The next chapter focuses on Latin authors' attempts to

categorize status, belonging, and deviance through dietary habits. Following this, I explore the tension between elite writers' demonstrable ignorance of the skills and practices associated with cooking, yet their obvious attempt to appropriate culinary knowledge as an expression of mastery and self-reliance through the inclusion of recipes and remedies in their works. Next, I examine the material evidence for food preparation, consumption, and elimination within domestic spaces through the theoretical lens of actor-network-theory and object/human dependencies. In the last chapter, I take up the kinetic organization of household routines involving somatic function as a daily performance of mastery on the one hand and enslavement on the other. Final thoughts point to future research that explores the power popular tastes and practices had on shaping elite attitudes to the body during the early Principate.

## INTRODUCTION

### EXPLORING EATING, DIGESTING, AND EXCRETING IN THE ROMAN WORLD

*est enim actio quasi sermo corporis, quo magis menti congruens  
esse debet*

For it is by the action of the body that speaks, so it is  
all the more necessary that it agrees with the mind.

Cic. *De or.* 3.222.

While Cicero's comment about the body's ability to communicate with action rather than words is tied to his concerns about the overall development of one's persuasive oratorical skills, his claim nonetheless demonstrates that some—if not many Romans—were aware of the body's power to convey certain social realities.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Pliny the Elder declares that various movements of the forehead, eyebrows, eyes, and nostrils reveal the state of a person's mind and character (*HN* 11.114-15). Cicero and Pliny's sensitivity to the body's potential to express a person's internal thoughts makes sense when we remember that many aspects of Romans' daily lives were carried out in the presence of others. Romans defined their status by social connections and the public performances of their duties in front of a crowd of peers and other (sometimes hostile) observers.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, Cicero and Pliny's observations about the body's ability to manifest certain elements of an individual's personality are different from the type of studies modern sociologists and

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<sup>1</sup> For discussions on gestures as a part of Roman political life as well as expressions of masculinity, see Gregory Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Anthony Corbeil, *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Maud Gleason. *Making Men: Sophists and Self-presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); F. Graf. "The Gestures of Roman Actors and Orators." in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, eds. J. Bremmer and H. Roodenburg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 36-58.

<sup>2</sup> Holt Parker. "The Observed of All Observers: Spectacle, Applause, and Cultural Poetics in the Roman Theater Audience," in *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, eds. Christine Kondoleon and Bettina Ann Bergmann (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1999) 160-72. Parker discusses how Roman senators could be ridiculed in the theater by the actors' choice of play and delivery of lines that would have topical importance. They would also be booed, hissed, or even hit by thrown rocks or fruit.

anthropologists do in order to understand the cultural and evolutionary aspects of non-verbal communication; yet, these two brief examples suggest that Romans were not only aware of the potential of the human body to communicate certain messages but also that they believed that others observed and interpreted unspoken expressions.<sup>3</sup> Their comments tantalizingly hint at Roman notions of embodiment, and the role that bodies moving through and functioning in the physical realities of the Roman world played in shaping social interactions.

Providing a distinct window into the social and political developments of the late Republic and early Principate, this work takes up various lived experiences in domestic settings in order to probe Roman notions of embodiment. Specifically, it offers a close study of Roman attitudes towards the digesting body and the quotidian activities associated with its needs as they are represented in Latin literature as well as revealed in archaeological evidence. Making an important case for studies that integrate textual and material sources, Robin Osbourne notes the pitfalls that many scholars encounter when they place ancient writings in a type of academic quarantine that keeps them separated from the physical aspects of the world in which they were penned:

Few people, even if deprived of sight, live in a world where the only communication they receive is verbal. Most of us negotiate our way through the world using all of our senses, and while many of us give and receive only somewhat basic messages in the languages of texture and smell, we both send and receive complex communications in visual language. Visual messages, themselves reinforced, undermined or otherwise qualified by smells, tactile encounters, non-verbal sounds, and tastes, play a constant counterpoint to verbal messages. Removing the sights from the world of the past does not simply leave that world less colorful; it leaves the words bequeathed to that world at best radically decontextualized, and at worst incomprehensible.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, see Judee K. Burgoon and D.B. Buller, "Interpersonal Deception III: Effects of Deceit on Perceived Communication and Nonverbal Behavior Dynamics," *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 18 (1994) 155-184. They assert that when non-verbal and verbal communications are incongruent, people place greater confidence in non-verbal cues rather than verbal statements. Others have found that nonverbal cues were three to four times more important in attributing superiority or inferiority to the actor than were verbal statements. Some scholars have found that nonverbal cues were three to four times more important in attributing superiority or inferiority to the actor than were verbal statements, while others observe that non-verbal signals are especially effective in signifying one's power and dominance, particularly through posture and expansive use of space. See Valerie L. Manusov and Miles L. Patterson, *The Sage Handbook of Nonverbal Communication* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006) xvi.

<sup>4</sup> Robin Osbourne, *The History Written on the Classical Greek Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 17.

In essence, Osbourne declares that studies that tie ancient texts to material realities are not simply helpful, but essential if we hope to understand the ancient world at all. Even though textual and material evidence often do not fit together seamlessly, a more complete and complicated picture of Roman attitudes to and practices surrounding somatic functions emerges when they are stitched together or set in a dialogue with each other.<sup>5</sup> Interdisciplinary in its approach, this study employs historical, archaeological, art historical, and philological sources and methodologies in order to explore the daily experience of men and women, and of people from different social classes in the Roman world. In essence, it demonstrates that one's most basic bodily functions and needs became the markers of a person's place in Roman society. Most of the relevant literary evidence dates to the first two centuries CE, although I occasionally turn to early Republican authors to trace the development of Roman attitudes toward the digesting body. For material evidence of somatic functions, I rely on houses and objects from Roman Italy. For Pompeii, Herculaneum, and the villas on the Bay of Naples, I am concerned with the period between 60 BCE and 79 CE; for the imperial port of Ostia, I focus on the early Empire through the reign of Septimius Severus.

While recent work in Roman social and cultural history has enhanced our knowledge about Roman attitudes toward sexuality, far less attention has been given to the role of the digesting body for the articulation of Roman social hierarchies.<sup>6</sup> I contend that the ways in which a society

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion on how textual evidence has been employed incorrectly to interpret material sources, see Penelope Allison, "Using the Material and Written Sources: Turn of the Millennium Approaches to Roman Domestic Space," *American Journal of Archaeology* 105.2 (2001): 181-208.

<sup>6</sup> The work done on sexuality in the Roman world is extensive, but for some examples of the types of work that have been helped create a shift in study of gender and sexuality in scholarship on the Roman world. For example, see the collection of essays in Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner, eds. *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) and in Amy Richlin, ed., *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). On homosexuality and masculinity, see Amy Richlin, "Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law Against Love Between Men," *Journal of History of Sexuality* 3 (1993): 523-73. On the construction of Roman masculinity, see Anna O. Koloski-Ostrow, "Violent Stages in Two Pompeian Houses: Imperial Taste, Aristocratic Response, and Messages of Male Control," in *Naked Truths: Women, Sexuality, and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology*, eds. A.O. Koloski-Ostrow and Claire L. Lyons (London: Routledge, 1997), 243-66; Thomas Habinek, "The Invention of Sexuality in the World-City of Rome," in *The Roman Cultural Revolution*, eds. Thomas Habinek and Alessandro Schiesaro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 23-43. For recent work on notions

discusses and deals with the daily practicalities of eating, digesting, and excreting food ultimately exposes the gender and class assumptions that are intrinsic to it. In fact, the body played an essential role in expressing, establishing, and maintaining daily interactions and exchanges that communicated the very real, but often difficult to nail down, power dynamics of Roman social hierarchies.<sup>7</sup> The well-known French theorist, Michel De Certeau, provides some of the framing that shapes my argument. Exploring how people counter mass culture through individualizing daily practices, he explains how the repressive elements of modern society influence every part of a person's life. He declares that people's bodies become tools by which societies make their power real—wordlessly recreating and reasserting it through social practices and conventions.

From birth to mourning after death, law 'takes hold of' bodies in order to make them its text. Through all sorts of initiations (in rituals, at school, etc.), it transforms them into tables of the law, into a living tableaux of rules and customs, into actors in the drama organized by a social order....The foods that are selected by traditions and sold in markets of a society also shape bodies at the same time they nourish them; they impose on bodies a form and a muscle tone that function like an identity card.<sup>8</sup>

Hence, he claims that when bodies conform to societal rules or fashion, they reinforce each society's particular brand of power and its attempts to constrain the behavior of its members. Further, he argues that each society makes "the body tell the code" through practices as far reaching as initiation ceremonies to torture, and that these simultaneously incarnate each society's values as well as continually (re)establish the 'reality' of these.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps he most clearly articulates what he is trying to

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of sexuality and gender in Pompeian graffiti, see Sarah Levin-Richardson, "Fututa sum hic: Female Subjectivity and Agency in Pompeian Sexual Graffiti," *The Classical Journal* 108.2 (2013): 319-345; and Sarah Levin-Richardson, "Facilis hic futuit: Graffiti and Masculinity in Pompeii's 'Purpose-Built' Brothel," *Helios* 38.1 (2011): 59-78.

<sup>7</sup> My work seeks to contribute to the burgeoning interest regarding the history of the body. For a fine collection of essays that examine the body in the Greco-Roman world, see Thorsten Fögen and Mireille M. Lee, eds., *Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); Andrew Hopkins and Maria Wyke, eds. *Roman Bodies: Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (London: British School at Rome, 2005); and James I. Porter, *Constructions of the Classical Body* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999). Although I disagree with the conclusions she draws and the way she reads the ancient evidence, Susan E. Hill's work is another study that seeks to understand the ancient body: Susan Hill, *Eating to Excess: The Meaning of Gluttony and the Fat Body in the Ancient World* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Michel de Certeau and S. Rendell (trans.), *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 139, 147.

<sup>9</sup> De Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. 148-150. He states: "The credibility of a discourse is what first makes believers act in accord with it. It produces practitioners. To make people believe is to make them act. But a curious circularity,

say when he turns his eye on one of the body's most basic somatic needs—nourishment. He observes that the foods traditionally consumed by a group of people have the ability to tangibly shape the bodies of members. He declares that the physical effects of culturally favored foods on the human body act “like an identity card.” That is to say that the corporal manifestations of dietary practices tacitly, yet intimately and viscerally, communicate a society's normative discourse. In essence, he indicates that the body's nutritional needs can be manipulated by a society in such a way that they provide visual clues about a society's values and practices. Indeed, these are inscribed on people's bodies. Notably, what is implied in de Certeau's argument is not only the body's ability to communicate society's rules to observers, but also its potential to shape the daily, lived experience of a person and her place in society. Whether or not social actors are self-conscious of this process is not an issue for me in this work. Rather, de Certeau's notion that social practices or assumptions have the ability to create a society's—and thereby an individual's—reality underpins my research on Roman daily practices. Because activities involving the care of the body's most basic functions and needs are so routine and unquestioned, they have the greatest ability to mold the way a person experiences the world in she lives. Or in other words, as Pierre Bourdieu puts it, “what is ‘learned by the body’ is not something that one has, like knowledge that can be brandished, *but something that one is* (emphasis added).”<sup>10</sup>

While eating and excreting were commonly done outside of Roman homes, and are worthy of their own study, I have limited the scope of this current project to the domestic environment because the private house was fundamental to the organization of Roman society. It was at the

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the ability to make people act—to write and to machine bodies—is precisely what makes people believe. Because the law is already applied with and on bodies, “incarnated” in physical practice, it can accredit itself and make people believe that it speaks in the name of the “real.” It makes itself believable by saying: “this text has been dictated for you by Reality itself.” People believe what they assume to be real, but this “reality” is assigned by a belief that gives a body inscribed by the law. The law requires an accumulation of corporeal capital in advance to make itself believed and practiced... From initiation ceremonies to tortures, every social orthodoxy uses instruments to give itself the form of a story and to produce the credibility attached to a discourse articulated by bodies.”

<sup>10</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, Richard Nice (trans.), *The Logic of Practice*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 76.

heart of most elite persons' social and economic lives.<sup>11</sup> The house is the primary locus of my dissertation because this dynamic environment concomitantly enabled the continual (re)enactment of social hierarchies grounded in attitudes about nutritional and excretory needs while permitting temporary threats or resistances to common practices. The choice to keep my eye trained on the digesting body in relation to domestic spaces and activities allows me to contribute to the recent flurry of research on Roman homes, slavery, food, and toilets. During the course of the nineteenth century, the initial work done Roman domestic architecture was colored by aristocratic bias and focused on spectacular finds made in Pompeii and Herculaneum;<sup>12</sup> yet, a shift towards studying domestic architecture in combination with Roman social history began almost twenty years ago and has acted as a jumping off point for other scholarship that is interested in the daily lives of non-elite people living in the Roman world.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, this scholarly trend has stimulated important work to on the lives of enslaved household members, who had been previously overlooked, and has brought

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<sup>11</sup> The issue of public and private spheres in the Roman house in recent years been addressed by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton University Press, 1994); Andrew M. Riggsby " 'Private' and 'Public' in Roman Culture: The Case of the Cubiculum," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 10 (1997): 36-56; Mark Grahame, "Public and Private in the Roman House: Investigating the Social Order of the *Casa del Fauno*," in *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, eds. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (Portsmouth: JRA, 1997), 137-64; Susan Treggiari, 'Home and Forum: Cicero between "Public" and "Private,"' *Transactions of the American Philological Society* 128 (1998): 1-23. More recent works have addressed questions of class and gender as represented in Roman homes: see Kate Cooper, "Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure and Private Power in the Roman *domus*," *Past & Present* 197 (2007) 3-33; Miko Flohr, "Reconsidering the Atrium House: Domestic *fullonicae* at Pompeii," in *Pompeii: Art, Industry and Infrastructure*, eds. E. Poehler et al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 88-102; and Miko Flohr "Working and Living Under One Roof: Workshops in Pompeian Atrium Houses," in *Privata Luxuria: Towards an Archaeology of Intimacy: Pompeii and Beyond*, ed. Anna Anguissola (München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2012) 51-72.

<sup>12</sup> Notably, a distinct upper-class bias resulting from the Bourbon privilege and aristocratic flavor of early excavators colored the initial scholarship on Roman domestic spaces. See Giuseppe Fiorelli, Umberto Pappalardo, and Mario Grimaldi, *La descrizione di Pompei per Giuseppe Fiorelli (1875): con una cronistoria per immagini e la lettera alla guardia nazionale del distretto di Castellammare di Stabia* (Napoli: Massa Editore, 2001); August Mau, *Pompejanische Beiträge* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1879); August Mau, *Geschichte der Decorativen Wandmalerei in Pompeji* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1882). Even Amedeo Maiuri, writing about a half a century later, argued that links between elite houses and commercial spaces were evidence of how grand houses had deteriorated and been taken over by lower-class merchants: Amedeo Maiuri, *Pompeii* (Novara: Istituto Geografico de Agostini, 1960) 188.

<sup>13</sup> This shift began with the publication of three seminal works: the previously referenced Wallace-Hadrill's *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, as well as Paul Zanker, *Pompeii: Public and Private Life* (Harvard: Harvard University Press 1998), and Jens-Arne Dickmann, *Domus frequentata: Anspruchsvolles Wohnen im Pompejanischen Stadthaus* (München: Verlag Dr. F. Pfeil, 1999).

some aspects of their daily lives to the foreground.<sup>14</sup> Even though many scholars have thoughtfully and carefully explored Roman domestic spaces for insight into broader questions about Roman identity, culture, and values, they have, nonetheless, too frequently moved through the rooms of Roman houses and villas as if observers following a camera through uninhabited spaces.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, studies of daily, household activities have removed these practices from the body. For example, Roman dining and food have recently received a lot of attention in modern scholarship and attempts to recreate the rich sensory experiences of smell and taste intrinsic to Roman banquet settings are steadily becoming more popular.<sup>16</sup> Yet, where eating is the topic, dining is the focus: eating becomes an event separated from the biological functions of the body.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, focusing on specific ephemeral sensations of taste and smells commonly obscures other bodily experiences that were fundamental to the Roman banquet—particularly those that helped physically and kinetically

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<sup>14</sup> For recent scholarship on slaves in Roman households, see Sandra R. Joshel and Lauren Hackworth Petersen, *The Material Life of Roman Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014); the collection of essays in Michele George, ed., *Roman Slavery and Roman Material Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Beth Severy-Hoven, “Master Narratives and the Wall Painting of the House of the Vettii, Pompeii,” *Gender & History* 24.3 (2012): 540-80; Ulrike Roth, *Thinking Tools: Agricultural Slavery Between Evidence and Models* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2007); and Michele George, “*Servus* and *domus*: the Slave in the Roman House,” in *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, eds. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997), 14-24.

<sup>15</sup> For instance, Shelley Hales, *The Roman House and Social Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) are works that carefully address the Roman house and the role it plays in the home owner’s social, religious, and daily life, but their investigations do not evoke these domestic settings as a dynamic and inhabited spaces.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, the Archaeological Institute of America offered tours through Italy in 2013 that were focused on Roman food and dining. Sally Grainger wrote a blog post for the British Museum on how to cook Parthian chicken: Sally Grainger, “From Parthian chicken to flat breads: experimenting with a Roman oven” <http://blog.britishmuseum.org/2013/07/30/from-parthian-chicken-to-flat-breads-experimenting-with-a-roman-oven/> (accessed November 4, 2014). She has also written an article in *Gastronomica* about the famous cookbook attributed to Apicius: see “The Myth of Apicius,” *Gastronomica: the Journal of Food and Culture*. 7.2 (2007): 71-7. There are also a fair number of books on Roman cooking that have adapted ancient recipes for modern kitchens. Those that I have used and found their adaptations to be tasty are Patrick Faas, *Around the Roman Table* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); Andrew Dalby and Sally Grainger, *The Classical Cookbook* (London: British Museum Press, 1996); and Illaria Gozzini Giacosa, Anna Herklotz (trans.), *A Taste of Ancient Rome* (Chicago: Chicago of University Press, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> For some examples, see the collection of essays in Dennis E. Smith and Hal Taussig, *Meals in the Early Christian World: Social Formation, Experimentation, and Conflict at the Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Michael Beer, *Taste or Taboo: Dietary Choices in Antiquity* (Totnes, Devon: Prospect Books, 2010); Barbara K. Gold, and John F. Donahue, eds. *Roman Dining: A Special Issue of American Journal of Philology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Inge Nielsen and Hanne Nielsen, *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998); and Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

articulate class and gender distinctions in this environment.<sup>18</sup> An obvious exception to this type of investigation is Matthew Roller's work on dining posture, which explores non-verbal messages of class and gender attached to poses struck while eating.<sup>19</sup> However, Roller's focus almost entirely on the posture of the dining figure(s) overlooks the many other sensory and physical exchanges that occurred during these convivial settings. The same can be said for recent work on Roman toilets, which (although wonderful and insightful to read) do not really address Roman attitudes to the excreting body and the effects those had on daily routines associated with defecating and urinating.<sup>20</sup> My work builds on these previous studies, but it also populates Roman households with bodies of different statuses in complex relationships as they participate in activities tied to bodily functions. In fact, focusing on how Romans thought about and dealt with somatic needs illuminates that homes and daily routines associated with bodily functions were the backbone of the social interactions that created, managed, and maintained the class and gender distinctions that were central to Roman hierarchies and their institution of slavery.

There is another element about daily routines that must be considered as well. Norbert Elias' masterful work on the development of French and German manners until the nineteenth century provides a stimulating counterpoint for investigating Roman thoughts on somatic needs and

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<sup>18</sup> Another route that the study of food in the ancient world takes is that of health and nutrition as it pertains to demographic and osteological study. For instance, see Peter Garnsey, *Food and Society in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Peter Garnsey and Walter Scheidel, eds., *Cities, Peasants, and Food in Classical Antiquity: Essays in Social and Economic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). These issues are often tied to other issues like hunger and poverty in antiquity. For example, see, E.M. Atkins and Robin Osborne, eds., *Poverty in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and David Cherry, "Hunger at Rome in the Late Republic," *Echos du monde classique*. *Classical Views*, 12 (1992): 433-50. For a discussion on osteological studies of ancient people, see Chapter 4.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew B. Roller, *Dining Posture in Ancient Rome: Bodies, Values, and Status* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> On Roman toilets, see Gemma C. M. Jansen, Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, and Eric M. Moormann, eds., *Roman Toilets: Their Archaeology and Cultural History* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011); Barry Hobson, *Latrinae et Foricae: Toilets in the Roman World* (London: Duckworth, 2009); Gemma C. M. Jansen, "Toilets with a View: The Luxurious Toilets of the Emperor Hadrian at his Villa near Tivoli," *Babesch* 82.1 (2007): 165-181; Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, "Finding Social Meaning in the Public Latrines of Pompeii," in *Cura aquarum in Campania. Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress on the History of Water Management and Hydraulic Engineering in the Mediterranean Region, Pompeii 1* (1994): 79-86; Richard Neudecker, *Die Pracht der Latrine: zum Wandel öffentlicher Bedürfnisanstalten in der kaiserzeitlichen Stadt* (München: Pfeil, 1994).

the practices associated with the digesting body. He contends that when bodily behaviors become hot topics of discussion in literature it signals social restructuring.<sup>21</sup> Looking specifically at Erasmus' handbook of manners that addresses (among other things) what and how a person should eat while at the table, Elias notes that Erasmus composed this instructional manual during the time period that followed the loosening of medieval social hierarchies, but before the stabilization of modern ones. Taking this into account, he smartly remarks, "People forced to live with one another in a new way become more sensitive to the impulses of others. Not abruptly but very gradually the code of behaviors became stricter and the degree of consideration expected of others became greater."<sup>22</sup> While I do not mean to suggest a one-to-one comparison between Erasmus' contemporary socio-political environment to that of Rome's transition from a republican system of governance to a (more or less) autocratic one, his point that people become more sensitive to others' behaviors during periods of social restructuring is helpful for understanding why Roman authors begin writing about the digesting body with more frequency during this period.<sup>23</sup>

For instance, the late Republic and development of the Principate were marked by turmoil and a social and political restructuring that challenged traditional behaviors and hierarchies. Romans watched the Republican institutions that played such a critical role in the shaping of Roman identity take on different forms and meanings. They lived with and fought in civil wars that preceded the rise of Julius Caesar and later his adopted son. Under Augustus, the Roman elite who previously enjoyed sole access to positions of power and influence had to learn to share these with the new elite that he created from Italian communities outside Rome.<sup>24</sup> While the Julio-Claudians governed, the aristocracy grappled with further socio-political challenges that undermined their place in society.

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<sup>21</sup> Norbet Elias, Edmund Jephcott (trans.), *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994, 2000).

<sup>22</sup> Elias 63, 69.

<sup>23</sup> For a fascinating study on the development of Roman ideas *pudor*, *verecundia*, and *fastidium* during the first century BCE and the first century CE that speaks to the issues I raise here, see Robert Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 331-509.

They had to loosen their hold on positions of prestige and influence when Claudius extended the numbers of seats in the Senate to include Roman citizens from the provinces. They also endured Caligula and Nero's dismissive treatment, humiliations, and fatal violence.

The first two Flavian emperors, Vespasian and Titus, attempted to renew some of the honor and authority the elite lost under Nero's reign and to reestablish traditional social orders.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, by this time the emperor's position was firmly established; returning to the governing system of the Republic was no longer truly entertained as an option.<sup>26</sup> Like Augustus and Claudius, Vespasian attempted to restock and enlarge the aristocracy, turning to his immediate and extended family, generals in the East, and Danubian legates to help govern the empire.<sup>27</sup> The result of these changes meant that the elite again needed to manage new competition to their authority and to rethink their positions in society. Under Domitian's rule, Romans carefully negotiated their behaviors and positions under the terror of his controlling and emasculating surveillance.<sup>28</sup> Thus, from the late Republic through the development of the early Principate, elite Romans tried to define their role in a continually shifting social and political environment that demanded renegotiations and rethinking their place in society.<sup>29</sup>

With these thoughts guiding my work, I argue that Latin authors' concerns about the body's digestive functions and dietary behaviors in texts from this period subtly reveal elite concerns about the political and social changes that were occurring. Additionally, I assert that the Roman notions of

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<sup>25</sup> Erik Gunderson, "The Flavian Amphitheatre: All the World as Stage," in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, ed. A.J. Boyle and William J. Dominik (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 637-58.

<sup>26</sup> For a study on the various techniques Vespasian employed in ordered to define himself against the Julio-Claudians and establish his own *auctoritas*, see Karen Louise Acton, "Vespasian Augustus: Imperial Power in the First Century CE" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Ronald Mellor, "The New Aristocracy of Power," in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, ed. A.J. Boyle and William J. Dominik (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 69-102.

<sup>28</sup> David Fredrick, "Architecture and Surveillance in Flavian Rome," in *Flavian Rome: Culture, Image, Text*, ed. A.J. Boyle and William J. Dominik (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 199-228.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew Roller, *Constructing Aristocracy: Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 126. Focusing on Lucan and Seneca the Younger's works, Roller argues that even though governmental structures and institutions receive no specific mention in their works, they are nevertheless socially and politically engaged. Indeed, Lucan and Seneca cast the cultural and political developments under the Julio-Claudians in moral terms.

embodiment that emerge from this study indicate how different practices and assumptions of bodily needs inscribed class and gender onto people's bodies so that these assisted in (re)establishing and (re)enacting social interactions and domestic hierarchies. In order to demonstrate this, I juxtapose textual accounts of eating, digesting, and excreting to physical aspects of built environments and tools that influenced quotidian activities.

Chapter One explores Latin authors' representations of the body's digestive processes and the hierarchical social assumptions that inform their interpretations of these somatic needs. I note that Roman authors' opinions of social and political issues often colored their interpretations of the internal workings of the body's alimentary canal. Additionally, in the first century CE, Latin authors begin to treat some organs and muscles involved in the body's eating process as abstract elements. Specifically, the *gula* (throat) and *venter* (stomach) become body parts that pervert or change the original nature of food and thereby harm not only the body but also natural order. Furthermore, indigestion reveals individuals who have erroneously served the ruinous demands of these insatiable organs—who (interestingly) also happen to be people who act in ways that challenge traditional Roman values. Ending this chapter, I contend that, although elite authors express cultural taboos about frank discussions of bodily elimination, they make telling associations between this necessary bodily function and members of their society. In fact, their more liberal use of bodily waste in their works ties feces to those who are enslaved or considered deviant in Roman society.

In Chapter Two, I argue that Roman authors during the late Republic and early Principate attempted to categorize social class and gender based on food, body types, and attitudes towards hunger. Mentioning their own food consumption, Latin authors are quick to point out their humble dining habits and preferences for simple foods. Not only do elite authors rely on food and dining habits to distinguish their role in society from others, but they also emphasize the moral benefits of hunger to delineate their positions from either their peers or those they deem to be their social

inferiors. Through the praise of their own tempered habits, modest tastes, and productive use of hunger, they demonstrate that the performance of agency and discipline is intimately tied to diet and eating habits. However, when describing the practices of others, they highlight the excessiveness or strangeness of others' diets. In their portraits of eating women, Latin authors lean on elements that they used to criticize their social peers as well as on assumptions they have about enslaved persons. Yet, they reserve a different type of language and criticism to mark women's eating habits. In fact, Roman authors mingle sex and food in such a way that they underscore the power-imbalances of gender relationships.

Chapter Three explores the tension between Roman authors' demonstrable ignorance of cooking skills and their attempts to appropriate the language and knowledge of cooks. Beginning this chapter with an examination of elite authors' perceptions of kitchens, cooks, and culinary knowledge, I argue that, through Roman writers' representation of domestic kitchens and the activities that take place there, they reveal not only their distaste for culinary practices but also ultimately their ignorance of the skills necessary to prepare food. What is more, through their obvious disapproval of the type of knowledge and skills that cooks possess, elite authors unintentionally disclose their anxiety about household resources left in the hands of cooks. Given these attitudes towards kitchens, cooks, and food, one might assume that they would not waste time on providing instructions for the preparation of food. But, Roman writers pepper their works with the compact expressions of culinary knowledge as a way to communicate their perceptions of the social realities in which they operate. Recipes included in Latin literature not only entail Roman thoughts on class and mastery, but they highlight distinctions that these writers draw between bodies—male and female, free and enslaved.

Chapter Four examines the material evidence for food preparation, consumption, and elimination within domestic spaces through the theoretical lens of actor-network-theory and

object/human dependencies. Exploring consistency and modifications in design choices found in objects associated with somatic functions, I propose that these reveal cultural perceptions about the social practices of those who performed these labours. I argue that non-verbal codes of status, which are inherent in the design of household fixtures and tools, played a fundamental role in routine activities involving food preparation, consumption, and excretion. Indeed, items from Roman households crafted to assist bodily needs manifest design decisions that encouraged specific physical responses to objects and these framed Roman interpretations of domestic hierarchies. Not only does the built environment set the stage for repeated non-verbal codes signalling class to outside observers, it also shapes an individual's experience with her own body through quotidian household routines. Whether or not a person using the tool or a person observing another's encounter with it was self-consciously aware of the unspoken messages that colored the exchange, the physical response to Roman household items, nonetheless, continually inscribed status on the bodies who used these tools.

Finally, Chapter Five adds to the recent scholarship about movement in the Roman world, especially that which was contained in Roman domestic spaces. Building on my observations that Roman authors frequently conceived of the digesting body and the practices associated with it in terms of a hierarchical bodily order that governed the interconnected movements of organs and muscles within the alimentary canal, I argue that Romans conceived of domestic spaces not as specific locations where things were put or activities occurred, but rather in terms of the movement that accompanied daily activities. Indeed, categorizing and orchestrating movement seems to be the key for understanding the Roman organizational thought process. Using architecture and artifact assemblages of three Pompeian homes, I illuminate paths of movement that accompanied the most basic and repetitive daily routines involving eating, digestion, and excretion. Because of the careful attention paid to creating different visual and physical experiences of movement within the home, I

assert that Romans organized their houses and daily lives around a notion of directed movement. Not only did the experience of movement inform their perception of their homes, the motion associated with these quotidian and repetitive acts was front and center in their houses. Although the level of display or staging of this movement differed according to house or villa size, I assert that the motion that accompanied domestic activities was an essential element in homeowners' performance of mastery as well as the physical experience of enslavement.

As a final remark, I should note that my reader will see that I return to specific passages or concepts throughout this work. For instance, I refer many times to Cicero's comparison of the body's digestive tract to domestic architecture (*Nat.D.* 2.133-41), the exchange between Fotis and Lucius in Milo's kitchen that is found in Apuleius' novel about Lucius' transformation into a beast of burden (*Met.* 2.7), the famous section from Petronius' *Satyricon* on Trimalchio's extravagant dinner (*Sat.* 27-78), and the anonymous author's poem detailing Simulus' morning preparations of his breakfast (App.Verg. *Moretum*). My hope is that returning to these passages (and other ideas) will not feel redundant, but rather that by revisiting evidence with a different lens that I can show the many layers of Roman social and cultural assumption that accompanied these anecdotes. The words, analogies, and details that Roman authors relied on to express their views on the digesting body and the activities associated with it are pregnant with their perceptions about class and gender. In fact, coming back to the same piece of evidence again and again not only illuminates the many ways in which the unquestioned repressive elements of Roman society colored people's daily experiences with their own bodies, but it also helps to contextualize the words and ideas Roman authors deployed to discuss the digesting body.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE ALIMENTARY CANAL IN ROMAN AUTHORS: The Digesting Body and the Social Body

*Prima ars hominis est ipsa virtus; huic committitur inutilis  
caro et fluida, receptandis tantum cibis habilis.*

Man's primary art is virtue itself. Joined to this is useless and fleeting flesh, suitable only for the reception of food.

Sen. *Ep.* 92.10

Writing in the first century CE, Seneca the Younger expresses discomfort about his body's nutritional needs. He refers to his body as *caro* (flesh) a term he uses in another letter to underscore the human body's opposition to the spirit.<sup>30</sup> Not only is his body *caro* but it is also *inutilis* (useless) and *fluida* (soft/fleeting). Because the body taints man's primary purpose to seek virtue, Seneca deplores its alimentary process and makes it nothing more than a receptacle of food. His moralizing use of the body's nutritional demands is echoed in other Roman authors' works, and his views on ingestion play an important role in the development of a correlation between the body's alimentary functions and social standing. Although this use of digestion as commentary on man's virtue and behavior is a subtle development from the late Republican period through the second century CE, it shines a light on how the elite in Rome experienced and coped with the dramatic social and political changes of this period.

It is particularly striking that, during this period of upheaval, elite authors—who were not doctors and were not writing medical texts—began to fill their writings with detailed accounts of the

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<sup>30</sup> See Sen. *Ep.* 65.22.

human body's physiology, concerns about diet, and the physical and social effects of hunger.<sup>31</sup> The works of Mary Douglas and Norbet Elias offer some help in understanding these developments.

Douglas argues that the meaning of the physical body and the social body reinforce each other:

The body is a complex structure. The functions of its different parts and their relations afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva, and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body.<sup>32</sup>

Put simply, the body can symbolize society while at the same time society can symbolize the body.<sup>33</sup>

For our purposes, the digesting body in Roman authors of the Late Republican and Early Principate reveals their perception of Roman society writ small.<sup>34</sup> Norbet Elias' work rounds out Latin authors' focus on the alimentary canal; he asserts that when people of talent and renown concern themselves with problems of bodily behaviors, it is an indicator of social restructuring.<sup>35</sup> From this perspective, Roman authors' representation of the body and its digestive functions during this period offers a very particular, but engrossing, window into the social and cultural assumptions that contributed to each author's understanding of the body and its intimate role in society. The continuity or variation of ideas about bodies ingesting and excreting food in texts from the late Republic through the early Principate also highlight perceived challenges to elite perceptions of a properly functioning social body.

Using both Douglas and Elias' observations on the role of the body and perceptions about its somatic functions as a looking glass into Roman society's values and perceived challenges to it,

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<sup>31</sup> Mark Grant, *Galen: On Food and Diet* (London: Routledge, 2000), 3-4. Grant claims educated Romans were for the most part conversant with current medical theories.

<sup>32</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966), 115. See also Alexandra Howson, *The Body in Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 76.

<sup>33</sup> Howson, 77.

<sup>34</sup> John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994), 77. Discussing the body in the New Testament—specifically Jesus's treatment of lepers, Crossan notes, "We are quite used to calling society the body politic, but it is equally important to reverse the process and speak as well of the political body. It is not just that society is body writ large; body is society writ small."

<sup>35</sup> Elias 62.

this chapter explores Latin authors' representations of the body's digestive processes and the hierarchical social assumptions that inform their interpretations of these somatic needs. Even though Roman writers commonly mix their representations of the alimentary canal with their thoughts on dietary practices, which I take up in the next chapter, I separate them (as much as possible) in this chapter in order to show how ideas about the body's digestive functions reflect Roman authors' perceptions of their hierarchical society.

Beginning with Cicero, I argue that Roman authors' opinions of social and political issues often colored their interpretations of the internal workings of the body's alimentary canal. These men employ the human body's physical process of taking in and digesting food to demonstrate the order and providence of *natura*.<sup>36</sup> In fact, the comparisons they draw between the natural order and Roman social/political organizations indicate the socio-political values that each author esteems. Alongside this trend, a tendency to isolate some of the organs and muscles involved in the body's eating process emerges in the first century CE. This tendency corresponds with Latin authors' attempts to point out those individuals who disturbed traditional Roman hierarchies. Specifically, the *gula* (throat) and *venter* (stomach) become body parts that pervert or change the original nature of food and thereby harm not only the body but also natural order. Concomitantly, Latin authors rely on the vivid imagery of distended throats, stuffed bellies, and the physical side effects of indigestion to create the telltale signs of those who challenged traditional Roman avenues of privilege and power through their misguided attempts to pacify the *gula* and *venter's* wanton desires. Finally, I argue that, although elite authors express cultural taboos about frank discussions of bodily elimination, they make telling associations between this necessary bodily function and members of their society. In

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<sup>36</sup>Although earlier Roman authors like Cato and Plautus use food as social markers in their writings, I choose to begin my study with the late Republic because this appears to be the first time that Roman authors begin to use the alimentary canal rather than primarily food in their writings.

fact, their more liberal use of bodily waste in their works ties feces to those who are enslaved or considered deviant in Roman society.

## **I. Ingestion and Nature: Tools of Political Critique**

Roman authors used their hierarchical view of society to interpret *natura*, the laws that governed nature and the human body.<sup>37</sup> Cicero, Seneca the Younger, and Pliny the Elder each employ an understanding of natural order and law to frame their discussions about the human body—specifically its alimentary process—and rely particularly on stoic views of nature to inform their works.<sup>38</sup> For each author, mankind’s place in the cosmos is privileged above all other living things.<sup>39</sup> They assert that nature has equipped humans unlike any other living beings with the capacity to understand cosmic order and to promote the rationality of nature through their own efforts.<sup>40</sup> For these authors, the body is implicitly linked to nature, and an either harmonious or discordant relationship with it suggests a person’s *virtus*, *disciplina* and status as well as the proper organization of human society. Additionally, an author’s representation of the level of concordance between the alimentary process and nature is also influenced by political canvas of his day.

In the tumultuous last days of the late Republic, Cicero relays the inspired relationship between physical ingestion and nature to reassert traditional Roman hierarchies in his *De Natura Deorum*. For Cicero, nature is frequently, but not always, benevolent to mankind and he finds

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<sup>37</sup>Brad Inwood, *Reading Seneca: Stoic Philosophy at Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 224. He observes that the term natural law has been controversial for ancient studies—particularly ancient philosophy—because its later history has been entangled with Christian theology and seventeenth century notions of natural law.

<sup>38</sup>Sirkka Heinonen, *Prometheus Revisited: Human Interaction with Nature through Technology in Seneca* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 2000), 18-20. Stoics primarily described nature in two ways: 1) it holds the world together and causes things on earth to grow and 2) it is endowed with an extraordinary rationality. Heinonen argues that according to Stoic thought the individual human being is an essential part of nature and the cosmic order, which embraces everything, thereby making humans’ part in the world precise and integral; cosmic events and human actions are not separate.

<sup>39</sup>Mary Beagon, *The Elder Pliny on the Human Animal: Natural History, Book 7* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 15. Beagon argues that although Pliny’s stoicism is not carefully worked out it informs his view of nature, which is a pantheistic concept that asserts the natural world is imbued with divinity. “It is also an anthropocentric one, in which the human race was the highest creation, and through the possession of reason (*ratio*) shared in the divinity of nature herself. Man was to a large extent the very purpose of nature.”

<sup>40</sup>Heinonen, 18.

nature's divine forethought in the very structure of the human body. Indeed, he prefaces his explanation of digestion with an explicit link to the stoic concept of providence: 'And it will be more easily understood that there was the immortal gods' divine foresight for man, if the whole structure of man and all the conformation and perfection of human nature is considered' (*Nat.D.* 2.133).<sup>41</sup> In essence, nature is governed well by the gods and human physiology is evidence of this.

This opening highlights his overtly positive view of the body's form and its somatic functions, and it sets up his description of physical ingestion. He argues that there are three things essential to maintain all animal life: food, drink and breath, for which the mouth is most aptly formed (*Nat.D.* 2.134). The front teeth are sharp in order to bite food while the molars cut and prepare food (*Nat.D.* 2.134). The tongue assists this process and is attached to the *stomachus* (gullet)—the first organ in the digestive tract that receives masticated food. The purpose of the *stomachus* is to push food down through intermittent dilating and contracting movements (*Nat.D.* 2.135). Cicero distinguishes between the *stomachus* and the *aspera arteria* (the rough windpipe), which is attached to the lungs and covered by a sort of lid to discourage food entering it. The *stomachus*, on the other hand, is connected to the *alvus* (stomach) that is a receptacle for food and drink. The *alvus* is fibrous and twisted, collecting and mixing both dry and moist food that is then altered and digested through the constricting and relaxing movements of the *alvus*. Cicero envisions the digestive process enabled by heat and the breath: "...so that with ease and heat, which (the stomach) has an abundance, everything is digested and worked up by its crushing of food, and also by the operations of the breath, so as to be distributed throughout the rest of the body (*Nat.D.* 2.136)."<sup>42</sup> Cicero then comments that *cibo succus* (food juice) is secreted to the rest of the body because the *alvus* is connected to the intestines and the *iecur* (liver), which has many channels leading

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<sup>41</sup> *faciliusque intellegetur a dis immortalibus hominibus esse provisum, si erit tota hominis fabricatio perspecta omnisque humanae naturae figura atque perfectio.*

<sup>42</sup> *...ut facile et calore, quem multum habet, et terendo cibo et praeterea spiritu omnia cocta atque confecta in reliquum corpus dividantur.*

into and out of it and becomes the means by which the *cibo succus* enters the *vena cava*. The *vena cava* flows to the heart, which distributes this alimentary juice throughout the entire body by means of the veins connected to it (*Nat.D.* 2. 136).

Thus, Cicero describes the organs involved in the ingestion and digestion of food as connected to one another:

*os* → *lingua* → *stomachus* → *alvus* → *intestini* → *iecur*.

These muscles and organs are connected to and assisted by other body parts not immediately related to ingestion or digestion:

*vena cava* → *cor* → *venae* and the *aspera arteria* → *pulmones*.

In fact, it is difficult to see whether Cicero conceives of digestive organs as distinct things even though he attempts to describe them each in turn and according to their function. Rather, his description of the body's ingestive and digestive functions highlights his understanding of the human body as an entirety with each part connected to and/or reliant on others. The human body consumes and digests food as an integrated whole.

The body's interconnected functions, however, do not mean that Cicero esteems each part equally. Instead, Cicero contends that nature made humans upright so that they might be able to look towards the sky and gain knowledge of the gods (*Nat.D.* 2.140). He then lists different body parts and functions that accomplish this purpose in a descending order. Senses that help interpret the outside world are found in the head. Because eyes are *speculatores*, they have the highest position. In order to hear sound that travels upward, ears were placed high in the body. The nose is also on the head because it must be able to discern food and drink that is brought near the mouth that holds taste (*Nat.D.* 2.140-141).

The hierarchy of position and preference for the head over all other body parts comes to the foreground when Cicero compares the locations of the head and bowels in the body's form to the

structures of a house: “And just as in a house architects remove from the eyes and nose of the masters (*dominorum*) that which, as it flowed forth, would inevitably be somewhat offensive, so *natura* has banished similar things (*res similis*) from the senses” (*Nat.D* 2. 141).<sup>43</sup> For Cicero, the logic of architects’ domestic designs seems catered to the needs and desires of the *dominus*—the male owner of the house and word normally reserved for a slave owner.<sup>44</sup> Metaphorically, this articulates an inherent logic in the structure of the human form: the head is associated with the powerful role of the *dominus* of the house while the location of the plumbing in the house is compared to *res similis*—politely implying excretory functions—that *natura* has removed from the senses. In sum, Cicero asserts that the body’s alimentary process demonstrates nature’s divine foresight, and he aligns its eating economy with the structure of the Roman house and the social hierarchy found within its walls.

It is not by chance that Cicero refers to the hierarchies found in the domestic realm when he tries to explain the internal workings of the alimentary canal. In another work, he mentions that the three places where a man made an impression on others were the forum, the theater and the house (*QFr.* 2.14b.2). Indeed, the Roman house, as Bettina Bergmann has observed, was “perceived as an extension of the self, signaling piety to divine protectors and social and genealogical status to the world outside.”<sup>45</sup> The house was an essential component in a Roman man’s display of his social standing, particularly during the Republic when the patron/client relationship played a meaningful role in an elite man’s political life.<sup>46</sup> It is noteworthy that Cicero relies on the cultural significance

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<sup>43</sup> *Atque ut in aedificiis architecti avertunt ab oculis naribusque dominorum ea quae profluentia necessario taetri essent aliquid habitura, sic natura res similis procul amandavit a sensibus.*

<sup>44</sup> For a smart analysis of Roman attitudes towards the Cloaca Maxima, see Emily Gowers, “The Anatomy of Rome from Capitol to Cloaca,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995): 23-32. She specifically mentions this passage from Cicero in connection with other ancient authors who used the body’s anatomy as a metaphor for urban settings (26-27).

<sup>45</sup> Bettina Bergmann, “The Roman House as Memory Theater: The House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii,” *The Art Bulletin* 76.2 (1994): 225.

<sup>46</sup> Hanna Platt, “Keeping Up With The Joneses: Competitive Display Within the Roman Villa Landscape,” in *Competition in the Ancient World*, eds. NRE Fisher and Hans van Wees (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011). 243; Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 4.

and established hierarchies that the Roman home invokes while penning *De Natura Deorum* three years into Julius Caesar's dictatorship and the year before his assassination. Suetonius offers some context to Cicero's thoughts when he records several socially destabilizing acts, such as creating new patricians, offering citizenship to medical practitioners and tutors, setting laws against luxury, and even going so far as sending *lictors* and guards into dining rooms to confiscate illegal dishes that Caesar tried to implement with his new authority (*Jul.* 41-43). In the face of these changes that Caesar sought to carry out, Cicero maps on the body a natural and social order that reasserts traditional values and domestic hierarchies of the Republic.

Under the turbulent reign of Nero, Seneca the Younger also describes in detail the body and its somatic functions. He seems to be influenced in part by the same pattern that is present in Cicero: that is, he finds evidence for nature's order in the internal workings of the human body. Nevertheless, his view of the body's relationship with nature is more complicated than Cicero's description, and his particular brand of stoicism profoundly influences his physical hierarchy, coloring his discussions about the body's alimentary process. For instance, Seneca, too, claims that the world is ruled by *natura* and that this maxim is best exemplified by a comparison to the human body. Yet, rather than using the eating process to demonstrate this, he relies on veins and semen when he likens nature's order to the body.<sup>47</sup>

It is pleasing that the earth is governed by nature and is much like the exemplar of our bodies, in which there are veins and arteries: one a receptacle for blood, the other for breath. Also, in the earth there are some routes through which water runs, others through which air runs. Long ago, nature fashioned these in the likeness of human bodies so that even our ancestors called them veins of water (*QNat.* 3.15.1).<sup>48</sup>

In another instance while arguing that every object or being's original state contains its beginning and end, Seneca compares semen to the origin of the world.

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<sup>47</sup>See also Sen. *QNat.* 6.14 and *QNat.* 5.4.2 for other examples of Seneca's parallels between human body and earth.

<sup>48</sup>*placet natura regi terram et quidem ad nostrorum corporum exemplar, in quibus et uenae sunt et arteriae, illae sanguinis, hae spiritus receptacula. In terra quoque sunt alia itinera per quae aqua, alia per quae spiritus currit; adeoque ad similitudinem illa humanorum corporum natura formauit, ut maiores quoque nostri aquarum appellauerint uenas.*

In the semen, the entire record of the man to be is held and the not-yet-born infant has the laws governing a beard and grey hair; all of the body and its subsequent growth are marked [there] in a tiny and hidden form. In the same way, the origin of the world (*origo mundi*) contained the sun, moon, and rotation of the stars (*QNat.* 3.29.3-4).<sup>49</sup>

Strikingly, in these two examples, Seneca uses the human form to make sense of the natural world rather than adducing the natural world to explain the human body. In other words, unlike Cicero who works from the natural world to the human body, Seneca starts with the logic of the human body and maps that on the world. *Natura* governs the earth using the body as exemplar and human semen provides an analogy for understanding the *origo mundi*. Seneca's views are also markedly different from Cicero's because he focuses on distinct elements of the human body, representing them as unconnected to other parts. Veins are not joined to any other organ, like the heart, mind, or belly. They are simply represented as passageways through which liquid flows. Semen is abstractly related to a man's hair and beard, but he does not attempt to trace this connection as Cicero does. He prefers to treat the body as fragments of an undefined whole rather than integral parts belonging to a highly regularized and structured unit.

His separation of body parts results from his specific understanding of stoicism that draws pronounced distinctions between the body and the *animus*.<sup>50</sup> Seneca most clearly articulates this separation when he claims that the body is simply a garment that covers the soul (*Ep.* 92.13). Because he values the *animus* over the material and often holds the two separate, he seems unconcerned about ranking each part of the body according to some sort of hierarchy. Instead,

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<sup>49</sup>Ut in semine omnis futuri hominis ratio comprehensa est et legem barbae canorumque nondum natus infans habet (totius enim corporis et sequentis auctus in paruo occultoque liniamenta sunt), sic origo mundi non minus solem et lunam et uices siderum et animalium ortus quam quibus mutarentur terrena continuit.

<sup>50</sup>Ernst Holler, *Seneca und die Seelenteilungslehre und Affektpsychologie der Mittelstoa* (Kallmünz: M. Lassleben, 1934). He argues that Posidonius is most to blame for the seemingly confused dualism found in Seneca. See also Janine Fillion-Lahille, *Le de ira de Sénèque et la philosophie stoïcienne des passions* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1984). She finds both a significant Posidonian and Chrysipean philosophy of the mind in Seneca's work. On the other hand, Inwood argues for Seneca's own developments of thought. The psychological dualism seen in Seneca's work is not Platonic dualism nor Posidonian but rather a typical stoic body/soul dualism (Inwood, 40-42).

Seneca asserts that the materiality of the body ties the *animus* to the earth, which is detrimental to the health of the soul; the body is not to be valued but overcome.<sup>51</sup>

In fact, in a rare instance when he focuses on many parts of the body in one discussion, Seneca treats the body as a list of grievances and disjointed parts rather than an intertwined system. He starts with pain found in nerves, joints, and narrow passages and then moves to gout that affects the feet and hands. The vertebrae and nerves suffer from similar intervals of physical agony. Suffering in teeth, eyes, and ears are alike because of the narrowness of these areas. Seneca distinguishes the head; however, he does so not for its privileged position but rather for its danger to the *animus*. Acute pain here will turn to delirium and stupor (*Ep.* 78. 7-10). Hence, he presents the opposite of Cicero's view of the body. Far from Cicero's connected, hierarchal, and ordered whole, Seneca's description of the body is a mish-mash of elements. Nature's foresight does not rule the body and its functions; instead, it is tied together by pain and suffering. Although, it would be a mistake to believe that Seneca's view of the body is always as starkly negative as suggested by his description here, the most consistent aspect in Seneca's attitude towards the body is his vision of the body as a loosely connected collection of parts, which is susceptible to weakness and vice.<sup>52</sup> For him, the body is a burden that man must bear, not love (*Ep.* 92.33).<sup>53</sup>

This view of the body as somehow disjointed and flawed influences Seneca's attitude towards eating. Discussing his own alimentary needs, Seneca expresses contempt for this somatic demand, which he conceives as one of many bodily weaknesses.

If one had not been admitted to these studies, one should not have been born.  
Why should I rejoice to be placed in the number of the living? So that I might filter  
food and drink? In order that I restore this diseased and soft body, which would

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<sup>51</sup>Inwood, 317-19. Seneca's contempt for the body comes from his insistence that one must identify the mind with the universe, not with one's body.

<sup>52</sup>Occasional passages in some of Seneca's letter present a more positive view—or at least one that is ambiguous. For examples of Seneca's more ambivalent discussions of the body see *Ep.* 71.33, 72.6, 101. 7-10.

<sup>53</sup>On Seneca's discussion of pain and suffering as compared to his exhortations to look after one's mental health, see Catharine Edwards, "The Suffering Body: Philosophy and Pain in Seneca's Letters," in *Constructions of The Classical Body*, ed. James I. Porter. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999) 252-268.

soon die unless it were immediately filled, and that I might live as an attendant on a sick man? So that I might fear death, for which we all are born? Take away this invaluable prize—life is not of such great worth that I should sweat and burn (*QNat.* 1.4.).<sup>54</sup>

The body is again subordinated to the mind, as Seneca claims it is only through his mental pursuits that he has found value in living. Because he places so little value on the *corpus*, he collapses the body and its various functions into a container of food, not worthy of the physical effort to maintain it. Digesting and drinking become the means of continuing the body's life, which brings only disease and death.<sup>55</sup> In effect, he views his own alimentary needs as features of his daily, physical burden.

When he comments on the eating process, Seneca withholds any personal interpretation of this somatic function. Instead, he cites Posidonius as his source and mocks his views. Seneca's censorship is not reserved for Posidonius's description of the alimentary process, but rather for his attempt to make bakers seem like they are wise because they imitate nature.

Furthermore, he is not content with these arts, but he even sends the wise man down to the mill. He tells us how the sage imitating the processes of nature began to make bread. He says, "You take into the mouth the grain, which meets the hostile hardness of the teeth that crush it. Whatever falls out, the tongue returns to the same teeth. Then it is mixed together so that it may more easily pass down the slippery throat (*fauces*). When it comes into the stomach (*ventrem*), it is digested by its equable heat; then and not till then, it is added to the body (*Ep.* 90. 22).<sup>56</sup>

From this account, it seems that Seneca is aware of the same types of sources that influenced Cicero's views of the body and that he is not critical of Posidonius' description of the alimentary process. Rather, Seneca scorns Posidonius because he uses human physiology to elevate the station

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<sup>54</sup>*Nisi ad haec admitterer, non fuerat nasci. Quid enim erat, cur in numero uiuentium me positum esse gauderem? an ut cibos et potiones percolarem? ut hoc corpus caesarium ac fluidum, periturumque nisi subinde impleatur, sarcirem, et uiuerem aegri minister? ut mortem timerem, cui omnes nascimur? Detrahe hoc inaestimabile bonum, non est uita tanti, ut sudem, ut aestuem.*

<sup>55</sup>In 108 CE, the Greek stoic philosopher Epictetus claims that it is the sign of a stupid man to spend a great deal of time the concerns of his body; he specifies exercise, eating, drinking, evacuating bowel, and copulation as activities that should be done in passing so as to ensure that one's whole attention be focused on the mind (*Ench.* 41).

<sup>56</sup>*Deinde non est contentus his artibus, sed in pistrinum sapientem summittit. Narrat enim quemadmodum rerum naturam imitatus panem coepit facere. "Receptas," inquit, "in os fruges concurrentes inter se duritia dentium frangit, et quicquid excidit, ad eosdem dentes lingua refertur; tunc uero miscetur, ut facilius per fauces lubricas transeat. Cum peruenit in ventrem, aequali eius seruore concoquitur, tunc demum corpori accedit.*

of bakers. He fears that Posidonius will not stop at simply elevating bakers to *sapientes* (wise men); he will likely try to do the same with cobblers (*Ep.* 90.23). Seneca's derision of another's socio-hierarchical use of the body presents the pecking order that informs his thought. Those that pursue wisdom are placed at the top of his hierarchy and are distinguished from craftsmen. Bakers and cobblers are not *sapientes* because their professions are grounded in the material world. Thus, he denigrates Posidonius' claims because the latter finds wisdom and value through the imitation of the physical world rather than the *animus* and immaterial.<sup>57</sup>

This description of physical ingestion enveloped with comments about class structures suggests Seneca's unease about the social changes in his society. Tacitus provides some insight into the social environment in which Seneca lived under Nero. Recording (and frequently focusing on, perhaps even enhancing) the more sordid details of Nero's rule, Tacitus highlights Nero's preference for the company and actions of people who were traditionally outside the sphere of respectable and influential Roman citizens.<sup>58</sup> Whether or not Nero truly surrounded himself by such people, Seneca and Tacitus' remarks signal a type of social restructuring that occurred during this period and elite concerns about their effects. Like Cicero but in his own fashion, Seneca responds to those changes by employing the body's alimentary process to reaffirm his views on proper hierarchies.

Seneca's concerns about these objectionable social and political changes result in his devaluing man-made structures and contemporaneous social trends. For example, he inverts the easy comparison of the body to domestic architecture that Cicero made. Not concerned with demonstrating the natural/divine logic of the body's form, he argues that houses, shelter, food, etc., are perversions of the natural world because nature provided what was necessary to humans but man in turn valued, admired, and sought them with *ars* (*Ep. Mor.* 90.18). Man's desire to expand

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<sup>57</sup>Heinonen, 72.

<sup>58</sup>For example, Nero puts on a slave's disguise in order to wander the streets of Rome visiting taverns and brothels (*Tac. Ann.* 13.25).

upon what nature provided is motivated by the pursuit of luxury, which he defines as the withdrawal from nature—*a natura luxuria descivit* (*Ep.* 90.19). The result of luxury's pursuits is that the soul becomes a slave to the body, which alters the house and city into locations that spotlight the body's unnatural supremacy:

All these crafts, by which the city is either busy or made loud, are carrying on the business of the body, to which all things were once offered as to a slave, but now they are made ready for it as for a master. And so, here are the workshops of the weavers, here those of the carpenters; here the odors of bakers; and here the wantonness of those teaching the postures of soft bodies and wanton and weak songs (*Ep.* 90. 19).<sup>59</sup>

Seneca equates clothing, shelter, and food with lewd corporeal pleasures. Consequently, the markers of civilization become signs of the somatic enslavement that threatens all men.<sup>60</sup> He pushes this imagery of corporeal captivity further by employing political constructions to explain the dangers of bodily gratification. A healthy and balanced *animus* is *rex* (king), but a soul that is ruled by bodily passions is *tyrannus* (tyrant) (*Ep.* 114.23-37). Thus, Seneca represents a shift in the perception of the body and Roman civilization's relationship to nature.<sup>61</sup>

Seneca's view of the body is a telling critique of the time in which he lived. Tacitus records that Nero marked elite bodies in ways that were traditionally offensive and humiliating. He accuses

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<sup>59</sup>*Omnes istae artes, quibus aut circitatur civitas aut strepit, corporis negotium gerunt, cui omnia olim tamquam servo praestabantur, nunc tamquam domino parantur. Itaque hinc textorum, hinc fabrorum officinae sunt, hinc odores coquentium, hinc mollitia molles corporis motus docentium mollesque cantus et infractos.*

<sup>60</sup>Tacitus seems to pick up on this line of thought in the *Agricola* but pushes the metaphor of subjugating civilization from the enslavement of an individual's *animus* to the enslavement of entire peoples (*Tac. Agr.* 21). In fact, he seems to argue that true freedom is only found once people are entirely removed from the refinements of civilization. Discussing the Fenni, Tacitus foregrounds their simplicity of dress, shelter and food (*Tac. Germ.* 46). After explaining everything they lack and how simply they live, he contends that they do not care for god or man, which means they have no wants or need for prayer (*Tac. Germ.* 46). Thus, Seneca represents a shift in the perception of the body and Roman civilization's relationship to *natura*, which Tacitus later employs for his own ends. The body, food, house, and urban landscape become tools of enslavement and examples of man's removal from *natura* rather than elements that demonstrate the order and providence of *natura*.

<sup>61</sup>W.S. Anderson, "Anger in Juvenal and Seneca," in *Persius and Juvenal*, ed. Maria Plaza (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 334. Anderson claims that Seneca spurns the type of *libertas* that comes from being removed from culture and mental discipline. Relying on Seneca's passage from *de Ira* 2.15.4 that states wildly free people live like lions and wolves, who can neither command or be commanded, Anderson argues that Seneca views the Germans and Scythians as brave and loving freedom. However, ultimately their bravery degenerates into sheer rashness because lack of mental discipline. My contention with Anderson is not that Seneca despises this type of *libertas* but rather that Seneca's own idea of *libertas* is intimately tied to civilization. I agree that Seneca values mental discipline, but frequently Seneca uses culture, civilization, and its luxury as the hallmarks of enslavement and does not associate it with mental discipline and *libertas*.

Nero of making elite women dress and act as prostitutes and elite men behave like sycophants (*Ann.* 15. 34-37). By requiring elite men and women to put on the clothing and perform the actions of the traditionally disenfranchised or ridiculed, Nero undermined the elite's position and prestige in Rome in the most intimate way he could, turning their daily, physical appearance and experiences into a reminder of their subordination to his authority. It is no wonder then that Seneca more frequently than not expresses scorn for the body and refers to it as either *rex* or *tyrannus*. Evidently, the powerful position of the emperor had the ability to influence a person's own experience with his/her body. As a response to this, Seneca fragments and disparages the body and relies on stoicism to retreat from the physical effects of Nero's reign through a devaluation of the material world.

Pliny the Elder, writing during the relatively stable and peaceful period of Vespasian's reign, produces a natural history that is more optimistic than Seneca the Younger's letters. Moreover, his encyclopedic opus presupposes a universal availability of other countries' resources at the center of empire and the continual movement of things from the periphery to Rome.<sup>62</sup> As Mary Beagon notes, Pliny was in sympathy with the general tone of imperial politics under the Flavians, and his work is very much a product of the age.<sup>63</sup> Even though Pliny's work demonstrates a concordance with the Flavians, he, like Cicero and Seneca, details the physiology of ingestion and uses this process to make claims about man's relationship with *natura*. His use of the body's alimentary process suggests a society in transition, but he displays personal sympathies for Flavian policies.

When Pliny explores ingestion specifically, interconnection and movement characterize his description. Following his typical pattern of comparing the human body part to that of an animal

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<sup>62</sup>Trevor Murphy, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History: The Empire in the Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 50. See also Sorcha Carey, *Pliny's Catalogue of Culture: Art and Empire in the Natural History* (Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation; London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 41–74, who argues that the text itself becomes a “physical” monument of empire.

<sup>63</sup>Mary Beagon, *Roman Nature: The Thought of Pliny the Elder* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 6.

(in this case the swine), he details the body's alimentary process by describing tonsils, tongue, uvula, and the smaller tongue called the *epiglossis*, which sits between two passages. The *epiglossis* serves as a cover for the interior passage (*arteria*), which leads to the lungs and heart, in order to keep food and drink out. The exterior passage, or *gula*, receives food and drink, and leads to the *stomachus* and *venter*—stomach/belly—(*HN* 11.66). Discussing the alimentary process, Pliny attempts to represent each organ accurately as well as their individual roles in ingestion. Although he does not discuss how the *venter* is attached to the intestines or bowels, it is possible to see that, much like Cicero, Pliny depicts an understanding of the body's alimentary organs as connected not simply to one another but also to other body parts.

Like Cicero, Pliny observes a physical hierarchy in his own work. However, he relies on comparisons to insects, animals, the ancient urban landscape, and government to develop his view of the body. Progressing from the smallest insects to animals and finally humans, Pliny traces nature's divine influence from the untamed natural world to the human one. He argues that nature's artifice is best demonstrated by the variety of insects' flexible vertebrae (*HN* 11.1). His admiration for the divine care and design found even in the smallest of creatures highlights his overarching belief that *natura* provides an understandable and comprehensive order to the natural and human world. Like Cicero, Pliny conceives of this order as hierarchical with human beings at the top. However, he is not solely focused on the digesting body. Rather, he flits back and forth between comparisons of animal and human body parts and relies on comparative adjectives and superlatives to distinguish humans' organs from similar animal ones. For example, comparing human and animal brains, Pliny claims:

All animals that have blood have a brain, even in those sea animals that we have called mollusks, although they are devoid of blood, such as polypus. But man has in portion the greatest and most humid brain of all, and the coldest of all the vicera,

which is enveloped above and below with two membranes, either of which if to be broken is fatal. Clearly, man's brain is larger than woman's (*HN* 11.49).<sup>64</sup>

For Pliny, the male human brain is the standard by which all other living beings are measured. Man has the greatest, moistest, and coldest brain of all blooded beings and even some sea animals, although Pliny does not articulate why moistness and coldness are significant characteristics. Nevertheless, Pliny's diction and grammatical choices demonstrate his view that man's brain is distinct and superior. Even when comparing a man's brain to a woman's, the only living being which is truly comparable to him, man clearly comes out on top because his brain is larger. His quick sketch of a hierarchy of living beings leads into his hierarchy of the human body.

Pliny, like Cicero, employs spaces found in the human world to trace a physical hierarchy of the human form. Yet, while Cicero uses domestic spaces and household hierarchies to suggest the head's pre-eminent position in the body, Pliny tellingly relies on the urban landscape and political offices. Rather than the *dominus* of the house, Pliny's brain is the *arx* of the senses and the mind's *regimen*: "The senses hold this organ as the citadel (*arx*); to this organ all of the veins from the heart reach, here they all end, it is the governor (*regimen*) of the mind" (*HN* 11.49).<sup>65</sup> Pliny's use of the image of the *arx* with all the veins from the heart leading to and ending there suggests a visual imagery of roads leading to the citadel/city center, and of the periphery being connected to the center; the heart and the brain are connected, but the role of the heart is to sustain and serve the brain. His description of veins feeding into the brain maps on the body not only his physical hierarchy, but also assumptions about the constant movement from periphery to center that was characteristic of the Flavian empire. Moreover, Pliny's reliance on the inherent order and power of the urban landscape and government offices highlights a confidence in the political institutions of

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<sup>64</sup>*cerebrum omnia habent animalia quae sanguinem, etiam in mari quae mollia appellavimus, quamvis careant sanguine, ut polypus. Sed homo portione maximum et umidissimum omniumque viscerum frigidissimum, duabus supra subterque membranis velatum, quarum alterutram rumpi mortiferum est. cetero viri quam feminae maius.*

<sup>65</sup>*Hanc habent sensus arcem, huc venarum omnis a corde vis tendit, hic desinit, hoc columen altissimum, hic mentis est regimen.*

his day, which is singularly lacking in the Cicero's and Seneca's descriptions. Thus Pliny does not use the body's economy and form to resist but rather to proclaim support for the political structures of his day.

This positive attitude is again reflected in his discussion of the human head. For Pliny, the head—and the organs and muscles found there—gain their privileged position because of their special relationship to and ability to communicate the human *mens* and *animus*. He claims that the forehead and the eyebrow indicate man's feelings and intentions; the eyebrows specifically show a portion of a man's *animus* (*HN* 11.51). The eyes are the most precious part of the body because they most fully indicate a person's feelings and character (*HN* 11.52-54). Thus, the brain is the goal and terminus for the *omnis venarum a corde* and is the governor of the mind; the forehead, eyebrows, and eyes all serve to indicate the feelings and character of a man's mind, with the eyes as the most important part of the three. This bodily hierarchy seems to influence his thoughts about a hierarchy found in the universe as well. Pliny abstractly explains the cosmos through stoic ideas of the human form: the world is the body and the sun is the soul and mind of the world (*HN* 2.13).<sup>66</sup> Indeed, Pliny easily draws parallels between the human body, the earth and the universe. His reasoning underscores how intimately he understands the body's relationship to nature and the hierarchical order that informs its movements.

Notwithstanding the clear superiority of the head, Pliny's discussion becomes entangled when he turns inward. This entanglement, however, is telling because it denotes Pliny's understanding of the body's interdependence and interconnection. For instance, when recounting different ailments that afflict the eyes, Pliny proposes his personal theory that the eyes and *stomachus* are connected. "The most learned authors recount that veins reach from [the eye] to the brain, but I am inclined to believe that it is to the *stomachus*; for certainly no one's eye is lost without feeling

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<sup>66</sup>Beagon, *The Elder Pliny*, 17. Beagon observes that the sun was regarded as the particular embodiment of divine rationality of the universe in Stoic thought.

sickness here” (*HN* 11.55).<sup>67</sup> In effect, he imagines veins as a complicated internal net uniting seemingly unrelated body parts. It is as though he physically interiorizes the assumptions he has about movement and availability of goods in the empire. For Pliny, both the external world of the Roman empire and internal structure of the human body are intricately connected to the various heads of body or empire.

In sum, this link between the body, nature, and the state can be traced through the late Republic and early Principate, as different authors use it either to resist or confirm the authority of contemporary political leaders. Additionally, assumptions about proper social hierarchies underscore their representations of physical ingestion. The inherent logic and order of ingestion explained for Cicero and Pliny the divine foresight of nature, man’s pre-eminent position in the world, and inspired comparisons to domestic architecture and urban landscapes. However, Cicero’s use of the body’s ingestive functions reasserted traditional Republican hierarchies during the social upheaval Caesar invoked whereas Pliny’s views about the body reflect confidence in the Flavians’ governance. Although employing methods similar to Cicero and Pliny when speaking about the body and ingestion, Seneca’s approach to the body’s alimentary process highlights his profound discontent with the political and social changes that occurred during his time.

## II. The Isolation of *Venter* and *Gula*: Organs of Social Disorder

Seneca’s use of the alimentary process and loosely tied body parts seems to belong to a trend that develops in the mid-first century and extends into the second century CE. In lieu of highlighting the body’s interconnection and interdependence, Roman authors during this period more frequently represent alimentary organs and muscles—namely the *venter* and the *gula*—as unconnected and independent parts whose insatiable demands spelled ruin for the man who failed

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<sup>67</sup>*venas ab iis pertinere ad cerebrum peritissimi auctores tradunt; ego et ad stomachum crediderim: certe nulli sine redundatione eius eruitur oculus.*

to discipline them.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, they act as symbols of man's perversion of the order found in nature. Many Roman authors, as Emily Gower notes, thought an overindulgent stomach disturbed the equilibrium of the body where desires ought to be ruled by the head.<sup>69</sup> Yet, Latin authors' concern over imbalance resulting from an intemperate belly is not simply restricted to a disturbed physiology. More precisely, it reflects a worry about the disorientation they experienced in a continually changing social world. Indeed, the literary separation of the *gula* and *venter* from the body's alimentary canal is accompanied by a subtle transition from the internal and personal preoccupations of Seneca to the externally focused critique of social relationships in Martial and Juvenal.

Seneca's works tend to separate the *gula* and the *venter* from the body's nutritional needs and they receive more of his contempt than any other body part. In fact, he spotlights the *gula* and *venter* as the most potent symbols of personal enslavement, gluttony, luxury, and debasement. For him, the *venter* and *gula* are lustful and wanton organs that demand men serve their insatiable needs. He cautions that the unchecked demands of a single *gula* and *venter* create imbalance and waste in addition to spreading disease throughout the body.

Look how many things pass down a single throat (*unam gulam*) that luxury—ravager of sea and land—mixes together. It is inevitable that so many different dishes must surely disagree; they are badly swallowed and poorly digested, each straining against the other. No wonder diseases that result from ill-assorted food are variable and manifold; there must be an overflow when so many unnatural combinations are pressed together (*Ep.* 95. 19).<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>For an interesting look at modern symbolism of big bellies in HBO's series, *The Sopranos*, through the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque to medieval society, see Hazel Work, "Big Bellies and Bad Language: The Carnavalesque in *The Sopranos*," *Media Education Journal* 31 (2002): 29-31. On the carnivalesque, excretory system, and modern consumption, see Craig Thompson, "A Carnavalesque Approach to the Politics of Consumption (or) Grotesque Realism and the Analytics of the Excretory Economy," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 611.112 (2007): 112-27. On Mikhail Bakhtin's theories applied to ancient authors' writings, see the collection of essays in Robert B. Branham, *Bakhtin and the Classics* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

<sup>69</sup>Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 13.

<sup>70</sup>*Vide, quantum rerum per unam gulam transitarum permisceat luxuria, terrarum marisque vastatrix. necesse est itaque inter se tam diversa dissideant et bausta male. male digerantur aliis alio nitentibus. Nec mirum, quod inconstans variusque ex discordi cibo morbus est et illa ex contrariis naturae partibus in eundem compulsa redundant.*

Notably, Seneca leans on the word *gula* in this passage when he has other words in Latin to choose from to describe this alimentary organ: i.e. *stomachus* or *fauces*, both of which are found in the examples cited above. *Gula*, however, has the dual meaning of gullet and gluttony, and it seems that Seneca wants to exploit its double meaning here. He concentrates on the number and unnatural combinations (represented here as a mixture of land and sea) that the isolated *gula* is able to receive.<sup>71</sup> Apparently, a man should be wary of his own body because it—or specific parts of it—are locations of disease and have the ability to internalize unnatural elements. In other words, the throat, through its ability to consume luxury, can simultaneously corrupt the person.

Seneca continues this pattern of separation and negative association when referring to the *venter*. Yet again, Seneca’s vocabulary is telling and elucidates a change in attitudes about this part of the body. As noted above, Cicero uses *abus* in his remarks on ingestion, a word that is primarily associated with the body’s digestive process, although it can also mean womb or beehive. Describing the horrors that garlic visits on his digestive organs, Horace relies on *praecordia*: the word is normally linked to the physical body to describe the stomach, but it also denotes the seat of the passions (Hor. *Epod.* 3). However, both Pliny and Seneca depend on *venter* for the belly, thereby suggesting a change in the perception (and perhaps symbolic usage) of the belly during the mid-first to late-first century CE. *Venter* names the stomach or belly, but it also carries a moral judgment as it is associated with the seat of greed or gourmandizing.<sup>72</sup> This second meaning comes to the foreground in Seneca’s work. While Pliny’s discussion of the physical qualities of the *venter* places it within the alimentary canal, Seneca’s general view of the body and his specific thoughts on its nutritional needs suggest that his choice of *venter* for the belly serve his moralizing use of the body.

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<sup>71</sup>See also *Prov.* 3.6, where Seneca follows the progress of fish and birds into an all-consuming stomach.

<sup>72</sup>Additionally, *venter* is frequently used to describe the womb. The rough equivalent of *venter* in Greek γαστήρ. As Yurie Hong Easton observes, γαστήρ was used interchangeably to describe gestation and digestion, which lead to the popular metaphor of the womb as an oven. Yurie Hong Easton, “Gender Conceptions: Reproduction of Pregnancy and Childbirth in Greek Literature” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 2007), 43. This association of *venter*/womb/cooking could add another layer to Seneca’s choice to rely on it in his works.

With the *venter*, Seneca expresses a particular concern about its wastefulness and the frivolity of those who attempt to satisfy it. He asks Lucilius to consider how many kitchen fires and cooks busily work to satisfy the demands of a single belly; how many brands of wine and storehouses does a single *venter* consume; how much labor is lost on farms and vineyards in the pursuit of filling the stomach's demands (*Ep.* 114. 26). Arguing that man must be stern with its demands because it never holds the things of value crammed into it, Seneca discloses his greatest anxiety about the *venter*:

What does it matter what the stomach receives, since it must lose whatever it has received...I assure you that such carefully chosen and variously seasoned dishes, once they have entered the belly (*ventrem*), will be overtaken by one and the same corruption (*foeditas*). Would you despise the pleasures of eating? Then consider its result (Sen. *Ep.* 110.12)!<sup>73</sup>

For Seneca, the inherent nature of the *venter* is to lose what it receives. But more importantly, it changes everything that enters it into *foeditas*—foulness, corruption. When placed in the context of his claims about luxury, which he relates specifically to the *venter* and *gula*, his dread about the *venter* becomes clearer. As we have seen, Seneca cautions that the greatest danger of luxury is its removal from nature or its desire to expand upon what nature provides. Yet, the very function of the *venter* is to change the nature of the food that enters it. Nor does the *venter* merely alter food; it corrupts food—it changes its nutritional nature into foul excrement.<sup>74</sup> For Seneca, the belly is an internalized and ever-present part of a man's body that befouls the natural state of the thing it receives.

But Seneca is a fair-weather critic. When an allegory of eating suits his admonitions to pursue the life of the mind, the body's process of changing food from its original form is praised and described as natural. He compares the process of sifting through readings to a bee's production

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<sup>73</sup>*quid enim ad rem pertinet quid accipiat, perditurus quidquid acceperit...At mehercules ista sollicitate scrutata varieque condita, cum subierint ventrem, una atque eadem foeditas occupabit. Vis ciborum voluptatem contemnere? exitum specta.*

<sup>74</sup>Michael Beer, *Taste or Taboo*, 104. Beer argues that meals were particularly highlighted as luxurious because they ultimately became excrement: "But what pleasure was more ephemeral, more transitory than a meal? To spend great wealth on food, something quickly consumed, scarcely remembered and ultimately excreted, was indeed the ultimate luxury."

of honey, whose sweetness is different from whence it came but nevertheless does not betray its origins (*Ep.* 84.5). He then makes the following observation:

We see nature do this in our own bodies without any of our labor; the food that we have received, as long as it retains its [original] quality, floats as a solid in the *stomachus* and is a burden; only when it changes from its original form does it pass into the organs and blood. Similar to this, a man's natural quality (*ingenia*) is nourished by these things; we should see to it that whatever we have absorbed should not be permitted to be unchanged lest it remain foreign [to us]. We must digest it; otherwise it will merely enter the memory, not his nature (*ingenium*) (*Ep.* 84.5-7).<sup>75</sup>

Because he is arguing for the unity of a man's thoughts through the successful integration of his studies, Seneca describes the alimentary process as beneficial, and mentions digestion but not excretion. Food's conversion is compared to honey whereas previously it became *foeditas*. Significantly, Seneca does not employ either *gula* or *venter* when discussing eating, but rather relies on the less charged word *stomachus*. In essence, he reserves *venter* and *gula* to point out the dangers of favoring the body and its needs above the *animus*.

For Seneca, the lustful *venter* and *gula* become the organs that man must despise and control the most because they provide the greatest threat to his soul (*Ep.* 78.11 and 110.12). They consume wealth and luxury, and they are sites of disease and corruption. Only through the disciplined restraint of their wants can man find freedom: "The greater part of *libertas* is a good-humored *venter* that endures abuse" (*Ep.* 123.1-3).<sup>76</sup> A disciplined stomach means personal liberty. In fact, Seneca plays with the hierarchy of head over body when he claims that slaves neglect their stomachs in pursuit of manumission: "In exchange for freedom (*pro capite*), they pay out the savings that they have scraped together by cheating their bellies; will you not desire—whatever the cost—to attain

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<sup>75</sup>*Quod in corpore nostro videmus sine ulla opera nostra facere naturam: alimenta, quae accepimus, quamdiu in sua qualitate perdurant et solida innatant stomacho, onera sunt; at cum ex eo, quod erant, mutata sunt, tum demum in vires et in sanguinem transeunt. Idem in his, quibus aluntur ingenia, praestemus, ut quaecumque hausimus, non patientur integra esse, ne aliena sint. Concoquamus illa; alioqui in memoriam ibunt, non in ingenium.*

<sup>76</sup>*magna pars libertatis est bene moratus venter et contumeliae patiens.*

that liberty into which you think you were born?" (*Ep.* 80.4).<sup>77</sup> The slave's desire to pay for his freedom/head (*caput*) rather than his stomach becomes a model for the behavior of freeborn men. Thus, Seneca's writings reflect a developing trend to use the *gula* and *venter* as symbols of gluttony and luxury or as threats to personal freedom.

Juvenal and Martial follow Seneca's lead in their poems by relying on the moralizing usage of *venter* and *gula* and separating both from the body's eating process. Yet, Juvenal's employment of these organs in his writings more frequently than not functions as invective for others' social failures rather than threats to a man's personal integrity and freedom.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, he paints a graphic physical image of those who attempt to fulfill the lustful *gula* and *venter's* overreaching desires. Cautioning a man to consider his own measure before purchasing a fish, Juvenal neatly compares a shrinking purse and an expanding throat.

What will be your end, if your purse is getting empty while your throat (*gula*) is expanding? You have sunk your paternal fortune and all your belongings in a belly (*ventrem*) that can hold capital and solid silver as well as flocks and lands? (4.11.35-41).<sup>79</sup>

As in his other satires, food here does not revivify the body.<sup>80</sup> Instead, this 'food' acts as a reminder of iniquity in Rome and its foul pursuit of luxury.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, like Seneca, Juvenal treats the *gula* and *venter* as unconnected to the body's alimentary functions and describes them as wanton voids that piddle away a man's wealth. In fact, the power of Juvenal's words relies on the picture he

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<sup>77</sup> *Peculium suum, quod comparaverunt ventre fraudato, pro capite numerant; tu non concupisces qualiacumque ad libertatem pervenire, qui te in illa putas natum? Libertas* in Seneca is frequently connected to death, the acceptance of good or fate, and the mental freedom from passions and disorders; it is a freedom that accompanies wisdom (Inwood, 305). Thus, Inwood claims that Seneca's understanding of human freedom is not political nor does it come from aligning oneself with the power of god or fate but rather from philosophical or moral breakthroughs in life (Inwood, 319).

<sup>78</sup> For an interesting comparison of Luke and Juvenal's representations of movement and cultural exchanges occurring in the Roman Empire, see Osman Urmuhan and Todd Penner, "Luke and Juvenal at the Crossroads: Space, Movement, and Morality in the Roman Empire," in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 165-194. They note that while Juvenal was aware of the cultural exchange that the movement within the empire allow, he was not optimistic about it.

<sup>79</sup> *quis enim te deficiente crumina/et crescente gula manet excitus, aere paterno/ac rebus mersis in uentrem fenoris atque/argenti grauis et pecorum agrorumque capacem?*

<sup>80</sup> Paul Miller, "The Bodily Grotesque in Roman Satire; Images of Sterility," in *Persius and Juvenal*, ed. Maria Plaza (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 334.

<sup>81</sup> Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 195.

draws through the juxtaposition of a shrinking wallet, expanding *gula*, and a man's wealth, which creates an unnerving image of a distended throat attempting to swallow coins, jewels, slaves, and all other markers of wealth. In the process, Juvenal's consuming *gula* and *venter* condemn other Romans' luxuriant desires and asserts what he deems correct and frugal behavior.<sup>82</sup>

Martial goes even further in distancing the *gula* from the alimentary process and denigrating the bodies of those who stand outside traditional Roman society. Lambasting Parthenopacus's sore throat, Martial begins with the *fauces* and ends with the *gula*, demonstrating the *gula*'s now distant association from the body.

To soothe your throat (*fauces*), which is grieved by a rough and constant cough, Parthenopacus, your doctor prescribes for you honey, nuts, and sweet cakes—whatever is not allowed wild (*trux*) boys to eat. Yet every day you don't cease coughing. This is not a cough, Parthenopacus, it is gluttony (*gula*) (11.86).<sup>83</sup>

The doctor prescribes what can only be seen as the *faux* remedies of honey, nuts, and sweet cakes to soothe his throat. Martial adds these ridiculous remedies to the patient's name (a mixture of *parthus/partbinus*—Parthian and *opacus*—dark) and the adjective *trux* (wild) to underscore his marginalized status in Roman society.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, the doctor's fake remedies in tandem with Parthenopacus' name highlight his inability to overcome his original wildness as well as his ignorance and tendency towards gluttony. In order to make a play on the physical discomfort Parthenopacus suffers, Martial uses the more neutral word *fauces* for the throat at the beginning of his poem to describe the body part that troubles Parthenopacus and *gula* (gluttony) at the end of the poem to name the real culprit of his pain. In effect, Martial has at once removed the *gula* from the alimentary canal and turned it into an abstract idea. Or in other words, he makes what had

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<sup>82</sup>Ulrich Knoche, "Juvenal's Cannon of Social Criticism," in *Persius and Juvenal*, ed. Maria Plaza (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 269. He remarks that Juvenal was concerned that Rome was allowing in too many foreigners, which upset the proper method of reciprocal relationships between patron and client. Instead of this appropriate order, money dictates morals.

<sup>83</sup>*Leniat ut fauces medicus, quas aspera vexat/assidue tussis, Parthenopae, tibi,/mella dari nucleosque jubet dulcesque placentas/ et quidquid pueros non sinit esse truces./At tu non cessas totis tussire diebus./Non est haec tussis, Parthenopace, gula est.*

<sup>84</sup>Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 10. She notes that xenophobia sharpened many writers' outburst of resentment.

previously been an organ essential for the nutritional needs of the body into a moral weakness that exposes a man's social status.

Thus, Seneca's separation and moralizing usage of the *venter* and *gula* suggests a change in attitude towards how the body ingested food. The *gula* and *venter* become tools to criticize other men's inappropriate or servile behavior, although Seneca's aim is to warn against personal enslavement while Juvenal and Martial point out others' servile or foreign behaviors. Indeed, their use of overly stuffed throats and bellies hints at an attempt to create a specific physical image of those individuals who indulge the wanton desires of the *venter* and *gula*.<sup>85</sup> In essence, Seneca, Juvenal and Martial imply through their use of the *venter* and *gula* that the enlarged and stuffed body signifies the perversion of the natural order and improper social behaviors. This type of verbal attack becomes even starker when Latin authors turn their critical eye on others' digestive difficulties.

### III. Indigestion: The Disease of the Gourmand

Distinctions between easy digestion versus indigestion add to elite authors' categorization of approved and inappropriate social behaviors. Specifically, their comments about indigestion reveal their continued attempts to craft a body image of indulgence, and thereby social deviance, that we have seen them do with their separation of the *gula* and *venter* from the digestive tract. In fact, indigestion, for these authors, is not an indication of physical problems but rather of moral failings. For example, Catullus aligns sound digestion with the worry-free existence of a small household, country-living, and a plain diet (Catull. 23).<sup>86</sup> Listing the bodily harm one suffers after a rich meal that mixes a variety of dishes, Horace describes dinner guests' pallid visages, their bodies clogged

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<sup>85</sup>Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 36. She notes that Roman authors relied on bloated paunches and guts to suggest the Saturnalian confusion of grossly overfed food and the gross bodies of people who consumed it.

<sup>86</sup>*Furi, cui neque seruus est neque arca/nec cimex neque araneus neque ignis,/uerum est et pater et nouerca, quorum/dentes uel silicem comesse possunt,/est pulcre tibi cum tuo parente/et cum coniuge lignea parentis./ nec mirum: bene nam ualetis omnes,/pulcre concoquitis, nihil timetis,/non incendia, non graues ruinas,/non facta impia, non dolos ueneni,/non casus alios periculorum./atque corpora sicciora cornu/aut siquid magis aridum est habetis/sole et frigore et esuritione./quare non tibi sit bene ac beate?*

from excessive consumption, and their interrupted sleep after such meals (*Sat.* 2.2:70-81). Implicit in Catullus and Horace's comments is the same type of social critique that censures the throat and stomach of Rome's *bon vivants*. Or in other words, Catullus and Horace indicate that proper, and in fact 'good', digestion is the happy consequence of making lifestyle choices that are in keeping with traditional Roman values; poor digestion proceeds from indulgent eating habits that reflect fishy social behaviors of those who undermine traditional hierarchies.

Similarly, Celsus combines the body's digestive functions with indulgent living. Before outlining various practices meant to aid digestion, he prefaces his remarks by first spotlighting those who are most likely to suffer from bodily feebleness. He asserts that 'weak individuals are usually town folk or people who are too fond of letters (*Med.* 1.2:1-2).'<sup>87</sup> That is to say that Celsus aligns infirmity with corrosive city-living and indulgent literary pursuits. Indeed, his critique of social practices—particularly as regards one's eating habits—becomes clearer when he describes various remedies one can employ in order to aid digestion or elimination of food. He begins by making a point to uphold Asclepiades's censorship of individuals who vomited daily in order to maintain their gourmandizing (*Med.* 1.3:17-18). Then, after explaining that vomiting is more advantageous in winter than summer and that it can relieve a stomach that has consumed a meal larger than what can be digested, Celsus strangely pauses his discussion of serviceable retching to contend that vomiting should not be practiced for the sake of luxury (*Med.* 1.3:21).<sup>88</sup> Notwithstanding this assertion, Celsus returns to outlining the best times during the day to vomit (particularly in relation to meals and various exercises). Notably, his analysis of indigestion covers those behaviors that challenge or ignore traditional Roman values of frugality and discipline. In effect, his medical advice illuminates a tension between the reality that some (if not many) Romans dealt with difficulties involving the

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<sup>87</sup>*At imbecillis, quo in numero magna pars urbanorum omnesque paene cupidi litterarum sunt, observatio maior necessaria est, ut, quod vel corporis vel loci vel studii ratio detrahbit, cura restituat.*

<sup>88</sup>*Itaque istud luxuriae causa fieri non oportere confiteor.*

body's digestive functions and the moralizing rhetoric of indigestion that elite authors deploy to indicate inappropriate social behavior.

Seneca sharply underlines the association of indigestion and indulgent living that Celsus makes. Comparing reprehensible eating habits to of his own day with diet practices of Rome's rustic past, he paints a vivid picture of the gourmand's poorly digesting body:

Then comes paleness, and a trembling of wine-sodden muscles, and a repulsive thinness, due rather to indigestion than to hunger. Then weak tottering steps, and a reeling gait just like that of drunkenness. Then dropsy, spreading under the entire skin, and the belly growing to a paunch through an ill habit of taking more than it can hold. Then yellow jaundice, discolored countenances, and bodies that rot inwardly, and fingers that grow knotty when the joints stiffen, and muscles that are numbed and without power of feeling, and palpitation of the heart with its ceaseless pounding. Why need I mention dizziness? Or speak of pain in the eye and in the ear, itching and aching in the fevered brain, and internal ulcers throughout the digestive system? Besides these, there are countless kinds of fever, some acute in their malignity, others creeping upon us with subtle damage, and still others which approach us with chills and sever ague. Why should I mention the other innumerable diseases, the tortures that result from high living? (*Ep.* 95.16-18).<sup>89</sup>

The gourmand's body is simultaneously pallid, thin, weak, sick, riddled with ulcers, yet somehow maintains a distended stomach that exposes his indulgent living. Seneca is also quick to point out that the body's thinness is not the result of hunger, but of an inability to process food. Thus, this disgusting body is not scarred by the deprivation associated with hunger or slavery; rather its poor state is the result of useless consumption. Indeed, the gourmand's *venter* seems unable to perform the task that Seneca finds most offensive about the stomach: it does not even assist in producing shit. The expanded belly in conjunction with the *bon vivant's* debile, drippy, and diseased body puts in sharp relief this greedy void's refusal to nourish the body as it should. For Seneca, indigestion is

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<sup>89</sup> *Inde pallor et nervorum vino madentium tremor et miserabilior ex cruditatibus quam ex fame macies. Inde incerti labantium pedes et semper qualis in ipsa ebrietate titubatio. Inde in totam cutem umor admissus distentusque venter, dum male adsuescit plus capere quam poterat. Inde suffusio luridae bilis et decolor vultus tabesque in se putrescentium et retorrudi digiti articulis obrigescentibus nervorumque sine sensu iacentium torpor aut palpitatio sine intermissione vibrantium. Quid capitis vertigines dicam? Quid oculorum auriumque tormenta et cerebri excaestuantis verminationes et omnia, per quae exoneramur, internis ulceribus adfecta? Innumerabilia praeterea febrium genera, aliarum impetu saevientium, aliarum tenui peste repentium, aliarum eum horrore et multa membrorum quassatione venientium? Quid alios referam innumerabiles morbos, supplicia luxuriae?*

the disease of the rich who reject living in accordance with Rome's humble origins.<sup>90</sup> Those who do so, he warns, must endure its physical side effects.

Martial and Juvenal continue this mingling of comportment and disorderly digestion, in particular showcasing the physical harm of opulent consumption. Martial mocks Laetinus, who complains of a constant fever, by listing Laetinus's lavish lifestyle of litters, baths, mushrooms, oysters, wine, and soft, purple bed. He asks: is it any wonder that Laetinus's fever refuses to leave when it lives so comfortably (*Ep.* 12.17)? Again, physical ills come from high-living. Relying on the visual imagery of a *gula* swallowing more than it is able (in this case a boar), Juvenal wonders who can stand to witness such filthy luxury (1.139-140). Yet, he warns such vile acts are not without punishment; a man must carry an undigested peacock with him in his belly into the baths, thereby risking sudden death or intestate old age (1.144-147). Thus, according to Martial and Juvenal, indigestion signals the moral failings of others' inability to curb their deviant behaviors and its potentially fatal results.

In short, the trend to isolate the *gula* and the *venter* together with their remarks on indigestion expose a tendency for elite authors to mark the bodies of those whose dietary habits they find disturbing as grotesque and physically weak. This type of invective suggests that these authors were working under a perception that traditional, Roman social hierarchies were being threatened. Furthermore, it illuminates how troubling they thought these challenges were to Roman class structures through their representation of the bodily harm men endure as a result of consuming extravagant meals. Even Celsus, who sometimes attempts a type of medical impartiality, cannot resist inveighing against the lavish eater. Additionally, Seneca and Juvenal's visual imagery of a gourmand's body that is recognizable by its distended belly carrying undigested food plays a

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<sup>90</sup>See also, Sen. *Ep.* 88.18. Here Seneca wonders how the fattened bodies, but thin and dull minds, of those who vomit up their food can instruct their ancestors' martial skill to Rome's young men.

significant role in Latin authors' attempts to categorize appropriate Roman eating behaviors (see Chapter Two).

## V. Excretion, Feces, and Farting: Taboo, Slavery, and Deviance

Although Roman authors have much to say about helpful remedies and personal practices that purport to ensure the beneficial elimination of bodily waste, they are reticent to make commentary on the excretory process itself. There is a noticeable lack of excretion as evidence of nature's providence, and Roman authors do not rely on this profoundly necessary somatic function as a fluid comparison of proper socio-political order, as we have seen them do with the first stages of digestion.<sup>91</sup> Even Celsus's record of medical knowledge and practices offers little information on this bodily function, although he will have plenty to say about beneficial behaviors and remedies. Sadly, the last part of the alimentary canal that removes excreta from the body, and the organs and muscles that do its grunt work, do not get their day in the sun in Roman authors' works, as they are relegated only to passing mentions or the common censorship that surrounds this essential, but frequently stinky, process. Nevertheless, even though they say little about elimination, what Latin authors do say and what they imply is helpful for understanding their attitudes toward the digesting body. Moreover, the associations they make between feces and members of their society makes explicit the pervasiveness of Roman views of social hierarchies.

Brief, but significant, exceptions to the silence that shrouds the body's excretory functions are found again in Cicero's *de Natura Deorum*, which places remarks about elimination within its loftier praise of nature's divine operations. For instance, exploring the role of heat and motion

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<sup>91</sup> For some fascinating studies on the role of feces, flushing, and modern attitudes to 'body betrayals' like farting, diarrhea, etc., see Allen Chun, "Flushing in the Future: the Super Modern Japanese Toilet in Changing Domestic Culture," *Postcolonial Studies* 5.2 (2002): 153-70; David Inglis, "Dirt and Denigration: The Faecal Imagery and Rhetorics of Abuse," *Postcolonial Studies* 5.2 (2002): 207-21; Alex I. Thompson, "Sometimes I think I Say Too Much: Dark Secrets and the Performance of Inflammatory Bowel Disease," *Symbolic Interaction* 36.1 (2012): 21-39.

within the natural world, Cicero records Cleanthes's argument that heat is necessary to life and is in great supply in living bodies.<sup>92</sup> In order to clarify his point, he turns to digestion and bodily waste as proof of its fiery nature: "He [Cleanthes] states that there is no food so heavy that it is not digested [*concoquatar*—literally, cooked thoroughly] in a night and a day; and even the residue of our food which nature rejects contains heat (*Nat.D.* 2.23)."<sup>93</sup> In essence, Cleanthes asserts that the body's thermal characteristics are intrinsic to digestion and excretion. Notably, while retelling Cleanthes's argument, Cicero refers to the body's digestive function with a word rooted in ideas about cooking and boiling. Refraining from specifying whether he refers to urine, feces, or both, he notes that the body's steamy by-product is proof of this universally shared heat. More importantly, he also underlines in this sentence that nature rejects bodily waste. Put simply, excreta has no place in the natural world. Waste, once relinquished from the body, is no longer part of nature's providence—it has no value except as the repudiated remains of a digestive system that is governed by heat and motion.

Cicero's choice not to linger on a description of the somatic process of elimination and his lack of specificity in language about the body's by-products discloses a broader sense of Roman propriety that filters his comments. Later in this same work, this self-censorship becomes explicit when he attempts to finish his account of ingestion and digestion. Immediately following his attention to the organs and muscles involved in the alimentary processes, Cicero provides a brief window into the muscles essential to elimination. "It will not be difficult to indicate the way in which the residue of the food is excreted by the alternate astriction and relaxation of the bowels; however, this topic must be passed over lest my discourse should be somewhat offensive" (*Nat.D.*

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<sup>92</sup> On the broader medical concepts that influenced Roman authors thoughts on the body, particularly as it relates the body's qualities of hot, cold, wet, and dry, see Rebecca Flemming, *Medicine and the Making of Roman Women: Gender, Nature, and Authority from Celsus to Galen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 92-124.

<sup>93</sup>*negat enim esse ullum cibum tam gravem quin is nocte et die concoquatar; cuius etiam in relinquis inest calor iis quas natura respuerit.*

2.138).<sup>94</sup> Reaching the excretory function, Cicero maintains his representation of interconnection and reliance on other bodily parts that pervaded his previous comments. In fact, he places excretion within this framework and sees it as intrinsic to the larger digestive process. Nevertheless, he cuts himself off from saying more because of the unsavory nature of his subject and turns quickly to more detailed explanation of the lungs, heart, bones and veins. This self-imposed lacuna within his recital of somatic functions reaffirms his previous thoughts about nature's dismissal of this process and reveals a shared reserve—within some Roman circles at least—about discussing the nitty-gritty details of bodily waste.

Like Cicero, Seneca the Younger is simultaneously dismissive of and reserved about physical elimination, although he disdains (not surprisingly) this bodily need. Revisiting his remarks about the soul-tarnishing characteristics of the *venter*, we can see that Seneca relies on a negative view of bodily waste to help drive home his point about the foolishness of attempting to satisfy the stomach's greedy demands. Alluding to, but not naming, feces, he bristles at the digesting belly's ability to turn food into *foeditas*—corruption. If a man desires to tame his appetite, Seneca advises him to look at what comes out of his body, although again Seneca is reticent to name the shit he condemns (*Ep.* 110.12).<sup>95</sup> No longer evidence for the abundance of heat that moves the natural world and living bodies nor simply a by-product on which nature turns her back, excreta, for Seneca, is foul. Not only is it fetor, the symbolic disgust that it can call up is so powerful for Seneca that it has the ability to make a man turn from his pursuit of bodily pleasure—and thereby enslavement—to caring for the health of his soul.

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<sup>94</sup> *Quemadmodum autem reliquiae cibi depellantur tum astringentibus se intestinis, tum relaxantibus, haud sane difficile dictu est, sed tamen praetereundum est, ne quid habeat iniucunditatis oratio.*

<sup>95</sup> “What does it matter what the stomach receives, since it must lose whatever it has received...I assure you that such carefully chosen and variously seasoned dishes, once they have entered the belly, will be overtaken by one and the same corruption. Would you despise the pleasures of eating? Then consider its result! (*quid enim ad rem pertinet quid accipiat, perditurus quidquid acceperit...At mehercules ista sollicitate scrutata varieque condita, cum subierint ventrem, una atque eadem foeditas occupabit. Vis ciborum voluptatem contemnere? exitum specta!*). See discussion on page 23.

Although he is generally explicit in his language and use of imagery as an attempt at humor, Martial takes advantage of the latent censorship revealed in Cicero and Seneca's comments about the excretory process to weave the sad tale of Aethon. While in the presence of Jupiter's likeness in the Capitolium, Aethon breaks wind as he stands on his toes to address the god. Although the men around him simply laugh at this ill-timed bodily need, Jupiter is offended by this act and punishes Aethon by denying him three dinners.<sup>96</sup> After that, Aethon always visits the latrines first so that he can fart 10-20 times before visiting the Capitolium and clinches his butt-cheeks whenever he addresses the father of the gods (*Ep.* 12.77). This little poem reveals a Roman sense of offensiveness tied to flatulence and excretion. In fact, the humor relies on a general Roman sense of impropriety as regards passing wind that is amplified by the unfortunate occurrence of a body betrayal outside culturally defined locales for these types of bodily needs.

Despite Roman authors' reticence to discuss the process of excretion, they liberally use crap in their works. Revisiting Cicero's application of domestic architecture to the body's form confirms a sense of taboo around discussions about excrement, but also aligns slavery, elimination, and stank human waste.<sup>97</sup> Again, while comparing the eyes and nose's location in the body's form to the front of the house where the *dominus* is found, Cicero contends that the bowels have been removed from the senses just as similar things have been removed in the house so as not to offend the *dominus* (*Nat.D.* 2. 141).<sup>98</sup> Directing our attention to Cicero's representation of excretion rather than ingestion in this passage, we see that elimination is discussed in veiled terms, although it is explicitly referred to as loathsome. The use of domestic architecture, however, is telling for what it reveals about domestic relationships. Those "similar things (*res similes*)", to which Cicero refers, that are

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<sup>96</sup> For more on Jupiter as the punishment for deviant elimination, see Chapter 4, 197.

<sup>97</sup> See page 8-10 above.

<sup>98</sup> "And just as in a house architects remove from the eyes and nose of the masters that which, as it flowed forth, would inevitably be somewhat offensive, so *natura* has banished similar things from the senses (*Atque ut in aedificiis architecti avertunt ab oculis naribusque dominorum ea, quae profluentia necessario taetri essent aliquid habitura, sic natura res similes procul amandavit a sensibus.*)"

removed from the *dominus*'s view are considered intrinsic to the functioning of the house and must be performed by some members of the household. Likely, those people who are not verbally acknowledged, but assumed essential (and perhaps loathsome) are domestic slaves. Thus, implicit in this remark is not simply the powerful role of head of the house, but also the marginalized and repudiated status of slaves who perform daily routines that are involved in various activities surrounding the elimination of bodily waste.

In addition to leaning on mephitic excreta to underscore the priceless nature of personal *libertas*, Seneca combines it with his reliable metaphor of enslaved individuals' longing for freedom to expose his contemporaries' misplaced values. For example, he shares an anecdote about an enslaved German man who was training to perform as a gladiator. Enraged at the thought of entering the arena for the morning exhibition, this German used his only solitary moment to kill himself with a latrine sponge.<sup>99</sup> Praising this poor man for what he deems a brave act rather than one of desperation, in a rare instance, Seneca does not shy away from the unpalatable details of excretion. Instead, he delves into toilet practices in order to underscore the significance of the nameless German's suicide. "There he took a stick tipped with a sponge for cleaning off filth and stuffed it down his throat and choked the breath from his body" (*Ep.* 70.20).<sup>100</sup> Seneca tries to paint a vivid picture of this man's last moments by highlighting that he chose to shove the dirty sponge side reserved for wiping away excreta, rather than the other end of the stick down his throat in order to suffocate himself. Again, Seneca chooses the word *gula* for throat, thereby allowing for the layered meaning to provide texture to his comments. He ends this brief tale with the lesson he wants his reader to take away: "the foulest death is preferable to the fairest slavery" (*Ep.* 70.21).<sup>101</sup> In effect,

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<sup>99</sup> For a discussion of various ideas about how Romans cleaned themselves after excreting, see Andrew Wilson, "7.4 Toilets," in *Roman Toilets: Their Archaeology and Cultural History*, eds. Gemma C.M. Jansen, Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, and Eric M. Moorman. (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 99-104. On this passage in Seneca, see Gowers, *The Anatomy of Rome*, 28 and Kaster, 125-6.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibi lignum id, quod ad emundanda obscena adhaerente spongia positum est, totum in gulam farsit et interclusis faucibus spiritum elisit.*

<sup>101</sup> *praeferebam esse spurcissimam mortem servituti mundissimae.*

Seneca uses Romans' distaste for slavery and shit to create a striking parable about the value of personal freedom.

Continuing his allegoric use of slavery and excreta to showcase the value of *libertas* and admirable behavior, Seneca adds a sense of shame to those who must deal directly with bodily waste. Relaying the story of a young Spartan boy who refuses the enslavement that has been forced upon him, Seneca lavishes praise on this boy when he chooses to break his own skull against a wall rather than debase himself by carrying a chamber pot (*Ep.* 77.14). He asks who would not wish to have their own son die this way rather than reaching lazy old age (*Ep.* 77.15). Given Seneca's proven dislike of the body's excretory process (indeed all of its somatic functions), it should not be surprising that he finds the story about this young Spartan's refusal to demean himself by carrying a chamber-pot inspiring. Indeed, in these examples from Seneca's letters, the disgrace of shit and slavery combine in order to heighten his admonitions to lay aside the bonds of fleeting bodily pleasures and small-mindedness. What is noteworthy, however, is the assumption of ignominy assigned not only to excreta but also to slavery and activities involving bodily elimination. Moreover, Seneca's juxtaposition of enslavement and bodily waste discloses his easy association between these two things and indicates an implicit understanding of slaves' place in Roman society. Like excrement and bodily elimination, they are outside of an interconnected system, defiled by their role in society, and their labor overlooked as an essential component to the smooth functioning of the Roman social body.

Cicero and Seneca's parallelism of slavery and feces extends to other marginalized persons in Celsus, Petronius, and Martial's works. For instance, listing the various body betrayals that afflict the elderly, Celsus lingers on multifaceted bowel difficulties that come with old age.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> On Roman attitudes towards aging, see Mary Harlow and Ray Laurence, *Age and Ageing in the Roman Empire* (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2007) and Tim G. Parkin, *Old Age in the Roman World: A Cultural and Social History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

In old age there occur breathing and urinary difficulties, choked nostrils, joint and renal pains, paralysis, the bad habit of body which the Greeks call cachexia, insomnias, the more chronic maladies of the ears, eyes, also of the nostrils, and especially looseness of the bowels with its sequences, dysentery, intestinal lubricity, and the other ills due to bowel looseness (*Med.* 2.1.22).<sup>103</sup>

Immediately following this section, Celsus also remarks that diarrhea along with a runny nose, consumption, and pain in the lungs and side are common maladies for people with thin bodies (*Med.* 2.1.23). As with his thoughts on indigestion and vomiting, Celsus's medical advice is governed by his notion of an ideal body that is balanced in its somatic functions. For Celsus, difficulty in the bowels is a bright red flag that exposes a man's improper behaviors, lifestyle choices, and natural deficiencies. Thus, watery poop reveals that elderly and unnervingly thin people are at the edge of Celsus's view of an ideal Roman society.

Petronius also relies on feces to poke fun at others who are on the fringes of Roman communities. Satirizing both wealthy freedmen and their free and freed friends' avarice, Petronius has his character, Seleucus, relay the story of Chrysanthus's death, which begins to hamper the festive mood of the banquet. Attempting to interrupt the buzz kill that the story has become, Phileros moves in to veer Seleucus's tale towards the silver lining of Chrysanthus's life. In order to do so, he focuses on the wealth that Chrysanthus was able to accumulate—HS 100,000. As he builds up to this point, Phileros reveals the extent to which the dead man would go in his early life to obtain wealth. "He grew up with a penny in his pocket; at that time he would have picked up a penny with his teeth out of shit" (*Sat.* 43).<sup>104</sup> Although it is unclear whether or not Chrysanthus was himself a freedman in this story, the setting of this conversation at the extravagant and chaotic dinner of the wealthy freedman, Trimalchio, with his less than respectable guests, suggests that Chrysanthus and his social connections did not run in the same circles as someone like Seneca the

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<sup>103</sup> *In senectute spiritus et urinae difficultas, gravedo, articularum et renum dolores, nervorum resolutiones, malus corporis habitus (καχεξίαν Graeci appellant), nocturnae vigiliae, vitia longiora aurium, oculorum, etiam narium, praecipueque soluta alvus, et quae secuntur hanc, tormina vel levitas intestinorum ceteraque ventris fusi mala.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ab asse crevit et paratus fuit quadrantem de stercore mordicus tollere.*

Younger or the tale's author. Indeed, Petronius relies on the foulness of feces coming into contact with the mouth to punctuate Chrysanthus's insatiable desire for wealth and his acquaintances' mislaid admiration for what he was able to garner in his life. By doing so, Petronius's association of excreta and the social world of wealthy freedmen mirror Seneca's collocation of slavery and crap and discloses a similar prejudice to this group in Roman society.

Farting and feces assist Martial in mocking those who engage are generally regarded as sexual deviants in Roman society. Leaning on a common Roman prejudice against men who enjoyed receiving anal sex, Martial crassly asks Polycharmus, whose habit is to shit after fucking vagina (*entuis*), what he does after he has been butt-fucked (*pedicaris*) (*Ep.* 9.69). He relies on an association of excrement and anal sex again when he slights Carisianus, whose sexually activity has been hindered for many days because of his loose bowels (*Ep.* 11.88). Nor does Martial reserve his sex and excrement parallelism for just men he deems repellently passive participants in anal sex; he also uses flatulence to berate the physically beautiful, but vaginally challenged Galla. Martial explains to her that what keeps men from wanting to have sex with her is the distracting noise her vagina makes during sex. Relying on the general societal offensiveness assigned to expelled intestinal gas, Martial says he would in fact prefer Galla's breaking wind during sex to her talkative love canal (*Ep.* 7.18). Thus, Martial's use of flatulence and feces illuminates Roman taboos about expelling gas as well as the fringe status of receptive partners in male/male sex. Moreover, he also illustrates the mockery some women endured when their bodies did not conform to their male lover's preferences.

## **VI. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that Roman authors' representation and interpretation of the body's digestive functions that include eating, digesting, and excreting food were often colored by their views on politics and social hierarchies. Indeed, relying on Mary Douglas's observation of the

symbolic relationship between the social body and physical body, I have argued that the digesting body in Latin authors' works acts as a mirror that reflects their views of Roman political institutions and social relationships. In the first section, I demonstrated that Cicero, Seneca the Younger, and Pliny the Elder's discussions of ingestion reveal their support of or discontent with the political institutions of their day as well as their views on the appropriate functioning of public and domestic hierarchies or the failings of those. In effect, the properly digesting body is reliant on an interconnected system of organs and muscles that resembles domestic and political hierarchies with a recognized head that has the authority to govern and maintain the ideally functioning social and physical body. Next, I argued that, beginning with Seneca the Younger, one can see a trend that aligns the isolated and wanton elements of the alimentary canal—the *venter* and *gula*—with those whom elite authors deem as challenging proper social hierarchies and practices. Properly digesting bodies mark those who live in accordance with traditional Roman values, but indigestion is the bane of the *bon vivant's* lavish lifestyle and diet. Finally, I have shown that, although Roman authors show a reluctance to describe excretory functions in detail, they easily correlate feces and farting with slaves and those they consider sexually deviant in their society.

I've also attempted to suggest that Roman authors' preoccupation with the digesting body is a response to the social and political changes that marked the Late Republic and Early Principate. Norbet Elias's observation that elite authors' sudden inclusion of basic bodily behaviors and functions in their works discloses their attempts to respond to evolving social and political landscapes underscores my analysis here. In the face of these changes, Roman authors turned to digesting body as they attempted to work out their altering political and social roles. This need to distinguish their place in society from those who challenged their privileges comes out most clearly in their attacks on those who are enslaved to the reckless *venter* and *gula* and their descriptions of the disgusting and dyspeptic bodies of gourmands. These attacks reveal elite authors' discomfort with

others' abilities to have access to traditional markers of wealth and status in Rome, and with behaviors that made it difficult to distinguish who was who in Roman society. In the next chapter, I explore this idea further by examining elite authors' comparisons of their own dietary habits and opinions on hunger to those they consider bad eaters, poor, foreign, or enslaved. In fact, the stuffed belly, distended throat, and diseased body described in this chapter provide a foundation for understanding elite authors' commentary on their own and others' dietary practices.

## CHAPTER TWO

### YOU ARE WHAT (AND HOW) YOU EAT: Defining Status, Marginality, and Gender through Food and Dietary Habits

*homini cibus utilissimus simplex, acervatio saporum pestifera et condimento perniciosior. difficulter autem perficiuntur omnia in cibis acria, aspera, inconsueta, varia, nimia et avide hausta, et aestate quam hieme difficilius et in senecta quam in iuventa. vomitiones homini ad haec in remedium excogitatae frigidiora corpora faciunt, inimicae oculis maxime ac dentibus.*

The most wholesome nutriment for man is plain food. An accumulation of flavors is injurious, and still more so if heightened by sauces. All acrid elements are difficult for digestion, and the same is the case if food is devoured greedily, or in too large quantities. Food is also less easily digested in summer than in winter, and in old age than in youth. The vomits which man has invented, by way of remedy for this evil, render the body colder, and are more particularly injurious to the eyes and teeth. (Pliny *HN* 11.117)

Given Roman writers' use of the digesting body and its organs as analogies for either properly functioning or flawed social bodies, it should not be surprising that they have much to say about food and dietary practices. Pliny's remarks on the benefits of simple food in contrast to the dangers of an accumulation of flavors—which are especially heightened if accompanied by risky sauces—is an excellent starting point for this chapter's exploration of the types of commentary about food and dietary practices that elite Roman authors include in their texts. Although he refers generally to mankind (*homo*), it quickly becomes clear that mankind, for Pliny, more often than not signifies Roman men of means, who would respond to the tacit assumption of discipline—or its lack—that colors his comments. Additionally, the striking and discordant visualization of a tubby belly, distended throat, and weak, pallid physical body that Roman authors relied on to describe those who challenged their perceptions of the ideal Roman social body enhances Pliny's caution about the consumption of rich sauces. Through his praise of simple food, he implicitly takes for granted an easy access to luxurious food and all of its perils. Or in other words, connected to the

undercurrent of discipline that informs his comment is also an expectation of agency and privilege; Pliny does not question that a person has the ability to choose his preferred dietary practices or constraints. Instead, his focus is on the moral and physical risks of extravagant dietary behaviors and the digestive difficulties a man might endure because of rich pabulums, seasonal challenges to diet, or questionable practices to induce unnecessary vomiting. What's more, Pliny seems unconcerned about lack of access to food or the physical consequences of malnutrition that occur because of sustained caloric deprivation—the more common worries for those enduring poverty or enslavement.<sup>105</sup>

Pliny's compact statements in this passage expose elite assumptions that Roman authors make and that I explore in this chapter. Their preoccupations with luxury and extravagant food relay apprehensions about competition to traditional social orders that were the consequences of Rome's empire and the development of the Principate. Like other pre-industrial societies, Romans marked a person's position in society by his or her physical appearance rather than relying on spatial ordering.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, Romans, like other Mediterranean peoples, performed much of their lives in public areas of cities, and an elite Roman man gained prestige through public performance of sacred rites and political actions. As Wallace-Hadrill notes, “[i]n the stock-market of reputation, appearances are critical, the luxurious display of wealth added to the appearance of power and raised the stock of reputation, so increasing actual social power.”<sup>107</sup>

Yet, the question of the true economic challenge these extravagant eaters presented to the elite is difficult to assess. Wallace-Hadrill smartly points out that if Roman sumptuary laws were

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<sup>105</sup> In the section immediately following these remarks, Pliny does mention that humans can go without food for seven days and suffer no ill effects. Yet, I argue that this view of caloric deprivation echoes similar elite attitudes to hunger that are present in Celsus and Seneca the Younger's writings.

<sup>106</sup> Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 327; Holt Parker, “The Observed of All Observers,” 160.

<sup>107</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 333. Wallace-Hadrill's work elucidates the cultural concern behind this trend. He observes that Roman food was one of the prime obsessions for Roman authors like Seneca, satirists, and sumptuary laws and that “critique of luxury goes hand in hand with a society of rank and hierarchy formally defined by the state. Abandonment of that critique... spells abandonment of a society defined by rank.”

about the competitive struggle within the nobility, they would have focused on the house rather than food.<sup>108</sup> Because of their focus on food and eating behaviors, Roman authors hint that their problem was not simply with their social peers, but also with those that had enough means to buy expensive food. Put simply, anyone with some money—including equestrians, ex-slaves, foreigners, and women—could purchase exotic or expensive food, permitting them to make (superficial) claims to privileged positions in society based on their wealth. These threats meant that some Roman men began to search for different ways to mark their bodies in order to reaffirm their prestige and *virtus*. Strikingly, many Latin writers use diet and practices surrounding eating as a way to categorize appropriate and unacceptable behaviors for different status groups.<sup>109</sup> Doing so, they return to cultural tropes about their ancestors, which expose their deep conservatism.<sup>110</sup>

In this chapter, I argue that Roman authors attempted to define social class and gender based on food, body types, and attitudes towards hunger. Mentioning their own food consumption, Latin authors are quick to point out their humble dining habits and preferences for simple foods. Not only do elite authors rely on food and dining habits to distinguish their role in society from others, but they also emphasize the benefits of hunger to delineate their positions from either their peers or those they deem to be their social inferiors. Through the praise of their own tempered habits, modest tastes, and productive use of hunger, they demonstrate that the performance of agency and discipline is intimately tied to diet and eating habits. However, when describing the practices of others, they highlight the excessiveness or strangeness of others' diets. Indeed, strange food and eating habits signal for these authors those who do not appear to participate in Roman

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<sup>108</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 336.

<sup>109</sup> Latin authors are not the only ones using food and dietary choices as commentary—Plutarch also details the dietary practices of great men in his biographies. See, Plutarch. *Cat.Mai*, 32, *Ant.* 4, 28.

<sup>110</sup> Brendon Reay, "Agricultural Writing and Cato's Aristocratic Self-Fashioning," *Classical Antiquity* 24.2 (2005): 352-3. On Roman writers' reliance on food and foodways to define Roman-ness and historical changes, see Nicholas Purcell, "The Way We Used to Eat: Diet, Community, and History at Rome," *American Journal of Philology* 124.3 (2003): 329-58. For an interesting comparison to Greek notions of community revealed through dietary practices, see Kathryn Topper, "Primitive Life and the Construction of the Sympotic Past in Athenian Vase Painting," *The American Journal of Archaeology* 113.1 (2009): 3-26.

society in meaningful ways. For example, Roman authors suggest that social climbers like freedmen or the *nouveau riche* revel in extravagant dining practices that muddle class distinctions and pervert nature. Sub-elite men are ill-mannered or desperate dinner guests who endure any manner of poor and disgracing treatment for the mere promise of food. Exiles and slaves are marked by bodies that expose their lack of agency while bandits and foreigners are animal-like in their diet and eating behaviors. Finally, Latin authors' portraits of eating women lean on elements that they used to criticize their social peers as well as on assumptions they have about enslaved persons. Nevertheless, they reserve different language and criticism to mark women's eating habits. In fact, Roman authors mingle sex and food in such a way that they underscore the power-imbalances of gender relationships. Noticeably, however, these authors are silent on either the beneficial or perilous effects hunger might hold for women. Throughout my exploration of these themes, I reveal that, through their descriptions of dietary practices, elite Roman men expressed their worries about the competition they faced from their (foreign) peers and those from traditionally lower statuses who seemed to encroach on their coveted positions of influence and power.

### **I. Figs and Olives: Simplicity, Moral Integrity, and Elite Agency**

Elite authors' praise of simple foods and humble dietary practices—especially their own diets and eating habits—brings out the moral uprightness they assign to both.<sup>111</sup> The manner in which Latin writers extol the physical benefits a person gains through strict adherence to the consumption of simple foods as well as enduring temporary bouts of hunger suggests that choosing a specific diet played a significant role in the performance of status. Moreover, the physical effects that are joined

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<sup>111</sup> On the morality of food in the modern world, see Helen Zoe Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013) and John Coveney, *Food, Morals, and Meaning: The Pleasure and Anxiety of Eating* (London: Routledge, 2006). For a collection of essays treating the intersection of food and morality in various cultures and time periods, see Susan R. Friedland, ed., *Food and Morality: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2007* (Totnes: Prospect, 2008).

to these dietary practices stand in stark contrast to the bodily defects and illnesses they attributed to persons who enjoyed finely prepared food, which I explored in the previous chapter. Yet, this high regard for unadorned comestibles and dining habits belies elite assumptions about food, personal agency, and the management of social relationships, while concomitantly barely masking the unease they experienced in the evolving social environment of the early Principate.

Latin authors rely on this sense of agency and discipline to demarcate their dining habits and preferences from others' condemnable behaviors.<sup>112</sup> Comparing his unpretentious appetite to those of rich merchants, Horace proudly announces that olives, endives, and mallows sustain him (*Carm.* 1.31: 14-15). As though to emphasize the correctness of his gastronomic choices, he declares that he only has two hopes in his life: that he can enjoy what he possesses in good health and with mental vigor, and that in his old age he does not lack dignity nor the cithara (*Carm.* 1.31:16-20). His juxtaposition of unadorned food and life-goals that accentuate his preference of health, vigor, dignity, and poetry illuminates the connection he draws between a man's dietary mien and his moral soundness. Indeed, his modest diet and ambitions soberly contrast the rich merchant's thirst for wine served in golden goblets whom he mentions in this poem as well as Horace's playful, yet stern criticism of Catus's inane devotion to the culinary arts (*Sat.* 2.4), or those who are lead astray by their vain desires to consume cooked peacock (*Sat.* 2.2:23-30). In light of others' questionable appetites and practices he brings out in his works, Horace clearly separates his proper behavior and choices from their ridiculous tastes and pursuits.

Proposing activities and foods to balance a person's physique, Celsus also reveals that his bodily paragon is aligned with notions of proper and respectable Roman behavior. Celsus relies on commentary about different types of bodies' strengths and weaknesses to illustrate his ideal body—

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<sup>112</sup> Kaster, 18-27. Placing dining practices within a longer list of appropriate actions of *verecundia* that will keep members of Roman society from offending each other, Robert Kaster observes that categorizing specific social behaviors was crucial for social interactions: "*Verecundia*, as an emotion, animates the art of knowing your place in every social transaction and binds the free members of a civil community"(27).

one that is neither too fat nor too thin. He insists that a person must be acquainted with the nature of his own body, noting whether it be thin, obese, hot, frigid, moist, dry, constipated, or of loose bowels (*Med.* 1.3:13).<sup>113</sup> If a man's body is slight, Celsus advises that he fatten up, and if thick, he should slender down (*Med.* 1.3:14). He suggests that a man reach this ideal and moderate body type through various types exercise, anointing, and bathing that are dependent on the man's original, natural state. For instance, although the thin man may engage in exercise, he should attempt to grow in mass through rest, anointing, bathing after a meal, confining his stomach, sleeping on a soft couch, and eating large meals often. A man reduces his body's weight by bathing in hot water on an empty stomach, being in the hot sun, worrying, lightly sleeping on a hard bed in the summers, running or walking, vomiting, and eating only one meal a day (*Med.* 1.3:15-16).<sup>114</sup> Celsus explains that there are various weaknesses in thin and obese bodies, thus supporting his assertions to bring a man's body to this ideal median (*Med.* 2.10:5). In fact, his counsel about physical actions performed to balance the body informs his advice on assisting one's proper ingestion.

Relaying to his reader precise meal order and seasonal demands on one's dietary practices, Celsus expresses elite assumptions about unhampered access to pabulums. True to his desire to find the proper balance pertaining to all of the body's functions, he educates his readers on the most beneficial order to consume various food types. Namely, a meal should begin with savories and salads, after which one may have meat that has been either roasted or boiled. He warns against eating preserved fruits because of their sweetness and their tendency to cause digestive difficulties. Celsus observes, however, that desserts will not harm a good stomach, but they will turn a bad belly sour. Someone suffering from an ill-tempered stomach should chose to eat dates, apples, or other

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<sup>113</sup> Celsus also asserts that knowing one's body type prepares a person to understand the development of certain problems. For instance, he suggests that when the body alters its natural state. He mentions that if one becomes either better looking with a healthier color, or thinner and uglier without any effort, it is a sign of impending illness (*Med.* 2.2:1-2).

<sup>114</sup>Celsus mentions that the seasons of the year can also affect the state of one's body (*Med.* 1.3:33-39).

similar items (*Med.* 1.2:8-9). The seasons also demand specific diets and routines; he advises his reader to eat more in the winter and drink less—but stronger—wine. The winter diet should include more bread, boiled meat, and vegetables, although he advises sparing amounts of vegetables during these colder months. He also points out that food in the winter should be consumed while hot. Moreover, one should eat only a single meal each day, preferably at midday, unless one suffers from constipation. Spring requires less food, but more diluted wine. Celsus remarks next that more meat and vegetables should be included in a person’s diet at this time, but now those should be roasted rather than boiled. Summer diets benefit from more food and drink on a more frequent schedule. Again, meat and vegetables are recommended, but meat should be roasted, and cold or cooling food is best for consumption. Autumn allows for a little more food, but he adds to his dietary recommendations that one should not go outside unless well-covered (*Med.* 1.3.34-37). In effect, Celsus’s meticulous attention to meal order and seasonal effects on one’s digestive patterns implies that a person has the ability to have food catered to his chosen dietary practices. He assumes uninhibited seasonal access to meat, vegetables, and wine in addition to other material resources that would allow meals to include more than one dish, such as a first plate of salad and savories before a second entrée.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, his counsel to limit consumption to only one meal a day presupposes that a person has the ability to eat more than once daily. Thus, Celsus’s advice on dietary practices rests on expectations about the relative ease of access to food, and a person’s ability to decide to limit his consumption if he so desired.

The agency that Celsus underlines in his work is coupled with discipline and happiness in Seneca’s letters as he prescribes untainted food as a blow against the destructive influence of others’ extravagance. He argues that, back in the good old days of early Rome, food was simple and

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<sup>115</sup> Celsus also extends his dietary advice to one’s behavior at banquets. He explains that at some banquets a man can eat more than is sufficient, but then at another banquet, he should eat no more than is sufficient. He also asserts that a person can eat up to twice a day as long as he is able to digest what he eats (*Med.* 1:1:2).

uncorrupted by elaborate *ars* (*Ep.* 95.15). By way of emphasis, he points out that the unadorned food of Rome's ancestors resulted in stronger bodies, whereas the elaborate comestibles of his day poisons the body and inhibits digestion (*Ep.* 95.15,24-25). Referring directly to his own humble eating practices and the benefits of fasting, he contends that, although some may initially complain about the hardships of abstaining from food or feeling thirst and that the *stomachus* will at first be petulant, eventually food becomes hateful. The felicitous result is that desire dies away (*Ep.* 78.11). Happiness, he asserts, comes when one learns the discipline of personal satiety—which he specifically defines as limiting eating and drinking (*Ep.* 95.23).

Simple dietary practices are an essential component for his view of happiness because they can enhance the experience of a person's interactions with his social peers. For example, he writes that for two days he and his friend Maximus had been traveling with only a few slaves, one carriage, and nothing but what they had on their bodies; they sleep on the ground, although Seneca unwittingly discloses that 'on the ground' is a relative concept because he mentions that he has rugs and a mattress (*Ep.* 87.2). He boasts that his lunch is so meager that nothing could be subtracted from it and it only took an hour to prepare. In fact, he seems proud to report that he and Maximus are never without figs that he prefers to eat with bread if he has bread; but, if lacking bread, he is content to eat only figs (*Ep.* 87.3). Seneca declares that this lifestyle marked by its simple diet and pleasant companionship creates the ideal circumstance for the soul's happiness because it is able to lay aside all extraneous things (*Ep.* 87.4).

Yet, Seneca's humble dietary practices and living conditions in this anecdote highlight the agency that is so intrinsic to his position as an elite Roman male. Remarkably, his definition of simplicity while traveling entails the accompaniment of slaves and a carriage as well as sleeping on the ground with a mattress and two rugs. Although he may only have the clothing on his back, it was a choice he and his friend Maximus made upon beginning their journey rather than what is likely

the daily reality for the enslaved individuals on this trip. Moreover, his ‘simple’ lunch is cooked by slaves, which he claims only takes an hour to prepare. However, it is unclear from his discussion whether only one slave or a few cooked the meal, which means that preparation might require multiple man-hours. In fact, this comment highlights the general ignorance of cooking that elite authors typically disclose in their writings because Seneca is only aware of the time he must wait before he eats. In effect, Seneca’s ‘simple’ diet serves to underscore his position and power in society. He has the privilege of requesting a less elaborate meal from his slaves, the leisure to indulge his desires to travel in a more modest manner, and the choice to sleep on a mattress placed on the ground. By making these supposedly frugal choices, Seneca is able to assert the prerogatives of elite agency to behave in a restrained manner, which demonstrates his *disciplina* and ability to indulge in the mental pursuits aimed to elevate his soul above his body. Moreover, the lack of food (or at least variety of it) that most likely defines many his slaves’ dietary options and the enforced control and surveillance of their behavior is not the type of simplicity and discipline to which Seneca aspires. In other words, his vacation into self-denial has not been forced upon him by necessity or enslavement. Rather, his choice to relish this manner of living, however temporal it might be, is done as an exercise for his soul’s benefit, a situation that asserts his power and status in Roman society.<sup>116</sup>

Seneca’s pronouncements about the benefits of enduring hunger amplify how he depends on his diet to display his elite agency and disciplined lifestyle. Discussing the poisonous effects of rich food, he observes that, in Rome’s more disciplined past, men’s bodies were still strong through the consumptions of plain food that served as nourishment to a hungry man, but now food is a burden

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<sup>116</sup> Seneca also recommends temporary ventures into poverty for the soul’s benefit, which he is careful to distinguish from the popular fad of the rich, who finding themselves bored by their own luxury, began enjoying “Timon-style meals and hovels of the poor” (Ep.18.5–8). Commenting on the incongruity of elite Roman attitudes towards poverty and labor, William Fitzgerald sharply points out that “Labor and poverty are constantly praised by the Roman moralists, but from a safe distance: the multi-millionaire Seneca, for instance, recommended imitating the life of the poor for a few days so as to achieve mental security from the blows of fate (Ep.18.5–8).” See, William Fitzgerald, “Labor and Laborer in Latin Poetry: The Case of the Moretum,” *Arethusa* 29.3 (1996): 390.

to a full belly (*Ep.* 95. 15). Seneca's observation combines his predilection to display disdain for the wanton belly with his nostalgia for Rome's golden past in order to underscore the benefits of experiencing the physical effects of hunger. Hunger alone allows food to nourish the body and not weigh it down. Using himself as an example of the rewards of enduring hunger, he mentions coming home one evening after traveling to find that his baker and cook were unprepared for his arrival, which meant that Seneca had to wait a few more moments to eat. This delay had the happy result of Seneca finding some spare moments to sit at his writing table, which he uses to ponder the benefits of a temporarily empty belly. He claims that hunger has taught him not to be squeamish about bad bread, which is a fine lesson to learn because no one knows when misfortune might strike and force even a rich man to change his desires (*Ep.* 123.1-3). Musing over hunger's lack of ambition and fussiness about what food brings its end, Seneca moralizes that extravagant dishes are but instruments of luxury and do not bring happiness (*Ep.* 119.14). For Seneca, hunger represents the body and its demands as natural and existing in the world as it should. In fact, hunger becomes an exercise—an option to choose when one desires to bring the body under control and to learn temperance—rather than a frightening reality that promises debilitating effects. Or in other words, Seneca's hunger asserts his privileged position and agency because he elects to limit his diet or to prolong the physical discomfort of an empty stomach.

Like Seneca, Pliny the Elder details the benefits of a simple diet and reiterates the role it plays in manifesting a man's agency and discipline. He points out that sweet and fatty food enlarge the body, as does drinking wine. On the other hand, dry, acrid, and cold things diminish its size (*HN* 11.118). When Pliny turns to abstinence of food and drink, he characteristically jumbles his discussion of human physiology with that of animals, pointing out that animals in Africa and sheep only eat and drink every four days while men suffer no ill effects if they do not eat for up to seven days (*HN* 11.118). He then makes the side remark that the greatest danger in life—particularly to

the body—is excess and one must attempt to lessen its heavy influence (*HN* 11.119). Like the passage that began this chapter, these compact observations signal Pliny’s latent call to exercise one’s choice in a disciplined manner. Similar to Celsus and Seneca’s remarks, his comments suggest not only the personal value he places on an individual’s restricted alimentary practices, but also his elite assumption about the privilege and agency needed to choose to control dietary practices—the power to decide to abstain from food and see that abstinence as beneficial.

Martial also relies on olives in addition to modest chickpeas and lupines to underscore the moral integrity of his dinner invitation to Toranius (*Ep.* 5.78: 17-22).<sup>117</sup> Notably, his offer includes an atmosphere free of insincere words, threats of long-winded readings from a large volume of work, and onslaughts from girls’ lascivious loins; indeed, he even promises that Torianus can wear a natural face as he reclines to eat (*Ep.* 5.78: 23-28). Similar to Horace, Martial parallels food and behavior, elucidating the assumption that one’s consumption of simple food symbolizes a type of moral soundness. Moreover, Martial’s grant of an unassuming meal and atmosphere allows him to underhandedly criticize others who offer more ostentatious plates and gatherings that are fraught with complicated social performances. In effect, Martial showcases his own humble food offering and dining habits to demarcate his behavior from those who attempted to make status claims through conspicuous consumption and extravagant banquets.

While explicitly calling out others for their ill-mannered hosting through simultaneously ostentatious and demeaning uses of food during a banquet, Pliny the Younger puts forward his modest (and calculated) hospitality as an example of correct behavior. He willingly does this so that young men can learn to distinguish their habits from such reprehensible behavior. Pliny relates in a letter to Junius Avitus how an unnamed friend reserved the best dishes of the meal for himself and a

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<sup>117</sup> In Baucis and Philemon’s story, Ovid also has the old couple serve their divine guests olives, cherry plums, endive, radishes, cheese, and eggs as the first course, and nuts, figs, dates, plums, apples, and grapes (*Met.* 667-681). Although Ovid’s description of the food is mouthwatering and abundant, he, like Horace and Martial, relies on simply prepared or raw food items to underscore the couple’s piety and satisfactory offering.

few of his select guests but served the rest of the group only scraps of food (*Ep.* 2.6). His stinginess and rudeness was not limited to food; he also divided the quality and quantity of wine into three categories: one lot was given to the host and his more elite guests, who included Pliny; a poorer quality was provided to his lesser friends; and the poorest wine was reserved for his and his elite guests' freedmen (*Ep.* 2.6:2). Pliny, appalled by this unmannerly use of food and wine, sprinkles his account with snarky comments (*Ep.* 2.6:2). When asked by a fellow dining companion if he approved of such a performance, Pliny censures his host and boasts that he treats all guests to his table as equals, even the freedmen (*Ep.* 2.6:3). His incredulous companion remarks that it must be very expensive for him to do so. Happily, Pliny provides his frugal solution: he does not serve his freedmen enjoy the same wine he normally enjoys, but rather he temporarily lowers his standards to drink the wine his freedmen are accustomed to (*Ep.* 2.6: 5,7). Even though Pliny does not specifically name the simple foods he provides at dinner, as Martial and Horace do in their poems, he evokes a similar modest approach to eating and dining habits, which he employs to sharply delineate his dietary choices and well-mannered, thoughtful banqueting practices from others' mean display of greed and extravagance. However, Pliny reveals that, despite his temporary consideration of his guests' different social ranking during a dinner, he acknowledges his personal access to higher quality wine—and by implication food. In fact, he hints that he restrains himself from these finer items particularly while in the company of others, thereby underscoring the role that the observance of humble diet and eating practices played in his interaction with others. Additionally, Pliny does not question or criticize his society's strictly defined social classes that characterize his and others' dining environments.<sup>118</sup> Instead, he relies on the type of social stratification intrinsic to this type of

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<sup>118</sup> On the hierarchical structure of Roman banquet settings, see Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet*, 36-71 and John R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 315* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 224-226. On the ambiguity of hierarchies in Roman banquets, see David Frederick, "Grasping the Pangolin: Sensuous Ambiguity in Roman Dining," *Arethusa*. 36.3 (2003): 309-343.

gathering as a stage for the performance of his ability to limit his diet to that of his less dignified guests in such a way that it showcases his benevolence, moral soundness, and frugality.

Thus, Roman authors use the privilege of dietary choice and disciplined consumption as a means to assert their position in society. Indeed, these early imperial writers also create a different way to denote elite men's virtue, appearance, and status in society that puts forward their dietary practices as a reflection of traditional values. Through the practice of simple dietary choices, an elite male can simultaneously mark his body and demonstrate his agency; his tempered flesh lacks the tubby belly and weak pallor of the gourmand and he performs *disciplina* for others to observe through his rejection of lavish tastes.<sup>119</sup> Thereby, these writers make themselves models worthy of imitation in a society they claim is evermore marked by the corrupt behaviors of their contemporaries.<sup>120</sup> In effect, choices in diet, and the physical effects those choices had on the body, became ways to distinguish a performance of wealth and status that separated the 'truly' powerful, Roman men from those who falsely wore the garb and ate the grub of luxury.

## II. Fish and Mixed Dishes: Bad Eaters and Confusing Social Relationships

Put forward as a foil to proper elite practices, indulgent diets and the resultant chubby body become the favorite targets for many Latin authors' disdain. It is noteworthy that when describing the lavish diets and tastes of 'bad' elite diners, Roman writers often include commentary or details about confusing social interactions.<sup>121</sup> That is to say, the agency and claims to social standing they underscore in their own dietary habits is subverted in order to highlight the social problems extravagant eaters create. The framing of these authors' attacks against others' diets and bodies

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<sup>119</sup>Jane Gardner, "Sexing a Roman: Imperfect Men in Roman Law," in *When Men Were Men: Masculinity, Power, and Identity in Classical Antiquity*, eds. Lin Foxhall and John Salmon (London: Routledge, 1998), 147. She notes that behavior and appearances were important to an image of masculinity. "It is not enough to be biologically male, one must give out the appropriate signals and play the expected gender role."

<sup>120</sup>Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 18. She argues that the standard extremes of Roman eating simple and luxurious food were used to mark the two different mythologies of Rome's pure, rustic past on to its over-sophisticated urban culture.

<sup>121</sup> On *fastidium*, connoisseurship, and luxury, see Kaster 112-121; 128-9.

suggests that there was a perception that traditional Roman social hierarchies were challenged by people who had the economic means to host extravagant meals, thereby disturbing the prerogative and influence that elite Roman men usually enjoyed. In effect, the shared undercurrent through the criticism of others' dietary practices reveals elite writers' profound concern about the social ambiguity such status performances created.

Seneca's preoccupation with muddled class distinctions emerges when he writes about a *frutti di mare* stew. He uses the complexities of flavors and delicacy of seafood to highlight how askew his present society is. Complaining that this decadent mélange contained two types of mussels, oysters, sea urchins, and mullets, he rants more than once the mixing of flavors in a single dish (*Ep.* 95. 27-28). In particular, he deplores the lack of distinction that can be found in such a meal: "Let us have at one time, drenched in the same sauce, the dishes that are usually served separately. Let there be no difference: let oysters, sea-urchins, shell-fish, and mullets be mixed together and cooked in the same dish.' No vomited food could be more confused (*Ep.* 95.28)."<sup>122</sup> As Gowers notes, Seneca makes this dish the focus of his tirade against impatience, greed, and disordered worlds of Rome's empire because stew was the supreme culinary example of mystery.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, this dish serves itself up as an easy metaphor for Seneca's anxieties about a perceived increase in access to luxury items that made it more difficult to discern a person's place in society. Or in other words, Roman society—for Seneca—is becoming a messy stew.

The randomness of the seafood dish acutely opposes his use of an arch as an analogy for an appropriately structured society. "Our relations with one another are like a stone arch, which would collapse if the stones did not mutually support each other, and which is upheld in the very way (*Ep.*

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<sup>122</sup>*Pariter sint, quae disponi solent, uno iure perfusa. Nihil intersit: ostrea, echini, spondyli, nulli perturbati concoctique ponantur.' Non esset confusior vomentium cibus.*

<sup>123</sup> Gowers, 36. See also James N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998) for a discussion about attitudes towards fish in the Greek world.

95.52).”<sup>124</sup> Instead devaluing man-made structures as sites of bodily enslavement as seen in the first chapter, Seneca reverses his tactics and uses an arch—the quintessential architectural element of Roman construction—to discuss people’s appropriate social relationships with one another.<sup>125</sup> The arch’s defined and lasting quality sharply contrasts the helter-skelter depiction of food’s fleeting pleasures. Placing the arch in opposition to decadent stew, Seneca belies his worry that some people’s practices were clouding up what should have been easily understood social interactions, much like ingredients seen in vomited up or overcooked seafood dishes were indistinguishable.

Pliny the Elder also expresses some reserve about how access to luxurious items disrupts social relationships and nature’s well-ordered functioning.<sup>126</sup> What disturbs him most is man’s overly ingenious elaborations of nature’s work (*HN* 9.139).<sup>127</sup> In pursuit of fine clothing and the many delicate flavors found in seafood, Pliny laments that the most valued food, clothing, and jewels are those that are the most dangerous to obtain (*HN* 9.53).<sup>128</sup> In addition to goods procured from the sea’s bounty, he seems to be particularly enraged by the cultivation of cabbage and asparagus and the others’ demands to drink various types of waters (*HN* 19.19). He bemoans a world that is the opposite of what nature intended and protests that mankind is not pleased by anything that is its original, natural form (*HN* 19.19).<sup>129</sup> Through mankind’s efforts, cabbage—the food most frequently associated with the common Roman man—grows to be too large for the poor man’s table; asparagus meant to grow wildly is cultivated in Ravenna; and man has found a way to keep

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<sup>124</sup>*Societas nostra lapidum fornicationi simillima est, quae, casura nisi in vicem obstant, hoc ipso sustinetur.*

<sup>125</sup>Inwood, 122. He claims that this passage is an assertion of the Stoic physical principles of holism, which is the natural foundation of human sociability.

<sup>126</sup>Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, 348. As Wallace-Hadrill observes, “Pliny is an eloquent witness both of the perceived role of luxury in defining social standing, and of the abusive inversion of proper order which to him make it so objectionable.” Beagon also claims that Pliny allows for man to have friendly competition with nature, and can even increase nature’s productivity. Man’s interference is not simply harmonious; indeed, her productivity is actually increased through man’s activity (*Roman Nature*, 90). However, I believe that Pliny attempts to draw a line between appropriate use of man’s innovation and his over-reaching of nature’s limits.

<sup>127</sup>Beagon, *Roman Nature*. 77-79.

<sup>128</sup>Beer, 62. In Pliny’s work, the sea frequently serves as a dangerous location and he is critical of human endeavors there. Beer argues, “In short, fish was perceived as both a symptom of, and an agent for increasing and promoting luxurious behavior.”

<sup>129</sup>*nihil utique hoministic, quomodo rerum naturae, placet.*

snow even during the summer.<sup>130</sup> It is a topsy-turvy world fabricated to sustain the demands of gluttony. Although Pliny argues against the overreaching and disrupting effects that epicurean pleasures have on nature, an underlying concern about uncontrolled access to expensive items informs his critique. In fact, his examples of corruption, like Seneca's, are rather telling; they are consumable items that signal wealth but are—relatively speaking—easily acquired items. Even if these items are costly, expensive food and clothing are much more accessible than large homes, land, or summer villas. Yet, these more obtainable luxury items quickly provide clues about a person's wealth and status in a society where appearance is the calling card of power and prestige. Thus, his remarks about luxury's depravity and man's artifice as regards consumable items suggest an underlying anxiety about the confusion access to those items caused. It seems that, according to Pliny, it was becoming more difficult to distinguish who was who in Roman society.

Petronius' well-known tale of Trimalchio and his infamous dinner help define those whom Seneca, Pliny the Elder, and others blame for shaking up traditional power relations. When he first introduces this character, Petronius reveals that Trimalchio is an incredibly wealthy freedman and he relies on stereotypes of slaves and freedmen to fill in his representation of Trimalchio's behaviors.<sup>131</sup> In fact, Petronius derides him for his unsuccessful attempts to mark his status through the consumption of expensive food; the rich freedman comes across as a buffoon with more money than taste, whose treatment of food and dining practices indicate his previous servile status.<sup>132</sup> During his dinner, he offers his guests lavish dishes, some even that appear to be one thing, but in reality actually another. For example, one of the first dishes of his elaborate banquet involves a

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<sup>130</sup>See Cato. *Agr.* 156 and 157. Andrew Dalby suggests that the text of 157 is corrupted and not Cato's own work. Marcos P. Cato and Andrew Dalby, *On Farming=De Agricultura*, (Blackawton: Prospect Books, 1998). See also Juvenal. 1. 127-146.

<sup>131</sup> On Trimalchio's wardrobe and the clothing he provides for his slaves, see Sandra R. Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 135 and Lauren Hackworth Petersen, "Clothes make the man: dressing the Roman freedman body," in *Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, ed. T. Fögen and M. M. Lee (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 181-214.

<sup>132</sup> John Bodel, "The Cena Trimalchionis" in *Latin Fiction: The Latin Novel in Context*, ed. Heinz Hofmann (London: Routledge, 1999), 41-3.

centerpiece made of Corinthian bronze and fashioned like a donkey with series of bridges between accompanying platters containing dormice dipped in honey and sprinkled with poppy-seed (*Sat.* 31). Another displays a wooden hen with outspread wings that cover fig-peckers coated in peppered yolk hid inside baked flour casings that resemble peahens' egg (*Sat.* 33).<sup>133</sup> Unlike the simple dishes Horace, Martial, and Seneca prefer, Trimalchio's ostentatious meal stands in stark contrast, as flavors and luxurious ingredients blend together in dishes that pretend to be something they are not.

The mingling of flavors and ingredients in the banquet's playful dishes is mirrored in its setting and social interactions. As compared to the modest environment described in Martial's dinner invitation to Toranius, Trimalchio's banquet is filled with singing slaves, gossip, constant commotion of changing entrées, charades of violence, and melodrama. For instance, his guests immediately meet a slave shelling peas at the door (*Sat.* 28). They are next accosted by another slave begging to be rescued from punishment (*Sat.* 30).<sup>134</sup> During dinner, Petronius highlights the noise and confusion of Trimalchio's dinner through frequent descriptions of loudly singing slaves and sporadic performance accompanied by blaring music or bad poetry (*Sat.* 31-33,36,68-69).<sup>135</sup> Disciplined agency guiding dietary choices is lost as Trimalchio revels in the excess of food and performance. Painting Trimalchio in this manner, Petronius attempts to safeguard Roman hierarchical social structures by asserting that, despite his wealth and effort, Trimalchio lacks the necessary refinement to adopt elite Roman practices, and thereby the ability to become truly Roman.

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<sup>133</sup> See also *Sat.* 32; 34; 35; 36; 40; 49; 60. See also David Frederickson "Grasping at the Pangolin," 321-24. Relying on Douglas' thoughts on dirt, he argues that these dishes prepared by Trimalchio's chef are aligned with matter out of place. "The dirt, matter of place, miraculously becomes edible food, sometimes delicious, and far too plentiful. And yet, from the standpoint of moral writing and invective, it remains dirt because of theatricality and excess...[T]he reaction of the diners to Trimalchio's theater of food is an emotional split, mirroring in reverse, the spilt between outward appearance and interior "reality" that defines each trick: outwardly the diners must feign delight, surprise and laughter, while suppressing disdain, disgust, surfeit"(324).

<sup>134</sup> Trimalchio also loudly threatens other of his slaves with violence during dinner for breaking dishes. See *Sat.* 34; 52; 54.

<sup>135</sup> On slave movements during Trimalchio's dinner, see Joshel and Petersen, *The Material Life of Slaves*, 11.

Or in other words, his reliance on this luxurious meal to indicate his privileged status only seems to reinforce that he can never be part of elite.

Not only does Trimalchio's meal expose his and his guests' inability to conform to Roman practices, but Petronius also parodies their unsuccessful attempts at frugal dining choices. Lamenting Chrysanthus's death, Seleucus offers an explanation for his untimely passing: he had decided to go on a diet and did not eat or drink for five days (*Sat.* 42).<sup>136</sup> Compared to the benefits of frugal dietary choices and hunger purported in the above authors, Chrysanthus's decision to abstain from food has fatal consequences rather than soul-elevating and discipline-teaching results. In effect, the perceived influx of wealth into the hands of those traditionally marginalized in Roman society provides ammunition for elite authors' attacks against others' dietary practices. Yet, this hostility towards freedmen indicates that there were some people in the Roman world who had the means to vie for social relevance and influence with enough sway that some Latin authors felt the need to define their own eating and dining habits from this other group. Although it is possible that some members of this competing elite group were former slaves, it is also likely that authors, like Petronius, found stereotypes about freedmen's foreign origins and novice citizenship convenient scapegoats for their broader concerns about the steady expansion of Roman citizenship during the early Principate.

Identifying another group who seems to muddy the waters, Martial berates those who attempt to live beyond their means or those who try to fool others about their status through crafty cooking. He rebukes Callidorus who sells a slave in order to buy a large mullet for the main dish of his dinner (*Ep.* 10.31). He derides Opimian for using gold cups for cheap wine, and he can barely stomach Caecilius' surreptitious concoctions of gourds for an entire dinner (*Ep.* 11.31). Tuca also

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<sup>136</sup> On Trimalchio's preoccupation with his own death, see John Bodel "The Cena Trimalchionis," 44-7 and "Trimalchio's Underworld," in *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, ed. James Tatum (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 237-59. On Petronius's death in light of Nero and Domitian's violence against elite men, see Holly Haynes, "The Tyrant List: Tacitus' Obituary of Petronius," *American Journal of Philology* 131.1 (2010): 69-100.

deserves Martial's scorn because he desires to be seen and to be talked about as a glutton (*Ep.* 12.41). Thus, Martial focuses on those who cannot really afford luxurious living but still attempt some semblance of it. Despite his disapproval of their false representations and performances of wealth, he provides some insight into the lives of less-wealthy living in Rome. Apparently, some men might have felt compelled to sell property in order to provide their guests with the most fashionable food of the day and others attempted to falsely advertise their wealth through gimmicks. More importantly, his epigrams highlight the social and economic pressures that some Roman men experienced competing for prestige and power, or simply to remain relevant, in a society that relied on appearance and conspicuous consumption as a sign of social status.

Petronius, Martial, and Juvenal further develop this tension, and indeed rift, between lavish dining habits of non-reputable elite men and the alimentary struggles of the average Roman man. In order to belittle both men's sycophantic behaviors and bad patrons' treatment, these authors call up the degrading effects of hunger. A far cry from Seneca's high regard for the moral benefits of a jaunt into caloric abstinence, they suggest that hunger causes common Roman men to endure disrespect from others in order to ensure a meal for the evening. Encolpius and Ascyltos' fate while attending a Priapic feast is Petronius' scathing commentary about the shame the lower classes will put up with for the reward of a meal.<sup>137</sup> Relying on the typical Roman prejudice towards individuals who are on the receiving end of anal sex, Petronius seems to mock Encolpius and Ascyltos's for easily forgetting the penetration their bodies endured once dinner arrives (*Sat.* 21). Although they were sexually violated, Encolpius and Ascyltos can only talk about the food that is paraded in front of them, the couches they recline on, and the abundance of Falernian wine that is provided (*Sat.* 21). Through their short memory of the violence they suffered, Petronius mockingly suggests that, for

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<sup>137</sup> On the *Satyrical*'s expression of relationships of dominance and passivity through metaphors of theater, spectacle and law-courts, specifically as these pertain to this scene, see Haynes, "The Tyrant List," 75-79.

some individuals, the possibility of a good meal is at least enough to forget—if not suffer—whatever humiliation he must if he gets to eat at the end of it.<sup>138</sup>

Martial and Juvenal also berate men for the shameful actions they will engage in for a good meal. In addition to their admonitions to average Roman men to remember the respect they once held, Martial and Juvenal add criticism of bad patrons' behaviors. For instance, Martial passes judgment on Menogenes for saying and doing whatever is necessary to be invited to dinner. "He will praise everything, he will admire everything, until after a thousand tedious remarks, Perpessus, you say come!" (*Ep.* 12.82).<sup>139</sup> In his fifth satire that details the embarrassments Virro's poor guest must endure for a meal, Juvenal similarly berates a man's disgraceful behavior and the disrespect he will endure. Juvenal claims that the effects of hunger on a Roman man and the dishonor he suffers because of Virro, who uses the opulence of his own dinner to distinguish his status from those of the guests, are worse than if that same man behaved as a beggar on a street. In fact, Juvenal declares that it is better to satisfy hunger by begging and eating like an animal than to endure the insults from an overbearing and graceless patron (5. 6-11).<sup>140</sup> Even more reprehensible than the stinginess we saw Pliny the Younger censure, Juvenal argues that what is truly wrong in this situation is that the wealthy Virro has invited his client to dinner simply to be entertained by his hunger (5. 157-161).<sup>141</sup> At the end of his satire, Juvenal points his finger at Virro's poor dinner guest and berates him for enduring such treatment during dinner. Snarkily, Juvenal remarks that he should just offer his head

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<sup>138</sup> Confer Martial *Ep.* 2.51. Martial also employs food and anal sex to mock Hyllus; however, Hyllus' act seems to be more condemnable than those of Encolpius and Ascylos, who forgot the shame of their sexual violation once they had a meal, because he willingly goes hungry to pay for anal sex. By juxtaposing *venter*, *convivium*, and *culus* in the same line, Martial highlights the shameful wantonness of both voids: belly and anus: "*Infelix venter spectat conuiuia culi, / et semper miser hic esurit, ille uorat (Ep. 2.51.5-6).*"

<sup>139</sup>*Omnia laudabit, mirabitur omnia, / donec Perpessus dicas taedia mille 'Venit!'*

<sup>140</sup>*uentre nihil noui frugalius; hoc tamen ipsum / defecisse puta, quod inani sufficit aluo: / nulla crepido uacat? nusquam pons et tegetis pars / dimidia breuior? tantine iniuria cenae, / tam ieiuna fames, cum possit honestius illic / et tremere et sordes farris mordere canini?*

<sup>141</sup>Knoche 271. He remarks that there was no worse thing to a Roman man of little means than to be the focus of another's laughter.

up to be shaved and his back to be whipped (5. 170-173).<sup>142</sup> The image of slavery here is clear: shaved head and whipping underscore the hungry Roman citizen's lack of physical integrity, which directly aligns him with slaves who have no legal protections against such violence. For Juvenal, unlike Seneca, hunger offers no benefit to a Roman man because it more readily associates him with a slave.<sup>143</sup> Seneca describes hunger as a path by which an elite Roman man gains freedom over the body and thereby distinguishes himself from others in the society. For Juvenal and Martial, hunger only marks the common Roman man's debasement and loss of status in society; it shames him. Thus, Juvenal and Martial's comments on diet and hunger respond to the perceived disparity of wealth that marks this period, as well as the perception that wealth was centralized in the hands of unworthy people. They both use a Roman male citizen's poverty and hunger to represent a social order out of whack through the debasement of the non-elite male.

Describing dietary practices of their social competitors, Roman authors paint them as unruly and misguided freedmen or overreaching sub-elite men who live beyond their means. In their undisciplined pursuit of luxurious food that signals social prestige, these bad eaters are identified by elaborate, messy, and sometimes tricky meals alongside socially confusing or degrading dining atmospheres. Their explicit use of or more reserved implications that bad eaters also had servile backgrounds only underscores elite authors' attempts to demarcate their disciplined choices in the face of unhindered access to food from their social competitor's inability to embody elite agency. Not only are their attempts to contend for social privilege unsuccessful, according to writers like Seneca, Petronius, and Martial, these bad eaters are also responsible for the disrespect that the average Roman man must endure in the face of the changing social dynamics of the early Principate.

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<sup>142</sup>*ille sapit, qui te sic utitur. omnia ferre/ si potes, et debes. pulsandum uertice raso/ praebebis quandoque caput nec dura timebis/ flagra pati, his epulis et tali dignus amico.*

<sup>143</sup> See also Juvenal 15. 100-106. Describing the Vascones, Juvenal mentions the ill effects of a long siege, war, and famine on this tribe. After eating every herb and every living thing, they resort to human flesh. This poem reveals his perception of the perverting and unnatural effects of excessive hunger. Indeed, its negative effects make even the xenophobic Juvenal see past easy and common stereotypes of Vascones as barbarians.

Indeed, the hunger bad eaters experience does not edify, discipline, or instruct them, as it does for Celsus, Seneca, and Pliny the Elder. Rather, their hunger kills or enslaves them.

### III. Bears, Snakes, and Dog-milk: Eating on the Edge of Roman Society

Just as Roman authors depend on eating to categorize acceptable or inappropriate behaviors among the elite, they also lean on perceptions of food consumption and dietary practices to indicate marginalized people or groups in the Roman world. Pushed to the edges of society, exiles, slaves, the poor, bandits and foreigners illuminate how elite authors attempted to winnow those who belonged from those who did not easily fit into the traditional Roman social fabric.

Exiled to the Black Sea, Ovid relies on the loss of appetite and his thin, frail body to reveal the excessive suffering he endures in the locale of his banishment. Replacing the desirable qualities of rustic simplicity intrinsic to country-side living that are found in his own tale about Baucis and Philemon and echoed in other authors, the remote location of Tomis and its modest culinary offerings receives no redeeming praise from Ovid.<sup>144</sup> Instead, he despondently shares with his wife that the climate is unbearable and he cannot grow accustomed to the land or water; even the houses are unsuitable and the food is lacking (*Tristia* 3.3: 7-9). Ovid repeats his complaints in a later poem, adding a description of his languishing body (*Tristia* 3.8: 23-24). Notably, his physical and mental suffering are so visibly striking that he proclaims he prefers death to the constant reminder of what he once was (*Tristia* 3.8:35-42). In perhaps his most explicit link of Tomis's bleak locale to his ill health, he notes the physical effects on his body that would make it so that his wife would not even recognize him. He declares that his features have changed, his body is weak, and his skin is more pallid than fresh wax not because of too much sex, food, and booze, but his horrible environment (*Ex Ponto* 1.10:25-35). Or in other words, Ovid attempts to demonstrate that it is not his own

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<sup>144</sup> Confer Ov. *Met.* 8. 632-650. See also Chapter 3, 112-4.

dietary practices that cause him injury. In fact, he relays his own tempered behavior in food and drinking by pointing out that he mostly drinks water and is careful not to eat too much. In this way, he parrots other Roman authors' proclamations of restrained consumption. Despite its adherence to generally lauded dietary discipline, Ovid's body belies his complete lack of agency.<sup>145</sup> In contrast to the honed and tempered flesh assigned to those who practice modest consumption and simple living, his body has no strength and his color is paler than new wax. Dismissing too much drink, heavy food, or sex, Ovid charges the land and water of dreaded Tomis with his sorry physical state. In effect, he suggests that the performance of restrained dietary choices means nothing when other aspects of one's social standing and agency have been undermined. Tellingly, his body betrays the ignominy he suffers and no behavior offers him redemption.

Forced to endure a metaphorical exile, Apuleius's character, Lucius, expends much of his energy while in ass form pursuing his stomach's demands. Indeed, he experiences a type of banishment that is even more bodily focused and alienating than Ovid's relocation to the Black Sea. Unable to communicate with others or to be seen for who he once was, Lucius retains his human thoughts and culinary appetites even though he finds himself embodied in a different form. He lives uneasily between the new animal world into which he is thrust and the human world he knows, but in which he cannot meaningfully participate. His estrangement from the human world and marginalization in the animal one come into sharp focus whenever Lucius tries to eat something. Even though an ass, his elite assumptions about the availability of food offer stages for comedy when he first interacts with his non-elite and animal companions, who fiercely guard their access to food. Immediately after being turned into an ass, Lucius assumes that his horse and donkey would recognize him as their owner and would generously share their food and stall with them. Instead,

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<sup>145</sup> Discussing Ovid's description of the physical ailments that vex him during his exile to Tomis, Kaster notes that maladies of the body and mind are represented as the most common manifestations of *fastidium* (disgust): "The absolute aversion to food as such is figured as a 'dead weight upon the stomach'...the description is the typical way in which *fastidium*...is represented as being embodied" (Kaster 106).

both lower their ears and try to kick him with their hooves as they guard the barley he placed in their stall earlier that evening (*Met.* 26). Thus, poor Lucius must suffer the disgrace of banishment in both worlds. Similar to Ovid's physical experience, his body betrays him as his prior tastes and practices offer him no solace. In fact, he is not even able to access these. Like Ovid, his agency has been robbed from him by his metaphorical exile from his previous world.

Lucius's life as an ass suggests an association between banishment from Roman society and enslavement within it. As Keith Bradley has argued, Lucius's transformation into the beast that is most readily associated with menial labor serves as allegory for slavery.<sup>146</sup> Significantly, some of Lucius's dietary practices and situations reflect Latin authors' stereotypes about slaves and food. For example, criticizing others' miserly behaviors, Juvenal pooh-poohs men who pinch their slaves' bellies and even starve themselves in order to save or accumulate wealth (*Juv.* 14.126-128). Although Juvenal is more concerned about the slave owners' actions, his snide remark indicates that enslaved persons' access to comestibles was commonly dependent upon their slave owners and how they chose to expend their household resources. Pointing out others' unreasonable behaviors, Horace banks on common perception about slaves' sneaky practices to filch leftovers from the discarded plates of diners that they carry away from the table in order to underline the foolishness of others' unreasonable behavior (*Sat.* 1.3. 80-83).<sup>147</sup> The logic of Horace's comment relies on the notion that slaves commonly consumed the uneaten remains of their elite owners and their guests' plates. Indeed, such an occurrence is so commonplace that Horace implies its excessive punishment is a mark of insanity. Together, Horace and Juvenal corroborate slave owners' control over their slaves' access to food and slaves' attempts to alleviate their nutritional deprivation. As Lucius plods along

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<sup>146</sup> On animalizing the slave and how it relates to Lucius' travels as an ass, see Keith Bradley, *Apuleius and Antonine Rome: Historical Essays* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 59-78.

<sup>147</sup> *si quis eum servum, patina qui tollere iussus/semesos piscis tepidumque ligurrierit ius, /in cruce suffigat, Laebeone insanior inter/sanos dicatur.*

through his various adventures and misadventures as an ass, he exposes his and other characters similar 'slavish' attitudes towards food.

Yet, Apuleius's remarks on the negative and unnatural effects of hunger brings out the differences between elite representations of 'beneficial' hunger and the type of privation they imagined they enslaved in their society daily experienced.<sup>148</sup> In fact, he hints at anxieties about having to deal with the reality of potential loss of nutrition. When Lucius is turned into an ass, he commonly describes how hunger affects his belly and spurs his constant pursuit of food. In order to satisfy his hunger and previous appetites, Lucius is forced to sneak food from his various owners, thereby taking on behaviors associated with a slave. In one of his first attempts to appease his nagging stomach, he indiscreetly eats vegetables meant for human consumption. Not surprisingly, this has the unfortunate ending of Lucius being beaten until diarrhea explodes from his rear (*Met.* 4.3). In another scene, while his captors/owners sleep, Lucius consumes baskets full of bread as he tries to fill his bottomless belly (*Met.* 4.22). When he first begins to gnaw on these loaves of bread, he notes that his jaws are weak from long hunger. In another section, he pilfers leftovers from gourmet meals, which layers his own stereotypically slavish practices with those of two brothers who labor as cooks. Before discovering that Lucius is the culprit and that they can make money off of his human behaviors and appetites, these two men come to blows when they assume that the other is stealing food that they have claimed from the remains of their slave owner's meals (*Met.* 10.13-14).

Thus, Apuleius' representation of slaves and animals' treatment of food suggests that its availability to members of this lower rung of society was limited. More importantly, their fear of its loss is significantly different from elite assumptions about easy access to comestibles and the moral exercise hunger provided. In fact, whenever Lucius disrupts another's access to food, it often results in violence. This pattern of violence denotes that food was a carefully guarded commodity for

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<sup>148</sup>For a discussion about the religious implications of Lucius' fasting, see Judith K. Krabbe, *Lusus Iste: Apuleius' Metamorphoses* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2003), 149-216.

slaves, as well as the other non-elite people he encounters in his travels. Additionally, their reactionary and clandestine practices to obtain food reveal an assumption (and perhaps reality) that enslaved persons had little or no agency as regards their diet. They were dependent upon their slave owners or their own illicit actions, which frequently had high-risk consequences.

Apuleius also employs the fear of hunger to paint pathetic and frightening punishments that dramatically underscore the lack of agency attached to enslaved captives. For example, after Charite and Lucius unsuccessfully attempted to flee their enslavement, their bandit captors devise a grueling punishment for the pair: they threaten to split Lucius' throat and place Charite—alive—in Lucius' belly with her face poking out. Then, they toy with the idea of throwing both over a cliff to be left exposed and lying in the sun in order to become a feast for vultures and dogs. “While she is still alive, her dwelling-place will be the dead beast's belly; the oppressive stench will scorch her nostrils; the deadly hunger of continued fasting will cause her to waste away and she will not be able to contrive her death, for her hands will not be free” (*Met.* 6.32).<sup>149</sup> In the agony of this imagined horrific death, hunger and the belly become the tools of torture and death for the kidnapped and enslaved girl. Indeed, her captors seem to revel in the chance to rob her entirely of the ability to tend to her nutritional needs as she becomes delectable carrion for ravaging dogs and birds. Thus, lack of agency and the fear of hunger left unsatisfied distinguish slaves' eating habits.

Portraying the poor's attitude toward food, Apuleius relies on the literary development of unconnected *venter* to highlight the dangers of an unflinching simple diet and social disturbances of hunger rather than the deviance of extravagant eaters. Describing a mob of people who descends upon a group of captive bears, that were brought into town for a show and that died quickly because of hot temperatures and idleness, Apuleius focuses on the effects of *venter* and poverty's demands

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<sup>149</sup>*mortuae bestiae ipsa vivens ventrem habitabit, tum faetore nimio nares aestuabit, et inediae diutinae letali fame tabescet, nec suis saltem liberis manibus mortem sibi fabricare poterit.*

rather than the people themselves (*Met.* 4.14).<sup>150</sup> Indeed, their hunger and lack of access to food drives them to eat the dead, wild beast. While he mirrors Seneca's ideas about the enslaving quality of the stomach, Apuleius is not at all concerned about the corruption of abundance. In lieu of other authors' petulant commentary about the luxuriant desires of gluttonous stomachs, Apuleius foregrounds the fear and consequences of the shrunken belly's (*tenuato ventri*) unfulfilled desires and the demands of extreme poverty (*inculta pauperies*). More concerned with their social competitors, many Roman authors turn a blind eye on the experiences of the less fortunate in their society.<sup>151</sup> Yet, Apuleius's separation of the *venter* in this tale and the operose demands of hunger signals a type of social disorder that other elite authors commonly overlook in their works as he describes a throng of people descending into the city's streets. Replacing the social confusion caused by other's luxuriant dining habits, Apuleius spotlights the consequences of caloric deprivation and limited dietary options.

Apuleius also uses this tale to mark as wild and dangerous the dietary practices of those individuals living at edges of civilized society. In a scene leading up to this story, he discloses his disdain for bandits when he describes their dining practices. After accosting the old woman who prepares their food, they recline to a meal of stew and bread. Like the undistinguishable dish they consume, social distinction among the guests is lost as two groups of bandits draw lots for who will act as servers during the meal and who will recline (*Met.* 4.8). But this assignment does not seem to last long as both groups randomly join each other on the couch. The environment is disturbingly free of any order. As though to draw out the confusion of the scene, Apuleius compares their eating and dining habits to semi-bestial Lapiths and Centaurs.<sup>152</sup> Their behavior becomes even wilder as

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<sup>150</sup>*Tunc vulgus ignobile, quos inculta pauperies sine dilectu ciborum tenuato ventri cogit sordentia supplementa et dapes gratuitas conquirere, passim iacentes epulas accurrunt.*

<sup>151</sup>David Cherry, "Hunger at Rome in the Late Republic," *Echos du monde classique*. *Classical Views*, 12 (1992): 435. Cherry notes that food crisis effects were chiefly the concern of the poor, but the literary class has little interest in them.

<sup>152</sup>*ac iam cetera semiferis Lapithis [tebcinibus] Centaurisque semihominibus similia.*

these bandits later watch the hungry crowd descend upon the dead bears in the street. Acquiring a bear for their own consumption, they concoct a plan to use a bear's hide in their next heist. In fact, they decide that one bandit should be sewn inside the bearskin (*Met.* 4.15). Consuming bear meat denotes the group's internalization of the external, wild world; indeed, one of their member's adoption of the wild beast's skin symbolically and literally turns him into a feral being. The ultimate consequence of this internalization is that the man dressed in bearskin is later savagely torn apart by dogs as nothing more than a wild animal (*Met.* 4.20). The lack of propriety in their dining habits and bestial imagery attached to their dietary practices and appetites signify the bandits' marginalized role in Roman society. In effect, Apuleius paints these (non)members of society as an unpredictable and dangerous force.

Mentioning the various types of people living within the known (and unknown) Roman world, Pliny the Elder generally includes observations the types of things foreigners—especially those living on the boundaries of Rome's empire—consume in order to foreground their strangeness and wildness. For instance, living in a neighboring forest that holds every kind of elephant and snake, the Canarri tribe receives their name because they share their diet of wild animal flesh in common with canines (*HN* 5.15). Cave dwellers live on snakes and have no voices; they only squeak, thereby making their cave-society entirely devoid of conversation (*HN* 5.44). Surrounded by wastelands full of savage beasts that hunt human beings who are as wild as they are, the cannibal Scythians (obviously) eat humans (*HN* 5.20).<sup>153</sup> Passing over more deserts and the Tabis mountain region, Pliny asserts that one eventually will come upon the Chinese people. Although he focuses on the textile goods they make and does not mention their diets specifically, he remarks that they too are like wild animals who shun the company of men (*HN* 5.20). In another section, saying cryptically that the regions he presently details are purely imaginary, Pliny

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<sup>153</sup> For a brief discussion on cannibalism in antiquity and references, see Dalby, *Food in Antiquity*, 72-3.

nevertheless goes on to name groups of people by their dietary practices: *agriophagi* (wild-beast eaters) live on panthers and lions; the *pamphagi* (all-eaters) consume everything; *anthropophagi* are man-eaters; and *cynamolgi* (dog-milkers) are additionally known by their dog heads (*HN* 6.58). Ending his list of phantasmagorical eaters, Pliny finishes with Ethiopians who live on dried and salted locusts. Implying the deficiency of this Ethiopian food staple, he notes that they do not live beyond 40 years old.<sup>154</sup> Similar to Apuleius' use of bandits' consumption of bears and semi-bestial behavior during dinner, Pliny points out the strangeness of foreigners' eating habits in order to signal that they stand outside of Roman norms. Indeed, his concomitant analogies of wild animals and weird (and sometimes frightening) eating habits for Scythians, Ethiopians, and admittedly fictional groups he recounts exposes how he conceptually elides his perceptions about real foreigners with fantasies about strangers. As with Apuleius' bandits, many of Pliny's foreigners internalize the wild world through their diet, thereby distancing them from Roman civilization.

Portraying the eating habits of those marginalized in or removed from Roman society, elite authors use anecdotes and imagery that highlights either their lack of agency or human-qualities. Specifically, exiles, slaves, and poor individual's eating habits expose how alienation from meaningful participation in Roman society also includes insufficiency of dietary options. For slaves and the poor, meager opportunities to gain access to food leads to debilitating effects of hunger and encourages illicit or frowned upon practices that buck against Roman standards of comportment. Bandits and foreigners, however, are presented as marginalized persons who do not fully inhabit human characteristics. Aligned with feral animals, elite authors reveal their distrust and discomfort with people who do not conform to Roman notions of civilized behavior.

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<sup>154</sup> On mortality rates in ancient Rome, see Tim Parkin, *Demography and Roman Society* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 92-111. See also, Chapter 3, 109, fn 39.

#### IV. Wine, Honey, Nard, and Cinnamon: Eating Women

Roman authors employ slightly different tactics for their portrayals of women and eating. It is noteworthy that these writers' references to female eating habits are usually criticized or sexualized. For instance, I have not found any mention of how a woman's proper eating behaviors were either the same or different from her male counterpart in perception of diet choice, dining behavior, or amount. Latin authors rarely comment on it.<sup>155</sup> Nor do they make any specific comments on either positive or negative effects of hunger for women. What's more, although these writers rely on similar vigorous attacks to those of social-climbing freedman in order to signal the challenging behaviors of ambitious or unconventional women, they also tag on a critique of manly imitation to the unfavorable judgment of women eating badly. Additionally, elite authors introduce a strikingly different twist to descriptions of dietary practices associated with women: they represent women as consumable items by aligning women with spices, honey, and dishes of food. In effect, elite Roman writers express a dual view of female eating: bad women consuming food who participate in the social muddling that foils elite men's simple, traditional, and proper dietary practices, or women as consumable items meant to quench men's sexual appetites.<sup>156</sup> Despite these peculiarities to women and the relation to food, both consuming and consumed women are marked by a similar lack of agency that Roman authors' deny their social competitors and marginalized persons.

In the same letter that Seneca praises simple food and points out the follies of his contemporaries' dining preferences of hot, messy stews, Seneca spends considerable time showcasing the physical problems that have beset women caught up in the same frivolous pursuits. While berating women for the man-like appetites and behaviors, Seneca relies on distinctive dietary practices and consequences to mark women's overindulgence. Seneca comments that these women

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<sup>155</sup> See Pliny 7.15. Pliny lists various dangers pregnant and nursing women face, including her gait, sneezing, and eating salty food.

<sup>156</sup> Confer Madeleine H. Henry, "The Edible Woman: Athenaeus's Concept of the Pornographic," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed Amy Richlin. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 250-268.

are equal to men in their gourmandizing, imbibing and debauchery as they too keep the same hours, drink the same amount of wine, and vomit because of excessive consumption (*Ep.* 95. 20-21).<sup>157</sup> Like lavish male eaters, Seneca remarks that lavish female eaters also suffer from a distended stomach and indigestion. Again, a social system that is out of whack seems to spur his attacks on women, as they easily take on masculine behaviors that he finds not only unbecoming but also dangerous. While Seneca singles out women whose dining behaviors mimic overindulgent male diners, he provides no real insight into normal dietary practices of women who stay within the lines of Roman gender expectations. In fact, Seneca comments that these women are equal to men in their gourmandizing, imbibing and debauchery as they too keep the same hours, drink the same amount of wine, and vomit because of excessive consumption. Indeed, it is as though clear expectations for men and women are erased by these socially unconventional eating women. As such, they must endure the same diseases as men and their bodies betray the same tale-tell sign as the chubby male *bon vivant*, thereby announcing their disdainful epicureanism.

Despite his declaration that indulgent eating women must carry the same distended bellies and suffer indigestion that lavish male eaters do, Seneca's representation of what females consume—or more precisely the lack of solid nutrients they ingest—and the physical effects they endure in addition to bad male eaters is telling. First, Seneca does not mention a specific food that these gender-bending women eat. He only notes that they drink wine like men and that they gnaw on ice to relieve their fevered stomachs (*Ep.* 95. 20-21). His focus on women's wine drinking and the correlation he draws to their subsequent unchastity echoes broader Roman associations of wine, women, and adultery. For instance, Valerius Maximus records a story of Egnatius Meccenius, who

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<sup>157</sup> *Maximus ille medicorum et huius scientiae conditor feminis nec capillos defluere dixit nec pedes laborare; atqui et capillis destituuntur et pedibus aegrae sunt. Non mutata feminarum natura, sed victa est; nam cum virorum licentiam aequaverint, corporum quoque virilium incommoda aequarunt. Non minus pervigilant, non minus potant, et oleo et mero viros provocant; aequae invitae ingesta visceribus per os reddunt et vinum omne vomitu remetiuntur; aequae nivem rodunt, solacium stomachi aestuantis. Libidine vero ne maribus quidem cedunt, pati natae, di illas deaeque male perdant! Adeo perversum commentae genus impudicitiae viros ineunt. Quid ergo mirandum est maximum medicorum ac naturae peritissimum in mendacio prendi, cum tot feminae podagricaе calvaeque sint? Beneficium sexus sui vitiis perdiderunt et, quia feminam exuerant, damnatae sunt morbis virilibus.*

was supposedly a contemporary with Romulus, the ultimately victorious sibling of Rome's founding brothers (Val. Max. 6.3.9-10). After discovering his wife had drunk some wine, Egnatius clubbed her to death. Not only did he murder his wife for imbibing, he also received no criticism from his peers because they deemed his actions defensible. In fact, Valerius Maximus remarks that, by drinking wine immoderately, Egnatius' wife closed the door to every virtue and opened it to all vices. Other scholars have noted that the justification for his wife's death is founded upon the notion that if a woman was intemperate in her consumption of wine, she would be just as licentious in her sexual appetites, thereby casting doubt on the legitimacy of her husband's heir.<sup>158</sup> Thus, through Seneca's spotlighting women's man-like drinking behaviors, he also reminds his audience of the threat such actions pose to Roman domestic hierarchies and resources.

Next, Seneca caters his attacks on women's physical appearances in such a way that he combines the indicants of deviant eating with a loss of female beauty. Through their excessive eating and drinking habits alongside their other manly behaviors, these deviant women have not only taken on the stretched stomach of the gourmand, but they also have gout. Seneca suggests that the body of female *bon vivant* is quickly identified by her potbelly and puffy, red joints that manifest the painful inflammation from which she suffers because of her overindulgence. As though to truly mark their ugliness and lack of sexual appeal, Seneca also proclaims that these lavish and gender-bending female eaters are bald. It is an unappealing image of fat, swollen, and hairless female body, indeed. The power of his attack on female beauty echoes those that Horace made on elite women in his praise of sexual relationships with enslaved women, and hints at elite Roman men's expectations for and valuing of women's physical appearance as a means to exert social influence over their

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<sup>158</sup> See also, Pliny *NH*, 14.89. Alongside his retelling of Egnatius Meccenius' tale, Pliny also relays the story of an anonymous matron who was starved to death by her family because she broke a casket that contained the keys to wine cellar. See also Rebecca Langlands, *Sexual Morality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 11.

actions.<sup>159</sup> In effect, Seneca's attack on female gourmands attempts to paint them as the sexually undesirable and dangerous women, whose manlike behaviors confuse gender roles and threaten patrilineal lines and domestic resources.

Martial takes Seneca's censorship of the dining habits of unconventional women further when he attacks Philaenis, whose food and sexual preference reveal her unacceptable appropriation of manly behaviors. Unlike Seneca, who simply paints a portrait of female ugliness that results from lavish eating, Martial directly attacks Philaenis for her disreputable comestible and sexual appetites (*Ep.* 7.67).<sup>160</sup> Mingling descriptions of food, wine, sex, and athletic pursuits, Martial condemns the lust that drives her action, while beginning and ending this poem with an attack on her sexual activities. In the first lines, Martial declares that Philaenis not only has sex with boys but she also afflicts eleven girls a day with her desires. Next, he mocks her for playing handball, getting yellow from the sand (presumably from wrestling), and training like an athlete. These manly pursuits and sexual appetites are also reflected in her eating habits. Before she eats not one but seven steaks, Martial mentions that Philaenis vomits up undiluted wine, thereby using both excessiveness in the amount of meat and the strength of wine to sharpen his point about her hedonism. Martial ends his barrage by returning again to her sexual practices. Because Philaenis does not think fellatio is manly enough, she chooses to devour the crotches of girls. Through her willingness to perform both fellatio and cunnilingus, however, Philaenis reveals (much like Trimalchio) that she completely misunderstands what it means to behave like a male as she vigorously performs what are considered

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<sup>159</sup> See Horace *Sat.* 1.2.85-110; 121-7. Pointing out the advantages of sex with a prostitute, he contends that a Roman matron can hide her deformities behind expensive clothing, the craft of hairdressers, and her many attendants, Horace happily points out that the prostitute's clothing displays any physical faults she might have to her client.

<sup>160</sup> *Pedicat pueros tribas Philaenis/et tentigine saenior mariti/undenas dolat in die puellas./Harpasto quoque subligata ludit/et flaesct haphbe, grauesque draucis/balteras facili rotat lacerto,/et putri lutulenta de palaestra/uncti uerbere uapulat magistri:/nec cenat prius aut recumbit ante/quam septem uomuit meros deunces;/ad quos fas sibi tunc putat redire,/cum coloepbia sedecim comedit./Post haec omnia cum libidinatur,/non fellat — putat hoc parum uirile —/sed plane medias uorat puellas./Di mentem tibi dent tuam, Philaeni,/cunnum lingere quae putas uirile.*

incredibly shaming and effeminizing act for an elite Roman man.<sup>161</sup> Martial makes her disgraceful betise especially clear with his last line, “May the gods give you your mind, Philaenis, since you think licking pussy is virile.” In effect, through her sexual, athletic, and eating habits, Martial indicates that Philaenis does not comprehend what it means to behave as a Roman male. Indeed, her actions comically combine to highlight her ridiculous and ignorant behavior.

In essence, Seneca and Martial attack consuming women not only for manly drinking and dining habits, but also for the aggressive and unchaste sexual appetites. It is noteworthy, however, that their comments reveal not only the social class of these women, but some of the social freedoms they were able to enjoy during the early Principate. For instance, Seneca’s censure of deviant eating women is part of a longer letter that attacks the gluttony of others’ who had access to and indulged in luxurious food. Indeed, as we have seen, he lambasts those who use their wealth to buy fine food, thereby enslaving themselves to their bodies and confusing traditional Roman hierarchies along the way. Concomitantly, when Martial rebukes women’s lavish/manly eating habits, he tacitly suggests that these women are part of a social group that can afford to buy such food, and that have they leisure in their day to take up athletic pursuits and wile away the time necessary to have sex with many boys and girls. Of course, he relies on exaggeration when detailing Philaenis’ sexual activities and ingestion of meat and wine. Yet, even if Martial depends on stereotypes and exaggerations to attack her, his perception of her access to goods and her agency to spend her time in chosen pursuits indicates that he is critical of elite women (or at least women of means) who have the wealth and ability to behave badly.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Roman men were concerned with the purity of the mouth because it was organ of speech, essential for oratory and the man’s performance of public duties. Fellatio symbolically sullied the mouth and made it an impure vessel for speech. See John Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 220-2. See also Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 26-31.

<sup>162</sup> On the use of imperial women’s sexuality as invective, see Sandra R. Joshel, “Female Desire and Discourse of Empire: Tacitus’s Messalina,” *Signs* 21.1 (1995): 50-82. See also, Sandra R. Joshel, “The Body Female and The Body

Unlike the manlike female consumer that Seneca and Martial attack, Martial and Apuleius use food differently to indicate sexually desirable women. That is, they align women or heterosexual intercourse to pabulums, spices, and wine. For instance, Martial compares Claudia Peregrina and Pudens' happy joining to the complementary pairings of cinnamon mingled with nard and Massic wine sweetened with honeycomb (*Ep.* 4.13).<sup>163</sup> The pleasant olfactory and gustatory perceptions evoke hopeful complimentary sensual experiences of their nuptials. Additionally, they serve to underscore Roman assumptions about hierarchical gendered interactions that inform Martial's literary skill. For instance, after comparing their union to comestibles, Martial uses the relationships that tender plants have with nursing trees or more expansive environmental features as metaphors for the harmony of marriage: i.e., tender vines join elms and the lotus loves water as myrtle does the shore. Notably, these organic relationships are based on the support that the elm, water, or shore provides the more delicate plant's life. In fact, Martial's choice of the descriptive adjectives *melius* (soft) and *teneris* (tender), which language is commonly used to effeminize women and men in Latin authors' works, indicates the understood gender roles that color his literary tools: women are dependent on men and their resources. Not only are women reliant on men, Martial implies that they are responsible for maintaining the harmony of the relationship and their own sexual desirability. He beseeches Claudia to love her husband even when he is an old man, but for her part that she will never appear old to her husband, although she too ages. By juxtaposing the

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Politic: Livy's Lucretia and Verginia," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed. Amy Richlin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 112-131.

<sup>163</sup> The choice of cinnamon and nard is interesting as well. While most ancient authors place its origin in southern Arabia or northeastern Africa, but it was also included in the earliest Chinese herbal of emperor Shōn-nung (c. 2700 BCE). Cinnamon was valued as incense, perfume and medicine, although Apicius includes it as an ingredient in some dishes. Additionally, the cinnamon was the most distinguished spice for the Mediterranean world as its source was that the farthest end of the known world. Its trade route was also the oldest one in history. In Biblical texts, cinnamon is essential to Temple rituals. Nard, an aromatic root originating from the Himalayas, was used in perfumes, a key ingredient in a number of magical drugs, and sometimes included in cuisine. Additionally, the combination of cinnamon and nard is used in the Song of Solomon to describe the physical graces of the beloved (*S.S.* 4:12-15). On cinnamon and nard and their ancient trade routes, see Andrew Dalby, *Food in the Ancient World from A-Z* (London: Routledge, 2003), 87; 229-30; Andrew Dalby, *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 36-44; 86-88; and J. Innes Miller, *The Spice Trade of The Roman Empire: 29 B.C. to A.D. 641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 74-7; 88-92; 153-72.

comparison of their union to pleasant flavor pairings, hierarchical plant relationships, and gendered standards for aging, Martial implies a broader Roman perception that women's sexuality is tailored to—even consumed by—men's tastes.

Martial again leans on olfactory and gustatory perceptions to describe the unfortunate smelling Thais. In lieu of pleasing sensory experiences elicited from spices, wine, and honey combined with soft images of beautifully growing plants, Martial chooses decidedly stinky condiments or dishes adjoined to other unpalatable smells to illustrate her foul body odor. Not only does she stink worse than old-urine collected in a fuller's urn, hairy goats after sex, a lion's mouth, or a hide torn from a dog's mouth, Thais is more malodorous than an egg with an aborted chicken inside and putrid garum (*Ep.* 6.93).<sup>164</sup> The infamous Roman fish sauce past its prime and ultimately useless and death-ridden chicken egg enhance the other foul smells Martial invokes to condemn Thais and her body as undesirable. Her efforts at a bath serve only to heighten Thais' stench and implied sexual repulsiveness. Not only is she tinted green because of the depilatory she favors, she also attempts to disguise her fetid body by lining it with chalk, vinegar, and three or four thick layers of bean-meal. All of her efforts are in vain, however, as Martial declares that no matter what she does, Thais smells of Thais. Again, food, natural metaphors, and women combine in order to express Martial's assumptions that women and their bodies are items that are valued according to men's tastes. Indeed, the use of food past its prime and the unappetizing paste of vinegar, chalk, and beans smeared over Thais' green body relies on a profound olfactive and gustative disgust that belies broader Roman perceptions about the consumable qualities of women's bodies.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup>*Tam male Thais olet quam non fullonis auari / testa uetus media, sed modo fracta uia, / non ab amore recens bircus, non ora leonis, / non detracta cani transiberina cutis, / pullus abortiuo nec cum putrescit in ouo, / amphora corrupto nec uitiata garo. / Virus ut hoc alio fallax permutet odore, / deposita quotiens balnea ueste petit, / psilothro uiret aut acida latet oblita creta / aut tegitur pingui terque quaterque faba. / Cum bene se tutam per fraudes mille putauit, / omnia cum fecit, Thaida Thais olet.*

<sup>165</sup>On Greek and Roman thoughts on (and distrust of) legumes, see Kimberly B. Flint-Hamilton, "Legumes in Ancient Greece and Rome: Food, Medicine, or Poison?" *Hesperia* 68.3 (1999): 371-85.

This view of women as consumable objects finds its fullest expression in the verbal and sexual exchanges between Fotis and Lucius in Apuleius' novel. Almost all of their exchanges rely on sexual innuendo through food, or prominently feature edibles as an intrinsic component in their lovemaking.<sup>166</sup> Their sexual relationship begins with Lucius flirting with Fotis as she prepares a meal. "My Fotis, how you twist that pot with your rear! What a sweet stew you prepare! Happy and blessed is the one whom you would allow to plunge his finger in there (*Met.* 2.7)."<sup>167</sup> Unabashedly, Lucius barely attempts to camouflage the sensual connection he draws between the dish Fotis prepares and her body, as he suggests that sticking his finger in the food she prepares is akin to putting it in her. Fotis responds suggestively and then directly to his flirtation: "Depart poor boy," she said, "far from my oven, depart! For if my little flame should even slightly blow on you, you will burn deeply, nor can anyone extinguish your fire, except me, who sweetly seasons, and I know how to shake softly both the pot and the bed (*Met.* 2.7)."<sup>168</sup> Fotis' response to his flirtation marks her as a willing and knowledgeable recipient of his attention. She is the one to make the connection between her body and food explicit.<sup>169</sup> Additionally, she reveals that she happily mixes her work cooking food as slave and her role as an available sexual partner.<sup>170</sup> Indeed, Fotis' knowledge of making sweet stew and sweet-sweet love hints at elite men's desires to revel in both despite other society members' constant calls for moderate and restrained behavior. By imagining that the enslaved seeks sexual and physical pleasures, Apuleius suggests that some Roman men fantasied that they were saved from the consequences of their overindulgence; the slave's "agency" serves his desire. Thus, he then does not need to take responsibility for the association and his own intemperance. This

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<sup>166</sup> For food accompanying their sexual activities, see *Met.* 2.15.

<sup>167</sup> *Fotis mea, ollulam istam cum natibus intorques! quam mellitum pulmentum apparatus! felix et certius beatus, cui permiseris illuc digitum intingere.*

<sup>168</sup> "discede," inquit "miselle, quam procul a meo foculo, discede. nam si te vel modice meus ingiculus affliverit uresis intime nec ullus extinguet ardorem tuum, nisi ego, quae dulce condiens et ollam et lectulum suave quateri novi."

<sup>169</sup> On the sexual lives of enslaved women and boys, see Mira Green, "Witnesses and Participants: The Sexual Lives of Enslaved Women and Boys in Ancient Rome," *Helios* 42 (forthcoming).

<sup>170</sup> William Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 108.

exchange between the lusty Fotis and Lucius hints that, at least in the Roman male's mind, the slave was unrestrained by the sexual mores of free, especially elite, women. In a society that based status upon social connections, free relationships were often tarnished by tradition, ulterior motives, ambitions, and desires for profit. As William Fitzgerald notes, relationships with slaves granted some escape for slave owners from all that had gone wrong with relations between the free.<sup>171</sup> With enslaved individuals, the free were motivated not by ambition but rather personal desires and needs. And, it seems they wanted to imagine that slaves were willing participants in these relationships.<sup>172</sup>

The association of Fotis as sexual food coupled with Lucius' lack of agency regarding his sexual/comestible appetites becomes amplified as the exchange continues. Eventually, Lucius can no longer maintain his distance from Fotis, so he leans in to kiss her. Looking at him with devouring eyes (*morsicantibus oculis*), she warns him that he is sampling a sweet and bitter dish because the sweet honey he now tastes can bring bitter bile (*Met.* 2.10).<sup>173</sup> Once Lucius kisses her mouth, he describes the breath from her open lips to smell of cinnamon and her tongue tastes like nectar (*Met.* 2.10).<sup>174</sup> Thus, Fotis has effectively become a consumable item as she states herself to be a complicated dish and Lucius compares her breath and tongue to spice and food reserved for the gods. Not only is she a thing to be devoured, Apuleius hints that she is as dangerous luxurious food when he has her proclaim that her sweetness will cause bitter indigestion. In an interesting twist, Apuleius heightens the moral peril that Lucius is in when Lucius willingly serves himself up as a food for the grill that is lit by Fotis' fire. By indulging his lust for the rich food that is Fotis, Lucius has been simultaneously effeminized and enslaved. In fact, once the connection Romans made between sex, food, and women is understood and the role reversal Lucius happily takes on, one can

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<sup>171</sup> William Fitzgerald, *Martial and the World of Epigram* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 127.

<sup>172</sup> For other examples of Roman men imagining enslaved persons as having the agency during sex, see Green, forthcoming.

<sup>173</sup> *dulce et amarum gustulum carpis. Cave ne nimia mellis dulcedinem diutinam bilis amaritudinem contrabas.*

<sup>174</sup> *Iamque aemula libidine in amoris parilitatem congermanescenti mecum, iam patentis oris inbalatu cinnameo et occursantis linguae inlisu nectareo prona cupidine adlibescenti:*

see that this scene concisely foreshadows the lack of agency that Lucius must endure once he is transformed into a beast of burden that is constantly driven by his hunger.

Thus, Roman authors tend to represent a duality in women's interactions with food. On the one hand, when describing women's ingestion, they turn to similar imagery and language that they employed to mark the behaviors and bodies of gourmands, i.e. uncontrollable appetites and chubby bellies. Nonetheless, Latin writers also add specific gender criticism to censure the eating habits of unconventional women that focus not only on their mimicking of manly behaviors but also their lack of sexual allure. On the other hand, these authors also refer to women and sexual unions with them as spices, honey or sweet dishes, thereby indicating a perception of women as consumable objects that either successively or insufficiently met man's tastes.

## **V. Conclusion**

In sum, elite authors in the early Principate used a person's diet and eating habits to categorize his or her standing in Roman society as well as gender. The simplicity of their dietary choices alongside their stated preference of modest banquet settings provided elite Romans a daily opportunity to perform their discipline and moral uprightness for others' observation. By choosing unadorned food, elite authors attempted to uphold their privileged position in society by demonstrating, that despite their unhindered access to food items and wealth, they were not enslaved to their appetites. Not only that, it seems that they hoped their tempered flesh—that was neither too thin nor too fat and lacked a noticeably large belly—would quickly and vividly distinguish them from those who indulged in luxurious food items or consumed rich sauces and stews in socially ambiguous dining settings. The elite also relied on desperate attitudes to food and sickly thinness to provide clues about who was exiled, enslaved, or poor in their society. Additionally, the propensity to eat strange or wild food underscored who they perceived to be

foreigners or foreign elements to Roman society. Finally, these authors relied on a mingling sexual and comestible references to create images of women who either indulged in deviant appetites or were alluring sexual partners.

What these representations mask, however, is the fierce competition in the Roman world for social relevance and the growing disparity between the haves and have-nots. Martial and Juvenal's attack on men who sold property (a slave) for a meal, or others who attempted to use little tricks to make a meal seem more lavish indicate that diet and eating habits played a fundamental role in claims to social relevance. Seneca and Martial's criticism of women's manlike eating behaviors and additional practices also suggest that some women in the early Principate found the social space to behave in unconventional ways that challenged traditional gender roles and expectations. In fact, their remarks on consuming women suggests that at least some elite men perceived that the social changes during the early Principate presented previously unseen opportunities to women. In effect, elite representations of their own eating habits as compared to bad eaters' food preferences and dietary practices indicate that some people in early Principate were experimenting with or rejecting the status performances that were associated with eating.

## CHAPTER THREE

### KITCHENS, RECIPES, AND REMEDIES: Perspectives and Strategies of the Elite

*Savillum hoc modo facito. Farinae selibram, casei P. II S una commisceto quasi libum, mellis P. et ovum unum. Catinum fictile oleo unguito. Ubi omnia bene commiscueris, in catinum indito, catinum testo operito. Videto ut bene percoquas medium, ubi altissimum erit. Ubi coctum erit, catinum eximito, papaver infriato, sub testum subde paulisper, postea eximito. Ita pone cum catillo et lingula.*

Make *savillum* as follows. 1/2 lb. flour, 2 1/2 lb. cheese, mix together as for *libum*; 1/4 lb honey, 1 egg. Rub an earthenware baking dish with oil. When all ingredients are well mixed, place in the dish and cover the dish with a crock. See that you cook it through in the center, where it rises highest. When cooked, remove from the dish, spread with honey, sprinkle with poppy. Place briefly under the crock, then remove. Set out with dish and spoon. (Cato. *Agr.* 84)

Roman authors frequently sprinkled recipes throughout their works. Beyond the well-known cookbook of Apicius, recipes appear in Latin agricultural authors like Cato, Columella, and Varro as well as Horace, Pliny the Elder, and Petronius. The above recipe taken from Cato the Elder's handbook is an excellent example of the types of recipes for which elite authors demonstrate a fondness. Like their lauded personal dietary practices, this recipe is for the preparation of a simple dish. Notably, the ingredients are the ordinary, daily staples of flour, cheese, honey, eggs, oil, and poppy—nothing that reeks of extravagance or elaborate preparation. Even Cato's instructions for the best manner by which to eat this baked good highlight its simplicity: "Set it out with dish and spoon."

That elite authors attempt to communicate certain values or perceptions in their writings through recipes or culinary language, however, is quite striking. Recipes involve a type of language that is only fully understood by the prescribed actions that accompany them. In their introduction

to their new translation of the cookbook ascribed to Apicius, Sally Grainger and Christopher Grocock describe the language of recipes as a type of shorthand that assumes experiential or specialized knowledge.<sup>175</sup> For instance, a person familiar with cooking understands what “a pinch of salt” means or knows the distinction between “sauté” and “fry.” Because recipes are a type of shorthand, they can be recorded in various states of complexity—ranging from simply a command to combine a list of ingredients to detailing a much more elaborate process.<sup>176</sup> Essentially, this means that recipes are a kind of expression that is only truly communicated and understood by those who cook.<sup>177</sup> Moreover, they are performative texts because they are grounded in the material world and must be enacted in order to manifest the full, sensory meanings of their words.

This chapter explores the tension between Roman authors’ demonstrable ignorance of cooking skills and their attempts to appropriate the language and knowledge of cooks. Beginning this chapter with an examination of elite authors’ perceptions of kitchens, cooks, and culinary knowledge, I argue that, through Roman writers’ representation of domestic kitchens and the activities that take place there, they reveal not only their distaste for culinary practices but also ultimately their ignorance of the skills necessary to prepare food. What is more, through their obvious disapproval of the type of knowledge and skills that cooks possess, elite authors unintentionally disclose their anxiety about household resources left in the hands of a (wasteful)

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<sup>175</sup>Apicius, C. W. Grocock, and Sally Grainger, *Apicius: A Critical Edition with an Introduction and an English Translation of the Latin Recipe Text Apicius*, (England: Prospect, 2006), 70. See also, Luce Giard, “The Rules of the Art,” in *The Practice of Everyday Life, Volume 2: Living and Cooking*, eds. Michel Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 216. He describes recipes as a ‘minimalist’ text of which one must have prior knowledge.

<sup>176</sup>Grocock and Grainger 96. They note that within Apicius, 76 of the 459 recipes (which is 17% of the collection) are simply lists of ingredients with little or no grammatical joining. Additionally, they point out this listing occurs in an additional 94 recipes in combination with more detailed culinary expressions. For a discussion of the language used in *Pisum Indicum* recipe from this cookbook, see John Edwards, “Philology and Cuisine in *De Re Coquinaria*,” *The American Journal of Philology* 122.2 (2001): 255-63.

<sup>177</sup>Ernestine F. Leon, “Cato’s Cakes,” *The Classical Journal*. 38.4 (1943): 214. Offering advice on how to recreate Cato’s recipes for different versions of sweet, cheese cakes, she captures how cooking knowledge is best learned when she observes the differences between modern cooking practices and that of most previous times: “Today a cook follows exact printed directions, until a generation ago a novice watched an adept at cookery practice his art and so obtained just the right feeling.” But, one could say the *Food Network* might be a way for novice cooks to watch someone adept at cooking so as to gain this experiential knowledge.

cook. Given these attitudes towards kitchens, cooks, and food, one might assume that they would not waste time on providing instructions for the preparation of food. Nevertheless, in spite (or perhaps because) of their views on kitchens and food, Roman writers pepper their works with the compact expressions of culinary knowledge as a way to communicate their perceptions of the social realities in which they operate.<sup>178</sup> The sociologist Luce Giard offers some insight on the significance of this unexpected inclination evinced in Latin authors' writings. Looking at contemporary French recipes, Luce Giard notes, "*doing-cooking* is the medium for a basic, humble, and persistent practice that is repeated in time and space, rooted in the fabric of relationships to others and to one's self."<sup>179</sup>

Although he is speaking about modern social relations in light of French culinary ideas and practices,

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<sup>178</sup> I want to thank Professor Robin Stacey for pointing out Family Circle's Cookie Cook Off, which political ritual has recently accompanied each US Presidential Debate for the past 16 years. During the presidential campaign, this magazine asks the presidential candidates' spouse to give their favorite cookie recipe, which they ask their readers to bake, sample, and then vote on. I believe that these recipes concisely communicate who the candidate is and who they imagine their constituents to be. For example, during the Bush/Kerry campaign, Laura Bush gave a recipe for "Oatmeal Chocolate Chunk Cookies," which asked for three sticks of butter, oatmeal, chunks of chocolate, cinnamon, and sour cherries. Essentially, this recipe is a basic one for chocolate chip cookie with some personal embellishments that make it more flavorful (and fattening!). Nevertheless it evokes traditional, homemade American tastes. Teresa Heinz Kerry's "Pumpkin Spice Cookies" also calls on traditional (particularly Thanksgiving) American tastes, although one could argue that her recipe also appeals to her husband's followers, who were generally more politically liberal and who try to present themselves as more health conscious than their Republican counterparts, with a focus on pumpkin and less butter. Additionally, Mrs. Kerry's recipe is it is reinterpretation of the familiar and comfy—dare I say mundane—chocolate chip cookie. Indeed, her cookie recipe suggests someone whose tastes are a bit more refined, a bit more open to different interpretations of what "cookie" means. For the Bush-Kerry Cookie Cook Off Recipes: <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/WaterCooler/story?id=127740&page=1> (accessed November 15, 2013). The cookie bake off between Michele Obama and Ann Romney during the last election is fascinating as well. The First Lady's recipe calls on a notion of family traditions being shared through the name given to her cookies: "Mama Kay's White and Dark Chocolate Chip Cookies." Again, the traditional chocolate chip cookie is used, with only slight reinterpretations. Doing so underscores the Obama family's traditional, American tastes. The referencing of "Mama Kay," who is the godmother to the Obama children, also foregrounds the strong familial relationships and values that President Obama's campaign attempted to spotlight through his campaign—alongside Michele Obama's popularity. (As a side note it is also interesting to compare the use of "Mama Kay" in this recipe's title to Luce Giard's observation that French cookbooks with recipes attributed to women usually have a simple first name with a mythical familial title like Cousin Adele, Aunt Aurora, Grandma Madeliene, etc. But, cookbooks and recipes attributed to men contain their full name. While recipes attributed to women evoke a sense of home and simplicity, culinary knowledge attributed to men are attached to public life and costly refinement. See Luce Giard, "The Rules of Art," 216-217). Sadly, Ann Romney's M&M Cookies, which include corn syrup and peanut butter, seem unappealing and ultimately foreshadowed the majority of America's response to her husband's campaign. For the Obama-Romney Cookie Cook: <http://shine.yahoo.com/shine-food/presidential-bake-off-winner-michelle-obama-just-barely-162400633.html> (accessed November 15, 2013). What these recipes also communicate about gender expectations for presidential families is also fascinating, and both Professor Stacey and I can hardly wait for how a female presidential candidate might shake up this current campaign tradition. For example, what type of recipe might we expect from Former President Bill Clinton, who is now a vegan, should his wife Hilary Clinton run for president?

<sup>179</sup> Luce Giard, "Nourishing Acts," in *The Practice of Everyday Life, Volume 2: Living and Cooking*, eds. Michel Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 157.

his claim is helpful for understanding elite Roman writers' use of cooking formulas in their works. In this chapter, I explore how attitudes towards culinary activities and recipes provide insight on these writers' perception and manipulation of this 'fabric of relationships.

Recipes included in Latin literature not only entail Roman thoughts on class and mastery, but they highlight distinctions that these writers draw between bodies—male and female, free and enslaved. I contend that recipes as performative texts offers a view into elite Roman men's experience with their own bodies and hint at how they imagined the embodiment of other members of their society. In order to demonstrate this, I finish this chapter with a study of recipes (or anecdotes about recipes) that are specifically tied to male, female, prepubescent, eunuch, and enslaved or freed bodies. I assert that the language and imagined possibilities of these types of recipes and remedies reflect what Michele de Certeau has called the "strategy" of the dominant class: "A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper and thus serve as the basis for generating relationships with an exterior distinct from it."<sup>180</sup> While de Certeau's focus is on the control of space as a means of strategy, his ideas are useful here because Roman authors insinuate the male body's properness through recipes that are tied in one way or another to somatic functions. Or in other words, these writers underline the male body's superiority through the language and practices of cooking and remedies in such a way as to enable the continual (re)enactment of social and gender hierarchies grounded in attitudes about basic bodily functions. Indeed, its favorable qualities come out most clearly when its curative properties are compared to the limited beneficial elements (or deficiencies) of other types of gendered or classed bodies. Thus, the presumed standards that these authors assign to the male body generate perceptions about other bodies that are exterior and distinct from it.

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<sup>180</sup>Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, xix.

As a final note, I need to explain my insertion of Cato the Elder, an early Republican writer, and his recipes into what has up to this point has been an investigation of Roman authors' views on the digesting body and food during the early Principate. Through my analysis of Cato the Elder's recipes, I do not wish to suggest that Roman attitudes towards cooking remained unchanged across its complicated and long history. Rather, Cato's historical context and attitudes find echoes in some of the later works I explore. In fact, Cato's influence can be directly found in Varro, Columella, and Pliny the Elder, all of whom refer to his recipes and love of cabbage in their works.<sup>181</sup> Hence, his recipes act a launching pad for some of the ideas I examine in this chapter.

## **I. Chaos, Smoke, and Violence: Elite Perspectives of Kitchens, Cooking, and Cooks**

Before beginning a study of elite authors' perceptions of cooking done inside Roman homes, a bit of context for the material realities of food preparation in domestic settings is necessary. Although I will explore the tools and locations of cooking, eating, and excreting more fully in the following two chapters, I provide here some general background on Roman kitchens in order to show how authors' representations of cooking and kitchens expose their concerns about and ultimately ignorance of culinary labor. The archaeological sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum provide modern scholars with some of the best examples of kitchens and other cooking locations inside Roman homes.<sup>182</sup> Areas categorized as domestic kitchens are identified by the presence of a masonry bench that served as a cooking hearth, whose structure I take up in the next chapter.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>For example, see Pliny *HN* 19.21 (457-458). See also Cato, and (trans) Andrew Dalby, *Cato: On Farming=De Agricultura*, 26. Dalby notes: "When Varro, Columella and Pliny--and others--wrote on agriculture or household management, Cato came immediately to their minds. They quoted him often, from memory, with dreadful inaccuracy." For a discussion on Cato's influence on the development of Roman villa culture, see John Bodel "Villa Culture," in *Roman Republican Villas: Architecture, Context, and Ideology*, ed. Jeffrey A. Becker and Nicola Terranto (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012), 45-60.

<sup>182</sup> For a comparison of the types of food, cooking techniques, and tools used in Roman Britain, see H.E.M. Cool, *Eating and Drinking in Roman Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 8-15; 37-128.

<sup>183</sup> Eugenia Salza Prina Ricotti. "Cucine e quartieri servilli in epoca Romana," in *Rendiconti Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di archeologica* 51-2 (1978/80): 241-43.

Indeed, as Pedar Foss observes, the most common type of kitchen installation at Pompeii is the masonry stove, which is built against a wall. He adds that these benches vary in size and manner of construction, noting that they are typically either a solid stove, a cook top with an arched space below it, or a bench with squared opening underneath it. Customarily built on top of the bench's tiled surfaces were small fires that were used alone or set under cooking stands or tripods to cook food.<sup>184</sup> Rooms containing fixtures identified as cooking hearths have been discovered in various locations in these homes indicating that the placement of kitchens does not seem to have been restricted to one part of the house.<sup>185</sup> Not only does the location of kitchens vary, but the sizes of these rooms differ as well. Some kitchens are small and cramped while others are much more spacious, especially those found in larger homes or villas.

Despite these variations in size and location, kitchens in Roman homes almost uniformly lack evidence for proper ventilation and had little access to natural lighting.<sup>186</sup> Such deficiencies are particularly problematic given that charcoal seems the preferred fuel for urban and domestic settings.<sup>187</sup> Despite being a relatively smoke-free fuel, charcoal is mostly carbon and, if burnt incompletely, can result in carbon monoxide, which can be fatal in a room with little airflow. Moreover, household latrines are also commonly connected to kitchens, either being located in the

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<sup>184</sup> Pedar William Foss, "Kitchens and Dining Rooms at Pompeii: The Spatial and Social Relationship of Cooking to Eating in the Roman Household," (PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 1994), 79.

<sup>185</sup> Penelope Allison, *Pompeian Households: An Analysis of Material Culture* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles, 2004), 99. See also, Foss, "Kitchens and Dining Rooms at Pompeii," 37-44. A few brief examples demonstrate the variety of locations where a kitchen might be placed in a home. For instance, the Casa dei Ceii's (I 6,15) kitchen is located in room *i*, which is in the front of the house, off of the atrium, with its south wall separating it from the street outside. Conversely, the Casa di Principe di Napoli's (VI 15, 7-8) kitchen is in room *g*, which is immediately to the rear of the atrium, while the masonry bench defining one of the Casa del Menandro's (I 10,4) cooking areas and the kitchen (room X) in the Villa Oplontis squarely remove these rooms from each homes' atriums and peristyle gardens.

<sup>186</sup> Salza Prina Ricotti, "Cucine e quartieri servilli," 252-55; Foss, "Kitchens and Dining Rooms at Pompeii," 134-6; Pia Kastenmeier, *I luoghi del lavoro domestico nella casa pompeiana* (Roma: "L'erma" di Bretschneider, 2007), 58-60. They variously suggest that smoke and heat escaped from small windows onto a street, doors, or through perforated roof tiles. See also Robert I. Curtis, "Professional Cooking, Kitchens, and Service Work," in *A Cultural History of Food*, Vol.1, ed. Paul Erdkamp (London: Berg, 2012), 128.

<sup>187</sup> Robyn Veal, "The Wood Fuel Supply to Pompeii Third Century BC to AD 79: An Environmental, Historical and Economic Study Based on Charcoal Analysis." (PhD Diss. University of Sydney. 2009). 34; Jane M. Renfrew, *Roman Cookery: Recipes and History* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2004), 23; Patrick Faas, *Around the Roman Table* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 130.

same room as the cooking hearth with little or no separation, or in a room immediately adjacent to it.<sup>188</sup> While Gemma Jansen observes that the latrine assisted the disposal of waste material from food preparation, both Alex Scobie and Jansen argue that the proximity of the latrine to cooking surfaces often made household kitchens unsanitary environments and contributed to the spread of disease.<sup>189</sup> Poor lighting and ventilation in combination with proximity to household latrines all point to a different perception of hygiene and notions about safe cooking practices that are distinct from modern ones and influenced the physical realities of Roman daily life.<sup>190</sup> But, these conditions also signal a lack of consideration that Roman homeowners had for those labored in their kitchens.

Although the presence of masonry benches helps identify a domestic area that acted as a focal point for household food preparation, scholars have pointed out that it is a mistake to assume that kitchens were the *only* places associated with cooking in Roman homes.<sup>191</sup> Movable braziers and other cooking utensils were frequently recovered in or near household gardens.<sup>192</sup> Not surprisingly, there is some scholarly disagreement surrounding the type of cooking done on braziers. Eugenia Salza Prina Ricotti argues that they were most commonly used in houses that lacked hearths, but Penelope Allison notes that braziers have been recovered in homes that had one or more kitchen benches.<sup>193</sup> While Luisa Franchi Dell'Orto contends that braziers were used to reheat food for diners that had been prepared in kitchens far from dining rooms, Allison counters that these tools have also been found in modest-sized homes whose kitchens are located close to dining rooms.<sup>194</sup>

Nevertheless, she submits that the type of cooking done on braziers seems to be different from that

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<sup>188</sup> Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 99

<sup>189</sup> Gemma Jansen, "Private Toilets at Pompeii: Appearance and Operation," in *Sequence and Space in Pompeii*, ed. Sara E. Bon and Rick Jones (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997), 128.

<sup>190</sup> Sandra Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 25.

<sup>191</sup> Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 90-4; Berry, 192-3; Salza Prina Ricotti, 240-1.

<sup>192</sup> Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 126.

<sup>193</sup> Salza Prina Ricotti 239-40; Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 102.

<sup>194</sup> Luisa Franchi Dell'Orto. "Catalogo: L'arredamento, furnishings," in *Rediscovering Pompeii: Exhibition by IBM-Italia, New York City, IBM Gallery of Science and Art, 12 July-15 September 1990*, ed. B. Conticello et al (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1990), 187; Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 102. Allison also cautions that modern scholars need to be careful when applying western 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century assumptions to Roman food preparation techniques, noting that cooking activities are culturally specific (103).

which occurred in kitchens, although she is reluctant to offer her own conclusions about what kind of dishes they made or specific functions they performed. Additionally, Allison observes that the distribution of moveable artifacts associated with food preparation and food storage indicate that activities involving food preparation and cooking done outside of kitchens were generally focused in the rear areas of the house. Food storage, however, commonly occurred in the front of the house—notably in or near the atrium—and signals that some items associated with food participated in the display of a home's wealth.<sup>195</sup> In essence, the distribution of these items throughout Roman homes suggest that activities associated with food preparation and storage played an essential role in not only in quotidian household routines, but also in the homeowner's display of mastery. But, I take up these issues in the next chapters.

Now that we have a sense of the broader material realities of domestic cooking in hand, we can turn to elite perceptions of these locations and the activities that occurred there. Describing household labors involved in food preparation, Roman authors reveal their upper-class perceptions of these activities in such a way that they disclose their ignorance of, and likely disinterest in, the skills necessary to cooking. Interestingly, they usually prefer to record accounts of cooking done by either slaves in bustling kitchens or anecdotes about the meals prepared by poor, rustic country-folk. Perhaps not surprisingly, elite authors attack slaves and their masters for the extravagant meals they prepare, but praise simple farmers for making dishes from the rustic ingredients they have on hand or that they take from their home gardens. Notably, Roman writers rely on broad and general terms to illustrate cooking done by domestic slaves rather than recounting the refined and precise skills needed to cook a meal, especially the type of gourmet meals that elite authors typically attack. Furthermore, those writers who place the simple cooking done by poor, county people in front of humble household flames at the center of their works cover it with such a dense, romantic patina

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<sup>195</sup> Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 125-30.

that they ultimately obscure the cooking they describe. In other words, while Latin authors' depictions of cooking make transparent how the elite observed and experienced these domestic spaces and daily routines, they provide little insight on what actually occurred in Roman kitchens.

True to his curmudgeonly views on the body's digestive needs, Seneca bemoans the excess that others encourage with their epicurean pursuits. Pointing his moral finger at those who forget humanity's shared mortality, he insists that Lucilius peer into kitchens to observe how cooks frantically rush about many fires and consider the chaos their activities create as they attempt to prepare a meal for just one belly (*Ep.* 114.26). In addition to the tumult caused by those working in the kitchen, elite authors also mention quadruped problems that sneak in from the street.<sup>196</sup> Bemoaning his dining guest's bad manners, Martial compares Dento to a dog that is always seeking out delectable treats from a bigger and better kitchen (*Ep.* 5.44).<sup>197</sup> Setting the scene that unfolds around a cook's fear of punishment, Apuleius begins his brief tale by having a stealthy canine pilfer a portion of a stag that hung from the kitchen door (*Met.* 8.31).<sup>198</sup> From these brief, but vivid, pictures, elite authors suggest that bustling activity and movement surrounded domestic cooking. More importantly, these authors represent the liveliness of food preparation as chaotic, with many slaves frantically moving about and dogs possibly wandering in off the street to rob whatever scraps may be discarded, or to filch an even larger prize. What these representations lack, however, is any concrete detail about the activities that occurred in kitchens or other locations (temporarily) employed in food preparation.

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<sup>196</sup> See also Suetonius, *Vespasian* 5, for an example of dogs' abilities to roam freely into other sections of the house from the street as well. For example, Suetonius records several signs that heralded Vespasian's fated ascension to Rome's highest political position. One of those signs was a stray dog bringing a human hand from outside Vespasian's place of residence into the very room where he was eating breakfast and dropped it near him.

<sup>197</sup> For a discussion on dogs and the role they played in the unsanitary urban environment of Roman cities, see Scobie 418-20. On the cultivation of dogs as pets and archaeological evidence of preferred breeds, see Michael MacKinnon, "Sick as a Dog: Zooarchaeological Evidence for Pet Dog Health and Welfare in the Roman World," *World Archaeology* 42:2 (2010): 290-309. See also, Columella *R.R.* 7.12-13 for advice on the best types of dogs for guarding or herding, names for dogs, and feeding practices as well as how to treat canine illnesses. Finally, on dogs as part of Dionysus's bestiary, see Mario Iozzo, "The Dog: A Dionysiac Animal?" in *Revista di Archeologia* XXXVI 2012 (2013): 5-22.

<sup>198</sup> On this scene and how it plays a part in the representation of slave families in the *Metamorphoses*, see Bradley, *Apuleius and Antonine Rome*, 82.

The flirtation between Lucius and Fotis while she cooks in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, whose sexual relationship I explored in the previous chapter, provides a bit more detail regarding the skills cooks practiced within Roman households. Admittedly, the scene is so overlaid with sexual innuendo that we should immediately be suspicious of it. In fact, Lucius' vision of Fotis' lovely face, elegant linen dress, and shiny hair while preparing food starkly contradicts other authors' portrayals of cooks' appearances (see below) and seems to contradict the material realities briefly outlined above. In spite these issues, Fotis's cooking activities and location are not entirely glossed over and provide some clues. For instance, after searching the house for his hosts, Lucius eventually finds Fotis preparing food before midday (*Met.* 2.7, 11). Offhandedly remarking that he smelled the dish prior to finding her, he notes that she is making minced pork with stuffing, slices of meat, and spicy sausage. Although he is aroused by her activities, and therefore lays a thick layer of erotic insinuation over her movements, Lucius nevertheless observes that part of her work required her to turn a dish rhythmically. Her effort demanded all of her body, which becomes apparent when Lucius lustfully notes that her hands, hips, spine, and bum undulate together. As evidence for elite authors' knowledge of the necessary tasks performed and skills needed to create a meal, Apuleius' representation of cooking through his character Lucius falls in line with the general ignorance noted above. In fact, Apuleius' rendering of the exchange in the kitchen demonstrates at the very least the author's disinterest with these tasks, or perhaps more likely his unfamiliarity. Nevertheless, this anecdote confirms elite assumptions that cooking was commonly performed by a slave (or slaves) and that location for cooking (not surprisingly) has access to fire/hearth, pots, and other cooking utensils. Significantly, Lucius, as a guest in the house, is able to find and be in the same location as Fotis preparing food. Additionally, we learn that somehow stirring the ingredients for minced pork requires enough physical effort that it makes Fotis' *derriere* jiggle. As entertaining or titillating Lucius' observations might be, however, they provide very little insight on the knowledge and skills

Fotis learned and daily practiced in order to carry out the various acts of food preparation. Indeed, he almost entirely obscures the work Fotis performs by making her movements ones of sexual seduction rather than cooking techniques.

Hand in hand with the uninformed and critical view of activities that take place in cooking areas, Roman authors commonly focus on the sooty unpleasantness of kitchens. Like Seneca's observation of the many fires that supported busy culinary activities, Petronius also wields the literary punch of a kitchen flame in order to make a jab at contemporary rhetoric pupils. His character, Encolpius, laments that students are better trained in stories about pirates, tyrants, or oracular responses than they are in everyday issues, thus making them incapable of good sense. In order to bring his point home, he compares their mental impairments to that of kitchen cooks' olfactory deficiencies with roses (*Sat.* 2). Implicit in Encolpius' remark is the assumption that a kitchen's smoky environment holds ruinous physical effects for those who must spend time there. Petronius does not stop with poking fun at cook's inability to smell. He metaphorically turns his own nose up at the stench stuck on domestic cooks whenever they leave the kitchen. During Trimalchio's dinner, the author has the cook comically join diners reclining couches, while pointing out that the reek of various foods follows him (*Sat.* 70).<sup>199</sup>

Other Latin authors also detail how unpleasant they imagine the smoky atmosphere of household kitchens to be. For instance, Martial suggests that the pitchy air of Roman kitchens had physically marring side-effects when addressing the lovely-faced Thenopompos; he wonders who would so cruelly condemn his comely face to a black kitchen (*nigram culinam*) and expose his locks to a banquet's flames (*Ep.* 10.66).<sup>200</sup> Cooks are not alone in being banned to this distasteful

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<sup>199</sup> See also Plautus *Mos.* 1.3 for a comparison of the unappealing stink of old women's unguents to the stench resulting from cook's mixing various kinds of broth.

<sup>200</sup> *Quis, rogo, tam durus, quis tam fuit ille superbus, / Qui iussit fieri te, Theopompe, cocum? / Hanc aliquis faciem nigra violare culina / Sustinet, has uncto polluit igne comas? / Quis potius cyathos aut quis crystallas tenebit? / Qua sapient melius mixta Falerna manu? / Si tam sidereos manet exitus iste ministros, / Iuppiter utatur iam Ganymede coco.* See also Martial *Ep.* 8.23. He also rebukes Cinna for

environment. Deliberating who might be the proper recipient for his written work, Martial again relies on the words *nigram culinam* to describe a distasteful end for the pages of his book, which could be sent to this bleak locale as they are sentenced to become wrappings for fish if he gifts his poems to the wrong person (*Ep.* 3.2).<sup>201</sup> Before attacking a cook's overweening culinary style that threatens to bankrupt him, Martial describes his home filled with the odors of a kitchen fire and roasting boar: "Let my household gods grow fat with the steaming reek/and my festal kitchen blaze with the felling from an acre of land" (*Ep.* 7.27).<sup>202</sup> Although his allusion to the fire needing all of the wood from a plot of land for the preparation of this festive meal most likely holds some exaggeration, his side remark hints at the additional (and possibly external) labor that domestic kitchens required in order to create the heat necessary for cooking.<sup>203</sup> Nevertheless, his focus—like the other authors—is not on the specific activities within the kitchen, but on the smoke and smells in conjunction with the perceived disorder such activities produced. Indeed, Apuleius sharpens the point that many Romans found kitchens smutty and unpleasant; after hearing about his host Milo's miserly living habits, Lucius laughingly responds that at least he will not have to worry about kitchen-smoke or foul smells while staying with him (*Met.* 1.21).<sup>204</sup> Thus, similar to their illustrations of the bustling activity surrounding food preparation, Latin authors' portrayal of cooking environments imply their annoyance with these domestic locations and labors. They focus on the effects of cooking—smoke and odors—but not on the cooking itself. This particular preoccupation underscores not only elite

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making a lovely slave boy a cook. Again, the assumption here is that the kitchen environment will ruin the body's good looks, which underscore Cinna's poor judgment.

<sup>201</sup> *Cuius uis fieri, libelle, munus?/Festina tibi uindicem parare,/ne nigram cito raptus in culinam/cordylas madida tegas papyro/vel turis piperisue sis cucullus.*

<sup>202</sup> *Pinguescant madido laeti nidore penates/flagret et exciso festa culina iugo.*

<sup>203</sup> For a discussion of the types of wood used, ancient charcoal production methods, and manner of transportation of different lumber, see Veal, 149-78.

<sup>204</sup> Allison cautions that anecdotal accounts about kitchen smells needs to be contextualized before scholars claim that cooking locations in domestic setting were kept away from elite household members. Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 103; compare to Foss, "Kitchens and Dining Rooms," 42; 165-8.

authors' views of cooking, but also the overall lack of consideration given to those who labored in kitchens.

Re-enforcing elite views about the labor performed in kitchens, representations of cooks also elucidate Roman authors' anxiety about the social clout skilled cooks could create for themselves and those who employed or (more precisely) enslaved them. The hostility with which Latin authors attack cooks echoes their deeper concerns about the changing dynamics of social competition in the Roman world, which allowed gourmants to demonstrate tastes and refinements that rattled traditional avenues of privilege. It is worth pausing here to observe that, although censorship of others' culinary and dietary expressions of social prestige come to the fore during the early Principate, there are examples from the early Republic of similar unfavorable judgments passed on those who began to adopt (foreign) comestible luxuries that conflicted with Roman traditions. For example, in the second century BCE, the Greek historian Polybius records Cato's rant against the corrupting influence of imported Pontic pickled fish (Polybius 35.25.5a), and Plautus's comedies frequently include aggressive exchanges between a cook and another character (see *Aul.* 2.4, 3.2, 3.3; *Men.* 1.2; *Mer.* 4.4; *Mil.* 5.1; *Ps.* 3.2).<sup>205</sup> Livy cuttingly censures Manlius Vulso's return to Rome from his campaign in Asia by mentioning he and his soldiers not only brought back fancy, foreign furniture and a penchant for banquets that had pretty girls singing and playing instruments, but they even treated cooks as more important than the mean slaves they were and shocking thought of cooking as fine art (*Ab Urbs* 39.6). It should not be surprising that such concerns are raised in the wake of Hannibal's invasion and eventual defeat because this period marks the growth of Rome's territorial empire and its powerful effects on Roman society.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> On the representation of slavery in Plautine comedies, see Roberta Stewart, *Plautus and Roman Slavery* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 21-80. For a discussion of the various audiences these comedies address, see Amy Richlin, "Talking to Slaves in the Plautine Audience," *Classical Antiquity*, 33.1 (2014): 174-226; compare to Kathleen McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>206</sup> On social and economic effects of the second Punic War, see Keith Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 10-56; Neville Morley. "The Transformation of Italy, 225-28 BC," *Journal of Roman*

During the early Principate, however, authors' commentaries on cooks and their skills more commonly than not attempt to belittle the type of knowledge cooks possess and thereby reaffirm their lower social position in Roman society. For instance, Horace mockingly begins his satire that lampoons the gourmand's frantic ramblings about food advice with a tongue and cheek comparison to philosophy. Responding to Horace's inquiry about whereto he is rushing, Catus excitingly announces, "I have no time to stop, so keen am I to make a record of some new rules, such as will surpass Pythagoras, and the sage whom Anytus accused, and the learned Plato" (*Sat.* 2.4: 1-3).<sup>207</sup> I will return to the wisdom Catus departs later in the chapter, but suffice it to say here that it relies on the language particular to recipes. For Horace, the humor of this scene unfolds because Catus has obviously been hoodwinked into valuing the frivolity of food practices above the wisdom of great sages. By sniggering at Catus' misjudgment, Horace undermines the type of insight that those who worked with food shared. Indeed, he effectively establishes a hierarchy of knowledge that places mental pursuits above those that help feed and pleasure the body.<sup>208</sup> Valuing philosophy over culinary arts, Horace reinforces traditional Roman social structures, in which the elite generally enjoyed the privileges of an intellectual monopoly.<sup>209</sup> Implied in Horace's satire, however, is an undercurrent of resistance to such traditions, indicating some relied on the display of a different type of social currency to assert one's place in society. Indeed, one can easily envision Catus' real-life

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*Studies* 91 (2001): 50-2; and Arnold Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy: The Hannibalic War's Effects on Roman Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965). The past couple of years have been quite active for scholars taking up this question. For recent challenges or rethinking of previous arguments, see Luuk de Ligt, *Peasants, Citizens, and Soldiers: Studies in the Demographic History of Roman Italy 225 BC--AD 100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); 135-191; Alessandro Launaro, *Peasant and Slaves: The Rural Population of Roman Italy (200 BC to AD 100)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 168-183; and Saskia Hin, *The Demography of Italy: Population Dynamics in an Ancient Conquest Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17-62.

<sup>207</sup> *non est mihi tempus, aventi/ponere signa novis praeceptis, qualia vincent/Pythagoran Anytique reum doctumque Platona.*

<sup>208</sup> For a discussion on Horace's reference to Platonic philosophy in this satire, see Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 135-42. She argues that Horace assumes that his audience would be familiar with Plato's works, and, thus, would be in on the joke.

<sup>209</sup> On philosophy and its role in elite private and political life, see Michael Trapp, *Philosophy in the Roman Empire: Ethics, Politics and Society* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). For a discussion on philosophy and its role in the development of the Roman state and law, see Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak, *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World. Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1-13; 31-90.

counterpart making status claims based on his culinary tastes and knowledge in such a manner that it rankled other more traditionally minded Romans.

Seneca's sneers toward cooks' wisdom denote a similar concern about the influence food and culinary practices on Roman society. Defining what should be included in the liberal arts, Seneca bars any pursuit that leads one to luxury (*Ep.* 88.18). Notably, what is included in his list of tainted arts are all of those that require sensory skills: sculpting, marble-working, wrestling, perfume-making, and cooking.<sup>210</sup> Similar to his views on eating that were explored in Chapter One, Seneca devalues cooking and other manual skills because they are bodily focused; they esteem the physical over the *animus*.<sup>211</sup> In another passage, he subverts cooks' proficiency by aligning their gastric mastery with disease. Bewailing contemporary Romans' ill-health, he protests, "You need not wonder that diseases are beyond counting: count the cooks" (*Ep.* 95. 23).<sup>212</sup> In essence, Seneca debases cooks and the knowledge they possess by making them the vessels for physical failings that easily infect all those who fall prey to the body's enslaving desires. His snide comment is influenced by more than his stoic leanings; cooks, as slaves, were considered inimical outsiders in Rome and especially in Roman homes.<sup>213</sup> Thus, his comments reiterate common prejudices against cooks, but also hint at his unease with 'outsiders' and their perceived increase of social influence.

Seneca's concern about the social influence of cooks and the distracting temptations their kitchens offer also spotlight his anxiety about the state of his contemporary society as he describes a

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<sup>210</sup> Confer Plat. *Gorg.* 462. In a conversation between Polus and Socrates, Socrates claims cooking is not an art but rather a practice or routine.

<sup>211</sup> Chapter 1, 25-7.

<sup>212</sup> *Innumerabiles esses morbos non miraberis: cocos numerata.*

<sup>213</sup> Seneca records a Roman saying that claimed a person had as many enemies as he had slaves (*Seneca. Ep.* 47.7). See also Holt Parker, "Loyal Slaves and Loyal Wives: The Crisis of the Outsider-within and Roman *Exemplum* Literature," in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations*, eds. Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan (London: Routledge, 1998), 154-55. Parker claims that liminality marked wives' and slaves' positions within the home because both were "intimate strangers" who represented an outsider, or foreigner, brought into the family. For a brief discussion of representation of cooks in Roman law and literature, see Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 17-27. On measuring the number and movement of slaves in the Roman world, see Walter Scheidel, "Human Mobility in Roman Italy, I: The Slave Population," *Journal of Roman Studies* 94 (2004): 1-26 and "Quantifying the Sources of Slaves in the Early Roman Empire" *Journal of Roman Studies* 87 (1997): 157-69.

world turned upside down and out of control because of the pursuit of extravagant foods. He contends that equestrians needlessly spend their entire wealth on one meal (*Ep. Mor.* 95. 41). Young men also shirk proper pursuits, which he defines as consulting professor and philosophers, in order to seek the diversions found in the kitchen. “How many young men,” he protests, “are often in kitchens, pressing around the hearth of their descendants! I will pass over the flock of luckless boys who must endure the insults of the cubiculum after the banquet is over” (*Ep. Mor.* 95. 23-24).<sup>214</sup> Thus, the kitchen—that grimy household location most readily identified with domestic slaves—becomes the haunt of young men in pursuit of excessive appetites, both alimantal and sexual. For Seneca, young men’s desire to waste time with culinary amusements is particularly troubling because elite Romans feared that overexposure to lower classes could lead to corruption and/or servile behavior. In effect, the pursuit of expensive and elaborate food allows for the unnatural or inappropriate influence of cooks and kitchens on Roman society: equestrians bankrupt themselves for a meal and young men—in kitchens and at banquets—seek hedonistic bodily pleasures rather than loftier moral pursuits. All of these represent a perversion of Roman society and highlight Seneca’s concern about threats to traditionally established behaviors and hierarchies.

In addition to this type of invective against cooks and their skills, Petronius adds the lack of physical integrity to the overall ignominy that the culinary-abled in Rome endured. Following one extravagant dish after another, all of which underlines the host’s gaudy taste and belies his cook’s masterful skill, the attendant slaves present an enormous, cooked boar to Trimalchio and his guests. Despite the fact that they have been surprised and delighted with playfulness of each previous plate, the guests immediately doubt the cook’s skill and knowledge as the roasted pig enters the dining room. They complain that not enough time has passed to cook even a chicken, and wonder how this large boar should already be fit for consumption (*Sat.* 49). Trimalchio joins in his guests’ back-

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<sup>214</sup> *at quam celebres culinae sunt, quanta circa nepotum focos inventus premitur! Transeo puerorum infelicitium greges, quos post transacta convivia aliae cubiculi contumeliae expectant.*

seat-driving criticisms and orders his cook brought into the dining room for questioning and punishment. He demands that his cook explain how this dish has arrived prematurely to the table, to which the cook sheepishly responds that he forgot to gut the pig. For this mistake, Trimalchio orders him stripped of his garments in preparation for torture. Some of his guests beg mercy for the cook's mistake, but Encolpius voices his doubt about the cook's wits, wondering if anyone but the meanest of slaves would be so foolish as not to gut the pig beforehand (*Sat.* 49). Of course, it is revealed that this is just another of Trimalchio's games: they cut into the boar to find that it has been filled with sausages and puddings. Despite its happy outcome, this brief anecdote highlights a general disregard for cooks' knowledge and the guests' shared ignorance for the time management and preparation that must go into producing a seamless meal fit for a large party. Although it was a rehearsed charade for Trimalchio's guests, the scene evokes the real anger and violence a chef might encounter from his owner if he appeared to be unskilled, or if he was judged according to flimsy sapience of the culinary illiterate.

Like Petronius, Martial and Apuleius also record the physical punishment a cook might expect if he appears to waste household resources. For instance, Martial badmouths Rufus for his intemperate response to his undercooked meal: "You deny the hare is cooked, and call for a whip,/You prefer, Rufus, cutting the cook rather than the hare" (*Ep.* 3.94).<sup>215</sup> Unable to meet—or perhaps guess—his master's preference, Rufus's cook must pay for his mistake with his own body.<sup>216</sup> In the above mentioned anecdote of a dog stealing meat from a kitchen, Apuleius choice of how to record the cook's response to this unfortunate event illuminates his vulnerability within the household's power relations. That is, the cook's first inclination upon realizing that he had lost a cut

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<sup>215</sup> *Esse negas coctum leporem poscisque flagella./Manis, Rufe, cocum scindere quam leporem.*

<sup>216</sup> See also *Ep.* 3.13, in which Martial accuses Naevia of preferring to carve up his cook for an under prepared meal rather than cutting fish, fowl, or boar and *Ep.* 8.23 when Martial defends flogging his cook on account of a dinner presumably gone wrong. As Joshel notes, this poem underlines Roman perceptions of slaves as property. She writes: "Martial's words...reduce the person of the slave cook to his function: cooks cook; if they do not, beat them—as you would an ox that does not perform his assigned task" (Joshel, *Slavery in the Roman World*, 20).

of meat is to kiss his son goodbye and then fashion a noose to hang himself instead facing his master (*Meta.* 8.31). His fear of punishment for unwittingly losing some of his master's resources is so overwhelming that death is preferred to fessing up to the unlucky occurrence. In fact, these stories reinforce the insecurity of a cook's position within the home that was seen in Petronius' tale. Yet, although cutting up the cook's body over an undercooked rabbit or a preferred suicide at the loss of a slab of meat seem like excessive actions, Martial and Apuleius's brief tales also suggest the important role household cooks played in the expenditure of domestic resources. In fact, the threat of violence in these stories indicate that Roman slave owners were aware—and perhaps anxious—that some of their wealth was in the hands of their enslaved cooks. A skilled and careful cook could contribute to the house, but a poor, sloppy, or overly extravagant one could quickly and easily waste away a home's monetary and alimentary resources. Indeed, it is difficult to salvage or repurpose comestibles or fuel once they have been used or poorly prepared. It is no wonder then, after Martial mentions the hilltop felled for his home's festal meal, that he berates his cook for his love of peppers and announces that he will send away the boar that was chosen for the meal because it threatens to bankrupt Martial's home (*Ep.* 10.66). In essence, tied to Roman authors' representation of violence against cooks, watchful criticism of their skills, and disdain for the unpleasantness of domestic kitchens is elite anxiety about the use and loss of household resources.

By way of contrast to what the above authors express about cooking, it is helpful to pause for a moment and consider two rare windows into culinary practices that Ovid's tale of an old and pious couple and the anonymous Latin author's poem, *ad Moretem*, provide. Beginning with Ovid's tale of Baucis and Philemon entertaining divine guests, it is easy to see that he lovingly recounts the humble hearth and food preparation that is central to this story. In fact, Ovid seems to linger when describing the couple's old age, unpretentious circumstances, and contentment, which all combine

to support their goodness and piety.<sup>217</sup> As though to underscore the peace and nonpareil of their domestic harmony, he explains that their home has no master or servant (*Met.* 632-7).<sup>218</sup> After the disguised Jupiter and Mercury accept the elderly couple's invitation to enter their home, Ovid turns to Baucis and Philemon's kitchen labor (*Met.* 641-650).<sup>219</sup> Her own breath, leaves, and bark nourish embers from the previous day's fire and she carefully prepares the flame and copper pot for the cabbage that Philemon brought in from the garden.<sup>220</sup> As she trims the cabbage, Philemon throws some smoked-cured pork into the pot. In lieu of the smoke and chaos found in the above authors' portrayments of culinary activity, Ovid highlights the warmth of Baucis's hearth. In fact, Ovid provides an uncommon glimpse of the comfort and romanticism that a warm, kitchen flame in home free of complicated social relationships could allow. His charming description of cooking, however, almost obscures how his work falls in line with those of other elite authors. Even though he paints an expressive snapshot of Baucis at the hearth, he filters his portrait to showcase the simplicity of the cook and food, and relies on what we will see is Cato's (morally) preferred

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<sup>217</sup> Fitzgerald, "Labor and Laborer," 392. Commenting on elite Roman attitudes towards poor members of their society, Fitzgerald smartly asserts: "This desire to hold the poor criminally responsible for their revolutionary potential led the Roman upper classes to produce idyllic images of a contented and self-sufficient poverty, almost always rural. Ovid's story of Philemon and Baucis, a picture of domestic bliss in conditions of rural poverty, attributes the happiness of the aged couple to their uncomplaining acceptance of poverty... Lurking beneath this idyll is the anxiety of the urbanite at the ill-will towards their social superiors of the poor (*inertes pauperes!*) who do not cheerfully embrace their condition." On Ovid's idealization of the Baucis and Philemon's poverty, see Emily Gowers, "Talking Trees: Philemon and Baucis Revisited," *Arethusa* 38.3 (2005): 332-34.

<sup>218</sup> On the poem's themes of equality and mutuality between Baucis and Philemon as well as their reciprocal bonds with their divine guests, see Judith P. Hallett, "Mortal and Immortal; Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral: Equality and Change in Ovid's Baucis and Philemon Episode (*Met.* 8.616-724)" in *Rome and Her Monuments: Essays on the City and Literature of Rome in Honor of Katherine A. Geffcken*, eds. Sheila K. Dickson and Judith P. Hallett (Wauconda: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2000) 545-61.

<sup>219</sup> *inque foco tepidum cinerem dimovit et ignes/ suscitavit besternas foliisque et cortice sicco/nutrit et ad flammas anima producit anili/multifidasque faces ramaliaque arida tecto/detulit et minuit parvoque admovit aeno,/quodque suus coniunx rignu conlegerat horto,/truncat holus foliis; furca levat ille bicorni/sordida terga suis nigro pendentia tigno/servatoque diu resecat de tergore partem/exiguam sectamque domat ferventibus undis.*

<sup>220</sup> See Hallett 547-8. Providing a humorous summary of Baucis' cooking labors, Hallett crisply points out that, for all of the poem's claims about equality between the couple, Baucis' share of the domestic labors seems much larger than her husband's.

vegetable—cabbage.<sup>221</sup> Indeed, even his choice to subtract a host of cooks running about a banquet’s flames in favor of a small fire with an old woman and man before a single pan is revealing. Like our other authors, his sketch of Baucis at the kitchen flame with her copper pot does not provide much information about the knowledge she possesses or enacts. Although his portrayal is more sympathetic to kitchen activities, Ovid uses Baucis’s culinary practices for his own ends rather than to praise her or recount the skills of a talented cook, thereby exposing his similar prejudice against competent cooks and busy kitchens that is present in other Latin authors. In essence, he relies on the moral benefits of the elderly couple’s simple culinary actions and rustic food as a foil to the numerous (and perhaps more wealthy) homes that turned away the traveling gods. Or in other words, his picture of culinary simplicity in a humble setting devalues the work performed in larger kitchens and the skills of a more competent cook.

The anonymous author of the poem *Moretum* in the *Appendix Vergiliana* that features Simulus cooking himself a breakfast of freshly baked bread and *moretum* (a rustic dish of garlic, salted cheese, and garden cut herbs) relies on similar cooking tropes to underscore the hard work and simplicity of the humble farmer and his unpretentious appetites.<sup>222</sup> Even though Simulus has one slave in his home—an African woman named Scybale, whom the author describes by leaning on offensive stereotypes of curly hair, swollen lips, broad chest with droopy breasts, thin legs, flat stomach, and wide feet in addition to pointing out her dark complexion, his home reveals a similar type of romanticized poverty that Ovid assigned to the old and pious Baucis and Philemon.<sup>223</sup> That is to say that, while there is an obvious master and slave hierarchy in this tale, the author emphasizes that it is Simulus who prepares the fire for the hearth, mills the flour, and cooks the food; Scybale only

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<sup>221</sup> On this meal as an example a traditional Roman meal, see Gowers, “Talking Trees,” 339-40; Hallett 553; G. Karl Galinsky, *Ovid’s Metamorphoses: An Introduction to the Basic Aspects* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 201-2; and Mary Kay Gamel, “Baucis and Philemon: Paradigm or Paradox,” *Helios* 11.1 (1984): 120.

<sup>222</sup> Fitzgerald, “Labor and Laborer,” 390, n.4.

<sup>223</sup> On the relationship between Simulus and Scybale as master and slave, see Fitzgerald, “Labor and Laborer,” 402-5.

externally aids him in these tasks. Hence, the story creates a setting that is at odds with the typical situation found in elite Roman homes. Here, the homeowner takes immediate responsibility for the use of his household resources and the manner in which he feeds himself and his slave. Similar to Baucis and Philemon's little house, his home has a small garden that grows many things including cabbage (not surprisingly), beets, sorrel, mallows, elecampane, lettuce, asparagus, onions, chives, watercress, and cucumbers. This collection of crops should seem similar after the discussion about dietary habits in the previous chapter and we will see more on elecampane in this chapter. In effect, the items found in his garden help underline the humble farmer's rusticity and virtue.<sup>224</sup> Not only do the vegetables demonstrate his lack of luxurious appetite, but the author also uses the heavy bellied cucumbers growing in his garden to sharpen the point of Simulus's frugality. The writer notes that these are not for Simulus's table; rather he sells them at the market for a profit and is disciplined enough to return home without buying anything while in town (*Mor.* 68-81). Commenting on the author's representation of Simulus's garden and his self-sufficiency, Fitzgerald notes that these were important elements "of the myth of rural poverty. What the rich need from Simulus, in addition to his produce, is the fantasy of independence from the city that his imagined life provides them."<sup>225</sup>

Indeed, the pleasant fiction of his self-reliance and financial prudence punctuates the cooking that Simulus performs. When the author relates Simulus cooking activities, he (perhaps not surprisingly by this point) emphasizes the simplicity of the ingredients in conjunction with Simulus's considerable effort. For example, after Simulus wakes in the morning, he arduously starts a flame from the embers of the previous night's fire before he gathers grain to grind so that he might bake bread for his breakfast (*Mor.* 1-20). The writer draws attention to Simulus's right hand moving the flour mill in circles, noting that the left one occasionally offers a break when the right has tired

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<sup>224</sup> Compare to Pliny *HN* 19.57. He claims that ancient Romans would judge a farmer by the state of his garden. Additionally, he asserts that kitchen gardens were the responsibility of the farmer's wife.

<sup>225</sup> Fitzgerald, "Labor and Laborer," 405-6.

(*Mor.* 24-31). Again, the author highlights Simulus's hands as he combines the flour, which he has ground himself, with warm water on top of the smooth table he cleaned off for the task; his open palms knead and form the dough before he places it in the hearth and covers it with tiles to bake (*Mor.* 36-50). The same pattern of humble ingredients and Simulus's laboring hands is employed yet again for the preparation of the dish that gives the poem its title:<sup>226</sup>

His right hand first softens the pungent garlic, then he mashes everything so the juices mix equally. His hand goes round; gradually the ingredients lose their own character, and one color emerges from them all, not totally green, because the white bits resist, nor shining with the milk, because it is varied by all the herbs. Often the sharp odor attacks Simulus's flared nostrils and he curses his dinner with his snub nose. He wipes his weeping eyes often with his hand and furiously curses the guiltless fumes.

The work proceeded; no longer bumpy, as before, but the pestle moved more heavily as it circled. So he pours in drops of Athena's oil and on top of that a little vinegar for sharpness and again he mixes the product. Then with fingers around all the mortar he goes at last and brings into one ball the different portions, so that in name and likeness there is finished *moretum*. (*Mor.* 101-16).<sup>227</sup>

Although this anonymous author offers a bit more detail on the possible cooking techniques commonly used in Roman domestic kitchens, such as grinding flour, kneading dough, placing prepared dough in lit hearth on a clean spot underneath tiles, or preparing *moretum* in a mortar and pestle with available cheese, garlic and garden herbs, he overlays his tale with so many Roman clichés about the value of rustic simplicity, self-sufficiency, and virtuous poverty found in country-

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<sup>226</sup> For a discussion of the poet's use of the humble practice of cooking to create an elaborate metaphor for writing of poetry, see Fitzgerald, "Labor and Laborer," 413-4.

<sup>227</sup> *dextera pistillo primum fragrantia mollit/ alia, tum pariter mixto terit omnia suco./ it manus in gyrum: paulatim singula vires/ deperdunt proprias, color est e pluribus unus,/ nec totus viridis, quia lactea frusta repugnant,/ nec de lacte nitens, quia tot variatur ab herbis./ saepe viri nares acer iaculatur apertas/ spiritus et simo damnat sua prandia vultu,/ saepe manu summa lacrimantia lumina target/ immeritoque furens dicit convicia fumo./ procedebat opus; nec iam salebrosus, ut ante,/ sed gravior lentos ibat pistillus in orbis./ ergo Palladii guttas instillat olive/ exiguique super vires infundit aceti/ atque iterum commiscet opus mixtumque retractat.*

life as to make himself a suspicious source for actual cooking techniques.<sup>228</sup> Much like Ovid's elderly Baucis before her little hearth, this author's main character and his culinary efforts serves itself up as a quaint metaphor for its intended elite readers.<sup>229</sup>

In short, Roman authors rely on smoke, strong smells, heat, and commotion to illustrate the characteristics of household kitchens run by cooks and other slaves. Yet, their representations of kitchens expose their prejudice and reveal their ignorance about cooking. Indeed, their complaints about kitchens are devoid of specificity about ingredients and instructions while simultaneously indicating a general lack of consideration for those engaged in labors meant to feed their household and guests. What is more, Latin authors hint at a concern about household resources in left the hands of a sloppy or extravagant cook as well as threats of physical violence cooks endured if their work was found lacking. On the other hand, those writers who place the simple cooking done by the poor as a central theme in their story provide little insight into cooking because they romanticize their characters' poverty, morality, and rustic lifestyle so much that they share very little about the cooking they highlight in their poems. Indeed, the way they describe cooking is as generic as those authors who comment on slaves cooking in their homes.

## II. *Lora*, Sweet Cakes, and *Foie Gras*: Recipes as Elite Expressions of Mastery

Despite general disparaging remarks about the practices of food preparation and the knowledge cooks possess, Roman authors scatter recipes throughout their works in an attempt to

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<sup>228</sup> On Romans' ambiguous views on garlic and how it sharply divided the cooking done by rustic folk and the sophisticated elite, see Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 290–98. She also notes that this pungent bulb was associated with masculine vigor. On his rant against garlic, see Horace *Ep.* 3.

<sup>229</sup> One obvious exception from the story of Simulus making his breakfast to other representations of cooking in domestic settings is the anonymous author's recurrent attention on the humble farmer's fear of hunger. In fact, the poem begins, ends, and is driven by Simulus's fear of hunger. His day starts with him waking to the threat of gloomy hunger (*Mor.* 1-7). The poem ends with the fear of hunger being driven away before he heads out to his fields to plough the land (*Mor.* 117-22). At first glance, Simulus's actions seem to be motivated by a worry that is similar to concerns about caloric deprivation that are expressed in Apuleius's tale rather than the praise Seneca and Pliny give to temporary excursions into hunger for one's moral or physical benefits, which we saw in the previous chapter. Yet, the tale's focus on a rustic farmer's personal actions to bring an end to his own hunger with a simple meal that then allows him to go work in the field is typically Senecan and Plinian.

appropriate the language inherent to food preparation, thereby claiming mastery over the type of knowledge that cooks and other food-lovers possess. Notably, while elite authors invoke the words and implied performances of culinary vernacular, the goal of their recipes is decidedly different from that of a chef's. In lieu of producing a meal that showcases one's taste and skill, two overarching concerns inform the type of recipes that Roman elites include: control of management of household resources and the appropriation and mastery over culinary language.

First, recipes in agricultural authors demonstrate an attempt to control the management of domestic resources, which also reveal underlying assumptions about domestic power relations.<sup>230</sup> Although writing during the mid-Republic, Cato the Elder's recipes offer some of the best examples of an elite male's inclusion of this form of communication and provide a foundation upon which later authors talked about recipes and food.<sup>231</sup> Notably, the placing of this recipe within his work illuminates the assumptions that inform his thoughts on the proper allocation of household resources.<sup>232</sup> Before giving a recipe for a low-quality wine reserved for the *familia*, or household laborers, Cato describes the type of early ripening (and lower quality) grape that should be set aside to make the wine (*Agr.* 23).<sup>233</sup> Later, while discussing the hemp mats and vats needed to create it, he asserts that this wine can feed oxen through the winter, and also be served to the *familia* (*Agr.* 25).<sup>234</sup> Indeed, Cato's instructions reaffirm the lowly and unsecure position of slaves in domestic power

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<sup>230</sup>Thomas Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity, and Empire in the Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 34-68. Habinek argues that Cato's manual (and other Latin literature) codified, defined, and promulgated aristocratic ideals; it naturalized their authority and valorized tradition over any other source of authority. See also, Brendon Reay, "Cato's *De agricultura* and the Spectacle of Expertise," in *Roman Republican Villas: Architecture, Context, and Ideology*, eds. Jeffrey A. Becker and Nicola Terrenato (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012), 63.

<sup>231</sup>For instance, Cato includes recipes regarding the type of wine that is best produced for the slaves laboring on his farm, which Varro later includes in his work (*R.R.* 1.50). Compare Cato's instructions for wine cultivation as well as recipes to Columella *Rust.* 12. 34-42.

<sup>232</sup>Terrenato, Nicola, "The Enigma of 'Catonian' Villas" in *Roman Republican Villas: Architecture, Context, and Ideology*, eds. Jeffrey A. Becker and Nicola Terrenato (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012), 81.

<sup>233</sup>*Unas miscella, vinum praeliganeum quod operarii bibant, ubi tempus erit, legito.* See, also Varr. *R.R.* 1.54.1.

<sup>234</sup>*Quom vinum coctum erit et quom legetur, facito uti servetur familiae primum suisque facitoque studeas bene percoctum siccumque legere, ne vinum nomen perdat. Vinaceos cotidie recentis succernito lecto restibus subtento, vel cribrum illi rei parato. Eos conculcato in dolia picata vel in lacum vinarium picatum. Id bene iubeto oblini, quod des bubus per hiemem. Indidem, si voles, lavito paulatim. Erit lora familiae quod bibat.*

structures through his easy association of enslaved persons and animal chattel, one that Varro will later more directly articulate in his work and Roman law will make explicit.<sup>235</sup> Cato then outlines the exact amount of food and wine that should be allocated for enslaved laborers (*Agr.* 56-58).<sup>236</sup> Finally, after detailing the type of grape and the amount of food and wine best reserved for his slaves, he then provides this recipe for *lora* wine:

Wine for the household to drink during the winter. Put 10 *quadrantals* must in a vat and add 2 *quadrantals* grape syrup, 50 *quadrantals* pure water. Mix with a stick three times a day for 5 consecutive days. Add 64 pints old seawater, put the lid on the vat and seal after 10 days. This wine will last you till the solstice. If any remains unused after the solstice, it will make very sharp and very good vinegar (*Agr.* 104).<sup>237</sup>

The last line of this recipe succinctly illuminates Cato's efforts to govern the farm's resources. Obviously, Cato's claim to repurpose wine that might have passed its usefulness as a beverage is in line with a mindset that is more conservative with its resources than modern first-world practices. Nevertheless, in light of his previous remarks about the quality of grape and rations allowed to his enslaved laborers, this recipe and its stated second life also confirm domestic hierarchies and assign a notion of usefulness that all resources employed or produced on the farm must meet.<sup>238</sup> That is, he commands *another* to accomplish the outlined tasks and seems to rest on an authority that is inherent in his position not only as the author of the text, but also that of an experienced farm and slave owner.<sup>239</sup> Additionally, his thoughts leading up and including this recipe are filled with assumptions about enslaved household member's position within domestic hierarchies. Indeed,

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<sup>235</sup> Varro. *R.R.* 1.17.1

<sup>236</sup> On the inconsistencies in Cato's recipes for wine for the household as well as the significance of his incomplete detailing of process and tools used for the production of wine, see Terranato, "The Enigma of 'Catonian' Villas," 80-82.

<sup>237</sup> Translation by Andrew Dalby. *Vinum familiae per hiemem qui utatur. Musti Q. X in dolium indito, aceti acris Q. II eodem infundito, sapaē Q. II, aquae dulcis Q. L. Haec rude misceto ter in die dies quinque continuos. Eo addito aquae marinae veteris sextarios LXIII et operculum in dolium inponito et oblinito post dies X. Hoc vinum durabit tibi usque ad solstitium. Si quid superfuerit post solstitium, acetum acerrimum et pulcherrimum erit.*

<sup>238</sup> On the idea of *utilitas* and villa settings, see Annalisa Marzano, *Roman Villas in Central Italy: A Social and Economic History* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) 88-89.

<sup>239</sup> For a similar display of mastery and control over the knowledge of farm labor, see Columella *Rust.* 7.7:8. In this passage, Columella attempts to demonstrate his knowledge about the best methods for cheese production.

Cato asserts his powerful position within these social relationships by controlling access to the type and amount of sustenance needed for his slaves' survival.<sup>240</sup> The wine's second life as vinegar indicates that nothing set aside for the *familia's* consumption can be wasted. Cato's recipes for uncomplicated edibles or cooking basics also represent an attempt to use culinary phraseology in order to show the farm's (and thereby its owner's) self-reliance.<sup>241</sup> Although his overarching organizational themes are difficult to trace, the driving force of agrarian self-sufficiency is revealed as Cato commonly includes recipes within his agricultural manual after a discussion of the types of goods a farm should produce, or the type of items it will need to operate well.<sup>242</sup> For example, Cato provides recipes for preserving lentils, a Pontic version of the humble Roman dish—*puls*, as well as ones for food staples like starch, white salt, and durum wheat. His cooking instructions for different versions of sweet cakes made with sheep-milk cheese, however, expose his misguided attempt to employ the phrasing typical to gastric formulas:

Placenta to be made thus: 2 *lb* bread flour to make the base; 4 *lb* flour and 2 *lb* primer emmer groats to make the layers. Turn the emmer into water; when it is really soft put in a clean mixing bowl and drain it well; then knead it with your hands, and when it is well worked add the 4 *lb* of flour gradually, and make into sheets; arrange them in a basket to dry out. When they are dry rearrange them, press them with a cloth soaked in oil, wipe them round and damp them. When they are made, heat up your cooking fire (hearth). Then moisten the 2 *lb*. flour and knead it; from this you make a thin base. Put in water 14 *lb*. sheep's cheese, not sour, quite fresh; let it steep, changing the water three times; take it out and squeeze it gradually dry with the hands; when properly dry put it in a mixing bowl. When all the cheese is properly dried out, in a clean mortar knead it with the hands, breaking it down as much as possible. Then take a clean flour sieve and press the cheese through the sieve into

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<sup>240</sup>Ulrike Roth employs Cato's numbers for the items and food needed to sustain a villa's slave population to understand how the exploitation of female slave (re)production made not only the development of large villas economically profitable, but also how the exploitation of their labor also fueled the growth of Rome's territorial empire. Ulrike Roth, *Thinking Tools: Agricultural Slavery Between Evidence and Models* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2007), 25-52; 91-118.

<sup>241</sup>On Cato using frugality and rustic simplicity as a distraction for his relatively underprivileged position as a *homo novus* and as a way to gain political support from other aristocrats in Central, see Terrenato, "The Enigma of 'Catonian' Villas," 85-87.

<sup>242</sup>Dalby, *Cato*, 17. On the haphazard organization of Cato's farming manual, Dalby suggests: "He put down what he knew, as it came to his mind, as if he were giving advice verbally; the choice of a farm, the staffing, the equipping of it, the use of the land, the work that must be planned through the year, the essential religious rites, the terms of trade for building work and for various tasks that were subcontracted--and a good deal more."

the mortar. Then add 4 1/2 *lb.* good honey and mix it well with the cheese. Then put the base on a clean table which gives a foot of space, with oiled bay leaves under it, and make the placenta. First place a single sheet over the whole base, then one by one, spread the sheets [with the mixture] from the and add them, spreading them in such a way that you eventually use all the cheese and honey, and on the top put one more sheet by itself. Then draw up [the edges of] the base, having previously stoked up the fire; then place the placenta to cook, cover it with the heated *testu*, and put hot coals around it and above it. Be sure to cook it well and slowly. Open to check on it two or three times. When it is cooked, remove it and cook it with honey. This makes one gallon of placenta (*Agr.* 76).<sup>243</sup>

On its surface, Cato's recipe is convincing.<sup>244</sup> He is careful to include the types of things that usually denote cooking language and the skills needed to interpret it. In other words, he has specified amounts of ingredients and instructions that require learned skills to achieve desired results. That is, he directs one to knead 2 lb of moistened flour in order to make a thin base. His command assumes that one is aware of the type and amount of moistening agent needed (i.e. water and perhaps additionally some type of fat like olive oil) in order to make pliable dough that will serve as the base.<sup>245</sup> Indeed, his instruction depends on the experiential and tactile knowledge one requires in order to avoid over-kneading the dough, thereby making it either unworkable or extremely tough once baked. However, once a person tries to perform the activities outlined in his written instructions, Cato's clumsy attempt to use this type of language comes to light. As Andrew Dalby

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<sup>243</sup> Translation by Andrew Dalby. *Placentam sic facito. Farinae siligineae L. II, unde solum facias, in tracta farinae L. IIII et alicae primae L. II. Alicam in aquam infundito. Ubi bene mollis erit, in mortarium purum indito siccatoque bene. Deinde manibus depresso. Ubi bene subactum erit, farinae L. IIII paulatim addito. Id utrumque tracta facito. In qualo, ubi arescant, componito. Ubi arebunt, componito puriter. Cum facies singula tracta, ubi depresso, panno oleo uncto tangito et circumtergeto ungitoque. Ubi tracta erunt, focum, ubi coquas, calfacito bene et testum. Postea farinae L. II conspargito condepressoque. Inde facito solum tenue. Casei ovilli P: XIII ne acidum et bene recens in aquam indito. Ibi macerato, aquam ter mutato. Inde eximito siccatoque bene paulatim manibus, siccum bene in mortarium inponito. Ubi omne caseum bene siccaveris, in mortarium purum manibus condepresso comminuitoque quam maxime. Deinde cribrum farinarium purum sumito caseumque per cribrum facito transeat in mortarium. Postea indito mellis boni P. IIII S. Id una bene commisceto cum caseo. Postea in tabula pura, quae pateat P. I, ibi balteum ponito, folia laurea uncta supponito, placentam fingito. Tracta singula in totum solum primum ponito, deinde de mortario tracta linito, tracta addito singulatim, item linito usque adeo, donec omne caseum cum melle abusus eris. In summum tracta singula indito, postea solum contrabito ornatoque focum + de ve primo + temperatoque, tunc placentam inponito, testo caldo operito, pruna insuper et circum operito. Aperito, dum inspicias, bis aut ter. Ubi cocta erit, eximito et melle ungitoque. Haec erit placenta semodialis.*

<sup>244</sup> After providing his reader this recipe, he then offers variations of it so that one can make other sweet, cheese-cakes like *spira*, *scribilla*, and *globi* (*Agr.* 77-82).

<sup>245</sup> When I attempted to make Dalby's version of this recipe, I found that adding water alone to the flour did not create a workable dough that could handle even light kneading. However, once I added a touch of olive oil, the dough become slightly more pliable. On a side note, it also helped enhance its flavor. Additionally, a student from my senior seminar on Roman food and the body chose to make this sweet-cake, and she too found that the dough needed additional oil and water to become pliable.

notes, Cato's measurements are flawed. "The ratio of ingredients doesn't always work; the 2 lb of soaked semolina will not absorb 4 lb of flour to make a dough for the internal layers; and the base dough would have been too large to bake."<sup>246</sup> Dalby concludes that Cato must have been confused by the recipe that he copied. Yet, I contend that if Cato was familiar with cooking and the nature of the ingredients he included in this recipe, he would not have recorded the mistaken measurements. Like representations of cooks or cooking in other Latin authors, Cato's recipes reveal his ignorance of the type of skills and knowledge cooks possess.<sup>247</sup> Nevertheless, his inclusion of the recipe demonstrates his attempt to appropriate this type of communication for his own ends. Brendon Reay's recent works on Cato's agricultural manual provides some insight on how these recipes fit into Cato's larger showcasing of his expertise. He argues that Cato's nitpicky detailing and hands-on approach to farm labors falls into what he terms 'masterly extensibility' or the "conception of slaves not as independent agents, but as prosthetic tools with which the master assiduously and individually "cultivated" his fields."<sup>248</sup> This type of extensibility seems to underpin his recipes as well. The compact, culinary expressions support his command over the allocation and use of his farm's resources, which supports his performance as a self-reliant and simply satisfied Roman farmer. Additionally, they also underline that Cato, as a head of the larger household body, directed the all of the labor and daily routines that occurred on his farm. Or in other words, whether or not one can actually make *placenta*, or the other sweet cakes he mentions, seems not to have been his priority.

Like Cato, Horace and Pliny also imitate the language of the culinary literate for their own purposes. In the previously mentioned satire that pokes fun of Catus' epicurean fastidiousness, Horace includes some brief instructions on how to make a couple of versions of a sauce. Noting

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<sup>246</sup> Andrew Dalby and Sally Grainger, *The Classical Cookbook* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), 95.

<sup>247</sup> Compare to Leon, 217-218. Unlike me, she trusts that Cato was intimately familiar with the preparation of these recipes and claims that when he forgets something like adding salt or another ingredient, it is because he assumes his reader would know how to make it. Obviously, I find this blind faith in Cato's culinary knowledge problematic.

<sup>248</sup> Reay, "Agricultural Writing," 335. Confer Aristotle Pol. 1255b, where Aristotle claims that the slave is part of the masters body. See also, Reay "The Spectacle of Expertise," 64 and Brendon Reay, "Some Addressees of Virgil's *Georgics* and their Audience" *Vergilius* 49 (2003): 17-41.

that a person should know how to make a good double sauce, Catus explains that this simple sauce consists of sweet olive oil that mixed with thick wine and brine. When these are boiled, you add some chopped herbs; then you sprinkle on the sauce some Cilician saffron and leave the sauce to stand. After it has been left alone for a bit, you then add some pressed berries of Venafran olive (*Sat.* 2.4:63-70).<sup>249</sup>

Again, Horace uses the type of physical and sensory language typical of recipes. He instructs a person to mix olive oil, wine, and brine together. Tastes and smells mingle with these actions as he directs one to use sweet olive oil, chopped herbs, and saffron. In fact, Emily Gower's notes that these sauces are made from the best ingredients and they contain a peculiarly Alexandrian combination of bad and sweet smells.<sup>250</sup> Nevertheless, this recipe does not provide enough information so as to allow one to recreate the sauces. Describing the various puns and meanings Horace created in this poem that reveal his poetic mastery through his use of culinary language, Gowers pauses briefly to lament: "Sadly many subtleties of this recipe are lost on us."<sup>251</sup> I wonder if the subtleties of this recipe were lost on Horace as well as it seems more likely that his inclusion of it served his literary pursuits rather than his culinary efforts. Although Horace's parroting of a cook's linguistic behaviors puts his own satirical and literary talent center-stage, his use of gastronomic language underscores yet again Roman authors' attempt to appropriate this form of communication for their own ends, while revealing their lack of attention to culinary skills in favor of other agendas. The general tone of this satire and the inclusion of exotic ingredients in his recipe for these sauces falls back on elite authors' tendency to relay another's love of fine or foreign food as a signal of inappropriate behaviors and tastes.

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<sup>249</sup> *est operae pretium duplicis pernoscere iuris/naturam. simplex e dulci constat olivo,/quod pingui/miscere mero muriaque decebit/non alia quam qua Byzantia putuit orca./hoc ubi confusum sectis inferbuit herbis/Corycioque croco sparsum stetit, insuper addes/presa Venafranae quod baca remisit olivae.*

<sup>250</sup> Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 156.

<sup>251</sup> Gowers, *The Loaded Table*, 156.

Pliny the Elder also imitates the type of vernacular cooks and other food lovers use in order to categorize appropriate Roman behaviors. However, unlike Horace or Cato, he trains his eye on the culinary practices that help prepare ingredients—particularly the liver—for cooking and eventual consumption. Relaying that Romans displayed greater wisdom than other people when they discovered goose liver’s goodness, Pliny relies on the shorthand of recipes to describe the initial steps in the preparation of a type of *foie gras*. “When they are crammed, this (the liver) grows to a very large size, and on being taken from the animal, is made still larger by being soaked in honeyed milk” (*HN* 10.27).<sup>252</sup> In this brief sentence, Pliny has provided a truncated recipe of ingredients and practice: engorged geese liver marinated in a mixture of honey and milk. Even though he offers some insight into the preparation of geese liver for consumption, his description is so brief that one cannot actually use this language to cook it. Nevertheless, it does not stop him from mimicking culinary expressions. In another section, he asserts that Apicius, led by the pursuit of luxury in all things, developed a process for stuffing sows’ livers following similar techniques others used for geese; however, Pliny also remarks immediately before the sow is killed, it is covered with honeyed-wine (*HN* 8.77).<sup>253</sup> Again, an elite author attempts to manipulate the language and practices specific to culinary arts, but misses the mark. It makes little sense, nor would it affect the flavor of the sow’s excised liver, to cover the living animal in honeyed-wine *before* killing it. More likely, the liver is placed in this marinade after it has been removed from the body. Perhaps, this is not a mistake in his work and Pliny is fully aware of the confusion of this process. Indeed, his reversal of the description from the one he provides for *foie gras* could be a backhanded insult for Apicius’s over-extravagance and wastefulness. Whatever the cause (ignorance or insult), Pliny continues the same pattern found in Cato and Horace’s works: that is, he employs the type of short-hand language inherent to cooking instructions for his own purposes. Nevertheless, despite his attempt to

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<sup>252</sup> *fartilibus in magnam amplitudinem crescit, exemptum quoque lacte mulso augetur.*

<sup>253</sup> *adhibetur et ars iecori feminarum sicut anserum, inventum m. apici, fico arida saginatis ac satie necatis repente mulsi potu dato.*

demonstrate mastery and judgment over these matters, he unwittingly reveals his superficial familiarity with these arts.

Pliny, however, puts forward more precise instructions for food items that are simply prepared and that he deems are beneficial for the body. By doing so, he illuminates the moral undercurrents that inform his views on culinary practices. Following his remarks on *foie gras*, Pliny turns to the medicinal properties of goose fat. He explains that mixing this fat with cinnamon in a bronze vessel, which is then placed under snow, produces an excellent medicament (*HN* 10.28).<sup>254</sup> Although his language, particularly as regards the measurements of ingredients are imprecise, his recipe for this remedy is more detailed than those for the preparation of goose or sow liver. That is, Pliny is careful to mention that a bronze vessel is required and that it must be covered in snow. Doing so, he reveals the tool or object needed to assist in the process and he indicates that temperature change is essential to the medicament's formation. Notably, Pliny leaves out this type of information in his other recipes. His attention to these small details here discloses Pliny's greater interest in the preparation of food items that have beneficial properties rather than those that are meant to feed and pleasure the body.

Pliny's recipe for elecampane brings together his interest in relating efficacious food items and his focus on simply prepared dishes. He notes that this bitter herb on its own is injurious to the stomach; yet, when it is combined with sweeter items, it become more palatable and wholesome.<sup>255</sup> He claims that dried elecampane should be ground into a fine flour, and then mixed with a sweet liquid, or boiled vinegar and water. It can be mixed with boiled grape juice, or added to honey and raisins as well as eaten with dates, quinces, and plums. He also claims that you can vary the flavor of elecampane with pepper and thyme. He ends this section on elecampane by declaring it is good for

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<sup>254</sup> *aliud reperit syriae pars quae commagene vocatur, adipem eorum in vase aereo cum cinnamo nive multa obrutum ac rigore gelido maceratum ad usum praeclari medicaminis, quod ab gente dicitur commagenum.*

<sup>255</sup> Columella *Rust.* 6.3.35. He notes that elecampane thrives in deeply trenched and well-manured soil. He additionally gives instructions on best to harvest and cook it (*Rust.* 12.48).

stomach ailments, and Julia Augusta ate it daily to help her belly (*HN* 19.29).<sup>256</sup> In effect, Pliny explains the various methods of preparation that will bring out this herb's best qualities. Again, he uses the compressed expressions of cooking that assume a person's experiential knowledge. True to his more common practice, he does not include tools or instructions for temperature change. Rather, his instruction for making a type of flour out of the herb assumes one implicitly knows the amount of time elecampane must first dry and then the tools one would need to grind it into flour. Pliny then explains that a person can mix this powdered herb with various liquids, or that it can be combined with quinces, sorbs, and plums, or pepper and thyme.<sup>257</sup> Again, Pliny demonstrates greater interest in detailing the preparation of this medicinal root than he did in describing the steps taken to prepare a fine meal.

In essence, the recipes elite authors decide to include in their works expose their attempts to appropriate the type of knowledge and communication that cooks used. Not concerned with actually passing on necessary ingredients and instructions for preparing food, Cato wields culinary language to express his mastery over the enslaved in his homes and his careful allocation of his household resources. Horace and Pliny also parrot culinary language in their works in order to censure their peers. Again, the knowledge and skills of cooks is borrowed and subverted in order to serve their literary agendas to mock those who attempt to demonstrate social relevance in Roman society through their gastronomic refinement. In fact, the inclusion of these imprecise or erroneously configured recipes coupled with common negative attitudes towards domestic kitchens and cooks suggests that elite authors were suspicious of the type of knowledge and skills that the culinary-abled in Rome had. In response to the influence they might have or the access they had to household

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<sup>256</sup> *pluribus modis austeritate victa gratiam invenit. namque et in pollinem tunditur arida liquidoque dulci temperatur, et decocta posca aut adservata vel macerata pluribus modis et tunc mixta defruto aut subacta melle visive passis aut pinguibus caryotis. alio rursus modo cotoneis malis vel sorbis aut prunis, aliquando pipere aut thymo variata defectus praecipue stomachi excitat, inlustrata maxime iuliae augustae cotidiano cibo.*

<sup>257</sup> Supposedly originally springing from Helen's tears, it was commonly used as a tonic to enhance a woman's beauty and sex appeal or act as food supplement: Hippoc *Mul.* 32; Diosc. *MM.* 1.28-9. See also, Andrew Dalby, *Food in the Ancient World*, 131.

resources, these authors indicate that they attempted to manage and maintain domestic relationships and resources through an intellectual seizure of cooks' knowledge.

### III. Urine, Menses, and Feces: Recipes and Remedies Defining Gender and Class

Perhaps more intriguing than the tension between their stated disdain for the kitchen yet demonstrable desire to adopt the appearance culinary knowledge are Roman authors' recipes and remedies that are tied specifically to the human body. Cato, Pliny, Celsus, and Petronius all provide examples of recipes that either have a specific impact on the body or use somatic properties in such a way that they tellingly reveal how elite authors perceived of their own embodiment in contrast to that of children, eunuchs, women or freed and enslaved person. In fact, these culinary or medicinal recipes powerfully and concisely disclose the strategies and assumptions of elite men.

Cato's simple recipes for his beloved cabbage offer some of the best examples of the relationship between recipe and body. For instance, Cato recommends that cabbage be washed, dried, and seasoned with salt or vinegar. Nothing is healthier, he claims. If preferred, one can also enjoy it with honeyed vinegar. Additionally, he suggests eating cabbage that has been washed, dried, and seasoned with rue, coriander and salt. Cato then asserts that if a person practices disciplined cabbage consumption and saves his urine, he can heat this cabbage infused urine and bathe a person who is ill in it; the person will heal immediately. If a baby is bathed in this cabbage urine, it will never be weak; and if a woman soaks her labia in it, she will never become diseased (*Agr.* 157). Although Dalby contends these recipes come from this specific book of the *de Agricultura* were not written by Cato's hand but added by a scribe, he does not rule out the possibility that the book was added to Cato's work with his permission; he says there is no way of knowing.<sup>258</sup> Whether or not

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<sup>258</sup> Dalby, *On Farming*, 24. "I must add that, having had to translate chapter 157, the long excursus on the medical wonders of cabbage, I cannot accept that it was composed by Cato. Its repetitiousness is of a different kind from his. In any one passage, Cato writes concisely, even if he may afterwards revert to a topic and determinedly or absent-

Cato wrote these is not essential for my purposes. More significant is whether these recipes and the experience of Roman male embodiment they suggest are accurate. That is, if Cato did not write these recipes, but agreed to their inclusion within his work, then we can assume that Cato found (at the very least) that the information contained in them was of some use. Although the answer to this question is difficult to answer, we do know that, by Varro and Pliny's lifetimes, Cato's love of cabbage had become tradition as both separately record anecdotes about him and this leafy vegetable (Varro, *R.R.* 1,2.28; Pliny, *HN* 19.21). Additionally, regarding its use as a remedy on its own or as an ingredient, Celsus and Pliny the Elder also record the curative properties of urine for the treatment of different problems (see below).<sup>259</sup> Thus, these recipes and their outcomes seem at least compatible with ideas expressed elsewhere in Roman sources. If we accept these recipes, then they and the kind of urine they produce suggest an active attempt to control and affect the body. They also demonstrate a male body image that is rather extraordinary. Through the performance of strict cabbage-eating habits, the male body does not simply urinate but creates a product that has healing powers. Indeed, the male body appropriately fed and controlled becomes the gold standard by which all other bodies are judged and treated. His body is placed at the head of a clear hierarchy of body types: healthy male body, then sick body, infant body, and finally female body with the focus on its genitals. From these recipes for cabbage, we begin to see some of the first glimmers of Roman notions of embodiment: namely, the male body is an object that demonstrates control, power, and almost supernatural curative abilities.

The primacy of the male body as compared to other perceptions of embodiment in Rome becomes clearer through the recipes Pliny the Elder provide for urine-based topical ointments or

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mindedly repeat himself. The composer of this chapter on cabbage wrote laxly, repeating thoughts and words haphazardly from sentence to sentence. I suggest its origin is in notes made from some medical lecture. Because the subject matter fitted, these notes were incorporated alongside Cato's own chapter on cabbage (156) by one of the earliest scribes who made a copy of his book. Whether the addition had his authority I see no way to determine. If it had, he was unwise: but we have Plutarch's observation that, on medical matters, Cato was sometimes unwise."

<sup>259</sup> Pliny specifically mentions that old urine can treat rashes on baby's skins and urine mixed with soda treats ulcers found on genitals (*HN* 28.66-67)

other curative treatments. Notably, he makes a side comment on the lamentable state of medicine in his day before he goes into detailing different remedies. Similar to his remarks on his contemporaries disgraceful pursuit of luxury food items that extend beyond the boundaries Nature intended, he points out that people's desire for profit has made medicine too expensive. If remedies were sought in the kitchen garden rather than a storehouse containing ingredients from Arabia, India, and the Red Sea, he contends, then medicine would be cheaper and Romans would not have to be subjects to foreigners practicing their medicinal arts (*HN* 24.4-5).<sup>260</sup> Hence, his recipes for remedies involving somatic by-products demonstrate a similar attempt to appropriate knowledge, but in this case that of doctors rather than cooks. Although he has much to say about its ability to diagnose various illnesses or the need to treat problems associated with it, Pliny remarks on the medicinal properties of urine reflect a similar value placed on the bodily by-product produced by a male body that was seen in Cato's urine based remedies.<sup>261</sup>

Pliny is not always clear about the specific gendered or classed body from which he identifies the beneficial uses of urine. But, whenever he is precise, he is quite telling. For instance, he frequently combines other ingredients with children, eunuch, or women's urine to bring out its useful properties. The urine of child (*pueri inpuberi*) mixed together with boiled barley and cyathus helps drain sores associated with scrofula (*HN* 24.40). Additionally, he observes that urine from children who have not yet reach puberty should be used if a person has been bitten by an asp (*HN* 28.65).<sup>262</sup> Child urine mixed with breast milk is good for lung infections (*HN* 28.75). However, if a person desires aid in sexual matters, Pliny claims that a concoction of ash from a brya tree and urine from a eunuch makes a powerful aphrodisiac (*HN* 24.72). Elsewhere, he quickly drops a brief comment

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<sup>260</sup> One suspects that Pliny might complain about people consulting kitchen gardens in a large home for their cures, if he wasn't complaining about foreigners practicing medicine because cooks were likely in control of kitchen gardens.

<sup>261</sup> For some examples, see *HN* 24. 20-40; 28.68.

<sup>262</sup> If one happens to be bitten by any number of animals—but particularly dogs, he notes that a person's own urine is best to use (*HN* 28.67).

that a woman's own urine is best used to treat clothes that have stains from her menstrual blood, indicating the female urine seems to have no medicinal use (*HN* 28.85). Yet, he claims male urine—notably unattached to any other agent—cures gout (*HN* 28.66).

Similar to the gender assumptions and values in Cato's cabbage recipes disclose, Pliny's urine based remedies presume that the male body on its own, without any other catalyst, has curative properties. Notably, Pliny's remedies suggest that the male body on its own does not have to be of a specific social status in order to exhibit these curative elements. That is, he grounds his observation on the power of unadulterated male urine by pointing out that fullers do not suffer from this ailment. Although fullers could enjoy some economic stability and their shops and services are essential to the fabric of Roman towns, nevertheless, their status and position in Roman society did not enjoy the same privileges, prestige, and power that men of the senatorial class (like Pliny the Elder) did. Thus, his observation that fullers do not suffer from gout indicates an assumed valuing of male gender, regardless of class, that informs his thought. In contrast to his remarks on aphrodisiacs derived from eunuch's pee, he underscores that the male body with its genitals intact is able to produce curative properties. His evaluation of male primacy is underlined by his remedies that rely on eunuchs and women's bodies. That is the eunuch's body is an essential element in aphrodisiac while a woman's urine treats her own menstrual blood. Thus, he highlights the sexualized aspect of these bodies by the insinuation of what makes is obviously not sexualized (lack of genitals) or on what makes it unquestionably feminine (menses). The child's body suggests its liminality.<sup>263</sup> In both instances of cures involving children urine, Pliny notes that the urine in these remedies must come from prepubescent boys. For instance, the urine from a *puer impuberi* on its

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<sup>263</sup> For discussions on liminality of children's bodies and the expectations of enslaved children's bodies, especially as sexual objects, see; Francesca Mencacci, "Modestia vs. licentia: Seneca on Childhood and Status in the Roman Family," in *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture*, eds. Véronique Dasen and Thomas Späth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 223-44; Christian Laes, "Delicia-Children Revisited: The Evidence of Statius Silva," in *Children, Memory, and Family Identity in Roman Culture*, eds. Véronique Dasen and Thomas Späth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 245-72; and Fanny Dolansky, "Togam virile sumere: Coming of Age in the Roman World," in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, eds. J.C. Edmondson and Allison Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 47-70.

own, without any other ingredient, is able to cure an asp bite. Yet, Pliny also records that this by-product from a child's body must be mixed with other ingredient in order to be effective. Notably, in one case the child's urine is mixed with a women's breast milk.

Pliny the Elder's recipes for remedies that include women's breast milk offer a window into Roman perceptions of female embodiment (*HN* 28. 72-75). Notably, his discussion of breast milk cures immediately follows that of his description of urine's healing properties. But, when he turns to the female body, the focus is on those bodily secretions that showcase her ability to reproduce. For example, Pliny observes that women's breast milk can offer aid to those with long fevers or celiac (*HN* 28.72). Breast milk's ability to treat eye problems receives his greatest attention. To help a bloodshot eye, he recommends that one combine breast milk with honey, juice of narcissus, or powdered incense (*HN* 28.72). Or, one can mix it with egg whites, soak a wool cloth in it, and apply to the forehead to help diseased eyes (*HN* 28.72). Pliny notes that a woman's milk is more effective if she has given birth to a boy, and it seems to get double whammy power if she has given birth twin boys (*HN* 28. 72-73). Milk from a baby-boy-producing-female body can even prevent dogs from going mad (*HN* 28.75). Milk from a woman who had a daughter, however, is best only for curing face spots (*HN* 28.75).

A comparison between Cato's cabbage recipes and Pliny's urine and breast milk remedies provides some nuance to Roman attitudes about gendered bodies. For Cato, the male body's normal ingestive, digestive, and excretory processes produce a healing agent. Indeed, the only thing the man needs to do in order to tap into this power is to include more cabbage salad in his diet. Pliny's observation about male urine's ability to ward off gout does not even need cabbage. The male body's economy on its own is enough. The woman's body can also produce curative agents, but this is only the body that has been affected by a man who helps to jumpstart the production of therapeutic bodily secretions. Or in other words, it is not until she has become a reproducer that

her body is able to create a restorative liquid. In fact, her breast milk only reaches its full potential when added to other ingredients like honey, narcissus juice, or oil. Moreover, it is the female body that has reproduced one or possibly two male bodies that is the most powerful.

The only other female bodily fluids Pliny mentions in this section on remedies are saliva, which aids bloodshot eyes (but he is clear to point out that it must come from a woman who has not ingested food or wine the day before), and menstrual fluid (*HN* 28.76). Unaltered, menses seems best suited to drive off various forms of insects and vermin, highlighting its destructive rather than therapeutic qualities (*HN* 28.78-80).<sup>264</sup> Yet, he does include two recipes that rely on menses. The first combines ash, wax, and ash from burnt menstrual blood in order to heal animal sores. One can also mix this blood ash with rose oil to relieve headaches (*HN* 28.85-86). In effect, these recipes suggest is that what the female body naturally produces (unlike the male body) must be altered in some way to be able to become palliative—not unlike her breast milk.

Recipes for laxatives offer some insight into elite Roman perceptions of an enslaved and freed body. For instance, Cato offers a cluster of recipes for various medicinal wines in his agricultural handbook. Laxative wines all depend on ground hellebore (*Agr.* 115-116); old wine boiled with juniper can help ease urine retention or gout symptoms (*Agr.* 122-123); while wine mixed with myrtle berries helps indigestion and loose bowels (*Agr.* 125); and dry red wine steeped with 30 sour pomegranates for 30 days will help alleviate colic, loose bowels, and tapeworm (*Agr.* 126). Amazing cabbage also comes to the rescue if a person is suffering from constipation. In this recipe from Cato's work, however, cabbage is part of a larger concoction that boils pig's trotter, beets, polypody, mussels, fish, scorpion, snails, lentils, and wine (*Agr.* 158). What is most striking about Cato's discussions of medicinal wines and cabbage-infused laxatives is the distance he keeps

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<sup>264</sup> For a discussion on Pliny's remedies using women's breast milk and menses, see Amy Richlin, "Pliny's Brassier," in *Roman Sexualities*, eds. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1997), 197-220.

between himself and the recipes he provides. That is to say, Cato keeps himself and his body removed from the physical effects and intended outcome of the recipe. Much like his recipes for sweetcakes and cabbage, these recipes reveal Cato's notions of mastery and male embodiment. His authoritative voice instructs *others* what they must do if they suffer such afflictions, but he does not give away his own body's response to such calculated culinary shorthand.

Conversely, Petronius provides an anecdote about how the enslaved—or more precisely formerly enslaved now freed—body responds to a recipe meant to counter constipation. As we saw in the previous chapter, Petronius uses Trimalchio's dinner alongside his conduct and that of his guests and slaves to undermine his attempt to ape the practices of the elite. Indeed, the dinner foregrounds how erroneously Trimalchio has interpreted these behaviors. His misjudgment becomes even more apparent when he steps away from the dinner party for a moment. At the beginning of his extravagant and gaudy meal, Trimalchio appears to leave the dining area for a time, which allows his guests to gossip (*Sat.* 41). After a while, he returns mopping his brow and washing his hands, both of which are interesting actions when the reader learns from whence he is returning. Trimalchio waits for a few awkward moments before he informs his guests about where he was, even though none of them seem to have noticed his absence.<sup>265</sup> He claims that for the past few days he had been having some digestive difficulties, and that the doctors did not know what to do. Therefore, he prescribed himself his own remedy of pomegranate rind and pine-wood dipped in vinegar (*Sat.* 47). Like Cato's cabbage recipes to produce curative urine, this one does not appear to be overly complicated. However, unlike Cato's more elaborate recipe for a laxative that included cabbage as one of many ingredients, Trimalchio's recipe seems perhaps misinformed—even more so when one remembers that Cato used pomegranate flowers to assist in the flow of urine not excrement (*Agr.* 126, 127).

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<sup>265</sup> On Petronius' parodying Plato's *Symposium*, specifically the central figures temporary absence, see Bodel, "The Cena Trimalchionis," 39-41.

More importantly, Trimalchio highlights his own body's response to the laxative. He informs his guests that he did in fact relieve himself because he claims that his insides were rumbling and that it was tortuous to hold in his feces. He then encourages his guests to feel free to leave the table themselves if they are so moved by their bodies (*Sat.* 47). Thus, Trimalchio represents Roman imaginings of slave and freedmen's bodies. His body dictates his actions, not the reverse. In fact, he focuses so much on the need to evacuate his bowels, and the need for others to do so, that he extends his passive understanding of his bodily functions onto his guests, claiming that they should not feel ashamed if they cannot control their bodily needs. For his attempts at graciousness, his guests mock him as they thank him for his generosity while attempting to hide their laughter. In essence, the wealthy freedman's body becomes a site of ridicule—one that almost revels in the physicality of its excretory process.

In short, recipes that are tied specifically to body and the various liquids or solids it excretes/secretates disclose elite male authors' perceptions of gendered and classed embodiment. The male body is productive and restorative; the female body is most valuable when it has fulfilled its reproductive abilities; and the enslaved and freedmen's body ridiculously relishes in producing feces. The true significance of what these authors reveal about domestic hierarchies and the daily experiences of class and gendered embodiment in the Roman world, however, can not be fully understood until the actions that accompanied elite authors' observations are brought to light. I explore the power of routine, daily activities more in the next chapter. However, before I turn to that, I would like to end this section with a question about these recipes as performative texts. In order to do so, I offer a thought experiment. If we take these authors at their word and imagine that some men in the Roman world did so as well, then we can begin to get a sense of how actions attached to recipes—specifically those tied to the body—had the ability to communicate certain social realities to individuals. For instance, let's imagine that some men read Cato's manual and

decided to try eat cabbage seasoned with rue, coriander, and salt and then *collected* their urine to be used later as a remedy. Let's imagine that some women had their breast milk *collected* for uses other than feeding the young or their menses was *collected* and then *burned*. These actions would create specific relationships with a person's own body. In fact, the actions inherent in these recipes helped to inscribe Roman gender and social constructions onto the various bodies in their society.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

In sum, Roman authors reveal their distaste for domestic kitchen environments and the bustling activity that they created. However, their perceptions of the culinary practices and belittling of the knowledge that cooks held, elite writers expose their ignorance about the skills and practices cooks relied on to produce meals worthy of the households in which they forced to work. They also provide brief glimpses into the harsh conditions, physical labor, and threats of violence that surrounded the daily efforts of domestic cooks, whose work directly affected the allocation of household resources. Latin authors also demonstrate that, in spite of their undisguised disdain for kitchens and cooks, they felt the need to appropriate the language—and thereby knowledge—of the culinary literate in Roman world. For example, Cato the Elder, Horace, and Pliny the Elder attempt to mimic the shorthand language of recipes. Cato does so to underscore his unchallenged position within his household and his overarching control of not only the distribution and use of his farm's resources, but also all of the daily activities that contributed and maintained it. Horace apes culinary language to mock those who have been fooled into valuing the frivolity of gastronomic pleasures, while Pliny does the same, but also adds a moral spin to his criticisms of others' extravagance when he also provides examples of useful and beneficial recipes. Finally, elite authors also lean on recipes that are tied specifically to the human body to express their notions of classed and gendered bodies.

In the next chapter, I explore human and object interactions with the fixtures and tools designed to assist cooking, eating, and excreting food. In essence, the Roman cultural assumptions about the digesting body, food and dietary practices, and cooking and culinary language that I have explored in these three chapters directly influence perceptions about and physical experiences of quotidian activities. In fact, the ideas explore in these chapter helped to create a physical world that precisely communicated non-verbal messages about class and gender that accompanied a person's daily routine.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Bending, Stooping, and Touching: The Body, Tools, and Non-Verbal Codes of Class and Gender



This humble scene of a woman curled over a stove in the process of cooking a meal while seated diners converse behind her is found on a silver scyphus that was discovered on the underground level of the Casa del Menandro in Pompeii by Amedeo Maiuri.<sup>266</sup> It is part of a larger treasure that includes coins, jewelry and dining-ware that was either continually stored in the lower level of the house or perhaps stashed below for safekeeping as the home owners fled from the eruption of 79 CE.<sup>267</sup> Sadly, other items from this silver collection—such as coins or larger pieces—have received greater attention than this cup. Even the other three cups in this cache seem to catch scholars’ eyes more than this one with its cooking woman. In lieu of the lengthier descriptions detailing the mythological scenes found on the others, this cup receives a brief description and the woman herself is dismissed as not even worthy of an entire sentence. She is simply added on as an afterthought—“and a young woman bending over a hearth.”<sup>268</sup> Yet, she and

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<sup>266</sup> Scyphus with rustic scenes, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. no. 145505 .

<sup>267</sup> Kenneth S. Painter, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii Volume IV: The Silver Treasure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 33-34.

<sup>268</sup> Painter, 54-55; See also Maria R. Borriello et al, *Pompeii: abitare sotto il Vesuvio* (Ferrara: Ferrara arte, 1996), 221; Lucia Pirizio Biroli Stefanelli et al, *L’Argento dei Romani: vasellame da tavola e d’apparato* (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1991),

her labor offer a rare window into the cultural and social assumptions that Romans held about various practices involved in the care of the body's nutritional and digestive needs. Indeed, the representation of this woman's work as she interacts with the fixtures and objects designed to assist her efforts exposes how the material world of Roman homes participated in managing and maintaining domestic hierarchies through non-verbal codes that accompanied daily routines.

Even though many scholars have examined Roman homes over the years—especially with the recent focus on these spaces as a lens into Roman social and cultural practices—few have attempted to explore the particular relationship between the human body and domestic architecture and fixtures.<sup>269</sup> This is a significant oversight because, as other scholars have noted, architects frequently design buildings with the body's physical presence and movement in mind.<sup>270</sup> In fact, the built environment is imagined and designed according to a perceived relationship to the human body. As Yi Fu Tuan argues, the body informs how a person organizes space in such a way “that it [space] conforms with and caters to his biological needs and social relations.”<sup>271</sup> This claim holds true not only for space but for objects and fixtures as well. Indeed, items from Roman households made to assist in the preparation, consumption, and elimination of food indicate design choices that manifest an attention to the body's interaction with the item. It is also worth pausing here to highlight that these designs are the result of deliberation. As Stephen Pheasant observes:

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267, nos. 73-4; Amedeo Maiuri, *La Casa del Menandro e il suo tesoro di argenteria* (Roma: Libreria dello Stato, 1933), 251, 262-3, 272-9, 279-310, no. 2, pls. XX-XXIV.

<sup>269</sup> Lisa C. Nevett, *Domestic Space in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Pia Kastenmeier, *I luoghi del lavoro domestico nella casa pompeiana* (Roma: “Erma” di Bretschneider, 2007); Mark Grahame, “Public and Private in the Roman House,” 1997; Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii*, 1994.

<sup>270</sup> For example, Katharine T. von Stackelberg, *The Roman Garden: Space, Sense, and Society* (Routledge: London, 2009), 50-51. Referring to Lefebvre 1991, von Stackelberg explains, “It is one of the truisms of architecture that the body not only moves in space but also shapes the space around it, yet critical approaches usually relegate the somatic effect of a given space to a secondary position, preferring to concentrate on its intellectual comprehension.” Additionally, Mark Grahame's work, *Reading Space: Social Interaction and Identity in the Houses of Roman Pompeii, a Syntactical Approach to the Analysis and Interpretation of Built Space* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), explores how “domestic space have the power to shape us as individuals” and asserts that domestic spaces in Pompeian housing are “analogous to a text that is read with the body” (5).

<sup>271</sup> Yi Fu Tuan, *Space and Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 34.

To say that we live in an artificial world is a bit of a truism...It is all too easy to ignore the simple fact that most of the physical and tangible characteristics of the artificial environments in which we spend the greater amount of our lives are the consequences of design decisions...They represent choices that have been made which could have been made differently but were by no means inevitable.<sup>272</sup>

Consistency in design choices suggests cultural perceptions about social practices, values, and tastes. Conversely, modifications to common designs or evidence of repurposing various objects signal personal preferences for spatial organization and utilization of tools that can sometimes contradict or resist accepted social practices.<sup>273</sup>

Investigating the design of household fixtures and tools constructed to assist biological needs provides clues to the unspoken affirmations that influenced daily interactions and framed Roman interpretations of domestic hierarchies. Not only does the built environment set the stage for repeated non-verbal codes signaling class and gender to outsider observers, it also creates an immediate and repetitive experience with one's own body. As Pierre Bourdieu explains, "the world of objects" is like a book that is read with the entire body as it moves through and displaces space.<sup>274</sup> Placing the body within the designed world of Roman household objects allows modern scholars to recreate messages that a person wordlessly received and interpreted about one's status in Roman households.

In this chapter, I argue that non-verbal codes of status and gender, which are inherent in the design of household fixtures and tools, played a fundamental role in the execution of routine activities surrounding bodily needs. These unspoken communications helped perpetuate strictly defined domestic hierarchies in spaces that regularly lacked clearly articulated separations between elite and non-elite locations.<sup>275</sup> Although it is impossible to decode all the subtleties of Romans'

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<sup>272</sup> Stephen Pheasant, *Bodyspace: Anthropometry, Ergonomics, and Design* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1986), 4.

<sup>273</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 29-42.

<sup>274</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 76.

<sup>275</sup> Penelope Allison, "Artefact Distribution and Spatial Function in Pompeian Houses," in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*, ed. Beryl Rawson and P R. C. Weaver. (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre, 1997), 321-354;

non-verbal communications, I assert that elite Roman attitudes about somatic functions generally shaped spaces and objects associated with cooking, eating, urinating, and defecating. These views, which are preserved in the original layout of the home or in the production of objects used for somatic functions, in turn influenced how and where the human body was used in order to perform the task or necessity.

The interplay between the human body and built environments or objects provided long-term stability to daily practices and activities that made up a part of the non-verbal messaging I explore in this chapter. In fact, it is only through this type of exchange that the realities of Roman domestic hierarchies can be understood. For instance, Latour, while arguing for the importance of actor-network-theory (ANT) in sociological studies, reasons that any claims addressing social structures that are based solely on observations about social ties and interactions are flimsy. It is similar to assigning magical motivations to human relationships and questions of power and dominance because social interactions by nature are temporal and ever-changing. However, once objects or things that can exert more permanence in the social world of interactions are included, it is possible to make more concrete assertions:

In addition to ‘determining’ or ‘serving as a backdrop for human interaction’, things might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on...[N]o science of the social can even begin if the question of who and what participates in the action is not first of all explored, even though it might mean letting elements in which, for lack of a better term, we would call non-humans.<sup>276</sup>

The physical relationship between human and non-human actors in Roman homes comprise a set of actions that brings together different elements that at once create, communicate, redefine, and resist Roman social norms and domestic hierarchies. Additionally, Latour’s definition of collective action

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Joanne Berry, “Household Artefacts: Towards a Re-interpretation of Roman Domestic Space,” in *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, ed. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill. (Portsmouth, RI: JRA, 1997), 183-195; Nevett, 98.

<sup>276</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 72.

clarifies the many elements that must be considered when studying daily activities. “[B]y collective we don’t mean an action carried over by homogenous social forces, but on the contrary, an action that collects different types of forces woven together because they are different.”<sup>277</sup>

When a person performs the daily routines surrounding bodily functions, different forces come together to create a physical experience that communicates certain socio-cultural realities to others and to the self. Architecture, tools, and fixtures provide long-term stability to daily, household interactions because built environments and tools were designed with specific assumptions about the proper and regular performance of activities surrounding bodily functions. These assumptions then encouraged repetition of practices and specific relationships with things through the human body’s interaction with it. Those relationships created between human and object or space fluidly developed and maintained a visual language of non-verbal messaging that was observed and interpreted by others, helping to establish and work out relationships and status positions in Roman homes. Moreover, the practice itself created a specific, immediate, and repetitive experience for the person performing it and her body—thereby wordlessly communicating certain realities about her role and position in the house.

This chapter illuminates the physical interaction between body and fixture or object in Roman domestic spaces, and thus relies on evidence gathered from human remains and archaeological sites and artifacts to inform the particularities of those exchanges. The skeletons of those who dramatically died during Vesuvius’s 79 CE eruption typify the various bodies that inhabited Roman homes. Because they are an extremely rich (but sometimes overly tantalizing) demographic source, these remains hold specific challenges for modern scholars. For example, Sara Bisel’s work on the 1984 discovery of 139 skeletons in Herculaneum’s ship vaults provides crucial data about the city’s ancient population, but her recreations of specific skeletons’ occupations

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<sup>277</sup> Latour, 75.

and/or social status seem more fanciful than factual.<sup>278</sup> Additionally, skeletons at Pompeii in particular have had to overcome a similar fate faced by almost all domestic artifacts discovered during early excavations: that is, the sentence of insignificance passed upon them by Pompeii's earliest archeologists, who were more interested in finding grand treasures or works of art than the implements of daily life or the people who used them.<sup>279</sup> Like many other humble artifacts, skeletal remains were haphazardly recorded in excavation journals, carelessly labeled, and poorly stored and maintained.<sup>280</sup> Indeed, based on issues raised by Native Americans and Australian Aboriginals, modern scholars of the Roman world are beginning to question the ethics surrounding the display, storage, and study of these ancient remains.<sup>281</sup> Because of their more recent discovery, the skeletons from Herculaneum offer a more comprehensive picture of the people who lived in these locations.<sup>282</sup> Despite these and other challenges, the evidence from Vesuvius's victims is helpful for the argument presented here because they indicate the average stature and health of Pompeii and Herculaneum's populations in antiquity. As I will discuss below, my height falls within the range of average statures for these ancient populations. Thus whenever helpful, I used my body to explore the exchange between human and tool.

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<sup>278</sup> Estelle Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii* (London: Routledge, 2009), 217-218. Lazer discusses the challenges of using skeletal material alone to recreate lifestyles or claims about status. Although she offers specific indications that allow for more definitive statements to be made, Lazer mentions specifically Sara Bisel's claim that two women worked as prostitutes based on observed changes to the pubic region of their pelvis as particularly spurious: see Sara Bisel and Jane F. Bisel, "Health and Nutrition at Herculaneum: An examination of human skeletal remains," in *The Natural History of Pompeii*, ed. W.F. Jashemski and F.G. Meyer, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 466-467.

<sup>279</sup> Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 4-5, 30-32.

<sup>280</sup> Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 99-104. In addition to poor labeling and storage, Lazer also records the additional problem of curious and hungry rodents and beetles that disturb and complicate modern scholars' work with these remains. Pompeii's skeletons face the additional disadvantage that early scholars who did study them preferred to examine distinct parts—particularly the skull—rather than the entire skeleton. The unfortunate result of this practice coupled with poor labeling means that it is now almost impossible to rejoin the removed skulls with their original skeletons. Thus, the information from the human bones at Pompeii is severely limited (48-51).

<sup>281</sup> For a thoughtful piece about museum displays of these skeletons and plaster casts of the victims bodies alongside other objects recovered, see Bettina Bergmann, "Museum Review: Final Hours: Victims of Vesuvius and their Possessions," *American Journal of Archaeology* 110.3 (2006): 493-501.

<sup>282</sup> Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 136; Sara Bisel, "The Human Skeletons of Herculaneum," *International Journal of Anthropology* 6.1 (1991): 2; Sara Bisel, "Nutrition in First Century Herculaneum," *Anthropologie* 26 (1988): 61; Luigi Capasso, *Fuggiaschi di Ercolano: Paleobiologia delle vittime dell'eruzione Vesuviana del 79 d.C.* (Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2001), 73, 948-54, 956-57.

In order to investigate the bodily experience of practices surrounding eating, digesting, and excreting food, I studied 47 domestic structures from Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplontis, Stabia, and Ostia. I limited my selection of houses to those that recorded the discovery of physical remnants of kitchen fixtures and/or latrines so that I could measure and interact with them. To explore the body's interaction with domestic utensils that were commonly used during cooking, eating, and evacuating waste, I initially chose a sample of 20 objects from the Insula of the Menander in Pompeii because their state of preservation allowed me to measure and weigh them. By holding them, I could also estimate how their users encountered them in bodily terms. Additionally, these items have been carefully documented and catalogued—particularly through the recent efforts of Penelope Allison and Grete Stefani.<sup>283</sup> Unfortunately, some of the items I chose for my study were unavailable because they were included in traveling exhibits. Because of my lack of access to these and personal time constraints, I needed to decrease my study of objects to only 11 items. This limitation, however, still provides telling insight about their construction, intended user, and interaction with the body and thereby informs the study of domestic items recovered and catalogued from other locations.

Taken together, the evidence of dimensions of kitchen benches, braziers, dining couches, cooking and dining ware, and latrines in combination with the average height of Roman men and women unveils the physical demands made upon peoples' bodies as they performed activities associated with somatic functions. My argument begins with a brief description of the type of bodies that inhabited Roman homes. Next, I examine material evidence and visual representation of domestic activities surrounding bodily needs parallel to the steps of the body's digestive process: that is, (1) food preparation, (2) food consumption, and (3) food elimination. By connecting averages of male and female stature to dimensions and weight of common domestic fixtures or tools, the lived

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<sup>283</sup> Penelope Allison, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii, 3: The Finds, a Contextual Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Grete Stefani, *Menander: La Casa del Menandro di Pompei* (Soprintendenza archeologica di Pompei, 2003).

and bodily experience of Roman cultural practices becomes visible and indicates attempts to manage domestic hierarchies through quotidian activities. Because I am sensitive to the concerns raised by archeologists about historians' tendency to privilege textual accounts as they interpret (and sometimes distort) material evidence, I begin each section with a study of the permanent or semi-permanent domestic fixtures associated with food preparation, consumption, and excretion in order to gauge the physical relationship between human and tool.<sup>284</sup> Next, I compare these exchanges to similar ones represented in frescoes and reliefs. After establishing a congruent visual language between artifact and representation, I then employ these images to help inform interactions between the body and the smaller, movable items that assisted somatic functions. Through these studies, I reveal how posture and (sometimes) visible physical strain demanded by these spaces, fixtures, and tools helped signify one's position within the home. In fact, comparing the activities involved in the various processes of digestion uncovers continuity in Roman practices that signaled class and gender through the use of one's body. Roman domestic spaces, tools, and visual representations of these activities correspondingly mark lower status on the body through various degrees of concaved postures that simultaneously imply movement and mutability. Elite status is contrasted to these lowlier positions by relying on representations of erect or reclined postures with open and expansive poses. Additionally, domestic fixtures, tools and visual representations of these daily tasks suggest that Romans accounted for an 'audience' observing these activities, thereby confirming that Romans were aware that the non-verbal cues of status inherent in these physical exchanges had the power to articulate and maintain domestic hierarchies. In each section, I also explore how specific modifications to fixtures or tools attempted to negotiate different expressions of household relationships and status performances.

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<sup>284</sup> Allison "Artefact Distribution," 321-323; Berry, 183-185.

## I. Stature and Health of Ancient Roman Populations

The interaction between person and object, and inherent non-verbal codes tied to such exchanges, can only come to light by knowing the type of human bodies that populated and moved through Roman homes. Physical anthropologists and archaeologists continue to rely on Mildred Trotter and Goldine Gleser's 1958 formula that estimates a human's height based upon long bone measurements for the reconstruction of ancient populations' stature.<sup>285</sup> Ester Lazer, however, cautions that applying this formula to the human remains of those who died in Pompeii only creates a very broad sketch of average male and female height.<sup>286</sup> Rather, the work of Sara Bisel and Luigi Capasso offer more possibilities for height reconstruction. For example, although their results disagree by a few centimeters for both men and women, Bisel and Capasso independently argue that the height for Herculaneum's ancient inhabitants is comparable to that of modern Neapolitans. In fact, the ancient population was slightly taller (Table 1).<sup>287</sup> Thus, the average male body that worked and moved in Roman domestic spaces was 163.8—169.1 cm tall and females were 152.6—155.2. In feet, that makes men roughly 5'5" and women around 5'0" tall.

**Table 1**  
**Stature estimates for the Herculaneum skeletal sample and modern Neapolitan sample**  
**(based on Lazer 2009, 183)**

<b>Herculaneum Males</b> (Bisel and Bisel 2002—using Trotter and Gleser 1958)	169.1 cm
<b>Herculaneum Females</b> (Bisel and Bisel 2002—using Trotter and Gleser 1958)	155.2 cm
<b>Herculaneum Males</b>	163.8 cm

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<sup>285</sup> Mildred Trotter and Goldine C. Gleser, "Estimation of Stature from Long Bones of American Whites and Negroes," *American Journal Physical Anthropology* 10 (1952): 463-514; Mildred Trotter and Goldine C. Gleser, "A Re-evaluation of Estimation of Stature Based on Measurement of Stature Taken During Life and of Long Bones After Death," *American Journal Physical Anthropology* 16 (1958): 79-123; Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 179-184; Bisel and Bisel, "Health and Nutrition at Herculaneum," 455; Bisel "The Human Skeletons of Herculaneum," 4; Bisel, "Nutrition in First Century Herculaneum," 64; Luigi I. Capasso, *Fuggiaschi di Ercolano*, 925, 927.

<sup>286</sup> Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 179-183.

<sup>287</sup> Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 183. See also C. D'Amore, M. Carfagna, and G. Matarese, "Definizione antropologia della popolazione adulta di un comune della provincia di Napoli," in *Rendiconto dell'Accademia della Scienze, Fisiche e Matematiche della Società Nazionale di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti in Napoli, Serie IV, XXXI* (1964), 409.

(Capasso 2001—using Trotter and Gleser 1958)

<b>Herculaneum Females</b>	151.7 cm
(Capasso 2001—using Trotter and Gleser 1958)	
<b>Modern Neapolitan Males</b>	164 cm
(D'Amore <i>et al.</i> 1964)	
<b>Modern Neapolitan Females</b>	152.6 cm
(D'Amore <i>et al.</i> 1964)	

The skeletons at Pompeii and Herculaneum also imply that environmental and health issues had physical effects on these ancient populations. For instance, these remains tell us much about the inhabitants' diet. As Bisel notes, many skeletons exhibited marks that recur because of long-term effects of low-level anemia.<sup>288</sup> Data from these remains also manifest high level of strontium, which is a mineral found in vegetables that exists equal to the amount found in soil in which they grow or in variable amounts in herbivores and omnivores dependent on their consumption of either strontium-rich vegetables or meat.<sup>289</sup> Strontium is also found in abundance in fish and those who ingest a seafood-rich diet. Herculaneum's close proximity to the sea and its ship vaults confirm that fish was likely a major component of the ancient population's diet. Lazer's study of human remains at Pompeii yielded the same results.<sup>290</sup> Teeth provide additional information about diet and health of the ancient inhabitants from these towns. As Bisel observes, many Herculaneans had excellent teeth with few caries cavities, well-developed enamel, and strong jaws. These characteristics are consistent with the effects of a low-sugar diet, the consumptions of refined flour and dried meats.<sup>291</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Bisel and Bisel "Health and Nutrition at Herculaneum," 457-458.

<sup>289</sup> Bisel and Bisel "Health and Nutrition at Herculaneum," 457-458; Bisel, "The Human Skeletons of Herculaneum," 11; Bisel "Nutrition in First Century Herculaneum," 62, 65; Capasso, *Fuggiaschi di Ercolano*, 1065-1067; Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 213-214; M. Torino and G. Fornaciari, "Paleopatologia degli individui nella Casa di Giulio Polibio," in *La Casa di Giulio Polibio: Studi Interdisciplinari*, ed. A. Ciarallo and E. De Carolas (Pompeii: Centro Studi Arti Figurative, Università di Tokio, 2001), 95-98.

<sup>290</sup> Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 199.

<sup>291</sup> Bisel and Bisel "Health and Nutrition at Herculaneum," 455, 461-465; Bisel "The Human Skeletons of Herculaneum," 8; Lazer finds a similar pattern of low caries cavities in Pompeian skeletons (*Resurrecting Pompeii*, 171).

In general, Vesuvius's victims did not suffer from poor nutrition and illness during childhood and enjoyed the benefits of a healthy diet throughout their lives.<sup>292</sup>

Other indications, however, demonstrate that certain people suffered from larger health problems.<sup>293</sup> Some individuals had healthy, well-developed and rounded bones, but others had flattened ones that bore stress marks from over-use during the bones' development.<sup>294</sup> Capasso, Bisel and Lazer also record the presence of some disorders or illness such as brucellosis, tuberculosis, and arthritis in addition to marks showing recovery from an injury; such issues would have caused some members of these societies either physical discomfort or intense pain.<sup>295</sup> The evidence about diet and illness underlines that although the population alive at the time of eruption did not generally suffer from poor nutrition, some did experience physical discomfort and pain that accompanied various disorders, injuries, or overuse. As a result, these illness or ailments would have colored their physical experience of daily tasks associated with the care of their bodies.

## **II. Food Preparation**

The physical details that the skeletons from Herculaneum and Pompeii reveal about the health and stature of ancient populations elucidate the relationship that existed between ancient Romans and their built environment—particularly their homes—and the tools they relied on while tending to their somatic needs. Such interactions offer clues about Roman perceptions of common

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<sup>292</sup> Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 219. However, Lazer also noticed that many skulls bear the marks of worn dental enamel on the back molars that is consistent with patterns of dental wear found in other populations who regularly consumed unrefined wheat products and/or wheat ground in stone mills that leave traces of stone dust in the flour (170-171). In effect, the flour ground in the various examples of large stone mills found in Pompeii and Herculaneum contributed to dental problem that afflicted some members of these ancient communities.

<sup>293</sup> Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 184-220.

<sup>294</sup> Bisel and Bisel "Health and Nutrition at Herculaneum," 455-456; Capasso, 936-937; Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 184-185. See also, Kenneth A.R. Kennedy, "Skeletal Markers of Occupational Stress," in *Reconstruction of Life from the Skeleton*, ed. M.Y. Iscan and K.A.R. Kennedy. (New York: Allan R. Liss, 1989), 136-37.

<sup>295</sup> Bisel and Bisel, "Health and Nutrition at Herculaneum," 463-473; Luigi Capasso "Infectious Diseases and Eating Habits at Herculaneum (1<sup>st</sup> Century AD, Southern Italy)," *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 17. 4 (2007): 353-54; Luigi Capasso and G. di Tota, "Lice Buried Under the Ashes of Herculaneum," *The Lancet* 351(1998): 992; Luigi Capasso and G. di Tota, "Tuberculosis in Herculaneum (79 AD)," in *Tuberculosis Past and Present*; ed. G. Pálfi, O. Dutour, J. Deák and I. Hutás (Budapest: Golden Books & Tuberculosis Foundation, 1999), 463-67; Lazer, *Resurrecting Pompeii*, 184-220.

practices and the non-verbal messages that were attached to these activities. For instance, averages for male and female stature provided above in combination with the height of the kitchen bench where food was prepared or cooked implies the position the human body must hold in order to use it. Relying on Pedar Foss and Penelope Allison's work to identify and study houses with extant kitchen fixtures, I studied 46 domestic structures from Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplontis, and Stabiae in order to gather a sample of their average dimensions and construction.<sup>296</sup> Although I agree with Foss's categorization, I rely on the term kitchen bench more frequently than stove because stove suggests that these fixtures were only employed for cooking food when it is most likely that they assisted various stages of food preparation.<sup>297</sup> Notwithstanding this difference in terminology, I studied a group of 22 houses at Pompeii and Herculaneum that had original and/or extant kitchen benches like those Foss defined, and whose dimensions could be measured, in order to understand design choices that effected the interaction between human body and object.<sup>298</sup> It must be noted, however, that the measurements I present here are only approximations because I could not always measure from original floor surfaces and some benches were restored—although I noted instances of obvious and sometimes overly optimistic restoration (see Table 2). Additionally, my discussion of the physical interaction between bench and tool is informed by my physical exchange with these things because I am of 5'5" (167.64 cm), which is roughly the average height of a man from these ancient populations. I recognize, however, that my physical experience cannot speak to all of the various exchanges that occurred between object and individuals.

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<sup>296</sup> Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 125-34; Foss "Kitchens and Dining Rooms at Pompeii," 78-84. Foss notes that most common type of kitchen installation at Pompeii is the masonry stove, which he declares is always built against a wall in the kitchen. These masonry fixtures vary in size and manners of construction: 1) solid stove; 2) stove with arched under space; or 3) stove with squared under space. See also, Chapter 3, XX.

<sup>297</sup> Foss, "Kitchens and Dining Rooms at Pompeii," 69. He discusses the various Latin terms used to describe the kitchen or cooking areas.

<sup>298</sup> I also relied on Penelope Allison's companion website to her book to locate houses with extant and measurable examples of kitchen benches: *Pompeian Households: An Analysis of Material Culture*, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/home>

Despite these limitations, these approximations of size in connection with the average human stature of Pompeii and Herculaneum's ancient populations are telling. For instance, 13 different kitchen benches fell within the height range of 50-75 cm. Taking into account an additional 30-35 cm that would be added to the stove's height because of braziers or ceramic cooking devices holding a pot, the combined height of the bench and tools would still require a 163 to 169 cm tall person to bend forward in order to use it.<sup>299</sup> For example, when I stood before a 60.5 cm tall stove in the Casa di Principe di Napoli, I needed to lean deeply forward in order to come close enough to reach a height that would allow me to use the surface (Figure 1 and 2).



Figure 1: Kitchen bench at Casa del Principe di Napoli, Pompeii: I. Photo by author.



Figure 2: Kitchen bench at Casa del Principe di Napoli, Pompeii: II. Photo by author.

Only two houses out of the 22 studied have more comfortable working heights that fall between 80-89 cm, and four houses have kitchen benches with heights between 90-99 cm that allow for an erect posture during use (see Table 2). Thus, the material evidence suggests an understood physical

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<sup>299</sup> Again, this is only an approximation as there are differences in size of brazier or cooking pots (*cacabus*, *pantera*, etc.). Yet, this measurement helps give a sense of added height to the surface of the bench dependent on the other utensils in use.

interaction between body and kitchen bench demanded that the body be in an either deeply bowed or slightly concave position when preparing food. Indeed, an upright position seems to signal a deviation from common practices inside atrium-style homes.

**Table 2**  
**Measurements and Observations of Kitchen Benches**  
**Atrium Houses**

<u>Pompeii</u>			
House VIII 2, 26			
Fixture	Width cm	Height cm	Depth (Length) cm
Kitchen bench (street level)	339/340 for 3 arches 413/414 for 4 <sup>th</sup> arch	67, 57, 60 (different h for remains)	96
Kitchen bench (criptoportico)	203/204	75	120
House VIII 2, 28			
Fixture	Width cm	Height cm	Depth (Length) cm
Kitchen bench	215.5	52	122
Casa di Giuseppe VIII 2, 39			
Fixture	Width cm	Height cm	Depth (Length) cm
Kitchen bench (recon?)	256	60.5	99.6
House VIII 5, 9			
Fixture	Width cm	Height cm	Depth (Length) cm
Kitchen bench	254-55	63	111.5
House I 6, 8-9			
Fixture	Width cm	Height cm	Depth (Length) cm
Kitchen bench W Side	133-134 between E&W	109 (back wall) 75 (middle slant) 57.5 (lowest)	97
Kitchen bench E Side	133-134 between E&W	85 (back) 76.5 (middle) 59 (lowest)	?
Casa del Sacerdos Amandus			
Fixture	Width cm	Height cm	Depth (Length) cm
Kitchen Bench	118-119	74	88

Casa del Principe di Napoli			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	157	60.5	120.5

House VI 16, 26			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	150.2	23	94

Casa di Marco Lucretio Fronto			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen Bench	141	95	100

Casa di Vetti			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	250	90	135

Casa del Fabbro			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	195	94	94-96

Casa del Menandro			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench (opposite entrance)	170	61-62	138
Kitchen bench (perpendicular to entrance)	196	49 (top corroded)	118

Casa del Efebo			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	158	90	91

### Herculaneum

Casa dei due Atri			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen Bench (section closest to street)	75 (to oven) 104(to wall)	78	
Kitchen bench (closest to entrance)	172 (outer to oven)	82 (front section) 84 (next to wall)	61
Oven	29	78 (outer) 54 (interior)	64

Casa della Gemma			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	162.5 (exterior) 59 (interior)	72 (middle) 81.5/82 (N side)	64.5

	Casa del Nettune e Antifrite		
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	161	65	82/83

	Casa dei Quadretti Teatrali		
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	211.5	66	85.5

	Casa di Galba*		
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	210	39	111.5

	Casa del Bel Cortile		
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen Bench (on East side)	96	64 (bench height) 103 (height of wall)	

	Casa del Gran Portale		
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	168	56	64.5-66

**Average height of kitchen benches in 22 atrium houses observed: 70.88 cm**

**Frequency of Height**

	# houses	Height
Smallest:		
	52 cm	
	13	50-75 cm
	2	80-89
	5	90-99

\*\* Two houses had measurements lower than 52 cm (Casa del Galba: 39 cm and House VI 16, 26: 23 cm), but the state of these benches were so poor that I do not include their heights in my discussion here

The visual language represented in depictions of domestic food preparation agrees with the relationship between body and fixture implied in the material record. Two important depictions of women using these masonry structures for food preparation exhibit Roman expectations for the interaction between the individual's body and bench and the non-verbal codes that such activities sent to outside observers. The first is the above-mentioned silver cup from the Casa del Menandro, currently on display at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli and the second is a detail from Triclinium C in the Villa della Farnesina wall paintings displayed at Museo Nazionale Romano.

Although other scholars have mentioned this cup and triclinium scene, their focuses have caused them to overlook the rare insight these scenes offer into how food was prepared in many Roman homes.<sup>300</sup> The silver cup from the Casa del Menandro presents a kitchen bench in use and portrays a specific relationship between user and object (Figure 3). The masonry structure is seen from a side view, so it is impossible to know its precise categorization. Nevertheless, on the left side, the bench has a brazier on its surface with coals or a fire burning beneath it. A smaller fixture (or perhaps ceramic stove) is foregrounded with a large pot resting on top of it. This configuration is similar to what was found on some benches still in use at the time of Vesuvius's eruption, notably the Casa del Fabbro (Figure 4). A barefoot woman wearing a long dress that falls to her ankles, an apron tied behind her back, and a type of headdress or cloth tied over her hair attends the food. While using the structure, her body is bent forward as she intently gazes into the brazier on the top of the cooking bench. It is difficult to discern what she holds in her right hand, but it seems to be something both leafy and floppy, perhaps an herb or vegetable to add to the food she is preparing. In her left hand, she holds a small dish that rests easily on her open palm with her thumb curling around its edge. Although she is not involved in the conversation and consumption of food taking place behind her, her work at the kitchen bench is accompanied by the presence of three people sitting hunched over on small stools eating and talking, about whom I will say more later.

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<sup>300</sup>For the silver cup, see note 2. For the wall painting from Triclinium C in the Villa della Farnesina, see Stephanus T. A. M. Mols and Eric M. Moormann, *La Villa della Farnesina: Le Pitture* (Milano: Electa, 2008), 37-44; Eugenio La Rocca, "Gli Affreschi della Casa di Augusto e della Villa della Farnesina: una revisione cronologica," in *Le due patrie acquisite: studi di archeologia dedicati a Walter Trillmich*, ed. E. La Rocca, Pilar León, Presicce C. Parisi, and Walter Trillmich. (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2008), 223-242; M. R. Di Mino, Irene Bragantini, and Anna M. Dolciotti, *La Villa della Farnesina: In Palazzo Massimo alle Terme*. (Milano: Electa, 1998), 49-55.



Figure 3: Silver cup from Casa del Menandro: Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. no. 145505. Photo by author.



Figure 4: Surface of kitchen bench at Casa del Fabbro, Pompeii. Photo by author.

This simple scene deftly portrays Roman non-verbal codes that communicated certain realities to both observers and performers of food preparation. First, the woman's body bows forward to meet the demands placed upon her by the height of the kitchen bench. In fact, the physical strain required of her by the bench is rendered through attention to her curled shoulders and neck, her slightly bent knees, and her hunched back. Her bare feet and indistinct clothing only seem to reaffirm her lowly position. The triangular composition of the woman and items she relies on for food preparation creates an intimate symbiosis that almost makes it impossible for the viewer to separate the cook from the work she does and the utensils she uses. Or in other words, the physical demands of her activity, and thereby her position in society, are clearly marked on her body. The encoded message is clear: she is meant for work—an instrument—and she experiences this message with her body. Moreover, her work is performed in the presence of others, who create a type of audience for her actions, although neither she nor the people near her acknowledge each

other. Their mutual lack of interest in each other's actions suggests the mundaneness and routine of her work, and an unspoken understanding of her role in society. Even if these people are not elite, as their seated posture suggests, they are able to exert their slightly elevated social position over hers merely by being the recipients of her labor.<sup>301</sup> Thus, this scene concisely relays non-verbal messages and interpretations expressed both to the person performing the task and to outside observers.

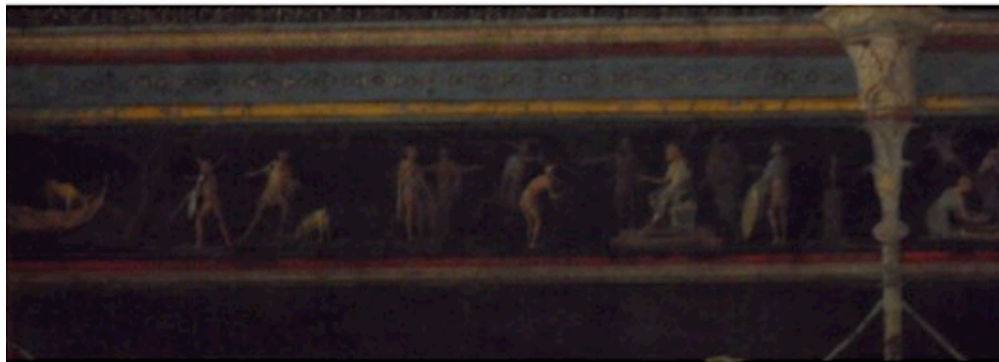


Figure 5: Detail from Triclinium C in the Villa della Farnesina, Museo Nazionale Romano.



Figure 6: Detail from Triclinium C in the Villa della Farnesina, Museo Nazionale Romano.

A fresco from Triclinium C in the Villa della Farnesina supports Roman associations of bowed posture with activities of food preparation as it captures two women who are surprised out of their tasks while a dramatic story unfolds around them (Figure 5 and 6). As Stephanus Mols and Eric Moormann note, the scene involves an accusation and trial, perhaps among more humble

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<sup>301</sup> Matthew Roller, *Dining Posture in the Roman World*, 85.

people rather than a representation of a similar event involving elite players.<sup>302</sup> The narrative begins on the western wall and continues through the central and opposite walls. As the drama progresses from scene to scene, it envelops two women at work (Detail 1, Figures 5 and 6). One woman kneels on the ground before a large circular dish and bears a large platter-like object. Her body inclines forward as she gazes down into the larger dish. Her companion carries a basket or large dish with extended arms, bent knees and a slightly curved back. She looks over her shoulder at a winged figure behind her, as if she has been startled from the task in front of her. Both women are working next to a fixture or furnishing that resembles Foss's third categorization (Figure 7).



Detail 1: Figures 5 and 6. Photo by author.



Figure 7: Kitchen bench at Casa del Bel Cortile, Herculaneum. Photo by author.

Although it is not attached to the wall, the fixture supports a dish similar to the Menander silver cup's hearth. This dish, however, does not appear to be in the process of heating or cooking food—thereby suggesting the multifunctional use of a kitchen bench.<sup>303</sup> In essence, this detail in the fresco provides the same type of non-verbal cues inherent in the design of domestic kitchen fixtures

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<sup>302</sup> Mols and Moorman, 44.

<sup>303</sup> Its lack of attachment to the wall could be an artistic choice or maybe an example of a movable fixture employed in food preparation. However, if it is not a kitchen bench, its structure and requirements on the body are strikingly similar to what has been found in Roman homes.

and the silver cup from the Casa del Menandro: namely, both women are physically represented in various degrees of prostration; both are captured in the movement of the work they are performing; both are closely associated with the tool or object they employ in their task; and both women's work performed in front of others who passively or actively observe their actions.

The posture and non-verbal clues associated with those who prepare food in domestic environments extend to include the cultivation of food outside the sphere of Roman households. The expansion of this type of messaging connotes broader Roman perceptions about the types of activities associated with food as well as the status of those who perform such tasks. In fact, two brief examples from the frescoes found in the Large Columbarium from the Villa della Pamphilj and the Villa della Farnesina demonstrate that Romans connected the visual language and practices surrounding domestic labor of food preparation within the wider context of food cultivation. Instead of the intimacy of the small kitchen on the silver cup from the House of the Menander, the activities in these frescoes take place in the open-air environments of fishing, animal husbandry, and harvesting. Despite the different locations, the representation of the physical labor involved in food preparation remains the same, if not slightly exaggerated, to those within the domestic environment. For instance, a section from the Large Columbarium shows two men fishing in what appears to be a small pond or lake (Figure 8). Each man wears a hip-length cape and/or a short tunic; the garments neither obscure nor protect their legs or arms and are contrasted with the longer, more concealing clothing of the four erect figures above them in the painting.<sup>304</sup> The man on the left has bent knees, a curled back, and rounded shoulders as he pitches his body forward into his task. The man on the right sits hunched over on a rock with one arm resting on his bent leg and the other extending to

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<sup>304</sup> For studies on clothing as a form of social control in Rome, see J. C. Edmondson, "Public Dress and Social Control in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome," in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, eds. J. C. Edmondson and Allison Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 21-46; Michele George, "The 'Dark Side' of the Toga," in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, eds. J. C. Edmondson and Alison Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 94-112.

hold a pole. Although it is unclear what the other man, who is above them and similarly clad, is doing, he nevertheless shares their same clothing and posture as he leans over and reaches out to a low white item. These men are juxtaposed to four fully clothed figures who stand erect; in fact, their backs seem dramatically convex when juxtaposed to the men who are bent over as if to highlight the distinction between the two groups.<sup>305</sup> Moreover, their clothing only exposes their arms—protecting the rest of their body from the elements and another’s gaze. Even though one of the figures on the left is significantly smaller than all the others, the clothing and posture of this individual suggests that she or he is associated with the other three figures in togas, perhaps reflecting the individual’s youth rather than status. Notably, these figures lack any indication of movement in their posture whereas the prostrate men seem to be caught in the middle of an action. Thus, these men and their peers’ positions, clothing, and activities reflect a similar type of instrumentality and/or utility to the women discussed above that accords with the physical response assumed in the design of many extant kitchen benches in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

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<sup>305</sup> Michele George notes that, while there is no specific costume for slaves, Romans had enough of an idea of what constituted their dress to don their clothing as a disguise. See Michele George, “Slave Disguise in Ancient Rome,” in *Representing the Body of the Slave*, eds. Thomas E.J. Wiedemann and Jane Gardner (London: F. Cass 2002), 49-51. On depiction of slave bodies in art, see Michele George, “Slavery and Roman Material Culture,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol.1, eds. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 397-412. On juxtaposition of figures working and to static togate figures as visual language of status, see Lauren Hackworth Petersen, “‘Clothes Make the Man’: Dressing the Roman Freedman Body,” in *Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, eds. Thorsten Fögen and Mireille M. Lee (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 186-8.



Figure 8: Large Columbarium from the Villa della Pamphilj; Museo Nazionale Romano. Photo by author.

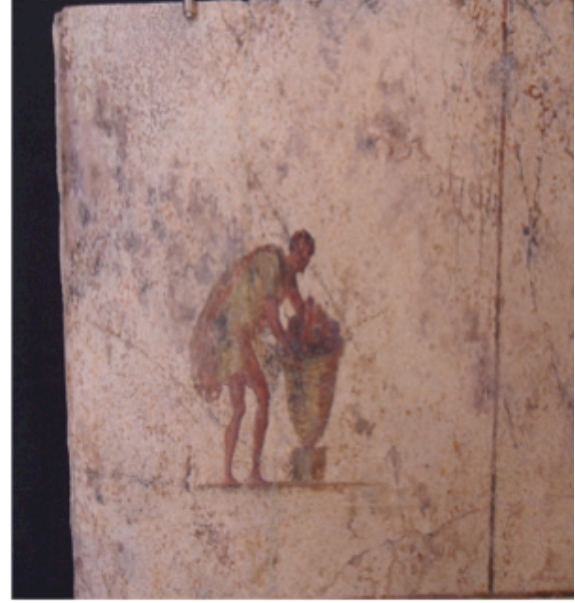


Figure 9: Corridor F-G, Villa della Farnesina, Museo Nazionale Romano. Photo by author.

Similar concaved positions and captured movement of labor are portrayed on a parallel fresco of this same columbarium and in the Villa della Farnesina. For instance, a fresco in the columbarium has a man in a short tunic and cape bending forward to lift a basket filled with flowers or fruit (Figure 9). Like the woman on the Menander cup, the man's relationship with the basket accentuates his instrumentality. Another fresco from the Corridor F-G in the Villa della Farnesina renders a bucolic scene, combining images of work and leisure (Figure 10). On the right hand side, a man in a short tunic and a blue cape bends over as he attempts to wield a large tool. Two tranquil oxen look on his efforts as a dog runs towards them (Detail 1, Figure 10). Sheep, goats, and cows graze in a field to the left of him in the center of the scene. Above the grazing animals, two men are caught in the middle of an interaction that provides significant non-verbal cues. Although they both wear the same type of clothing, a hierarchy seems to exist between the two; one man reclines on the ground—his body opened and relaxed as his right hand rests on his raised knee (Detail 2, Figure 10).



Figure 10: Corridor F-G in the Villa della Farnesina, Museo Nazionale Romano. Photo by author.



Detail 1: Figure 10. Photo by author.



Detail 2: Figure 10. Photo by author.

He leans back onto his left arm that props up his torso as he looks out on the field below him. Next to him, the other man deeply bows at the waist to bring his body down to the level of the reclining man. He holds out a tray with a dish on it to offer the reclining man either food or drink. In this

scene then, similar patterns to those found on the Menander cup and the scenes from the columbarium come to light: namely, people closely associated with the tool they employ are caught in the movement of their task, and in various levels of bending or stooping. Additionally, these freeze-frame representations of work are usually accompanied by non-working figures who respond to the working individuals' non-verbal messages with their own unspoken codes as they hold their bodies in contrasting erect or open and relaxed positions.

These various objects and images provide significant clues about Roman perceptions of the people and actions associated with food preparation, which are inherent in the design of kitchen benches, yet extend beyond the domestic realm to encompass all activities tied to food cultivation and preparation. First, those involved in various activities of food preparation or cultivation inside and outside of the home have poses and exchanges with tools that exaggerate the body's instrumentality and inferiority. Additionally, the non-human actors of tool or fixture exert a type of agency that demands specific physical responses from the individual who employs it—and those responses are most consistently depicted as involving a concave position in conjunction with motion. In effect, this symbiosis between human body, tool, and movement during the preparation of food collapses the distinction between the person, object, and task.<sup>306</sup> Moreover, those preparing and cultivating food often wear clothing that exposes their arms, legs, and feet. This clothing coupled with the body's hunched position highlights the inferior social position of the individual performing work. These details are particularly striking when juxtaposed to representations of other individuals who stand erect, wearing more concealing clothing, and striking more open, expansive poses.

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<sup>306</sup> Although my chapter deals with non-verbal and unspoken, this same process can be seen in the literature as well. For instance, Sarah H. Blake, in her paper "Instrumentum Domesticum: Masters, Slaves, and Objects in Martial's Apophoreta," given at the *American Philological Association General Meetings*, Philadelphia, January 5-8, 2012, explored Martial's views on the symbiotic relationship between slave owner, slave, and object. Analyzing how Martial portrays slaves and objects as extension of the slave-owner's self, she described not only how the figure of the slave owner incorporates the slave body into his own, but also how Martial collapses the distinction between object and slave.

Two different audiences observe the inextricability of laborer, tool, and work—the internal audience within the scene and the external viewers of the fresco or object. The internal audience often seems unaware of—or at least indifferent to—the person cooking, preparing, or cultivating food. The internal audience’s lack of interest in the efforts of these working individuals suggests the unremarkable routine of their labor and the underlying social assumptions and expectations of their actions. In fact, such scenes highlight how quickly Romans understood the non-verbal codes represented in these frescoes. Or in other words, this type of labor does not even require active observation. The non-verbal communication between the person performing the labor and the individuals who witness it passively accepted interaction; it silently signals the social hierarchies involved and the laborer’s lower social status and instrumentality.

An external audience observes and interprets this silent interaction as well. The medium of precious silver for the Menander cup, and the high quality of craftsmanship exhibited in the frescoes at the Villa della Farnesina suggest that these images were produced with elite consumers in mind. Yet, it would be a mistake to assume that only the elite observed the scenes described above. Slaves serving a meal very likely held the silver cup from the Casa del Menandro or had various opportunities to study the images on the black walls of Villa della Farnesina’s triclinium—not to mention the house owner’s guests. Indeed, the similarity in style and content between Corridor F-G to the frescoes in the Large Columbarium of Villa Doria Pamphilj indicates an attempt to transfer elite tastes and fashions to non-elite environments. Thus, the external audience for these representations was varied in terms of class. For these different audiences, they reinforce non-verbal codes and interpretations of daily activities involving food preparation and subtly instruct what involves the proper performance and reception of these labors.

The mutualism of person, tool, and function ascribed to those involved in domestic food preparation is highlighted again in the design of cooking tools. The correspondence between those

objects illustrated on top of the stove in the Menander cup or the fresco in Triclinium C in the Villa della Farnesina to the design of bronze cooking pots, braziers, and platters recovered from the Insula of the Menander exhibit choices that belie common assumptions about the performance of activities involved in food production. In particular, the various forms of bronze pots categorized as *cacabus*, *caldaia*, *calderotto*, or *pentola* lack ergonomic design and embellishment or decoration, hinting that they had been crafted to serve the object's intended function rather than the user's comfort or visual pleasure (Figures 11 and 12).<sup>307</sup>



Figure 11: Bronze cooking pot (*pentola*), Pompeii Collection, Inv. no. 5443. Photo by author.

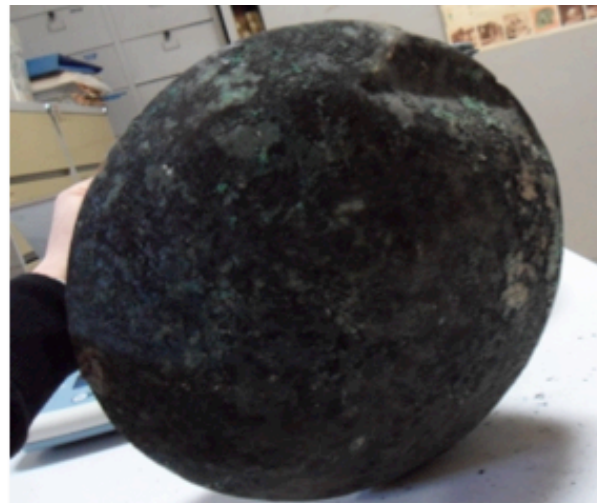


Figure 12: Base of bronze cooking pot (*pentola*), Pompeii Collection, Inv. no. 5443.

These large bronze pots have elliptical bases that bulge outward; this detail indicates an assumption that the pot either hung over something or rested on a surface that allowed for the bulging section of the base to drop into it, such as the small structure on top of the bench represented in the Menander silver cup and the mortar burner on the top of the Casa del Fabbro's kitchen bench.

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<sup>307</sup> For brief definition and discussion of these items, see Allison, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, vol. 3, 18, 25-26.

Additionally, ash remains in conjunction with lack of decoration denote that these items were designed primarily for activities involving fire or charcoal.<sup>308</sup> Interestingly, these items ranged in weight from about 1275 to 2779 grams, which made them sturdy but not too heavy to move—even holding contents. For example, one pot's handles were securely fastened to the side of the pots with two or three bolts/pins and rested neatly on its rim. Nevertheless, the handle's thinness would dig into the hand or even burn it if taken directly from the fire without something to help prevent contact with the hot surface. The lack of decoration, burn marks, and remains of ash suggest that these items were used in cooking or boiling, tasks that were normally associated with household slaves or those people who had to cook their own meals. Thus, the physical relationship between object and person required her to conform her movements to the tool (not vice versa). In essence, the tool's non-descript form wordlessly communicated a shared utility and instrumentality between her activities and the object's function.

Although scholars have pointed out that cooking or other food preparation did not always occur in the same location as the location of kitchen benches, the items for cooking or warming food outside of the kitchen require the same, if not slightly exaggerated, pose Romans associated with kitchen benches.<sup>309</sup> Large braziers like those found in the Casa del Fabbro were most likely used near diners in order to provide them with warm dishes (Figures 13-14). These objects are 18 cm (brazier 2) and 19 cm (brazier 1) high and have diameter of 43 and 55 cm respectively. These heights would require the individual preparing food to crouch low to the ground in order to maintain the small fire or smoldering charcoals on its surface if it was used alone, away from a kitchen bench. In effect, the physical interaction with braziers outside of the kitchen environment required an even more pronounced concave or crouching posture.

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<sup>308</sup> Charcoal seems the preferred fuel for urban and domestic settings. See Robyn Veal, "The Wood Fuel Supply to Pompeii," 34; Renfrew, 23; Faas, *Around the Roman Table*, 130.

<sup>309</sup> Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 90-94; Berry 192-193. Salza Prina Ricotti. "Cucine e quartieri servilli in epoca Romana," 241-43.



Figure 13: Brazier 1 from room 8, Casa del Fabbro. Photo by author.



Figure 14: Brazier 2 from room 8, Casa del Fabbro. Photo by author.

Yet, some objects reveal that attention to the user's comfort played an essential role in its design. Such consideration is especially pronounced in a terracotta pot on display at the Boscoreale Museum (Figure 15). Its simplicity suggests that this item was not used for display or elite taste, but rather was more likely designed to assist a person in the preparation of food and drink. This humble and unglazed pot has no particular decoration other than the handle that is embellished with three small peaks and three small valleys that contour the shape of the handle (Detail 1, Figure 15). This detail to the handle allows for an easy grip with two fingers and a thumb (Detail 2, Figure 15). Despite the lightness of the jug, the handle on its own is too small to wield its weight efficiently, especially when the jug held any contents. As though to respond to this problem, the belly of the jug seems molded to fit the contours of the palm and in fact rolls easily into one's hand when it is placed there (Details 3-4, Figure 15). The hands' positions on the handle and belly make pouring the contents of the pot easier and offer stability. In addition, the pot's surface is smooth (even without a glaze) indicating that care was taken with the clay before and after firing. In essence, this jug provides an example of some small considerations that were made for users' needs and comfort

in what is an otherwise large catalogue of evidence indicating Roman associations of symbiotic instrumentality and physical mutability between food preparers and the tools they used.



Figure 15: Ceramic jug (urceus), Pompeii Collection, Inv no. 4966



Detail 2. Figure 15



Detail 4. Figure 15



Detail 1, Figure 15



Detail 3. Figure 15

Notwithstanding the continuity between practice and cultural assumptions represented in household items and fixtures to visual representations of domestic food preparation, there are examples of modifications to these practices that bespeak attempts to reinterpret the physical relationship between object and person. These adaptations occur most obviously in design adjustments to kitchen benches that develop according to two divergent considerations: one that exaggerates the body's response to the fixture while simultaneously augmenting the number of its

users, and the other modifies the height of bench to allow for an upright position during use. The first development is found in some villas throughout the Bay of Naples and the second is most frequently (but not always) found in houses or locations that have evidence of commercial activities.

Unfortunately, the evidence for kitchen benches in villas is much more limited than those found in in homes at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Nevertheless, those that remain offer some interesting comparisons and raise some tantalizing questions. Generally, kitchen fixtures in villas around the Bay of Naples are longer, wider, and sometimes higher than those found in atrium homes at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Notably, the Villa of the Mysteries has a kitchen bench with the height of 107 cm and the depth of 134 cm from the wall to its edge and the Villa San Marco's kitchen bench is 114 cm high and 124 cm deep.

**Table 3**  
**Measurements and Observations of Kitchen Benches**  
**Villas**

Oplontis-Villa di Poppea			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	473	72.5-78	122-123
Villa of the Mysteries			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench (see drawing)	500	107 (W side) 172 (E side) 14 (interior height of stove	134 (back wall to front) 108 (interior)
Oven	189.7	209 (of oven) 79 (bench)	177
Villa San Marco			
<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	531	114	120-124
Arches under bench			123-124
Raised boundary on top of bench		9.5	

Villa Arianna

<b>Fixture</b>	<b>Width cm</b>	<b>Height cm</b>	<b>Depth (Length) cm</b>
Kitchen bench	559 (need to check these numbers)	76	151

These modifications to height and depth create a different physical exchange between structure and body. As I mentioned earlier, I am the same height as the average male from Herculaneum and of average proportions. The kitchen bench at the Villa San Marco reaches the lower part of my rib cage. Even when stretching my arms, I had difficulty reaching across the entire surface of the stovetop to the back wall while standing on the ground. When I held a measuring tape extending vertically from stove surface 35 cm (again the combined height of pot and brazier), it came to just slightly below my eye level. I assumed that a person using the bench for cooking would at some point need to see the contents cooking inside the pot. Attempting to bring my sight above this distance so that I might be able to look down, I needed to stand on my toes to bring my eye level above the combined height of burner and pot, but doing so only slightly increased visibility. Therefore, it stands to reason that some sort of stepping device—a stool or bench—was necessary in order to use these benches effectively. As a result, the kitchen benches at the Villa San Marco and the Villa of the Mysteries aim to intensify the physical encounter between body and object by requiring a person either to stretch her body if standing on the ground or to rely on a stepping stool so as to augment the original height and reach of the person using the fixture. The height of kitchen benches for the Villa Arianna (76 cm) and Oplontis (ranging from 72-78 cm), however, corresponds with the majority of atrium houses studied at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Consequently, they demand a concave position during use and incorporate the aforementioned non-verbal cues about Roman status. This limited evidence for the physical encounter of body and bench in these four villas suggests either the continuation of common practices of food preparation or the use of different equipment that exaggerated the movements of kitchen workers. Even though the higher

benches reinterpret the physical relationship between body and object, they nevertheless reinforce cultural assumptions about the shared instrumentality between food preparation tools and laborer through an exchange that stimulates an intense and exaggerated physical experience of enforced labor.

Unfortunately, the evidence for kitchen benches in villas is much more limited than those found in in homes at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Nevertheless, those that remain offer some interesting comparisons and raise some tantalizing questions. Generally, kitchen fixtures in villas around the Bay of Naples are longer, wider, and sometimes higher than those found in atrium homes at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Notably, the Villa of the Mysteries has a kitchen bench with the height of 107 cm and the depth of 134 cm from the wall to its edge and the Villa San Marco's kitchen bench is 114 cm high and 124 cm deep. These modifications to height and depth create a different physical exchange between structure and body. As I mentioned earlier, I am the same height as the average male from Herculaneum and of average proportions. The kitchen bench at the Villa San Marco reaches the lower part of my rib cage. Even when stretching my arms, I had difficulty reaching across the entire surface of the stovetop to the back wall while standing on the ground. When I held a measuring tape extending vertically from stove surface 35 cm (again the combined height of pot and brazier), it came to just slightly below my eye level. I assumed that a person using the bench for cooking would at some point need to see the contents cooking inside the pot. Attempting to bring my sight above this distance so that I might be able to look down, I needed to stand on my toes to bring my eye level above the combined height of burner and pot, but doing so only slightly increased visibility. Therefore, it stands to reason that some sort of stepping device—a stool or bench—was necessary in order to use these benches effectively. As a result, the kitchen benches at the Villa San Marco and the Villa of the Mysteries aim to intensify the physical encounter between body and object by requiring a person either to stretch her body if standing on

the ground or to rely on a stepping stool so as to augment the original height and reach of the person using the fixture. The height of kitchen benches for the Villa Arianna (76 cm) and Oplontis (ranging from 72-78 cm), however, corresponds with the majority of atrium houses studied at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Consequently, they demand a concave position during use and incorporate the aforementioned non-verbal cues about Roman status. This limited evidence for the physical encounter of body and bench in these four villas suggests either the continuation of common practices of food preparation or the use of different equipment that exaggerated the movements of kitchen workers. Even though the higher benches reinterpret the physical relationship between body and object, they nevertheless reinforce cultural assumptions about the shared instrumentality between food preparation tools and laborer through an exchange that stimulates an intense and exaggerated physical experience of enforced labor.

The question of who observed the visual messages that these modifications encouraged in villa environments and how those unspoken codes might be interpreted is difficult to fully answer, but important to address.<sup>310</sup> Although a purely utilitarian interpretation that these larger benches were designed to meet the demands of villas' numerous household members is helpful to consider, the consistency of longer lengths among these four kitchen benches points to shared notions about the requirements and functions of cooking in a villa that is more compelling. For instance, coupled with the heights that demand positions that exaggerate the performance of work, villa kitchen benches' significantly longer lengths allow for more people to use the fixture at once, thereby multiplying the visual imagery of people working in service of a villa's needs. If we limit the possible observers of the non-verbal codes that accompany the design of villas' benches to only household members—that is the villa owner, his immediate family, and those who work to meet the villa's demands—the power of these unspoken messages to maintain domestic hierarchies becomes

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<sup>310</sup> For the social meaning of the villa and its role in elite life and competition see, Hannah Platt, 239-78; Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 204-7; and Marzano, 86-97.

clearer. Whether self-conscious of the significance of their acts or not, those participating in the kitchen's labor enacted repetitively and collectively actions that served to benefit the villa and its owner. Indeed, the stretching or crouching of their bodies was amplified by that of their peers, who were working and moving in a similar manner nearby. For the villa owner, a look into the kitchen (however infrequent or fleeting it may have been) provided him a glimpse of the resources and manpower expended in service of his culinary needs and desires, thereby underlining his powerful role in domestic relationships.<sup>311</sup> Hence, the larger kitchen bench in a villa setting seems to visually enhance and physically amplify the distinction between the villa owner and those who prepared food for him, his family, and guest. In effect, the limited evidence of villa' benches hint that these adaptations and the messages they sent served the villa owner's needs to manage and maintain domestic hierarchies—not to aid the slaves' comfort while using them.

Conversely, adaptations to kitchen benches, specifically height and location, in homes associated with commercial functions indicate modifications that respond to the user's need. Although others have convincingly argued that past assumptions about household spaces and activities based primarily on Roman literary sources ignore the multifunctional use of space that is implied in the archaeological record, the material remains of some houses, nevertheless, denote commercial functions that reach beyond Pompeian homes' generally multifaceted spaces.<sup>312</sup> Indeed, in the Casa del Fabbro, the artifact dispersal of iron tools, bone hinges and other construction or carpentry tools seems particular to this house.<sup>313</sup> Notably, the kitchen bench is 94 cm high, 94-96 cm deep, and 195 cm wide and Ling asserts that the room in which the bench is located did not

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<sup>311</sup> The vivid imagery represented on the Sepulcrum Eurysacis offers an interesting point of comparison to the visual cues inherent in surviving villa kitchen benches (Edmondson, 21-46; George, "The Dark Side of the Toga," 94-112). For instance, Eurysaces attempts to elevate his status not only by dressing distinctly from his workers, but also by displaying his ability to orchestrate the labor of large group of people employed in the production of his wealth. A similar display of labour might be at play in villas. For more on the Sepulcrum Eurysacis, see Lauren Hackworth Petersen, "The Baker, His Tomb, His Wife, and Her Breadbasket: The Monument of Eurysaces in Rome," *The Art Bulletin* 85.2 (2003): 230-57.

<sup>312</sup> Flohr "Reconsidering the Atrium House," 88-9; Nevett, 98; Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 69-70.

<sup>313</sup> For catalogue and discussion of finds, see Allison, *Insula of the Menander*, 159-213 and Allison, *Pompeian households: an on-line companion*, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/home> (accessed March 22, 2014).

achieve its final form until after it had been blocked off from Corridor 53 in the Casa del Menandro just slightly before A.D. 50.<sup>314</sup> The height of this bench allows for an upright position and the width offers one individual comfortable movement while interacting with the bench; it is more confining if two people are preparing food. Additionally, a person is able to easily reach across its top surface to the back. Or in other words, the body does not hunch, curl, or stretch as it responds to the fixture's demands nor is the person's labor part of a larger collective effort. In fact, the human body encounters this bench in a decidedly different manner than is represented in the visual language of food preparation above and commonly practiced in other atrium houses and villas around the Bay of Naples.

House I, 6 8-9 in Pompeii offers another example of adaptation to food preparation activities that distinguishes it from common practices. First, the location of a kitchen bench in the atrium of this house demonstrates that the homeowner understood a logical or functional need that placed it within close proximity of the large storage jars that were also added here. Allison observes that the plaster of the kitchen bench matches that of south wall of the front hall, indicating that the bench must have been a later renovation.<sup>315</sup> In effect, both kitchen bench and storage jars highlight a reinterpretation of the traditional functions associated with practices in the front hall area. Within the context of these changes that the homeowner(s) made to this area, the kitchen bench is 74 cm. This small change would make one's physical response to the kitchen bench a bit more comfortable for an average height man or woman from Herculaneum, even though the body would still need to incline forward to use it for cooking.

The influence of a commercial setting on the activities and non-verbal cues associated with food preparation finds its fullest expression farther north in the Italian peninsula in the port city of

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<sup>314</sup> Ling, *The Insula of the Menander*, vol. 1, 154.

<sup>315</sup> For discussion of building techniques and materials, see Allison, "House I 6, 8-9," *Pompeian Households: An on-line companion* (accessed October 7, 2012).

Ostia. As Janet Delaine notes, construction of living spaces in Ostia seemed to respond to the needs and desires of a wealthy commercial class.<sup>316</sup> In essence, Ostia's historical development confirms the power of commercial considerations to influence layout and design of living spaces. In this atmosphere, the visual language of food production in Ostia incorporate similar elements to those found in Pompeii and Rome, but they reinterpret those cues in order to create a different type of message that challenges common cultural attitudes explored above.<sup>317</sup>

The commercial atmosphere of Ostia permeates the walls of private dwelling and influences activities of domestic food preparation. Although Ostia has far fewer surviving kitchen benches than Pompeii, the multi-level dwelling of Casa dei Volti Dipinti has two extant kitchens that offer an unexpected interplay between the non-verbal cues explored above.<sup>318</sup> The kitchen bench on the first floor is tall enough to allow for an erect posture and a width that allows two people to comfortably work at it. Additionally, the room in which the bench is located on the ground floor is much larger than the cramped setting for the stove on the upper level. In a small room tucked next to a staircase on the upper floor, the bench here is smaller (both in height and width) and requires the body to bend forward to use it while offering little room for maneuvering, especially if more than one person used it at a time. That is to say, the ground floor fixture follows the modifications seen in Pompeian houses with commercial characteristics that seem to respond to the user's comfort, but the second floor kitchen bench reflects ideas about practice that seem to fall in line with more common perceptions about food preparation and the lowly status of those who work at such structures. Perhaps one of the reasons for such differences in form is an assumption that those living on the

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<sup>316</sup> Janet Delaine, "High Status Insula Apartments in Early Imperial Ostia—a Reading," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* 58 (1999): 175-189.

<sup>317</sup> Natalie Kampen, *Image and Status: Roman Working Women in Ostia* (Berlin: Mann, 1981), 82-84.

<sup>318</sup> Sussana Riva, "Le cucine delle case di Ostia," *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Instituut te Rome* 58 (1999). 117-128. Riva notes that the lack of extant kitchens has more to do with Fascist imperative to clear away the evidence rather than an archaeological reality. See also Delaine, 149.

second floor were of a lower socio-economic status than those on the first floor.<sup>319</sup> Thus, when considering the location and design for this bench, the builders were influenced by social expectations and promoted practices that asserted domestic hierarchies that stretched across multi-level dwellings.

Although it would be a mistake to assume that the enhanced commercial nature of these houses in conjunction with the modifications made to the fixtures and spaces of food preparation reflect households free from traditional Roman domestic hierarchies, it is nevertheless telling that these settings allow for reinterpretation of the physical experience associated with these daily activities. Perhaps those people who had the imagination to rethink the use of these houses also had a different awareness of the body's response to fixtures and tools.<sup>320</sup> Whatever the case may be, there is evidence of adaptations to domestic spaces and fixtures that indicate an attempt to make either the tool and/or the location fit the needs of the user rather than simply making the person adapt to the bench or locale, and thereby the commonly shared perceptions about the place for and practices of food preparation.

### **III. Food Consumption**

The non-verbal cues to the status of men and women who prepared food are also found and elaborated in the typically convivial Roman practices of food consumption. Notably, Roman authors spend a significant amount of time describing Roman dining habits, thereby spotlighting the role of dining and banqueting in establishing Roman identity. This has led modern scholars to turn their

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<sup>319</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society*, 72-82, 103-110.

<sup>320</sup> For parallels on rethinking or modifying structural elements in Pompeian homes and Late Hellenistic Delian homes as a response to commercial considerations, see Flohr "Working Under One Roof," 51-72; Flohr, "Reconsidering the Atrium House," 88-102; Mantha Zarmakoupi "The city of late Hellenistic Delos and the integration of economic activities in the domestic sphere," *CHS Research Bulletin* 1. [http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hnc.essay:ZarmakoupiM.The\\_City\\_of\\_Late\\_Hellenistic\\_Delos.2013](http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hnc.essay:ZarmakoupiM.The_City_of_Late_Hellenistic_Delos.2013) (accessed March 22, 2014).

eyes towards the importance of dining in Roman society and culture.<sup>321</sup> Yet, they tend to discuss the significance of dining in broader social and cultural terms rather than exploring the collective activities that surrounded this daily practice; one obvious exception to this trend is Matthew Roller's work on dining posture, which explores non-verbal messages of class and gender attached to dining posture. Despite his novel and insightful analysis, Roller focuses almost entirely on the posture of the dining figure(s), thereby overlooking the many other sensory and physical exchanges that occurred during these convivial settings.<sup>322</sup>

Because Romans were known to recline while dining, couches offers insight into bodily practices surrounding eating. Unfortunately, the perishable nature of the material out of which they were normally constructed means that extant examples of Roman freestanding dining couches and other seating are quite rare.<sup>323</sup> However, the remains of a couch found in the Pompeii Collections and the reconstructed couch on display at the New York Metropolitan Museum can provide a sense of the general size of these items.<sup>324</sup> The dimensions of the reconstructed couch at the Metropolitan Museum are 74.9 cm tall and 114.3 cm long and the reconstructed height of the bronze couches in the Pompeii collection is 80 and 90 cm.<sup>325</sup> Although the width of these couches has not been recorded in catalogues, visual inspection reveals that they are wide enough to hold one individual comfortably while two people would require close physical contact in order for both to recline

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<sup>321</sup> Dirk Schnurbusch, *Convivium: Form und Bedeutung aristokratischer Geselligkeit in der römischen Antike* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011); Katherine Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Keith Bradley, "The Roman Family at Dinner," in *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, ed. Inge Nielsen and Hanne Nielsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1998), 38-55.

<sup>322</sup> Roller, however, does consider sub-elite dining posture and that slaves are distinguished by standing at dinner so as to be ready to serve, which highlights their instrumentality (84-95).

<sup>323</sup> Stephanus T. A. M. Mols, *Wooden Furniture in Herculaneum: Form, Technique and Function* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1999), 35-55.

<sup>324</sup> Brian F. Cook, "The Boscoreale Cubiculum: A New Installation" in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 22.5 (1964) 181; L. Sagui, B. Bacchelli, and R. Pasqualucci. "Un patrimoine unique au monde. Les verres de la collection Gorga," *Annales Du 13e Congrès De L'association Internationale Pour L'histoire Du Verre: Pays-bas, 28 Août-1 Septembre 1995* (Lochem: Association internationale pour l'histoire du verre, 1996), 222-3, figs. 8-9; V. Mastrodonato, "Una residenza imperiale nel suburbio di Roma: la villa di Lucio Vero in località Acquatraversa," *Archeologia Classica* 51 (1999-2000) 199, fig. 32.

<sup>325</sup> Carlos A Picón, et al. *Art of the Classical World in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007), 380-81, 93; Allison *The Insula of the Menander*, 64-65, Plate 11.

simultaneously on the couch. On the other hand, masonry couches found in outdoor triclinia are wider, allowing either for more space between diners or larger number of participants. For instance, the masonry couches found in the Thermopolium di Lucius Vetutius measure from 47-51 cm high, 127-131 cm wide, and 263- 401 cm (Figure 16). A 160 cm tall guard at Pompeii models the physical interaction between these fixed couches and body (Detail 1, Figure 16).



Figure 16: Masonry couch, Thermopolium di Lucius Vetutius, Pompeii. Photo by author.



Detail 1, Figure 16: Photo by author.

Visual representations of occupied couches found in painting or sculpture typically involve at least three different users who interact with its design, to whom I assign the categorization of first diner, second diner, and slave attendant.<sup>326</sup> The first diner is a reclining figure who is either depicted dining alone or dining with another person and is noteworthy for *his* dominant physical presence and lack of implied penetration. In these figures, the first reclining figure supports his upper body on the raised and cushioned arm so as to relieve some pressure on his curved spine. His legs rest on

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<sup>326</sup> For examples, see dining panels on the north, west, and east walls of the triclinium from House of the Chaste Lovers (IX.12.6-7), Pompeii. For images and discussion these frescoes and their relationship to dining posture, see Roller 2006, 139-42, plates II, III, VII.

the main bed of the couch, sometimes slightly curled at the knees. This positioning is consistent with the physical interaction of a man of average height from Herculaneum and a couch whose length is roughly 115-120 cm. Notably, no figure either stands or reclines behind him and he holds his body in an open and relaxed pose. As Roller notes, this posture signified elite concepts of the division between *otium/negotium*. The desirability of this pose's ability to wordlessly communicate status is underlined by freedmen's adoption of it in their funerary monuments.<sup>327</sup> This position, however, not only relays elite ideals of leisure but also notions of power and mastery. As compared to the concave pose and close association to tools for those who prepare food, the male diner's body is open and expansive. Additionally, the reclining male in these representations has no one standing behind him or touching his backside. This is striking when considering Roman notions of masculinity were connected to a sexually impenetrable body.<sup>328</sup>

The association of dominance with the first diner on the couch becomes more apparent when considering the posture and position of the second user of the couch. This figure is frequently a woman, whose backside contacts the man's front. If such depictions indicate assumed physical relationships with dining couches, then the narrowness of the couch attested in the material remains encouraged a contiguous physical exchange between the two individuals occupying the couch simultaneously. The intimacy of this bodily interaction between reclining male and female couch partners would most likely result in male genitals rubbing against the female backside. As Roller notes, Romans associated sexual intimacy and availability between reclining male and female diners.<sup>329</sup> Even though it is assigned Greek cultural origins, a small terracotta sculpture discovered in southern Italy neatly captures how a couch's design assists the sexual intimacy that Roller asserts is

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<sup>327</sup> Solo dining figures are usually found on funerary monuments. For an analysis of these figures, see Roller 22-45.

<sup>328</sup> Thomas Habinek, "The Invention of Sexuality in the World-City of Rome," 23-43; Holt Parker, "The Teratogenic Grid" in *Roman Sexualities*, eds. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 47-65; Jonathan Walters, "Invading the Roman Body: Manliness and Impenetrability in Roman Thought," in *Roman Sexualities*, eds. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 29-46.

<sup>329</sup> Roller, 99-123.

assigned to reclining female and male diners.<sup>330</sup> When this terracotta sculpture is observed from above, the two diners' bodies occupy the entire width of the couch. Significantly, the woman's position in all of these representations exposes her body's susceptibility to penetration. In effect, the couch's design and the cultural expectation of her position on it require the female recliner's body to have a physical interaction that responds both to the couch and the male diner's position and movements. Doing so puts her physical vulnerability on display and belies societal expectation that Roman women respond to male needs and values.

The second diner's physical intimacy with the first diner, association with the female, and implied susceptibility to penetration illuminate the unspoken messages of status intrinsic to place settings during a banquet. John Clarke details the power dynamics inherent in the seating arrangement of Roman domestic meals. He asserts that one's social standing played a role in determining access to unobstructed views to paintings or other vantage points.<sup>331</sup> Perhaps more telling than one's view, however, was the immediate and tangible physical exchange with the couch and other diners. Clarke's reconstruction of diners reclining implies the same intimacy and vulnerability that colored male/female diners shared occupancy of the couch. Whether or not sexual relationships existed between banqueters, the vulnerability and cultural association of dining positions in relation to others could communicate powerful non-verbal codes about status to participants. Although a Greek example, a detail from the Cella Frieze at the British Museum of two men facing each other while sitting crossed leg on a couch offers an example of personal practice that could ameliorate the power dynamics between reclining diners (Figure 17). Their seated posture is echoed in one diner's pose in a painting from the House of the Triclinium (Figure 19).

Fixed masonry couches associated with outdoor triclinia offer a slight variation on dining practices that were implicit in the design of freestanding couches. As pointed out above, masonry

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<sup>330</sup> Terracotta lamp filler, British Museum, Inv. no 1873.0820.603.

<sup>331</sup> Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans*, 224-226. See especially diagrams and drawings on p.225.

couches are of comparative length to couches, yet their width allows for greater distance or more people to use them simultaneously. A detail from the Large Columbarium at the Villa Doria Pamphilj provides insight into ordinary use of these objects (Figure 18). Because the couches are covered with cushions and fabric, it is impossible to decipher if they are made of wood or cement like those found in Pompeii. Nevertheless, the lower rectangular table with food remnants and al fresco ambience seem fitting for an outdoor triclinium.



Figure 17: Cella frieze, British Museum.  
Photo by author.



Figure 18: Large Columbarium at the  
Villa of Pamphilj, Museo Nazionale  
Romano. Photo by author.

A group of six men recline on these structures with elongated bodies that take up space as they lean forward on their left shoulders. As compared to the sexual intimacy implied in the above depictions of male and female diners, the group here is marked by their lively conversation, and the manner in which they engage in this conversation spotlights their use of space. The two central figures particularly assert their presence among the other diners; the man on the left raises his arms in a way that reveals his broad and open chest, creating a long line that draws the viewer's eye to his gestures. The man on the right leans dramatically to left, highlighting his use of space with his open and

relaxed pose. As compared to the intimate proximity between male and female diners, these men are physically separated from their fellow diners, thereby alleviating the vulnerability and mutability inherent in the female diner's pose. Additionally, even though all men lean on their shoulders, they are able somehow to maintain straight necks and taut shoulders. In fact, nothing about their bodies' positions is hunched or compact like those who prepare food, nor does their posture connote sexual availability that is inherent in female reclining pose. The dimensions of the examples of outdoor masonry couches presented above would allow for such a scene to occur: one that accentuates reclining figures' participation in conversation while consuming food rather than sexual intimacy. Thus, freestanding and masonry couches promote different social relationships that reaffirm or fix gender and social roles for those who recline on them during meals.

The slave attendant as third user has a physical exchange with the couch that showcases a person's lower status within this domestic setting. Again, freestanding and masonry couches from Pompeii and Herculaneum measure from 46 cm to 74 cm in height. As we saw with kitchen benches, these measurements require men and women whose heights fall within the averages recorded for these ancient populations to incline their bodies forward in order to assist the diners on the couch. In fact, it seems that a stooped position when offering food was so expected that a dining couch was not even needed for a reenactment of the practice between attendant and reclined diner to occur. A detail from the Villa della Farnesina relays non-verbal codes of the social exchange between diner and attendant (Detail 2, Figure 10). The reclining man on the ground in this bucolic scene echoes the posture of the above diners. That is to say, he has an open chest, straight neck, pulled back shoulders, and bent knee. Compared to his pose, the man serving him is hunched over and tightly held; all of his limbs—even as he slightly extends his arms to offer something to the reclined man—are kept close to the rest of his body. The interaction between the two men in this scene provides a clue to the non-verbal codes of status that passed between reclining diner and

attendant slave: one of dominance and the other of inferiority. The cultural assumptions of this type of social exchange also helped define the design and construction of couches.

Significantly, the physical interaction between couch and third user challenges Roller's claim that slave attendants were noted for their upright position during dining scenes and that this posture signaled their instrumentality.<sup>332</sup> However, relying solely on Roller's observation about slaves' erect posture while waiting to meet the diners' needs or my assertion that the couch's design demanded a bowed pose only partially captures how Romans marked enslaved individuals' bodies during meals. Rather, the tools and objects slaves used or encountered while performing tasks during dining service encouraged at least two visual and sensory experiences for those who observed (attentively or passively) the attendants' labor: they are a visual identification of the slave's body with the tool he or she employs and the sensory experience of orchestrated slaves' movements and labor during a meal. Or in other words, it is motion and a close tie to objects that marked enslaved from free bodies present during activities surrounding food consumption in a domestic environment.<sup>333</sup>

Once we recognize that it is movement that distinguishes the slave from the free during dining, the visual language Romans employed to represent dining scenes and the social exchanges that accompanied these practices becomes clearer. For instance, the painting from the House of the Triclinium shows slaves caught in the act of assisting diners (Figure 19).<sup>334</sup> One slave holds up a vomiting man; his body bends slightly forward as he bears the burden of the sick man's weight. The

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<sup>332</sup> Roller, 19, 29, 85.

<sup>333</sup> Roller, 19. Although Roller briefly mentions tasks that involve motion—specifically bringing food, pouring wine, and clearing the table—as significant for marking the enslaved body (19), his focus on the slave's standing posture to signal instrumentality. Indeed, Roller's analysis of both reclining diners and standing slaves almost fixes both diner and attendant in a freeze-frame that belies the movement and activity intrinsic to Roman dining.

<sup>334</sup> Even though this painting provides helpful clues to Roman expectations of attendants' movements during a meal, this is a challenging representation from which to glean the physical relationships between couch and users. Although it is not uncommon for Romans to depict slaves as smaller in order to signify their lowlier status, they are so small that their heads do not even reach the height of the couch, which seems unlikely unless the slaves were all very young boys. In fact, these couches represented here are so large that one diner seems to have a hard time reaching the floor with his feet. Surviving remains of freestanding and masonry couches suggest that the artist of this painting had other intentions than an accurate reproduction of domestic dining practices reliant on proportional relationships between humans and objects.

slave in the middle is caught in the act of raising his arm to offer a cup to a diner while the smaller slave next to him bends over to care for another diner's shoe. Although at first glance the slave in the background appears to have an upright and static pose reminiscent of Roller's observation, closer inspection reveals that even he is caught in the act of embracing the bald headed diner who looks straight ahead.



Figure 19: House of the Triclinium, east wall of room *r*, Pompeii. Author's photo.

Strikingly, all the diners make eye contact with each other or the outside viewer (as is the case with the bald diner) but they do not acknowledge those serving them. These details are not particular to this painting alone. In effect, these examples suggest that the attendants' movements and actions are an expected part of the practices associated with diners' food consumption.

The association between motion and attendant is not specific to Roman Italian homes but is also found in the provinces as is evinced in a mosaic from Tunisia on display at Louvre in Paris. In its original setting, this mosaic most likely covered the floor of triclinium in a wealthy North African home.<sup>335</sup> Here, the concurrence of person, tool, and motion collect in order to transmit Roman visual codes of the enslaved body. The central figure wears clothing that exposes his skin and carries a tray of bread or pastries above his head with his left arm. His right knee and ankle are slightly bent as he lands on the ball of his foot in mid-step. In fact, all the figures in this mosaic seem to have been momentarily captured in a loosely organized procession that displays the slaves and items that accompany their intended labor. In effect, the mosaic affirms that constant motion during a meal wordlessly communicated the realities of domestic hierarchies to both diners and attendants. Diners maintained an open and expansive pose of leisure while passively or actively noting the actions and actors put into motion in order to allow them to maintain their inactivity. For the slaves attending the meal, they experience the event differently as they bend, crouch, walk, and bear various items in order to sustain another's leisure.

Essential to the Roman dining experience are the movable items that assisted the consumption of food because these items participated in the host's performance of status. The design of typical dining objects illuminates the unspoken and tactile messages that communicated social positions both inside and outside domestic walls. First, a large number of dining images show a person with a dish resting easily in the palm of the diner's hand. The diners on the silver cup from the Casa del Menandro hold a small bowl or plate in one hand near their mouths (Figure 20). Ceramic figures from Boscoreale also have similar objects resting on tips of fingers (Figure 21 and 22).

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<sup>335</sup> Mosaic Panel, Late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE Musée du Louvre, Paris. (MA 1796–INV. MNC 1577). See Cecile Giroir and Daniel Roger, *Roman Art from the Louvre* (New York: American Federation of Arts in Association with Hudson Press, 2007), 213.



Figure 20: Silver Cup from House of the Menander, from Casa del Menandro. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. no. 145505. Photo by author.



Figure 21: Reclining Diner, Antiquarium di Boscoreale. Photo by author.



Figure 22: Reclining Diner, Antiquarium di Boscoreale. Photo by author.

Justin St. P. Walsh's forthcoming work on domestic assemblages from the fifth century BCE town, Morgantina, explains the import of consumer choice in expressing identity and provides a window into the significance of the Roman dining items. Walsh contends that, in this ethnically diverse (Greek and Sikel) town, consumers' decisions about the type of local or imported objects they used to eat and drink reflect a hybridization of identity formation that also allowed for individuals to make status claims. He observes that purchasing luxurious and imported items sends a signal to others that the purchaser understands elite etiquette because "buying the 'right' things...asserts membership in a desirable, envied, and powerful group, which in turn can enhance or prolong access to resources."<sup>336</sup> That is, objects used during dinner tell a story about how the host believes he relates to his guests and to his larger community. Indeed, the hand holding the dining ware experiences the quality and feel of these objects that quickly relay the host's tastes and belie his ability (or inability) to expend his resources on fine items. Thus, these objects play an essential role in his claims to privileged position in his home and among his guests.

Dining ware that survives from the Insula of the Menander offers some particularly nice examples of dishes that reveal the types of messages such objects could send. Terra sigillata ceramics typically have a deep, burnt orange glaze and were a common type of fine tableware.<sup>337</sup> Smaller plates, like figure 23, are delicately decorated with incised lines of staggered concentric circles, which become especially pronounced as the sidewall of the dish meets the base. Even though it is unglazed, the bottom exterior of the plate has been polished to remove any discrepancies that might have occurred during firing. The size, smooth bottom, and the slightly

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<sup>336</sup> Justin St. P. Walsh, "Consumption, Preference, and Identity," in *Mediterranean Identities: Formation and Transformation*, eds. C. Katsari and M. Bradley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>337</sup> Allison, *The Insula of the Menander*, 37; G. Pucci, "Le terra sigillata italice, galliche e orientali," in *L'instrumentum domesticum di Ercolano e Pompeii*, ed. Maria Anecchino (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1977), 9; Paul Tyers, *Roman Pottery in Britain* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1996), 42. Allison notes that "a number of smaller terra sigillata have been found in Pompeii with contents such as olives, plums, figs, and barley." She mentions that barley is an improbable table dish, being reserved rather for animal fodder. She suggests that these remains might indicate that these vessels could be used in offerings as well.

raised exterior walls allows for the plate to rest comfortably in the palm of the hand with the thumb resting on the side providing stability (Detail 1 and 2, Figure 23). Additionally, terra sigillata pottery commonly displayed the maker's symbol in the center of the dish (Detail 3, Figure 23). In effect, the object's design that allowed it to lightly rest in the hand, the attention to the base's smoothness so as not to scratch the hand while in use, and its richly colored and even glaze that was sometimes accompanied by the maker's mark all sent powerful tactile messages to the host's guests about his social position. He chose and could afford such items, and his guests holding these plates could judge his taste and compare their own dishes (and thereby status claims) to those of the host.



Figure 23: Terra Sigillata dish, Pompeii Collection, Inv. no. 4268, G



Detail 1, Figure 23



Detail 2, Figure 23



Detail 3, Figure 23.

The same is true for the items used while serving the meal, except these also advanced the reinforcement of internal domestic hierarchies. For instance, an *olpe* from the Insula of the Menander sends layered messages to both diners and attendants. This sturdy, but surprisingly light pitcher was likely used as a container for wine or water at the table.<sup>338</sup> Although its handle is rather slender, it accounts for the user's comfort when grasping it because the thumb neatly rests on a small protruding piece of curved bronze that extends upward off of it (Figure 24). This small extension seems molded exactly for the thumb and it makes manipulating the jug slightly easier. In fact, the *olpe*'s characteristic protrusion is in some cases playfully embellished so resemble the thumb that easily rests there (Figure 25). In other instances, it has more elaborate decoration (Figure 26).



Figure 24: *Olpe*, Pompeii Collection, Inv. no. 5597. Photo by author.



Figure 25: *Olpe*, Pompeii Collection, Inv. no. 5597. Photo by author.



Figure 26: *Olpe*, Museo Archeologico di Napoli. Photo by author

There is a possibility that these items sat on a table for guests within reach to refill their cups. If this is the case, then the same sort of messages discussed above could be expressed to guests who grasped the jug's handle and saw its embellishments. However, if a slave was responsible for using

<sup>338</sup> Allison, *The Insula of the Menander*, 21.

the jug to refill the guests' cups, a decidedly different experience occurred between user and object. Aware of the types of vessels employed in the preparation of the meal, slaves would be able to compare the rough and utilitarian quality of those items to the comfort and decoration of objects reserved for dining. Additionally, the playfulness of the thumb decoration on the handle's extension concretely tied the slave's hand to the *olpe's* functionality. These tactile messages, enhanced by slaves' movement as they served dinner and drinks, highlighted and reaffirmed the distinction between the enslaved and the free—attendants and guests.

Despite the common association of dining with a reclined posture and fixtures that assisted this accepted practice, there is also evidence of modification to domestic dining customs. For example, Roller notes that being seated or standing while eating was common practice in the military as a rejection of *otium*; men in mourning preferred to sit or stand while eating and some philosophers adopted these divergent practices.<sup>339</sup> He also observes that sitting while eating outside of the home in a *popina* was common, and that this posture and these locations resisted the hierarchically defined eating experience of domestic banquet settings.<sup>340</sup> Yet, the scene that accompanies the cooking woman on the Casa del Menandro's silver cup suggests that a seated posture was sometimes adopted in a household setting as well. It portrays three seated figures on short stools (Figure 20). The central figure has a covered head, and some have postulated that this person is an old witch, although there is no evidence to support this claim.<sup>341</sup> Nevertheless, this individual speaks to another seated man, who has short hair, a smooth face, wears a short tunic that reaches his thigh, and is barefoot. He holds up in front of his lips a small bowl in his left hand. In between them, a stick holds two parcels, suggesting that at least one of them is traveling. To the right of the central figure is another seated man who sports a thick beard and a cloth tied around his head. In addition

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<sup>339</sup> Roller, 88-92.

<sup>340</sup> Roller, 93.

<sup>341</sup> Painter, 55; Pirizio Biroli Stefanelli, 267.

to his short tunic, he wears a cape that slightly covers his arms. Like the other figure, he holds a bowl near his face in his left hand; in his right, he possibly has a small square plate or a type of food or bread. All three sit together below two canopies and seem to be deep in conversation—particularly the beardless man and central figure. Each person is hunched forward as they eat and in the same location as the food has been prepared.

Even though their dress, seated and slightly hunched posture, and proximity to a kitchen bench indicate the diners' sub-elite status, the medium of the silver cup and its fine craftsmanship suggests its construction was meant for an elite audience and thereby hint at an idealization of this type of dining experience. The scene evokes the warmth and smells of a kitchen hearth that accompanies a lively conversation between one's peers that perhaps also involves the engaging and strange tales from someone traveling or returning home after time away. It is noteworthy that in this idyllic domestic setting, each of the diners sits on his or her own separate seat. In effect, the lack of physical contact with another's body relieves the threat of (implied) penetration and thereby unspoken messages of structured domestic relationships that are typical of reclined dining experiences. Rather, this image showcases a lively conversation in an atmosphere free of status implications for the diners. Such a scene on a drinking cup would be a striking contrast for the diner using the cup, especially compared to the realities of his experience in his own setting.

#### **IV. Elimination of Bodily Waste**

The physical relationship between body and fixtures or tools designed to assist elimination of bodily waste is more difficult to establish, but nevertheless demonstrates a continuity of Roman associations of concaved positions with lowly status. With the recent focus on domestic spaces as a view into Roman social and culture history, the study of Roman toilets is also on the rise. It has been particularly spearheaded by two scholars, Gemma Jansen and Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow,

although many others are beginning to recognize the need of investigation into this normally overlooked aspect of Roman life.<sup>342</sup> In a recent edited volume, various archaeologists and historians examined the seat designs of latrines, economic culture of ordure, hygiene, and social implications of Roman toilets and toilet practices.<sup>343</sup> Following the methods I employed above, I hope to contribute to this emerging scholarship by exploring the significance of physical interactions between bodies and domestic latrines and chamber pots.

Yet, the exchange between bodies and domestic latrines is difficult to recreate because what remains of domestic latrines is frequently either a hole in the ground or one that was filled in.<sup>344</sup> Surviving seats are also rare, although it was possible in some cases to see marks where the seats had rested. For instances, the Casa del Gran Portale and Casa della Gemma offer nearly complete examples of household commodes (Figure 27 and 28). Gemma Jansen's earlier work on domestic latrines, however, provides some nice illustrations of these objects in use.<sup>345</sup> Notably, her work on domestic latrines leads her to recreate the body's posture as slightly hunched or curled forward, a pose which, as we have seen, is also associated with those who prepare food and attend reclining diners. In fact, household latrines in Pompeii and Herculaneum were regularly located in close proximity to kitchen benches. In this environment where the human body must bend over so as to use the kitchen bench, it must again adopt a hunched and curled position as it evacuates its bowels.

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<sup>342</sup> For example, see Barry Hobson, *Latrinae et Foricae: Toilets in the Roman World* (London: Duckworth, 2009); Gemma C. M. Jansen, "Toilets with a View: The Luxurious Toilets of the Emperor Hadrian at his Villa near Tivoli," *Babesch* 82.1 (2007): 165-181; Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, "Finding Social Meaning in the Public Latrines of Pompeii," in *Cura aquarum in Campania. Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress on the History of Water Management and Hydraulic Engineering in the Mediterranean Region, Pompeii 1* (1994): 79-86; Richard Neudecker, *Die Pracht der Latrine: zum Wandel öffentlicher Bedürfnisanstalten in der kaiserzeitlichen Stadt* (München: Pfeil, 1994).

<sup>343</sup> Gemma C. M. Jansen, Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, and Eric M. Moormann, *Roman Toilets: Their Archaeology and Cultural History* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011).

<sup>344</sup> Gemma Jansen, "Private Toilets at Pompeii: Appearance and Operation" in *Sequence and Space in Pompeii*, eds. Sara E. Bon and Rick Jones. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997), 122, 123.

<sup>345</sup> Jansen "Private Toilets," 124-125.



Figure 27: Latrine Casa del Gran Portale, Herculaneum. Photo by author.



Figure 28: Latrine, Casa del Gemma, Herculaneum. Photo by author.

The powerful articulation of one's place within domestic hierarchies expressed in the physical exchange between body and self fully emerges when the sensory experiences of the locations are considered alongside posture. Alex Scobie's now (in)famous article on Roman sanitation and Jansen's more recent work on hygiene detail conditions of latrines. Latrines collected dangerous gases that could be potentially fatal if proper ventilation or waste removal were not maintained.<sup>346</sup> These locations were often dark and dank, attracting vermin and insects.<sup>347</sup> Latrines' proximity to surfaces involved in various stages of cooking raises questions not only about the hygienic nature of food prepared for consumption, but also the converse effect of odors from the kitchen mingling with those coming from the latrine. The combined stench would intensify this physical interaction between body and tool.<sup>348</sup> In effect, the posture demanded of these latrines and

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<sup>346</sup> Gemma Jansen, "Toilets and Health," in *Roman Toilets*, 160-161; Alexander Scobi, "Slums, Sanitation, and Mortality in the Roman World," *Klio* 68 (1986) 412, n. 105.

<sup>347</sup> Jansen "Toilets and Health," 159; For a discussion of the worms and parasites that passed through ancient populations because of toilet practices, see Horst Aspöck, Ingrid Feueris and Silvia Radbauer, "Case Study: Detection of Eggs of the Intestinal Parasites *Ascaris Lumbricoides* in Samples from the Roman Sewers of *Carnutum*," in *Roman Toilets*, 163.

<sup>348</sup> For a discussion of the sensory experience of public latrines, see Zena Kamash, "Interpreting the Archaeological Evidence: Latrines and the Senses," in *Roman Toilets*, 181-82.

the sensory experience of the dim and foul location powerfully communicated one's position within the house's walls.

This distinction of status becomes more profound when considering the toilet practices of the more privileged members of the household. Jansen notes that elite relied on chamber pots to assist their excretory needs rather than entering the kitchen to use the nearby commode.<sup>349</sup> Not surprisingly, extant (or correctly identified) examples of chamber pots are particularly rare. However, Andrew Wilson has been able to identify a couple of chamber pots from Austria based on the analysis of surviving encrustations, which were identified as crystalized salts that result after the evaporation of human urine.<sup>350</sup> These clay vessels have large flaring rims around wide openings. The shape of these objects helps identify other possible candidates for chamber pots in the Roman world. For instance, a bronze basin from the Insula of the Mendander resembles the shape of those found in ancient site of Carnuntum in Austria. This elliptical basin was initially identified as a *bain-marie* cooking device, although more recently others have asserted that it was used in ablutions or as a tub to wash feet (Figure 42).<sup>351</sup> However, Ria Berg argues that these items and their accompanying lids transported warm water and served as a bidet.<sup>352</sup> Her interpretation is persuasive—particularly when comparing this basin's shape to that of the ceramic vessels identified as chamber pots. The bronze basin's flat base has an attached foot that encircles its outer edge so that it can easily stand on a flat surface. Although it is undecorated, the basin's metal work is smooth and delicate—particularly as regards the rim, which despite its emphasized width, is in fact delicate and gives way to slight pressure exerted between the thumb and finger (Detail 1, Figure 29). Under the basin's wide rim are two handles located on the long part of its elliptical form. Because of their position

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<sup>349</sup> Jansen, "Toilets and Health," 161; Andrew Wilson, "Urination and Defecation Roman-Style," in *Roman Toilets*, 95-96.

<sup>350</sup> Wilson, 98-99.

<sup>351</sup> Allison, *The Insula of the Menander*, 87. As *bain-marie*, see Apicius, Barbara Flower, and Elisabeth Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *The Roman Cookery Book*, (London: Harrap, 1958), 30. As basin for ablution or as tub, see Suzanne Tassinari, *Il cusellame bronzeo di Pompei: 1* (Roma: L' Erma di Bretschneider, 1993), 233.

<sup>352</sup> Ria Berg (personal communication January 2012).

underneath, the rim interferes or abuts fingers curling around them (Detail 2 and 3, Figure 29). The handles seem constructed to pull the basin sideways along a flat surface. However, if used for carrying, they require a strange hand placement because the wide rim interferes with the thumb. If the thumbs rest on the rim or presumably on top of the lid that covered it, the discomfort is alleviated, but the handles' functionality is made moot. The delicateness of basin's rim, its flat base, and smaller size suggest that, if this object was used as a bidet, it rested on a flat surface during use, but the object itself did not sustain any true weight.



Figure 29; Bronze Basin, Pompeii Collection, Inv. no. 4748



Detail 1, Figure 29



Detail 2, Figure 29



Detail 3, Figure 29

These design elements help recreate how the chamber pots influenced Roman practices involving elimination and cleansing of the genitals and/or anus. One must have stood or crouched above the pot that sat on a flat surface—either the ground or a low table. Perhaps, the wide rim indicates that it rested inside of some structure—like a modified chair or stool. But, the pot’s flat bottom and side handles make this option seem unlikely. Rather, it appears that a person must squat over these items during use and that the wider rim provided a larger surface area to catch liquid, either urine or warm water for cleaning, that might drop down from above.<sup>353</sup> The handle suggests that sliding the object was an essential component of its use, although sliding the object before and after use for the person squatting seems a bit difficult—particularly if one considers performing such activities with types of garments Romans frequently wore. Thus, it seems as though two different users were considered in the design of these objects: the person using them for urination, defecation, or cleansing and another person who (re)moved the object before and after use. These various interactions with this object adroitly expressed class distinctions within the home. That is to say, the elites’ toilet activities involved squatting over a pot in a location removed from the household latrine and their bodily waste (or water used to cleanse themselves) was removed by the slave, who experienced a decidedly different exchange with the basin while (re)moving and carrying it away.<sup>354</sup>

The non-verbal codes of domestic excretory practices inherent in the design of latrines and chamber pots cannot be compared to Roman representations of them because there are no depictions of latrines or chamber pots in use. The only possible visual imagery of latrines in use

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<sup>353</sup> The one possible exception to squatting over chamber pots or bidets is (obviously) a urinating man. However, while a man has the ability to stand while urinating without making a mess all over himself, and standing is thought to be the common way modern American males urinate, we should not assume that the male body’s physical ability to urinate standing up automatically translates to Roman men standing to urinate. We simply do not know. I think another important, but perhaps equally unanswerable, question addresses the cleaning after urinating or defecating. Did elite men and women clean their own anuses or genitals after excretion, or was that a job for slaves as well?

<sup>354</sup> On Roman assumptions that slaves carried chamber pots, Sen. *Ep.* 77.14-15. Seneca mentions a recently enslaved Spartan boy who kills himself by smashing his head in the wall rather than submitting to carry another’s chamber pot. This story obviously serves Seneca’s agenda, but it speaks to a Roman perception that some slaves were assigned the task of carrying chamber pots.

comes from Ostia and its playful painting found at the Caupona of the Seven Sages. Although Clarke has correctly argued that the jokes here are decidedly potty humor and the juxtaposition of seated sages above to (possibly) seated figures below, what remains of the lower half of the painting is too fragmentary to be able to gauge Roman conceptions of the interaction between latrine and body.<sup>355</sup> It is worth pointing out, however, that surviving images of bodily elimination are noteworthy in the lack of representation of objects designed to assist these bodily functions. For instance, a painting from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli shows a nude man squatting deeply down on his legs with his head turned to his right side (Figure 30).



Figure 30: Fortuna Painting from Pompeian Taberna, Museo Nazionale di Napoli. Photo by author.

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<sup>355</sup> John R. Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.C.—A.D. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 125-130. For a review of current scholarship on these frescoes, see Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow and Eric M. Moormann, “Case Study: The Painting of the Philosophers in the Baths of the Seven Sages in Ostia,” in *Roman Toilets*, 178-181.

Surrounding him on each side are two snakes that curve back and forth from their tails upward until their heads almost meet directly above him. To his left, the goddess Fortuna stands in a relaxed *contraposta* pose. She looks down impassively, possibly at him and the snakes. Above the squatted man, someone has written “*cacatore cave malum*—shitter beware.” Whether or not the person who painted this image originally intended to render a man defecating, the words suggest that his physical position reminded the author of someone releasing his bowels. Similar to the visual language of this painting, the Aquelia relief shows a squatting man before Jupiter. In this relief, however, the man is partially clothed although his toga is hiked up to his thighs and he seems to be stumbling forward as if he has been caught unaware. Unlike Fortuna who looks calmly on the crapper hunkered down before her, Jupiter raises his arm to hurl a lightning bolt at this unsteady man. Clarke argues that the possible original provenance of this relief in a temple precinct accounts for this type of subject matter being rendered in stone because it provides a humorous warning to visitors to make sure that they deposit their bowel movements in a more appropriate location.<sup>356</sup> Moreover, the lack of latrine or chamber pot in conjunction with gods observing—even attacking—the shitters indicate that modifications to common Roman practices involving the excretory functions were interpreted as inappropriate and offensive in addition to indications of lowly status.

The offensiveness of modifications to accepted latrine practices and locations is particularly highlighted in details of deviant crappers found a fresco found in the *Officina Fulonica* M. Vesoni Primi IV 14.22 at Pompeii and the Large Columbarium of the Villa Doria Pamphilj. The fresco from the fullery shows a man bent at the waist with his rear high and exposed (Figure 31). Excrement explodes from his bum as he seems to aim his attack on his unsuspecting neighbor. In the fresco from the columbarium, a pygmy assumes the same pose and intent as he steers his feces toward his undefended victim (Figure 32).

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<sup>356</sup> For image and discussion, see Clarke, *Looking at Laughter*, 62.



Figure 31: Fresco from Officina Fulonica M. Vesoni Primi IV 14.22



Figure 32: Fresco from Columbarium, Villa Doria Pamphilj, Museo Nazionale Romano.

The humor of these scenes plays on Roman notions of proper performance the elimination of bodily waste that is tied to specific tools and locations. Strikingly, the visual language employed here echoes that of those who prepared and served food; again, the person is hunched or curled forward, his clothing (or absence of it) exposes his body, an internal (sometimes divine) audience observes his actions, and he is caught in the middle of the act. Indeed, visual representations of excretion add vulnerability and offensiveness to these nonverbal codes.

## **V. Conclusion**

In summary, analysis of the practices involving care of the body's nutritional and excretory needs and implements designed to assist them unveils the bodily experience of these activities and their roles in managing domestic hierarchies. With the help of human remains from Vesuvius' victims, I have attempted to recreate physical exchanges between the inhabitants of Roman houses

and the material world in which they lived. The material record of domestic fixtures and tools and visual representations of cooking, eating, and excreting consistently reveal that Romans relied on bowed poses to mark enslaved bodies. Kitchen benches, couches, and latrines required slaves daily and repetitively to curl and stoop their bodies in order to use the fixtures designed to assist their labors. Movable objects employed in cooking and dining also underlined the slaves' low social standing within the home. Roughly hewn and constructed with only their function in mind, these objects were uncomfortable to use and dictated that their users adapt their body to the objects' forms, not the reverse. These objects and fixtures created immediate and tactile experience that continually instructed and reaffirmed slaves' servile function within domestic walls. Indeed, modifications to some kitchen benches and tools that permitted more comfortable postures and experiences with objects affirm the pervasive power of Roman assumptions about class and a desire to react against such cultural practices.

Conversely, dining couches and tableware articulated elite status through designs that encouraged poses of leisure and paid attention to the user's comfort. For some occupants, couches permitted a reclined and open pose that was sustained by slave attendants' labors. Couches not only distinguished elites' reclined and open poses from servants' stooped and straining ones, but they also promoted gender and status claims through the interaction of simultaneous use of its shared occupants. Dominant male bodies curled around and rubbed against female bodies that had to respond to the limited space left available to them on the couch. If the couch (either fixed or movable) held only men, the messages of feminine sexual vulnerability and mutability were the same for some diners as their backsides encountered their fellow diners' more dominant position. Tableware also assisted the host in making status claims as its comfort in the hand and visual embellishment communicated the host's taste and ability to expend his resources. The distinction in the quality of tableware from that of cooking utensils helped to manage household hierarchies as

they spotlighted the difference between tools used by elite household members and those by its enslaved members. Likewise, the use of chamber pots helped to maintain domestic hierarchies because they removed more privileged members of the household from the dank environment of the latrine that was frequented by servants.

Perhaps the most telling manner in which these items and visual representations delineated status through bodies is the attention paid to representing enforced movement. Visual representation of food preparation, dining service, and deviant excretion all spotlight the body's motion while performing the task or act. Intimately connected to a body caught in motion is an internal (and external) audience, who actively or passively witnesses the working body's effort. In some instances, the internal audience's inattentiveness to these mundane and routine activities highlights the domestic power dynamics that perpetuated daily household management. Other cases, like the modifications of kitchen benches in villas, shine a light on the profound role that the orchestration of people and their movements played in performances of status. In the next chapter, I explore more fully the role of movement and audience when I discuss the kinetic organization of these daily activities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FRONT AND CENTER: Moving Food and Excreta in Roman Homes

*Paulum redormio, dein ambulo, mox orationem Graecam Latinamve clare et intente non tam vocis causa quam stomachi lego; pariter tamen et illa firmatur. Iterum ambulo ungor exerceor labor. Cenanti mihi, si cum uxore vel paucis, liber legitur; post cenam comoedia aut lyristes; mox cum meis ambulo, quorum in numero sunt eruditi. Ita variis sermonibus vespera extenditur, et quamquam longissimus dies bene conditur.*

After a short sleep and a walk I read a Greek or Latin speech aloud with emphasis, not so much for the sake of my voice as my stomach, though of course both are strengthened by this. Then I walk, am oiled, take exercise, and have a bath. If I am dining alone with my wife or with a few [others], a book is read aloud after the meal, comedy or music; then I walk with mine [members of household], some of whom are well educated. Thus, with varied conversation the evening is prolonged, and even the longest days end well. (Plin. *Ep.* 9.36, 3–4).

In a letter to Fuscus Salinator that relays how he spends summer days in his Tuscan villa, Pliny the Younger ties digestion, reading aloud, and walking to an elite man's home. That Pliny lists walking as beneficial to digestion is not surprising; other Latin authors also note that ambulation helps one digest a meal.<sup>357</sup> Notably, for Pliny, reading aloud and walking through his grand house are activities that underscore his elite position in his home and offer opportunities to underscore his agency and privilege, which I explored in Chapter Two.<sup>358</sup> Indeed, Pliny's digestive friendly deeds are accompanied by various other activities that denote his privileged position in his home: namely, being rubbed down with oil, bathing, dining, and entertainment.

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<sup>357</sup> Both Pliny the Elder and Celsus also recommend walking to aid digestion, although the elder Pliny adds the warning that digestion done while sleeping leads to corpulence (*HN* 11.118-119). Careful again to address seasonal demands, Celsus advises a person should read aloud, walk, or participate in other forms of exercise to assist digestion. He notes that bathing and fine-tuning the amount of wine, water, and food ingested are also actions that help the digestive process (*Med.* 1.2:5; 1.3:4; 1.7.1; 1.8:1).

<sup>358</sup> Mantha Zarmakoupi, "Porticus and cryptoporticus in Luxury Villa Architecture," in *Pompeii: Art, Industry and Infrastructure*, ed. Eric Poehler, Miko Flohr and Kevin Cole (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011), 57. Zarmakoupi points out that walking was an intrinsic part of daily life in the villas of elite men.

Remarkably, Pliny perceives his home and daily routine in terms of movement—both his own movement as well as the orchestration of the movement of others who sustain his quotidian activities. In fact, the expectation and intertwining of his own movement with that of other members of his household is so normalized that Pliny does not (or perhaps cannot) conceptually separate them when he mentions the practices he performs to aid his digestion. Inherent, but unacknowledged, in all of these activities is the slave (or slaves) who applies oil to his body, prepares the baths for him, waits on him and his guests as they eat, or reads to him.<sup>359</sup> Thus, Pliny's digestive inducing strolls highlight not only his kinetic experience of his home but also profoundly differentiate his movement and daily activities from the enslaved laboring within the walls of his villa on his behalf. By doing so, his comments provide clues into how elite Romans conceptualized daily activities in domestic settings and how these participated in the performance of elite status. In fact, the way Pliny subsumes slaves labor under the activities in which he thinks he is involved is reminiscent of the way Cato speaks about the labor on his farm and the cooking that he directs. In fact, Pliny's comments reveal the masterly extensibility that Brendon Reay has articulated in his research.<sup>360</sup> Although they do not cultivate his fields, Pliny's domestic slaves and their labor, nonetheless, are perceived as moving, prosthetic tools that maintain his physical needs and pleasures.

In this chapter, I hope to add to the recent scholarship on movement, especially in Roman domestic spaces, by building on my observations that Roman authors frequently conceived of the digesting body and the practices associated with it in terms of a hierarchical bodily order that governed the interconnected movements of organs and muscles within the alimentary canal. The study of movement in Roman homes and cities has been on the rise in recent scholarship. In fact, in his edited volume addressing this very issue, Ray Laurence declares that the next paradigm shift in

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<sup>359</sup> On representation of slaves in Roman literature, see Sandra Joshel, "Slavery and Roman Literary Culture," *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, vol.1, eds. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 214-40.

<sup>360</sup> Reay, "Agricultural Writing," 335; Reay "The Spectacle of Expertise," 64; Chapter 3, 122, fn. 73.

spatial studies will be movement and mobility.<sup>361</sup> However, it should be noted that for the past twenty year scholars have been addressing movement, in one way or another, in Roman homes. For instance, Bettina Bergmann's work on the mythological panels in the frescoes from the House of the Tragic Poet observes that movement through a home, either physically or imagined, is essential to understanding authors' use of the Roman house to train their memory.<sup>362</sup> Mark Grahame investigated movement through domestic spaces in Pompeii and Herculaneum by applying access analysis to Roman homes in order to demonstrate that a home's architecture influences the social interactions that take place within its walls.<sup>363</sup> More recently, Timothy O'Sullivan explores Cicero's strolling through his villa within his larger study of the social practice and role of walking in Roman culture.<sup>364</sup> Current work on Roman houses and villas look at the structure and/or function of *porticos*, *cryptoporticos*, doorways, and paintings with the intent of understanding how Romans choreographed the movements of the household members who lived and worked in these spaces.<sup>365</sup> Studies of graffiti in Roman houses, on the hand, attempt to locate where different household members were able to linger long enough to scribble words or drawings on walls or columns.<sup>366</sup>

Building on these studies, I argue that Romans conceived of domestic spaces not as specific locations where things were put or activities occurred, but rather in terms of the movement that accompanied daily activities. Indeed, categorizing and orchestrating movement seems to be the key for understanding the Roman organizational thought process. In the first section of this chapter, I

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<sup>361</sup> Ray Laurence, "Endpiece: From Movement to Mobility: Future Directions," in *Rome, Ostia, Pompeii: Movement and Space*, ed. Ray Laurence and David J. Newsome (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2011), 386-402.

<sup>362</sup> Bergmann, "The Roman House as Memory Theater," 225-226.

<sup>363</sup> Grahame 2000; 1997.

<sup>364</sup> Timothy M. O'Sullivan, *Walking in Roman Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>365</sup> Sandra Joshel and Lauren Hackwork Petersen, *The Material Lives of Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 168-82; Sandra Joshel, "The Geographies of Slave Containment," in *Roman Slavery and Roman Material Culture*, ed. Michele George (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 99-128; Zarmakoupi, "Porticus and cryptoporticus in Luxury Villa Architecture," 50-61; Lara Laken, "Zebrapatterns in Campanian Wall Painting: A Matter of Function," *BABesch* 78 (2003): 167-189.

<sup>366</sup> Eamonn Baldwin, Helen Moulden, and Ray Laurence, "Slaves and Children in the Roman Villa: Writing and Space in the Villa San Marco at Stabiae," in *Writing Space in the Latin West 200 BC-AD 300*, ed. Gareth Sears and Peter Keegan (London: Bloomsbury 2013), 153-166.

explore Roman authors' analogies of the body to the built environments and suggest that this comparison reveals their notion that their homes were full of interconnected and orchestrated movement. Additionally, I set this undercurrent of pulsating domestic activity alongside Roman agricultural writers' instructions for the duties of the *vilica* and their advice on creating dung heaps. These comparisons provide insight on how homeowners distinguished their domestic movements from those who labored in their homes.

Next, I turn to the architecture and artifact assemblages of three Pompeian homes in order to explore where the movement that accompanied the most basic and repetitive daily routines of eating, digestion, and excretion occurred. Architectural features that suggest focal areas of activities in conjunction with locations of artifact assemblages found in Pompeian homes allow me to trace possible paths of movement that recurred in Roman houses. Recognizing that the discovery of some objects' final locales may be the result of their hasty removal by people's frantic efforts to escape Vesuvius' eruption or later robberies, I have chosen to rely on the work of Penelope Allison who has been able to distinguish some general patterns in the storage of common household items in order to recreate the movement that accompanied daily activities involving the digesting body.<sup>367</sup> For example, by looking at artifact assemblages, Allison has recently challenged traditional perceptions of the atrium as the almost hallowed location where the paterfamilias received his clients. Although it played an essential role in the *salutatio*, the atrium was also the site for storage of cooking items, looms, and other things associated with the household's wealth.<sup>368</sup> Indeed, recent work has shown that the atrium was central to ancient Roman economy and, in some cases, spatial reconsiderations or compromises needed to be made in order to support a home's commercial

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<sup>367</sup> Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 125-158; Penelope Allison, "Labels for ladles: interpreting the material culture of Roman households," in *The Archaeology of Household Activities*, ed. Penelope Allison (London: Routledge, 1999). 57-77. Allison. "Artefact Distribution," 321-54; Eugenia Salsa Prina Ricotti, "Cucine e quartieri servilli in epoca Romana," *Rendiconti atti della Pontificia academia Romana di archeologica*, no. 51-2 (1978): 237-94.

<sup>368</sup> Allison *Pompeian Households*, 78-80,128.

functions.<sup>369</sup> Additionally, the common recurrence of braziers and other cooking items located near colonnaded gardens or peristyles suggests that Romans found this area well-suited for at least for the storage of these tools; yet, the location of braziers in connection with gardens' open-air environments, which provide easy ventilation, also indicate that cooking frequently occurred in these domestic locations in addition to the food preparation that happened on the fixed masonry benches of Pompeian kitchens.<sup>370</sup>

Despite the uncertainty and partial picture that assemblages offer, Pompeian homes and their artifacts of daily life, nonetheless, provide broad sketches of the types of movements that involved routine practices that assisted digesting bodies' needs. I argue that the activities surrounding eating, digesting, and excreting were significant for free Romans' performance of status. Indeed, the careful attention paid to creating different visual and physical experiences of movement within the home reveals that Romans organized their houses and daily lives around a notion of directed movement. Not only did the experience of motion inform their perception of their homes, the movement associated with these quotidian and repetitive acts was front and center in their houses. Although the level of display or staging of this movement differed according to house or villa size, I assert that the motion that accompanied these domestic activities was an essential element in homeowners' performance of mastery. For my case studies, I chose houses that are from Wallace-Hadrill's third and fourth quartiles (Casa del Principe di Napoli and the Casa del Menandro) and a villa (Villa San Marco).

### **I. Movement and Mastery: The Body as House and The Busy *Vilica***

Similar to those clues found in Pliny the Younger's letter cited above, hints at elites' perceptions and experiences of domestic activities are found within other Latin authors' works as

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<sup>369</sup> Flohr, "Working and Living Under One Roof," 51.

<sup>370</sup> Allison *Pompeian Households*, 90-94; Berry, 192-93; Salsa Prina Ricotti, 240-41.

well. Because I am concerned with their perceptions of and practices surrounding the digesting body and its by-products, I propose a quick comparison between Roman writers' works that explicitly align the human body and buildings to Columella's instructions for the *vilica* to look closer at Roman perceptions of domestic space and activity. What emerges from such a seemingly incongruent comparison of literary apples and oranges is an underlying commonality in Roman thought. Specifically, these comparisons make transparent that Romans' perceived domestic spaces much like they did the body's digestive tract: as one body joined together by an interconnected system of movement.

In the first chapter, I demonstrated that Cicero, Seneca the Younger, and Pliny the Elder conceived of a properly functioning digestive process as a connected system that moved food through various muscles and organs working together. Cicero directly linked the kinetic energy of the digestive system to the structure and implied hierarchies of a Roman house, with the homeowner associated with the body's head and slaves with its bowels. Pliny the Elder also relied on the notion of the body's continuous internal mechanics to draw a comparison between the urban landscape and vascular networks joining the brain and heart. Although Seneca did not rely on a comparison of body to a built environment, he nevertheless employed veins' inherent transportive function to explain the movement of rivers and wind.<sup>371</sup> Although they may differ in the value they place on it, for these authors, the shared idea contained in their comments about the body is that it is a system best understood as pulsating with activity.<sup>372</sup> Because it seems that its inherent

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<sup>371</sup> See also, Mira Green, "Eating and Nature: Tools of Social and Political Critique," *Rosetta*, no. 13 (2013): 42-52.

<sup>372</sup> Compare to Vit. *Arb.* 1.2.4. In his treatise on architecture written for Augustus, Vitruvius turns to the symmetry of the human body to impart the harmony of design details that can be found in a completed building. He explains that the body's proportionate regularity explains Greeks' reliance on it for planning buildings and cities—focusing particularly on temples as evidence for this in his argument (*Arb.* 3.1.1-9). Although his use of its proportionality as an emblem for ancient standards of measurement comes across as more static than those examples I have highlighted from the above authors, Vitruvius, nevertheless, also discloses that movement within an interconnected system is inherent to his perception of the human body. Detailing the necessary training for aspiring architects, he makes the following claim: "For a general education is put together like one body from its members. So those who from tender years are trained in all the arts and see the intercommunication of all disciplines, and by that circumstance more easily acquire information

movability is what makes it most useful as an analogy for ancient authors, modern scholars should pause and consider why these authors find the human body an apt metaphor for built and natural environments. In fact, by relying on the body to describe their homes or other buildings, these authors indicate that they commonly perceived of built structures as pulsating with the same interconnected activity that is transparent in their representations of the body's digestive and cardiovascular functions.

Indeed, movement through built environments—particularly domestic ones—is fundamental to navigating and organizing it for these writers. Moreover, as we have seen with Roman authors' use of the body itself, an assumed hierarchical relationship underpins their experience of the movement that accompanies their and their household members' quotidian routines. As Pliny the Younger's peripatetic meanderings through his Tuscan villa while he digests indicate, the kinetic and physical experience of the homeowner is intimately tied to, but also differs from, the movement of those who labor within the walls of his home. This distinction is even more conspicuous in Columella's account of the domestic duties expected of the *vilica*—a female slave who overlooked household labors<sup>373</sup>. He notes that she should guard the goods that have been brought into the house, inspect regularly furniture and clothing that have been stored to make sure they have not decayed, check on stored fruits to make sure they have not been ruined (*Rust.* 12. 5). In fact, on rainy days, when she cannot be busy with field-work, she must busy herself with spinning wool. Not only she keep herself engaged with work, but she needs to keep her eye on other slaves

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(*Arch.* 1.1.12).” Only a body comprised of coordinated, movable limbs makes sense of Vitruvius' metaphor to illustrate the necessary concurrence between the various avenues of study he wishes to underscore in his statement. Or in other words, an inert body with stagnant or independently acting limbs muddles his point. What is striking, however, is that the attribute of movement is so intrinsic to Vitruvius's view of the body that he does not need to explicitly state it. Although its symmetry is an essential quality for Vitruvius, his statement along with those of the above authors imply Romans' notion of the body as composed of limbs and internal organs, muscles, and veins that needed to move together in order to function properly. On Vitruvius' use and varied notions of *corpus* as applied to architecture, see Indra K. McEwen and Pollio Vitruvius. *Vitruvius: Writing the Body of Architecture* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003).

<sup>373</sup> For a discussion on how the attention to the *vilica*'s the movement of her domestic duties extends to Roman authors' advice on dung heaps, see Appendix.

to make sure that they do not get away with being lazy (*Rust.* 12.8). Indeed, Columella does not allow for the *vilica* to have a moment to stand still. She must consult with others working on looms to offer her advice; in the next moment, she needs to check in on those cooking food for the *familia*, and then make sure that kitchen, cowsheds, and mangers are clean (*Rust.* 12.8). Or as he puts it, “it will be her duty to stay in one place as little as possible, for her work is not sedentary” (*Rust.* 12.8).<sup>374</sup> Columella’s expectations for the *vilica*’s daily routines speaks to the differences slave owners drew between their movement and that of their slaves. Note that Columella underlines that the *vilica* is expected to be constantly moving—her duty is not to stay in one place too long. Through his listing of the daily expectations for the *vilica*, it becomes clear that Columella is not so much concerned that she keep everything and everyone in their appropriate place, but rather that she sustain her own and others’ constant activity. Thus, well-organized domestic labor exhibited through the careful direction of slave movement seems to underline slave owner’s powerful position in his home.

In effect, Roman authors’ descriptions of the homes as pulsating with interconnected movement that echoes that of the body’s digestive system and Columella’s description of the *vilica*’s household duties indicate the significance of choreographing these activity within their homes. In fact, when we look specifically for daily practices that are focused on supporting the needs of the digesting and excreting body, we see that Roman authors attempt to describe actions surrounding these as recurring and dynamic. Yet, its recurrence and pulse is squarely placed on those that must labor in the home. The homeowner may walk through his home for his own physical benefit as Pliny the Elder, Celsus, and Pliny the Younger suggest, but Roman authors do not represent themselves as actively participating in the daily and repeating movement that is carefully orchestrated to sustain him or his family members. Indeed, they distinguish their privilege and position in the

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<sup>374</sup>*Denique uno loco quam minime oportebit eam consistere, neque enim sedentaria eius opera est.*

home as either being the passive recipients of others' work or the person who ultimately decides how labor should be performed in his home.

## **II. Mapping Daily Routines Involving the Digesting Body: Three Case Studies**

In order to test this hypothesis that Roman authors perceived their homes as locations of connected and ordered movement, I have chosen to investigate the Casa del Principe di Napoli, the Casa del Menandro (both of which are in Pompeii) and the Villa San Marco in Stabiae. All three of these houses have extant kitchen benches and identifiable latrines. The two houses in Pompeii provide a comparison of the performance of daily activities between an 'average' home and a more elaborate one. Additionally, these houses have been the focus of recent and careful studies on their architecture, decoration, and (most importantly for this chapter) domestic objects. Their artifact assemblages, while revealing distinctive features in each house, reflect similar patterns that Allison, Berry, and Salsa-Ricotti pointed out in their studies.<sup>375</sup> Although the Villa San Marco has not benefited from the same attention to its domestic finds as the two Pompeian houses, its configuration of kitchen, latrine, and atrium makes it a particularly interesting study for the ideas that are central to this chapter.

### A. Casa del Principe di Napoli (IV, 15, 7-8)

The Casa del Principe di Napoli is located in Regio IV of Pompeii and was excavated between 1896 and 1898.<sup>376</sup> Because of its 'average' size and more or less symmetrical layout based on the familiar plan of an atrium with a connected colonnaded garden, this house fits Wallace-Hadrill's "Quartile Three" classification and thus offers a view into a home that, while perhaps not

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<sup>375</sup> See note 9.

<sup>376</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/house?id=20> (accessed February 13, 2014). See also Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society*, 47.

an example of Pompeii's wealthiest citizens, suggests tastes and practices that are similar to some aspects of elite privilege and status.<sup>377</sup> Notably, scholars' comments have usually focused on the house's architecture and decoration, and overlooked the smaller and more mundane objects discovered there. Sadly, early archaeologists' disregard for daily items influenced the poor (and sometimes careless) recording of these artifacts. Allison remarks that during the house's excavation Mau compiled its list of finds in the *Giornali degli Scavi* similar to the work that was done on the Casa di M. Lucretius Fronto, which unfortunately resulted in confusing the location of original finds—particularly those from rooms *c* and *g*.<sup>378</sup> Yet Allison and Bernard Sigges have recently attempted to study, clarify, and catalogue the material finds of the house.<sup>379</sup> Additionally, the presence of food in room *b* suggests that this home was in use at the time of the earthquake.<sup>380</sup> Thus, because of the studies done on its architecture and material finds alongside evidence of inhabitation, this unpretentious house offers an interesting case study for the role that movement played in organizing daily routines ascribed to the digesting body's needs.

A brief study of only the architectural and decorative elements in the Casa del Principe di Napoli demonstrates that such an investigation offers an interesting, but ultimately limited, view of the kinetic routines that occurred daily in the house. The plan of the house indicates that this built environment is almost equally divided between those rooms that surround the atrium and those that open to the porticoed garden (Figure 33).<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>377</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/house?id=20> (accessed February 13, 2014). For discussion of size, characteristics, and distribution of various houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum, see also Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society*, 65-90, especially 80-82 for his categorizations of quartiles he assigns.

<sup>378</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/house?id=20> (accessed February 10, 2014).

<sup>379</sup> See Allison, *Pompeian Households*, 10, 17, 30, 48, 70-72, 89, 136, 164, 181, 191-195; Bernhard Sigges, "Vita Cognita - Die Ausstattung Pompejanischer Wohnhäuser mit Gefäßen und Geräten: Untersucht an Ausgewählten Beispielen," (PhD Diss. Universität, Köln, 2000), 347-397. See also, Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20> (Accessed February 10, 2014).

<sup>380</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/house?id=20> (Accessed February 10, 2014).

<sup>381</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 47. For various interpretations of the house's fourth style decoration and thereby dating, see Mau 1898, 32, 37 and Stroka 1984a, 35-36.

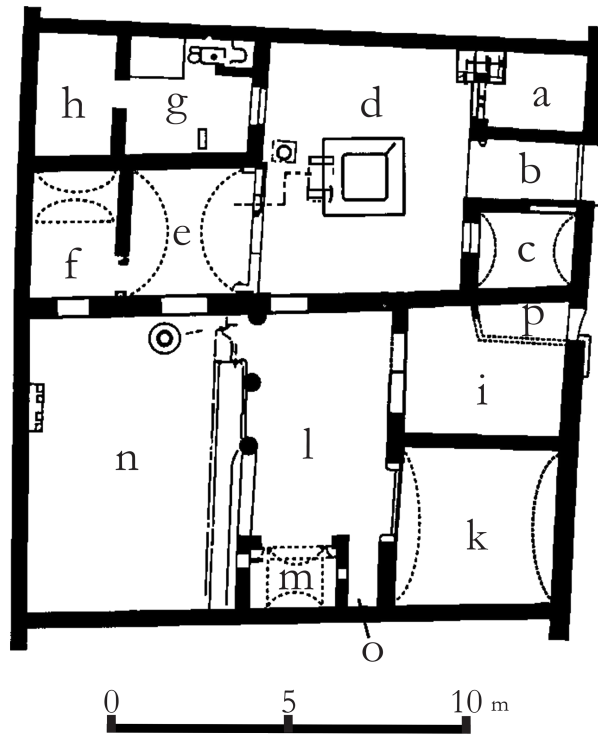


Figure 33: House plan for Casa del Principe di Napoli (according to Allison, 2004).

According to Wallace-Hadrill, its Fourth Style decoration, produced in a single phase, effectively and visually communicates a clear hierarchy.<sup>382</sup> Specifically, as a person enters the house from the street through entrance 8, she notices that the southwest side of the atrium draws light from not only from the opening above the impluvium but also the windows that offer views into the garden area. The northeast side of the atrium, however, is lit only by light coming from impluvium area (Figure 48).

<sup>382</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society*, 47; Volker M. Strocka, *Casa del Principe di Napoli, Häuser in Pompeji 1* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1984), 35-6.



Figure 34: Casa del Principe di Napoli: room *d* (atrium) and view of doorway into the kitchen (room *g*). Photo by author

This play between light and shadow in combination with the austere decoration of dark red panels in the atrium and the more delicate and detailed frescoes in the rooms to the south of the impluvium pull the eye away from the doorway and the two rooms (*g* and *a*) that opens immediately off of the atrium as one enters the house. In fact, it is easy to overlook room *a* and the narrow staircase to its north side once entering room *d* from *b* unless a person intentionally turns to look to her right (Figures 35 and 36). The visual contrast between light and dark would have been heightened if the

doorways, which now stand empty and which separate the atrium from rooms *g* and *a*, were filled with large doors or screens.<sup>383</sup>

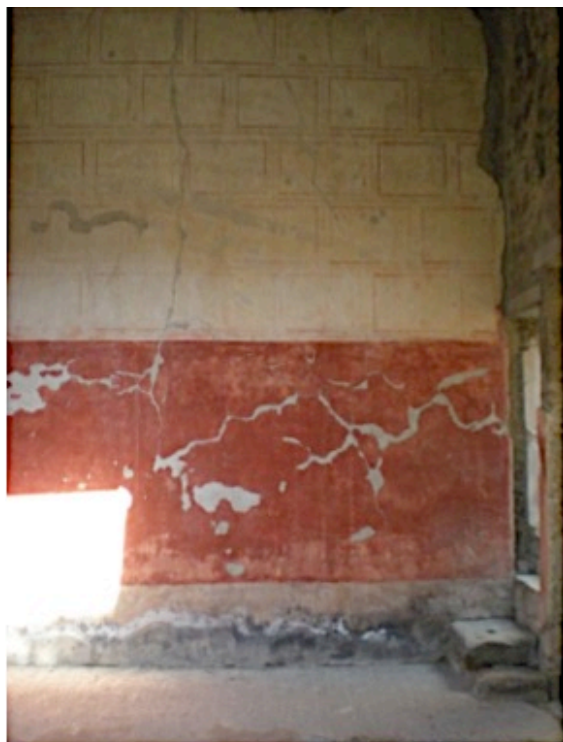


Figure 35: Casa del Principe di Napoli: view from atrium to east wall of atrium. N.B. stairway entrance not easily visible upon entrance into atrium. Photo by author.



Figure 36: Casa del Principe di Napoli: Stairway north of room *a*. Photo by author.

The finds and fixtures from these rooms signal that the kitchen, latrine, and storerooms, (spaces commonly associated with household slaves) are located in this section. Although the finds from room *g* reflect an upper floor assemblage, *g* was most likely used as a kitchen (or at least one site for food preparation) because it not only has a kitchen bench that is 60.5 cm high, but also just

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<sup>383</sup> On doorways, screens, and curtains in Campanian homes, see M. Taylor Lauritsen, “The Form and Function of Boundaries in the Campanian Home,” in *Privata Luxuria: Towards an Archaeology of Intimacy: Pompeii and Beyond: International Workshop Centre for Advanced Studies Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (24-25 March 2011)* (München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2012), 95-114.

inside of the doorway to the right is a latrine that is also only a few steps from the kitchen bench.<sup>384</sup> Across from the kitchen bench on the opposite wall, there was small wooden staircase that led to the second floor. Enhancing the effect of its lack of natural light, the kitchen's south and north walls were roughly plastered and the unadorned floor was made from beaten earth.<sup>385</sup> Located off the back of kitchen, room *b* has a small, high window that offers some light and perhaps ventilation for the cooking fires built on top of the hearth in the adjacent room. Like the kitchen, its walls are not plastered and it has an earthen floor. In addition to a few other bronze and ceramic items not obviously related to food preparation or consumption, two bronze basins and *casseroles*, three ceramic jugs, two plates, one *terra signillata*, an amphora, and a ceramic basin containing a fatty substance were found in this area; the room also had chicken and sheep bones, a shell, and iron axe.<sup>386</sup> At the very least, these finds indicate that food was stored in this area and that the house was occupied at the time of the eruption. Yet, they may also suggest that it served as a pantry for room *g*.<sup>387</sup> Thus, the frequent combination and proximity of kitchen bench and latrine in addition to food items found in room *b* suggests that these spaces were employed in food preparation activities. Room *a*, like rooms *g* and *b*, has walls covered in coarse gray plaster, lime mortar pavement, and finds that indicate the room was used for storage. Although it is not clear whether a slave lived in this space, as others have suggested, its similarity to rooms *g* and *b* denote that it had been designed and decorated with an expectation of servile use.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Allison records that four small glass bottles, a glass cup, two ceramic vases, an amphora, a bronze surgical instrument, a bronze lock, and bronze lock plates were found in this room. Because such objects seem more consistent with upper-floor assemblages, Allison notes that no actual finds belonging to the kitchen were recorded. Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20> (accessed February 14, 2014). See also A. Mau, "Insula VI,15." *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung* 13 (1898): 34.

<sup>385</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society*, 47; Stroka 22. Wallace-Hadrill offers the idea that room *b* could have served as a dining area for slaves in addition to a storage area. See also, Allison <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20> (Accessed February 14, 2014).

<sup>386</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20> (Accessed February 14, 2014).

<sup>387</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society*, 47; Stroka 22.

<sup>388</sup> Perhaps relying on Stroka's assessment, Wallace-Hadrill claims that room *a* housed the house's "porter" (*ostiarius*) and that he controlled access to the slaves' rooms above (1994, 47). Allison is reluctant to assert that this room was inhabited by slaves or that the upper floor was devoted to slave quarters.

The evidence of architectural elements that anticipate movement along with artifacts and fixtures attached to domestic slave labor help underline that this part of the house was designed and decorated based on certain class assumptions about those who normally occupied it. The lack of natural light and simply painted red panels in this part of the Casa del Principe di Napoli combines with the size of doorways and staircases to create a physical and visual experience of movement that distinguishes the activities on this side of the house from those that happened on the left side of the atrium and most of the spaces near the garden. The evidence of a latrine, wooden staircase, and kitchen bench that demands a concaved posture in combination with stark walls and earthen floor all point to physical experience of movement in domestic kitchens that elite authors' observed and criticized in their works—even if they misunderstood the labor that was carried out there. That is, Roman writers mentioned that domestic kitchens were dark, smoky, and filled with bustling activity.<sup>389</sup> On the other hand, if the doorway between room *g* and *h* was unhindered and the window remained open, this kitchen would perhaps have been slightly better lit and ventilated than elite authors let on. Nevertheless, it is apparent that rooms *g* and *h* served as focal points not only activities associated with food preparation, but also movement between the first and second floors, and motion tied to expelling and disposing human waste. Hence, Latin writers' impressions of kitchens bustling with activity seem apt for this space.

Not only does the kitchen in the Casa del Principe di Napoli reflect this same attention to human/object exchanges that I explored in the previous chapter, the width of the doorways and stairs in this section of the house also expose design details that create specific physical experiences as the human body moves through them. For instance, the doorway that allows passage from the atrium to room *g* is approximately 115 cm wide, which is similar to—if not a little larger than—the

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<http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20> (accessed February 14, 2014).

<sup>389</sup> For examples, see Martial *Ep.* 3.2; 7.27 10.66; Seneca *Ep.* 114.26; Apuleius, *Meta.* 1.21.

other doorways in the rooms off the atrium and the colonnaded garden.<sup>390</sup> This width allows for easy passage for one average sized person from Herculaneum and Pompeii's ancient populations to walk through, although it might be difficult for two people to use the doorway if, for example, one person was entering while one was exiting. If this person entered the kitchen with a need to use the latrine, either personally or simply to dispose of waste, then she would perceive a slight narrowing of entrance into this space, which is roughly 93 cm. However, if a person's trip into the kitchen required that she continue back into room *h*, she would have a much different physical experience because this doorway is 78 cm wide. Indeed, the difference of 37 cm between these two doorways is noticeable, and it creates a more confining physical interaction with the doorway. Although the evidence for the width of room *g*'s internal staircase is difficult to assess, we can perhaps extrapolate that it was similar in size to the staircase that was on the north wall of room *a* (approximately 64.5 cm). If both staircases were more or less equally built, then this indicates that the physical experience of movement between the first and second floors was particularly tight for an average sized person from ancient Pompeii or Herculaneum. In effect, the mitigation of access to natural light, lack of attention to decoration, and narrowness of entrances and stairways in the northern half of this modest home shaped a specific experience of servitude that powerfully and tacitly enforced domestic hierarchies. That is, the distinction between light and decoration that accompanies movement between the more finely adorned and lit atrium to the dark and shabby rooms *a*, *g* and *b* provides an immediate visual cue that signals one's location in the house. Matched with these optical impressions, the narrowing of passageways into tighter and darker areas that gradually restricts a person's movement the deeper a person passes into servile areas or enters upper levels of the house also expose Roman assumptions about who were expected to use these rooms and passageways. Together, these characteristics of rooms, doorways, and stairways create a physical

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<sup>390</sup> As in the previous chapter, the measurements I present here are only approximations of size and are meant to provide a context for the physical experience of moving through passageways.

experience of enslavement that enhances those I outlined in the previous chapter on human and object exchanges.

The rooms located to the north side of the atrium stand in stark contrast to those on the south side of the atrium and the others near the garden. Despite the similarity in doorway width of *c*, *e* and *f* to rooms *a* and *g*, the frescoed walls done in the Fourth Style and *cocciopesto* pavement are visual clues significantly different than those in the kitchen and storerooms on the north side of the atrium.<sup>391</sup> These decorative elements are particularly enhanced in rooms *e* and *f* by vaulted ceilings and large windows that open to the garden. The Fourth Style frescoes covering the walls in ambulatory *l* and rooms *k* and *m* on the garden side of the house and their contrast to room *i*'s mostly coarsely plastered walls and gray mortar floor help affirm the line drawn between areas that seem set aside for work and those for other household activities. In essence, these architectural and decorative differences indicate an attempt to distinguish patterns of bodily experience and movement of slaves from the more stationary activities of the homeowner and his family members. That is, it appears that movement particular to the homeowner and his family is focused on the left side of the atrium and to ambulatory *l* and rooms *m* and *k* off of the garden. Notably, rooms *c*, *e* and *f* on the atrium side of the house and rooms *k* and *m* off of the garden seem to have been originally designed to assist more stationary activities like dining, sleeping, and managing internal and external household interactions. However, the more spatially demanding actions that tied a villa owner's movements to his home, like those that Pliny outlined in his letters, seem unlikely in this smaller town house. Particularly, the home's modest size restricts digestive friendly strolling, exercising, or bathing. In lieu of the space allotted in a villa for these activities, Pompeii's sidewalks and baths obviously helped accommodate these activities if a person sought to aid his digestion with walking or bathing. Additionally, movement on the south side of the house appears to be confined only to

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<sup>391</sup> Strocka 36. The rough plaster on this in combination with the similarity of its decoration to room *f* led Strocka to date the decoration prior to 62 CE.

the first level of the house. The locations of stairways on the north side of the house indicate that movement between floors was localized here.<sup>392</sup> Although one cannot definitively say that these stairways were reserved only for household slaves' use, the location of the wooden staircase in the kitchen make it seem unlikely that the homeowner or his family members would rely on these to ascend to the second level of the house. The stairs on the north side of room *a* seem more likely for the homeowner and family members who might wish to go the second floor. Thus, if we base an investigation of movement within this home almost entirely on its architectural and decorative characteristics, these elements suggest an attempt to locate the movement of slaves to one narrow section of the house and to separate their activities from those who inhabited the more expansive and finely decorated sections of the house. In addition, the activities surrounding cooking or disposing of human waste were seemingly removed (as much as possible) from the peering eyes of guests to the home.

As compelling as these architectural and decorative distinctions between the north and south sides of the house are, it would be a mistake to assume that these alone dictated or accounted for the movement in this home. If the items that used in in food preparation and consumption are included in this study, then a different picture of movement emerges (Figure 37).

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<sup>392</sup> Additionally, Strocka claims that room *i* had been a workshop and the street entrance had been blocked during the house's last phase (Strocka 46).

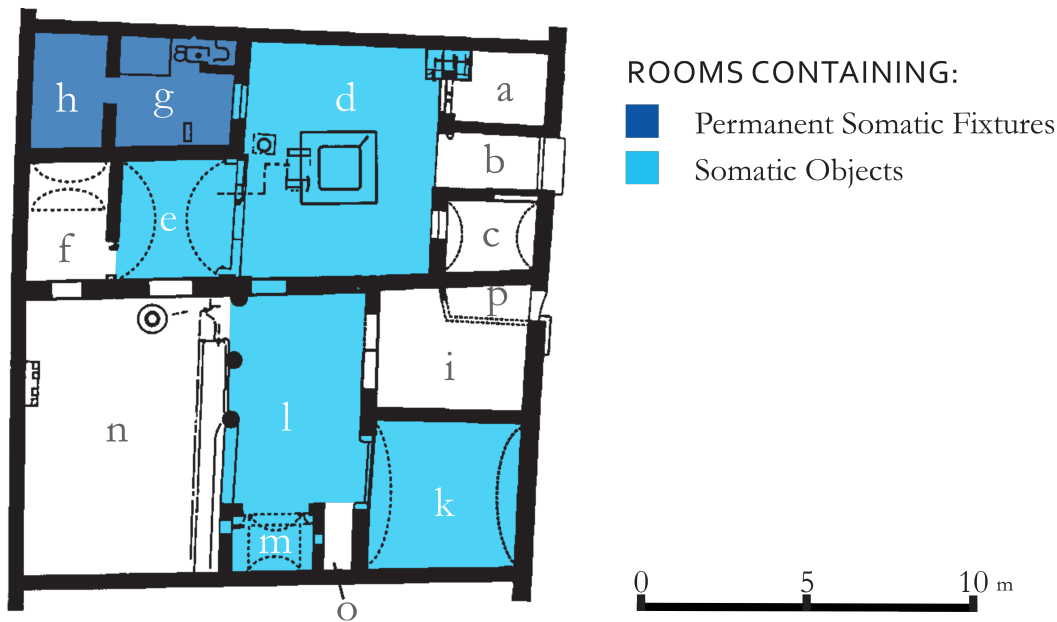


Figure 37: Casa del Principe di Napoli: Possible Locations for Somatic Functions.

Since the kitchen bench and latrine are permanent fixtures, they serve as the beginning or ending point for activities focused on the digesting body. Paths of movement come into focus when lines are drawn from the location of the material remains for cooking, dining, and toiletries to the kitchen/latrine area. These lines makes transparent that the center of the house (specifically the atrium, room *e*, and ambulatory *l*) were, in fact, important stages for daily activities involving somatic functions. The atrium has items that might have been used for the preparation and consumption of food.<sup>393</sup> If we accept that room *b* and *g* served as the central location for food preparation, then items needed for these activities might be taken from room *d* and brought to room *g* (or the reverse direction could be taken as well to return items brought to room *g* from room *d*).

<sup>393</sup> Allison lists the following items: “two small ceramic vases, the base of a terra sigillata vase, one amphora, and two glass storage flasks. Other unlocated finds included nine inscribed amphorae, a ceramic bowl, two bronze basins, two bronze buckets, a bronze forma di pasticceria, a bronze casseruola, ten glass storage flasks of varying sizes, a lead vase, a small cylindrical bronze container, a bronze buckle, and a small lead weight with an iron handle.” Although Allison records that the amount of these daily items seems peculiar to this house (perhaps because its smaller size lacked other storage space), she observes that storing such items in what is essentially the front hall of a house was a common practice in many Pompeian homes. Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20>, (accessed February 14, 2014).

Yet, as I have mentioned above, scholars have observed that cooking did not occur solely in kitchens, and the finds from the Casa del Principe di Napoli confirm this as well. Braziers along with other cooking items were found in room *e*.<sup>394</sup> Overlooking the significance of these items, Mau initially asserted that this room was a triclinium, while Strocka claims that this room served as a tablinum.<sup>395</sup> However, the presence of brazier and cooking items in this room demonstrate its multifaceted use for its ancient inhabitants, which extended beyond the more fixed definitions assigned by Mau, Strocka, and others. At the very least, the presence of these items suggests that room *e* sometimes contained cooking items and perhaps assisted food preparation routines. Again, accepting room *b* and *g*'s centrality in the storage and preparation of food, a path between *b* and *g* and room *e* would have been taken to bring items from room *e* to room *c*, or to bring some food or dish to room *e* to help with the cooking done on the braziers.

Following this same logic, paths can be drawn rooms from ambulatory *l* and room *k* where cooking or other items associated with somatic functions were found. On the north side of ambulatory, Allison records that an amphora, bronze bucket, a bronze *padella*, two bronze handles from a cooking pot, and a marble pestle and mortar were recovered, while on the south side another bronze *padella* and a small bronze lid were found.<sup>396</sup> Hence, it is likely that a path between ambulatory *l* and rooms *g* and *b* would have been commonly taken in this house. Additionally, although Strocka identifies room *k* as a triclinium (dining room), Allison notes that the cooking objects in addition to other finds belonging to chests or cupboards suggest that it was at least used for some household storage.<sup>397</sup> If used either (or both) as an area for dining and storage, it seems that movement associated with food preparation and dining would have been directed along a path that connected rooms *g* and *b* to room *k*.

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<sup>394</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20>, (accessed February 14, 2014).

<sup>395</sup> See Strocka 22; Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20>, (accessed February 14, 2014).

<sup>396</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20>, (accessed February 14, 2014).

<sup>397</sup> Strocka 35-6; Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20>, (accessed February 14, 2014).

Unfortunately, no recognized chamber pots were found in the Casa del Principe di Napoli. Some limited speculation, however, might trace paths taken to dispose of free household members' excreta. Based on the censorship and humor exhibited in Latin literature about excretion and feces in combination with the squatting and concaved posture required by tools or fixtures assigned to excretion, we might expect that caring for excretory needs frequently occurred in rooms that were removed or at least offered momentary privacy from the more public area of the atrium and the gaze of guests visiting the home.<sup>398</sup> Additionally, if we accept other scholars' assertions that the elite members of a home used chamber pots instead of household latrines—especially those located in kitchens, it might be possible to locate the practices associated with the expelling of bodily waste with others that were tied to caring for the body. For instance, room *m* contains some items that were attached to personal care: a small bronze bottle, an elliptical *forma di pasticceria*, a small glass amphora, two fluted ceramic jars, and ceramic beaker, two bone probes, and two bone spindle.<sup>399</sup> Because of the decoration and these items, Strocka identified this room as a cubiculum.<sup>400</sup> Whether or not sleeping might occurred in this room, the toiletries in this room suggest that it was used for personal care.<sup>401</sup> If we suppose that items demonstrating the care of one's body also points attention to other somatic needs, including the expelling of human waste into a chamber pot, then we can draw a line from room *m* to the latrine in room *g*.

Although there is little evidence for activities that occurred on the upper floor, assemblages in the rooms *g* and *a* mentioned earlier suggest that personal care was at least one activity that occurred on this level. A downpipe in the wall next to the latrine in room *g* also indicates that there

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<sup>398</sup> See Cicero *Nat.D.* 2.138, 141; Seneca *Ep.* 110.12; Martial 12.77.

<sup>399</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20>, (accessed February 14, 2014).

<sup>400</sup> Strocka 47.

<sup>401</sup> On cubacula and Roman attitudes towards sleep and privacy, see Laura Nissinen, "A Bedroom of One's Own," in *Privata Luxuria: Towards an Archaeology of Intimacy: Pompeii and Beyond: International Workshop Centre for Advanced Studies Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (24-25 March 2011)* (München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 2012), 15-31. See also, Riggsby " 'Private' and 'Public' in Roman Culture," 36-56.

might have been a latrine on the second floor as well, which is not uncommon.<sup>402</sup> Therefore, I cannot claim that if someone urinated or defecated on the second floor that it needed to come down the stairs to be disposed in the kitchen latrine. However, even if the second floor had a latrine, there is also no reason to assume that all human waste needed to go only into a second floor latrine, although it would likely have been the most convenient option. Yet, because there is no evidence other than a down pipe for a latrine on the second floor, I will assume that if waste was expelled on the second floor, it would need to be disposed of in the latrine in the kitchen. Thus, two paths of movement to dispose of waste can be drawn from the stairway in the kitchen and the other on the north side of room *a*.

In essence, a study of the objects, architectural features, and domestic locations that are associated with the most common and repetitive daily routines of food preparation, eating, and expelling bodily waste demonstrates that the atrium and ambulatory *l* are the central stages of movement for those who labored in the house as slaves (Figure 38).

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<sup>402</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=20>, (accessed February 14, 2014). On latrines on upper floors, see Barry Hobson, "The Location of Private Toilets," in *Roman Toilets: Their Archaeology and Cultural History* (eds) Gemma C.M. Jansen, Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, and Eric M. Moorman. (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 124-5.

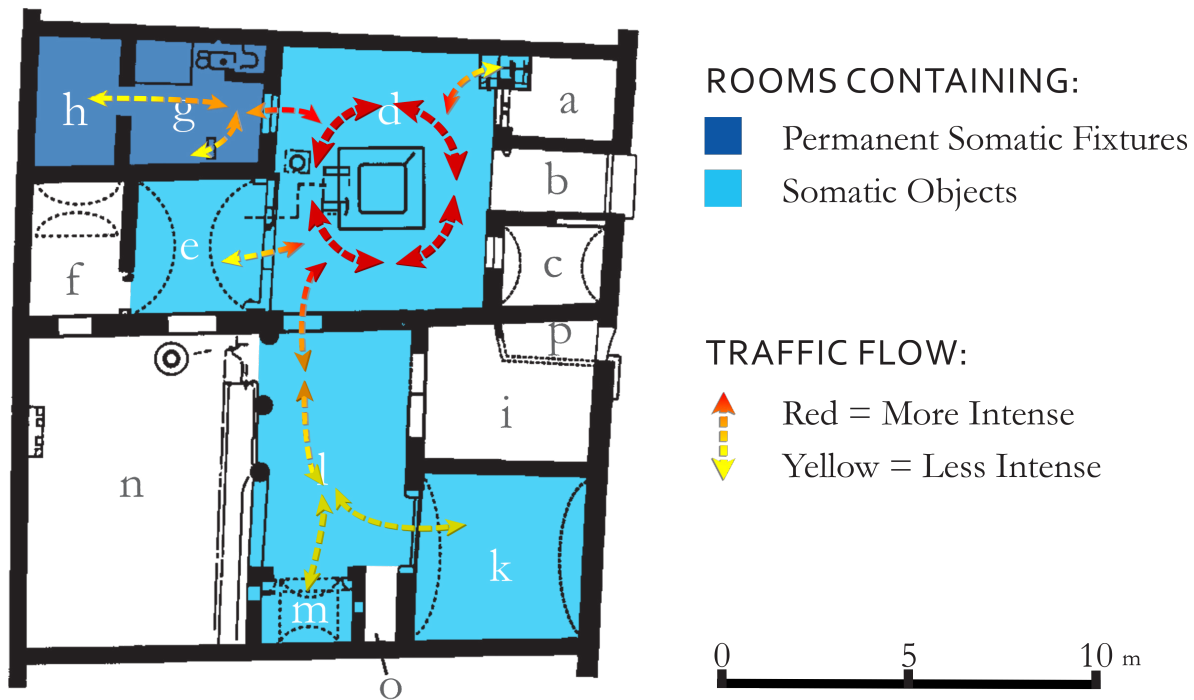


Figure 38: Casa del Principe di Napoli: Possible Paths of Movement.

These findings challenge the presumption that the north side of the atrium was the focal point of slave activity, which other scholars have argued based on studies of the house’s architectural and decorative elements alone. However, the distinctions between the kitchen, latrine, and storage areas located in rooms *g*, *b*, and *a* from those in the atrium, rooms *e*, *f*, *k*, and *m* do provide strikingly different visual and physical experiences, which encode for the type of activity and behavior that was expected as a person moved from one room to another.

#### B. Casa del Menandro (I 10, 4)

The Casa del Menandro—a larger and grander house that has been named for the painting of the Greek playwright found inside an exedra off of the peristyle garden—is located in Regio 1 in Pompeii (Figure 39). This home offers a slightly different perspective on the configuration of

domestic locations involved with activities associated with food preparation, consumption, and the elimination of bodily waste.



Figure 39: House Plan for Casa del Menandro (according to Allison 2004).

This large house fits Wallace-Hadrill's Fourth Quartile and allows Ivan Varriale to contend that, despite its central location in the town of Pompeii, its structure during its last phase imitated a

suburban villa.<sup>403</sup> The house was first excavated and restored by Amedeo Maiuri beginning in the summer of 1927 and he continued (on and off) until he finished in 1933.<sup>404</sup> The earthquake in 62 CE and continued seismic activity, which preceded the fatal catastrophe that was to follow seventeen years later, shook this grand home.<sup>405</sup> Because of the damage it sustained during the quake, Allison surmises that the house's final state reveals a change in the house's level of occupancy and also accounts for evidence of ancient restoration efforts.<sup>406</sup> In addition, she notes that the number of skeletons found in the home and the sparsity of artifacts recovered from such a large house suggest it was not at full occupancy during its last phase.<sup>407</sup> In effect, an exploration the paths of movement in the Casa del Menandro based on its architecture in combination with its artifact assemblages is rather tricky. Although the evidence from its final moments may not provide a detailed picture of the house at full occupancy, it can help create a broad sketch of how these activities might have been orchestrated when it was filled. Indeed, evidence for at least three distinct cooking areas and latrines suggests that certain activities like cooking and excretion could have several foci within larger homes and hints at how these activities met the different needs of the household's members. By surmising that common patterns of food preparation and storage occurred in the atrium and garden areas of this home as they did in other Pompeian homes, we can also perhaps presume additional patterns of movement that would have occurred in this house when it was occupied by a greater number of individuals than those who unfortunately died there.

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<sup>403</sup> Ivan Varriale, "Architecture and Decoration in the House of Menander in Pompeii," in *Contested Spaces: Houses and Temples in Roman Antiquity and the New Testament*, ed. David L. Balch and Annette Weissenrieder (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 67. For Wallace-Hadrill's quartile classifications, see note 26.

<sup>404</sup> For a discussion of the excavation, dating, and phases of the house, see Richard Ling, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, vol. 1: *The Structures*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 48-142.

<sup>405</sup> Ling 1997 vol. 1, 83-91, 132-42; Varriale 163.

<sup>406</sup> Allison, *Insula of the Menander*, 333-4, 399-405.

<sup>407</sup> Allison, *Insula of the Menander*, 401-5. See also, Estelle Lazer, "Human Skeletal Remains in the Casa del Menandro: Appendix F," in Richard Ling, *The insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, vol. 1: *The Structures* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) 342-3.

Like the Casa del Principe di Napoli, architectural elements in the Casa del Menandro appeared to localize the activities and movements of food preparation and elimination or disposal of bodily waste to distinct areas within the house. The core of the house follows the familiar sequence in the architecture of many Pompeian homes of fauces (room *a*), atrium (room *b*), tablinum (room 8), and peristyle garden (room *c*), with additional rooms surrounding both the atrium and peristyle.<sup>408</sup> Many, but not all, of these rooms are finely decorated with mosaic or paved floors and wall paintings, a number of which evoke mythological scenes.<sup>409</sup>

Even more pronounced than the architectural and decorative elements of the Casa del Principe di Napoli that appeared to centralize the activities of food preparation and disposal of waste to rooms *g* and *h* off of the atrium, similar elements in this house remove cooking areas and latrines from the atrium and peristyle portions of the house. The group of rooms (51, 52, and 54) in the western part of the house, which is accessed by corridor 53 appears to be the main kitchen for the house because of its size and proximity to the house's vegetable garden.<sup>410</sup> Larger and longer than the simple doorway into the kitchen in Casa del Principe di Napoli, corridor 53 effectively distances this cooking and disposal focal area from the more finely decorated areas of the house. Indeed, the view through the west ambulatory of the peristyle easily draws attention away from the low entrance that leads to this cluster of rooms (Figure 40).

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<sup>408</sup> On the peristyle in Pompeian homes, see Jens-Arne Dickmann, "The Peristyle and the Transformation of Domestic Space," in *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, Journal of Roman Archeology Supplement Series 22. eds. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997), 121-36.

<sup>409</sup> For a discussion of significance of mythological scenes in wall paintings, see Varriale 172-82. For descriptive catalogue of the Casa del Menandro's wall painting, see Richard Ling, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, vol. 2: *The Decorations*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 179-256. See also, John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy 100 B.C.—A.D. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 170-93.

<sup>410</sup> Ling, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii* vol.1, 92-96; Ling, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, vol. 2, 277-78; Allison *The Insula of the Menander*, 312. Despite having all of the qualities that connote this room's intended culinary functions, it should be noted that no movable artifacts associated with cooking were found in this area. Breaches in the walls of this side of the house and disturbed soil three meters below the modern surface suggest that the basic ceramic fragments found in this room might not accurately represent what had been left behind during the eruption. Although she observes that Maiuri noted that the kitchen bench had traces of ash and carbon on it, Allison is reluctant to assert that this kitchen was in use immediately prior to the eruption.

Through its noticeable narrowing from the peristyle's west ambulatory and its simple walls and pavement, the corridor simultaneously offers visual and physical clues about which household members were normally expected to enter this area and the type of activities that occurred here (Figure 41).<sup>411</sup> Not only does corridor 53 provide passage to corridor 51, which leads to the kitchen, it also allows access to the lower level of the house. In fact, the location of this cooking area seems to benefit from its proximity to a vegetable garden in area 50 that was reached by a staircase off corridor 53.<sup>412</sup> As a person enters room 52, she notices that a relatively large kitchen bench, which is roughly 62 cm tall, covers the entirety of the north wall and part of the east wall.<sup>413</sup> Although not seen today, Mauiri noted that there was a lararium painting on the west wall and the floors were covered with *cocciopesto* pavement; other than these, there appears to have been no other decorative elements.<sup>414</sup> This room also has a sink in its southwest corner that shares its drain with the nearby latrine in corridor 51, which is separated from the kitchen by a narrow wall.<sup>415</sup>

The Casa del Menandro has two additional, but smaller, cooking areas that underscore the association of similar architectural and decorative aspects. First, on the lower level of the house, room *c* is one of the dark, undecorated rooms with simple floors and low ceilings. Allison suggests that quarter-circular masonry platform in the southwest corner was a small hearth.<sup>416</sup> Additionally, there is evidence for a latrine nearby in the northwest corner of the room. On the lower level, room

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<sup>411</sup> Ling, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii* vol. 1, 2, 277. Ling records that the walls on the south side were decorated with high socle of signium with coarse plaster above and the pavement was a simple mortar.

<sup>412</sup> Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius* (New York: Caratzas Bros, 1993), 47. See also, Ling vol. 1, 93.

<sup>413</sup> For kitchen bench, see Chapter 4, 15. For discussion of room, see Ling 1997, 277-278. Pls. 39-41; <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=9> (accessed March 4, 2014).

<sup>414</sup> On lares and kitchens, see Pedar Foss, "Watchful Lares: Roman Household Organization and the Rituals of Cooking and Eating." *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 22, (eds) Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1997), 196-218.

<sup>415</sup> Ling *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii* vol. 2, 92-94, 277; Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=9> (accessed March 4, 2014). In the adjacent and simply decorated room 54, a small fornello, whose internal walls were covered in soot when Mauri first uncovered it, suggests that cooking or heating had been carried out here, although no items specific to cooking were discovered in the room. Nevertheless, the room seems to have been a work and/or storeroom.

<sup>416</sup> Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=9#192> (accessed March 5, 2014). She compares this structure to the hearth in room b of House I 6, 13.

a also had a brazier with a bronze with a bronze *casseruola* discovered in it.<sup>417</sup> Notably, both of these rooms are just off of the stairway that is next to the vegetable garden and that leads to corridor 53. In the eastern portion of the house, another makeshift cooking area was discovered in hall 41.<sup>418</sup> Specifically, an iron grid was attached to the wall near the entrance to courtyard 44 and a latrine was located in room 45. A bronze cooking pot, two jugs, a ceramic pot blackened from smoke, and three ceramic lids were recovered nearby. Indeed, this semi-permanent modification to a space that was initially not designed for cooking underlines the expected proximity and understood interrelatedness of activities surrounding food preparation with the disposing of human (and likely other) waste.

Although distinct from and more spatially expansive than the kitchen area in Casa del Principe di Napoli, these three defined cooking and disposal areas in the Casa del Menandro rely on similar architectural and decorative elements to denote expected behaviors and create physical experiences of the labor performed in these areas (Figure 42). Specifically, there is an attempt to create a physical experience of narrowed, and therefore more restrictive, passage into the kitchen located in room 52. Additionally, the main kitchen's low bench demands concave posture and is inside a room with simple decorative elements. Notably, all three cooking and disposal foci rely on a configuration of kitchen bench or small hearth and latrine signaling an attempt to contain the movement associated with food preparation, storage, and waste disposal within defined areas.<sup>419</sup> In essence, these rooms echo the qualities of rooms *g*, *b*, and *c* in the Casa del Principe di Napoli and hint at tendency in Pompeian homes to encourage a specific visual and physical experience of the type of activities that occurred in these areas.

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<sup>417</sup> Allison *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, 88.

<sup>418</sup> Allison *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, 124-49; 325-27.

Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=9#179> (accessed March 5, 2014).

<sup>419</sup> There is a latrine in room 31, however, that seems to not to be associated with cooking—or at least no items particular to food preparation were found nearby. Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=9> (accessed April 21, 2014).

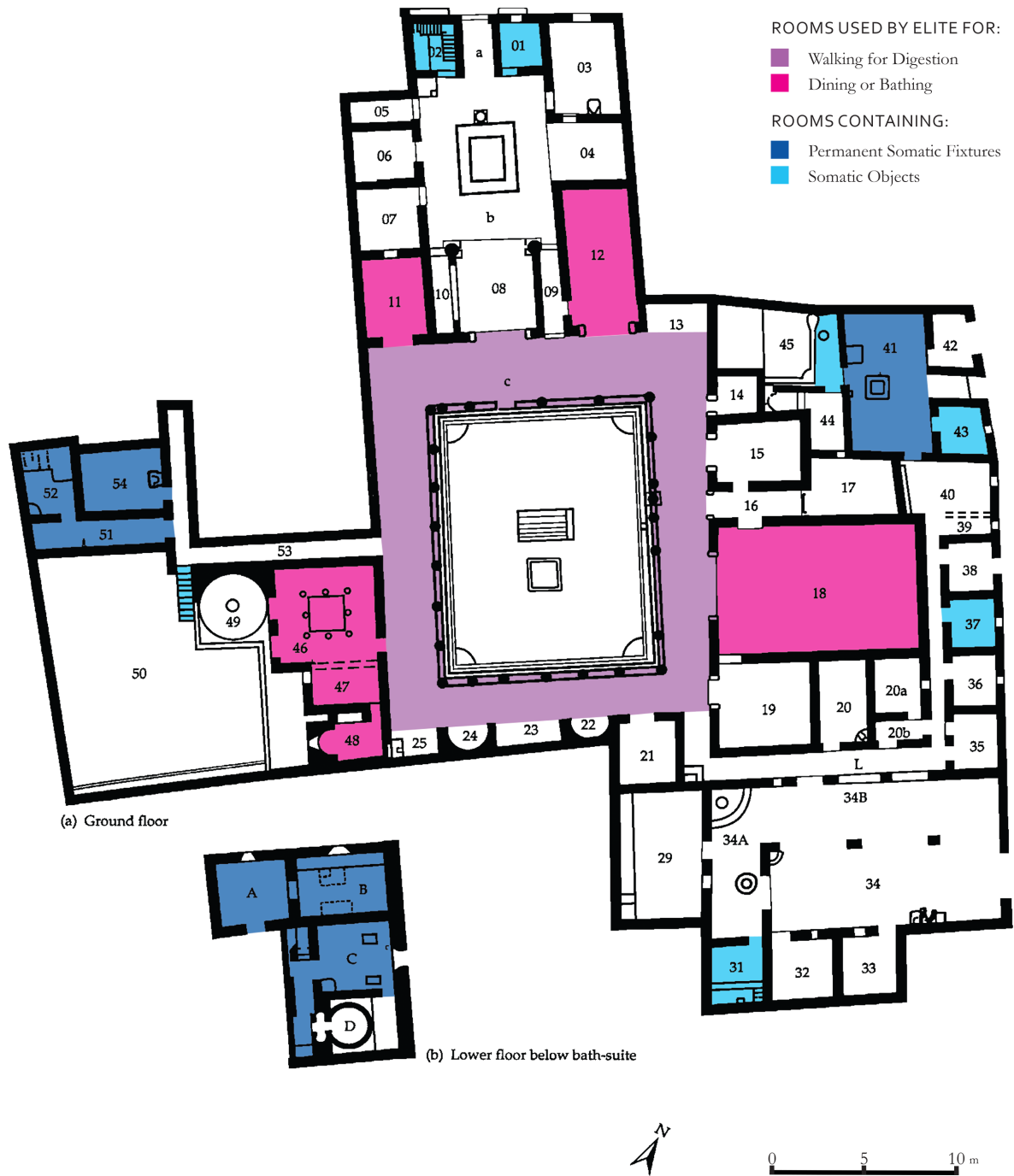


Figure 42: Casa del Menandro: Possible Locations for Somatic Functions.

However, once artifact assemblages that indicate food storage, preparation, consumption, and toiletry items uncovered in this house are included, a more encompassing vision of breadth of locations associated with daily routines that involved care for the digesting body emerges. As in the Casa del Principe di Napoli, items related to food preparation and consumption are located in rooms off of the atrium and the peristyle garden. Room 2 contained up to sixteen ceramic dishes with burn marks on them. These dishes seemed to have been stored underneath an internal staircase that led to the second floor and inside a locked cupboard.<sup>420</sup> The room in which they were located reflects some of the same elements we have seen generally line up with food preparation and/or spaces that seem to be intended for servile use. That is, the walls and floors are unadorned and an internal stairway leading to the second floor suggests an attempt to contain movement between the lower and upper level in or near rooms of servile use. Additionally, they are stored near the atrium, which Allison has noted is typical, but their location in a room off of the atrium and in a locked cupboard under the stairs seems peculiar to this house. Obviously, they were used for cooking, and were not simply stored here because they have burn marks. Allison is cautious to assert that they were used in the nearby *fornello* in room 3 because the oven has no visible evidence of a fire having been lit in it—or at least not often enough to leave any marks.<sup>421</sup> Whatever reason for their presence in this room, these dishes must have been transported here at least from a cooking area—either one of the three kitchens or in the peristyle.<sup>422</sup> For simplicity's sake, I only assume a path from the main cooking area to room 02 because of the likelihood that this kitchen served the needs of the entire house, and this path is the most direct between a cooking area and room 2. Braziers were also found in the north ambulatory of the peristyle, which offers another possibility for the use of the dishes stored in room

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<sup>420</sup> Allison *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, 251-252; 299-300; Allison, <http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/rooms?houseid=9#192> (accessed March 5, 2014).

<sup>421</sup> Allison *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, 300-1.

<sup>422</sup> Allison *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii*, 300. She believes that room 02's distance from the main kitchen suggests that these dishes were used primarily for heating food in the peristyle.

2. A tripod assumed to assist food preparation was also discovered in room 37, presumably stored here. Conceivably, it could have been brought to either hall 41 or the peristyle garden for use. Allison also records many cooking items recovered along the western wall of hall 41.

Following the same method I used in the Casa del Principe di Napoli, I propose the paths taken while performing daily routines based on the architectural focal points of cooking and waste disposal in combination with the movable finds that are associated with these activities (Figure 43). Not surprisingly, similar patterns represented in the Casa del Principe di Napoli are found here. That is, the atrium and peristyle play a significant role in the kinetic orchestration of these activities. Yet, this house is different from the Casa del Principe di Napoli because it offers pockets of activity that seem to respond to the needs of household members other than the homeowner and his family. Jens-Arne Dickmann argues that the cooking areas discovered in room *a*, *c* and hall 41 most likely were employed as sites for the preparation of food for slaves who labored in the home.<sup>423</sup> His argument offers up the possibility that specific places in the house could have been designed for or even appropriated by the enslaved members of the household in order to sustain their digesting bodies' needs in a manner that was independent of the activities and routines that involved the homeowner and his family.<sup>424</sup> In fact, his argument for such occurrences evokes the scene of domestic cooking and eating that is represented on the silver cup found in the silver cache from room *b* in this home and which I discussed in the previous chapter. It is too much of stretch to believe that that image specifically represented an actual event from the Casa del Menandro. Nevertheless, its setting might have echoed familiar cooking and dining practices performed in one of the cooking areas represented in this house. However, to accept that these focal points of

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<sup>423</sup> Jens-Arne Dickmann, "Crucial Contexts: A Closer Reading of the Household of the Casa del Menandro at Pompeii" in *Household Studies in Complex Societies: (Micro) Archaeological and Textual Approaches*, ed. Miriam Müller (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, *forthcoming*).

<sup>424</sup> See also, Sandra Joshel, "The Geographies of Slave Containment," 119. She argues that the Casa del Menandro, the Casa dei Vettii, Villa A at Oplontis, and the Villa Arianna offered spots enable slaves to remove themselves from the surveillance of their owners.

cooking and disposal were solely used for the preparation of household slaves' meals is somewhat misleading as well. It is also likely that these smaller cooking and disposal areas could have been called upon to help support the food preparation demands of a large banquet.

Offering what the smaller Casa del Principe di Napoli could not to its owner, this house—particularly its large ambulatories around peristyle garden—provides opportunities for the homeowner, his family members, and guests to walk around the central garden, perhaps even a stroll meant to ease the burden of full bellies after a large meal. We can likely draw at least a path around the peristyle garden that can represent a frequent route that the homeowner and his family would have walked inside this house. Additionally, one can easily imagine paths between the atrium portion of the house (perhaps even rooms 6 and 7 which suggest use as cubicula) back to the bath complex, where cleaning the body might also have combined with the elimination of bodily waste (Figure 42).

A comparison between the Casa del Principe di Napoli and the Casa del Menandro draws out different roles that architectural elements in conjunction the orchestration of activities and movement associated with the digesting body's needs were able to play in the articulation of domestic hierarchies. The Casa del Principe di Napoli seemed to manage its internal domestic hierarchy through the juxtaposition of the homeowner and his family's more static positions and locations to supervised movement of household slaves through the core section of the house. Indeed, it is as though the Casa del Principe di Napoli asserted domestic hierarchies through the contrast of movement and stasis. If the homeowner of the Casa del Principe di Napoli desired a digestive friendly stroll or to go the bathes, he needed to leave his home. However, in the Casa del Menandro, the paths of movement that emerge from the analysis of architecture and artifact assemblages evoke a different set of circumstances.

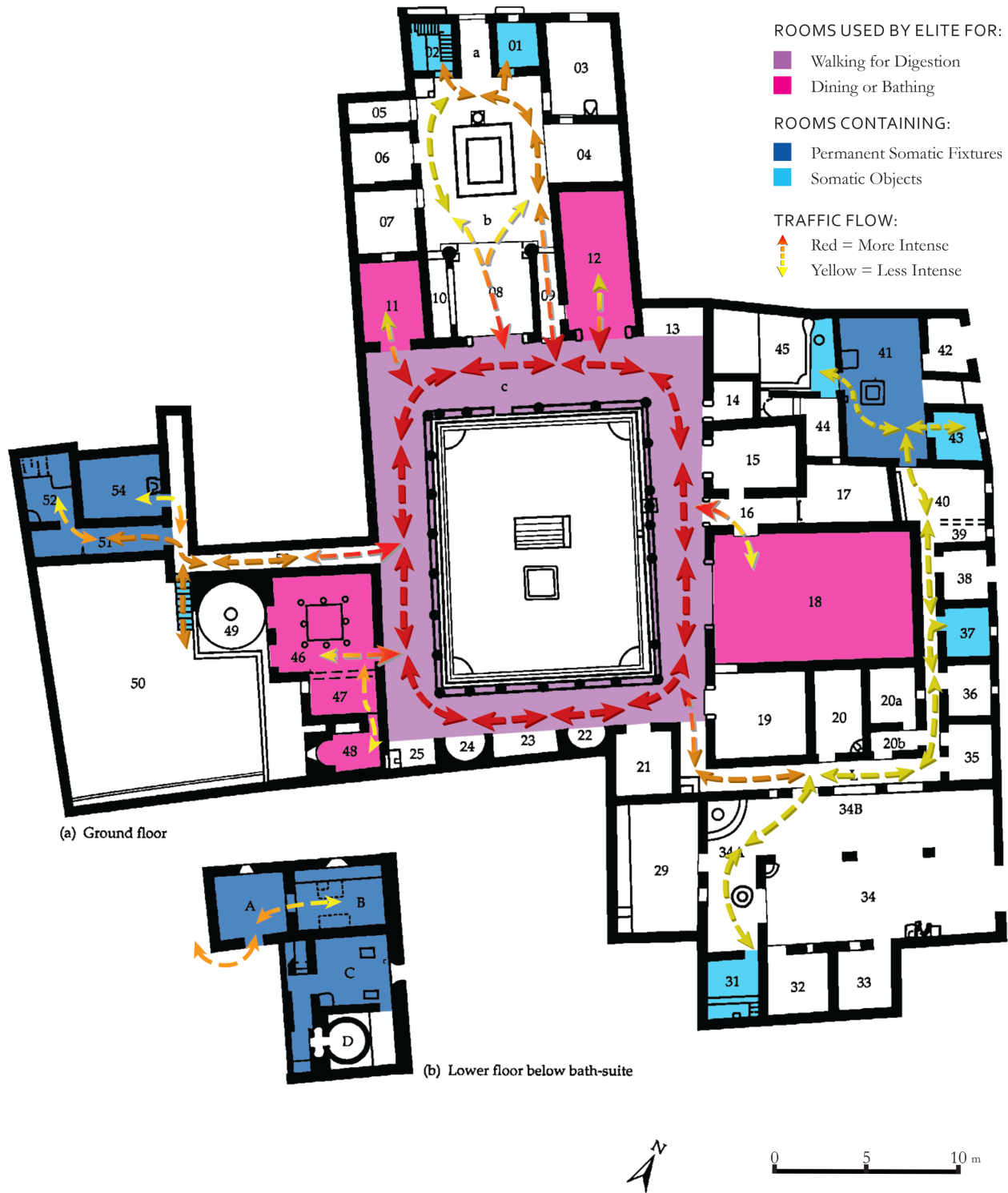


Figure 43: Casa del Menandro: Possible Paths of Movement.

Although the activities particular to food preparation and disposal are mostly removed from the atrium/peristyle core of the house, the atrium and peristyle are still significant pathways for the movement associated with food preparation and disposal of waste. Yet, this atrium/peristyle core also allows for elite routines—not only eating in rooms off the peristyle, but also walking for digestion and bathing (which might also entail excretion)—to be contained within the house. Hence, the Casa del Menandro provides the opportunity for the type of elite movement that Pliny the Younger mentions in his letter, and that the elder Pliny and Celsus also recommend in their works. Through the overlapping of slaves' movements to and from the eastern and western half of the house with those of the homeowner and family members along its central axis, an articulation of between the types of space, movements, and activities performed in the home helped to encourage and maintain domestic hierarchies. Indeed, Roman authors' allegory of the built environment as a body seems apt for the Casa del Menandro. The kinetic patterns of daily routines recreated from this house's structures and artifact assemblage evokes a similar perception of interconnected movement within a system of hierarchically delineated, but intimately joined, members that Roman authors expressed in their comments about digestion.

### C. Villa San Marco

Despite its troubled excavation history, Villa San Marco offers an interesting study for the ideas that I am exploring in this chapter (Figure 44). This grand home, located in modern town of Castellemare di Stabia, is about 7.5 kilometers south of Pompeii and was thus caught in the destructive path of Vesuvius' eruption. In antiquity, ancient Stabiae was a small urban center that acted as a residential area for Roman elites.<sup>425</sup> As Domenico Camardo notes, the Villa San Marco is

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<sup>425</sup> Antonio Ferrara, "History of the Stabiae Settlement," in *In Stabiano: Exploring the Ancient Seaside Villas of the Roman Elite*, Us 2005-2008 Tour, ed. Pesce, Angelo (Castellammare di Stabia (Na): Nicola Longobardi, 2005) 33.

one of eight luxury villas known to have existed in the area in addition to another fifty or so rural villas that were devoted to the production of wine, olive oil, and cheese.<sup>426</sup>

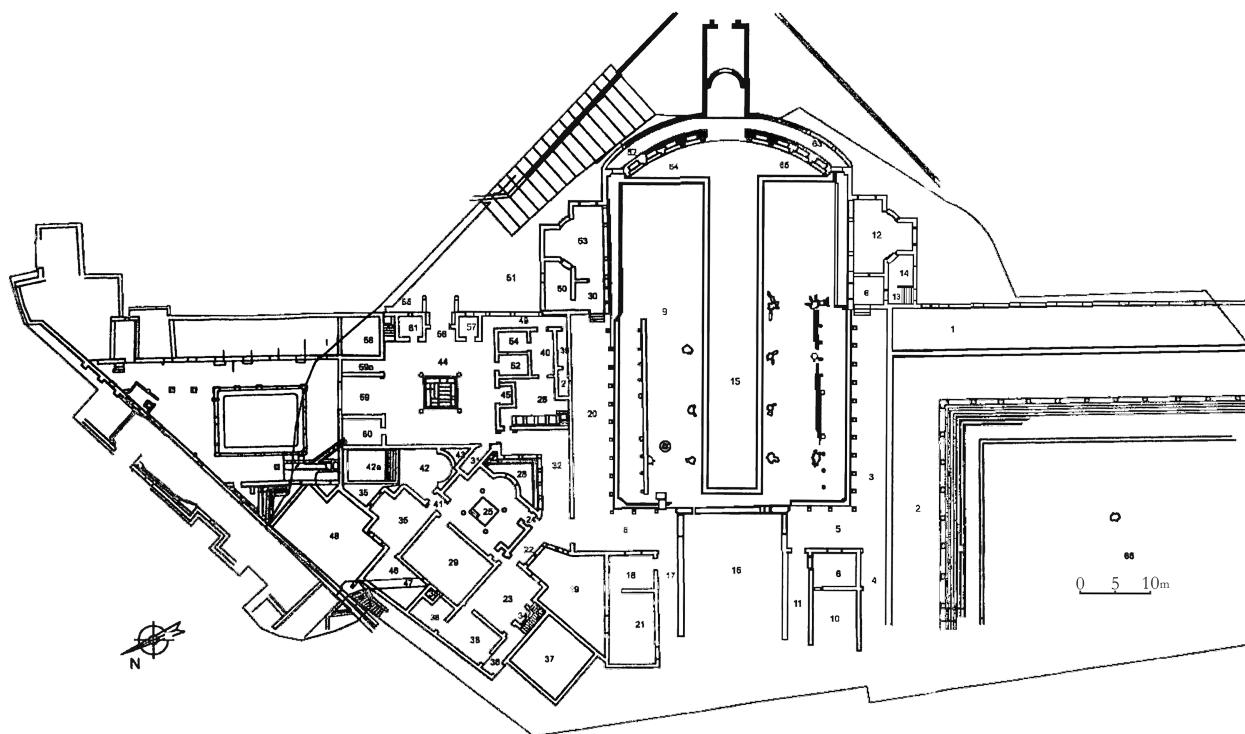


Figure 44: House Plan for Villa San Marco.

Although it suffered similar destruction to that of Pompeii and Herculaneum, Stabiae recovered and became a well-known spot for health and well-being under the Emperor Hadrian and maintained this renown all the way through sixth century.<sup>427</sup> Sadly, the fame of this town and the knowledge of the grand homes hidden under ground seemed only to enhance some of

<sup>426</sup> Domenico Camardo, "Mt. Vesuvius and Human Settlement in the Gulf of Naples in the First Century A.D." in *In Stabiano: Exploring the Ancient Seaside Villas of the Roman Elite*, Us 2005-2008 Tour, ed. Pesce, Angelo (Castellammare di Stabia (Na): Nicola Longobardi, 2005) 21. For more on the (contested) distinctions of various villa types, see Marzano, 13-101.

<sup>427</sup> Geoff W. Adams, *The Suburban Villas of Campania and their Social Function*. BAR International Series 1542 (Oxford: Archeopress Publishers, 2006), 88; Ferrara 33-35. Interestingly, Castellammare di Stabia is known today for its spas and spring waters.

the many problems that colored the first modern excavations of the ancient towns on the Bay of Naples.<sup>428</sup> Excavations began in Stabiae in 1749 when the Bourbon King Charles encouraged Spanish engineer Rocco Gioacchino de Alcubieer to start in the area of Ponte San Marco, but offered him only limited resources.<sup>429</sup> In fact, the excavations of the villas in Stabiae have suffered from sporadic excavations over the past 250 years in addition to very poor documentation in certain areas. While early Bourbon archaeologists produced careful records of structure, wall and floor decorations, sculpture and furnishing of the villas, they overlooked common and everyday objects.<sup>430</sup> Additionally, the lack of funding that has continually plagued these excavations resulted in a collection of some 9,000 finds still waiting to be prepared for publication.<sup>431</sup> Despite the efforts of current archaeologists working on the site, recent excavations at the villa have recovered only very few fragments of fine tableware, a few kitchen and dispensing containers, some pierced jars for agricultural use, two glass objects, a cup and serving tray, and two clay lamps.<sup>432</sup> Thus, the Villa San Marco has not benefited from the same careful attention to and cataloguing of objects as in the cases of Casa del Principe di Napoli and the Casa del Menandro.

Nevertheless, its configuration of atrium, kitchen, baths, and latrines in combination with its triclinia, nymphaeum, and peristyle garden reflect innovations to the performance and categorization of daily routines. Having undergone considerable enlargement and embellishment in its last ten years before its destruction, the villa's largest architectural features underscore the role that the display and lifestyle of luxury played in its structure. As Alix Barbet asserts, its architects attempted

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<sup>428</sup> Anna Maria Sodo, "Furnishings and Fittings," in *In Stabiano: Exploring the Ancient Seaside Villas of the Roman Elite*, Us 2005-2008 Tour, ed. Pesce, Angelo. (Castellammare di Stabia (Na): Nicola Longobardi, 2005) 85. Sodo also observes that the excavations here, like the first ones in Pompeii and Herculaneum, were part of an endeavor to make the Kingdom of Naples a cultural center in Europe

<sup>429</sup> Anna Maria Sodo and Giovanna Bonifacio, "History of the Excavations," in *In Stabiano: Exploring the Ancient Seaside Villas of the Roman Elite*, Us 2005-2008 Tour, ed. Pesce, Angelo (Castellammare di Stabia (Na): Nicola Longobardi, 2005) 39.

<sup>430</sup> Sodo 85.

<sup>431</sup> Sodo, Bonifacio 41.

<sup>432</sup> Sodo 86. She notes that some doorframes, latches, and hinges indicate that there were doors and a few metal corner caps suggest that there were wooden chests in the villa as well. On meager publication of finds for most villas, see Adams 2.

to take advantage of its fortunate setting through the design of a large triclinium (room 16) that opened up to unhindered views of Vesuvius and the sea.<sup>433</sup> To the south of the triclinium and dominating the current plan of the villa is a large pool (area 15) that was framed on each side by a row of trees. At the southern end of the pool, a large nymphaeum contains richly decorated niches representing mythological scenes that help this domestic monument upstage most contemporary and comparable structures.<sup>434</sup> Although still partially unexcavated, the peristyle garden located off of the eastern side of the pool is most likely a strong contender for the location of the villa's most expansive feature (peristyle 66). In fact, these large and elaborately decorated areas provide an excellent example of the type of domestic environment that Pliny the Younger describes as ideal locations for a stroll to assist digestion. The space dedicated to these domestic activities seem to dramatically underscore the role that villa owner, his family, and guests' pleasure and leisure played in its use, and have led some scholars to proclaim the diminishing significance of the atrium in such settings.<sup>435</sup>

Yet, the placement of the kitchen and newly discovered latrine in the Villa San Marco in light of recent scholarship on the social function of suburban villas challenges the notion that atrium's role was diminished in villas. Indeed, the particular association of atrium, kitchen, and latrine in addition to the view that the atrium imply that the bustling activities of daily routines were staged so as to enhance the villa owner's status claims. Recent scholarly work has highlighted the roles villas played in establishing a man's wealth and status and the blurry lines between villas' civic, entertaining, and productive functions. Hannah Platt asserts that elites' competitive displays of wealth that had been essential in the Republic continued through the Principate, a time period that

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<sup>433</sup> Alix Barbet, "Villa San Marco," in *In Stabiano: Exploring the Ancient Seaside Villas of the Roman Elite*, Us 2005-2008 Tour ed. Pesce, Angelo. (Castellammare di Stabia (Na): Nicola Longobardi, 2005), 49.

<sup>434</sup> Barbet 49.

<sup>435</sup> Thomas Noble Howe, "Powerhouses: The Seaside Villas of Campania in the Power Culture of Rome," in *In Stabiano: Exploring the Ancient Seaside Villas of the Roman Elite*, Us 2005-2008 Tour ed. Pesce, Angelo. (Castellammare di Stabia (Na): Nicola Longobardi, 2005), 15.

saw an increase in villa construction.<sup>436</sup> Challenging Paul Zanker and James Ackerman's contention that the villa was antithetical to the city *domus*, Platt asserts that this distinction was not as clear as they claim; for her, the villa was closely connected to the city and *domus*.<sup>437</sup> In her detailed study of the social and economic functions of villas in Italy, Annalisa Marzano affirms that the villa reflected "the owner's public persona, just as his *domus* in Rome or another city did" and that the "villa's architectural space became an acceptable frame for the display of one's achievement in public life."<sup>438</sup> Testing Vitruvius' claim that entrances of rural villa's entrances are defined by peristyles rather than atria (*Arch.* 6.5.3-4), Andrew Wallace-Hadrill examines the architecture of the Villa of the Mysteries and asserts that modern scholars need to give up on the idea that the *villa rustica* and *villa urbana* were separate types.<sup>439</sup> Rather, he argues:

The power of the *dominus* is expressed by the complimentary messages of the [villa's] *pars rustica* and the *pars urbana*, in the rustic quarters by the control over manpower manifested in slave gangs and the control over land manifested in the vintage and the oil pressings, and in the urban quarters by the control of wealth and the ability to impose on the countryside an alien cultural language.<sup>440</sup>

Indeed, he notes that the eastern entrance to the Villa of the Mysteries, which guest first entered as a person would have come to if they approached the villa from Pompeii's, parades its "Romanness, rusticity, productivity, and virtue," before the visitor is allowed into the more urban and luxurious part of the home.<sup>441</sup> Additionally, Nicholas Purcell argues that the eastern have of the Villa of the Mysteries displayed the owner's control of productive labor.<sup>442</sup> In effect, recent works on Roman villas spotlight their role in elite men's display of status. Most pointedly for this study, they declare

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<sup>436</sup>Platt, "Keeping up with the Jones," 266.

<sup>437</sup> Platt, "Keeping up with the Jones" 251-265. c.f. Paul Zanker, *Pompeii: Public and Private Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); James Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990).

<sup>438</sup> Marzano 230.

<sup>439</sup>Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 196-208.

<sup>440</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 207.

<sup>441</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 205.

<sup>442</sup> Nicholas Purcell, "The Roman Villa and the Landscape of Production," in *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, ed. Tim Cornell and Kathryn Lomas (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 141-79.

that part of that status performance rests on the villa owner's ability to display the manpower laboring on within the villa and their control over their slaves and land. While their works have focused on the production of villas, I think that widening the lens to include domestic services performed in relation to caring for the body offers a broader picture. Indeed, because these routines must be performed every single day, multiple times a day, they offer recurrent and expected patterns of movement that continuously express the slave owner's command over the daily functioning of his home and the resources. Unlike productive labor that was tied to seasonal demands, daily practices associated with somatic functions did not ebb and flow during different times of the year.

The Villa San Marco's structure also puts its productivity and labor front and center through its architecture; however, the location of the kitchen and latrine in the Villa San Marco also reveals that the movement associated with the repetitive actions that cared for the body's nutritional and excretory needs played a significant part in the villa owner's status performance. Notably, the kitchen is situated immediately off of the atrium on its northeast side in room 26. Heralding the room's culinary function is the kitchen bench, which I noted in the previous chapter is taller and wider than commonly found in other examples from the atrium homes and villas in this area (Figure 45). Similar to the homes discussed above, the walls and floor in this room were not finely adorned. Humbly decorated as they may be, however, there is also evidence for a different type of embellishment. Eamonn Baldwin, Helen Moulden, and Ray Laurence have observed that its walls were marked with functional graffiti, namely different numbers, that they argue aided cooking.<sup>443</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> Confer Antonio Varrone, "I graffiti," in *La Villa San Marco a Stabia*, ed. A. Barbet and P. Miniero. (Naples: Centre Jean Bérard, 1999), 354-57. He notes that the graffiti in the kitchen contain examples of possible division, while another seems to be working out the number of asses in a denarius. See also Rebecca Benefiel, "Dialogues of Ancient Graffiti in the House of Maius Castricius in Pompeii," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 114.1 (2010): 83-84. She suggests that numbers like those found at the Villa San Marco and the House of Maius Castricius are part of dialogue that occurred between inscriber and viewer. Specifically, she argues that the spacing between numbers and the combinations that result reveal a type of 'game' in which the viewer noted patterns and then added to it. If she is correct, then perhaps the numbers scratched on the walls in the kitchen had less to do with recipes but more to do with the passing of time. Either way, these scholars various interpretation of these inscriptions suggest that the kitchen acted as a focal point of activities where slaves calculated recipes, figured out monetary conversions, and possibly played a game to pass the time.

Additionally, they note that areas with the most graffiti in the villa are the kitchen, the small room right next to the kitchen and the baths (26, 25a, 27), which they contend indicate places where slaves waited for work or bathers.<sup>444</sup> In effect, the combination of these wall markings and large kitchen bench point to this room as focal point for labor in the villa—a place from which and to which the movement that accompanied food preparation converge.



Figure 45: Villa San Marco: kitchen bench. Photo by author.



Figure 46: Villa San Marco: room 49; entrance to kitchen marked.

A person can either enter or exit the kitchen through two access points off of the southeast and northeast side of the atrium (room 49 and 32). These two entrances provide different visual and physical experiences that reinforce messages sent to the slaves who most commonly used these.

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<sup>444</sup> Baldwin et al 156, 164. Baldwin et al also observed that over half of the numerically based graffiti was found in the kitchen. Interestingly, the most spatially integrated parts of the house contained texts to communicate messages to other household members.

Echoing passageway 53 in the Casa del Menandro but on a smaller scale, the northeast access off of the atrium in the Villa San Marco (room 49) is a narrow and poorly lit corridor that leads into room 40, which opens to room 26 (Figure 46). The other entrance to the kitchen is immediately off of the atrium as a person enters passageway 32. As seen in the atrium of Casa del Principe di Napoli and the Casa del Menandra, light and decoration combine to draw the eye away from the entrance to service areas (Figure 47).



Figure 47: Villa San Marco: room 32; entrance to kitchen marked. Photo by author



Figure 48: Villa San Marco: view from room 32, across from entrance to kitchen. Photo by author.

Indeed, the entrance off of corridor 32 into the kitchen is almost entirely obscured by sunlight streaming in through an opening above the small garden (room 28) that buttresses the wall of the bathing area (room 25) with its visually interesting combination of the sharp right angle of the garden juxtaposed to the curved wall of room 25 (Figure 48). Thus, the kitchen in the Villa San Marco seems to rely on similar techniques as those that are present in the above atrium homes to

distinguish who entered and labored in the kitchen. However, the manner in which the architecture and decoration at San Marco amplifies those messages. The kitchen had not one, but two entrances. For those entering and exiting the kitchen through room 44, they have the physical experience of moving through ever narrowing space from 26, 40, to 44 before entering the atrium. Although larger in width than passageway 44, the plainness of entrance 26 off of corridor 32 juxtaposed to the architectural features of the nearby garden also sends a visual cue about the domestic status of those who use this entrance to room 27. Not only does the kitchen lack any real decoration, but also the numerical graffiti on the kitchen walls serves to underscore the assumed utility of the room and the expected activity of those who work there. Indeed, it is fitting that the kitchen bench in this room is so much taller and wider than those in other homes. Through its modifications in scale, which exaggerates the body's response to its form, it complements the room and entrances' features by spotlighting the work that occurred in this room. Although 54 or 40 might have held an earthen latrine, the only confirmed built latrine for the villa is located in the northeast corner of the courtyard that is immediately off of the atrium and accessed through room 59 and 59a.

A broad sketch of the paths of movement for activities associated with the digesting body becomes apparent when the architectural features in this villa are associated with digestion and excretion are connected by the most direct routes between them. What emerges from this exercise is a picture of the Villa San Marco's physical and architectural separation of these activities from elite household members' kinetic experience of the home as in the Casa del Menandro (Figure 50). If this atrium also stored or displayed objects associated with cooking, which was common in Pompeian atrium houses, then we can presume that some movement between the kitchen and atrium occurred.

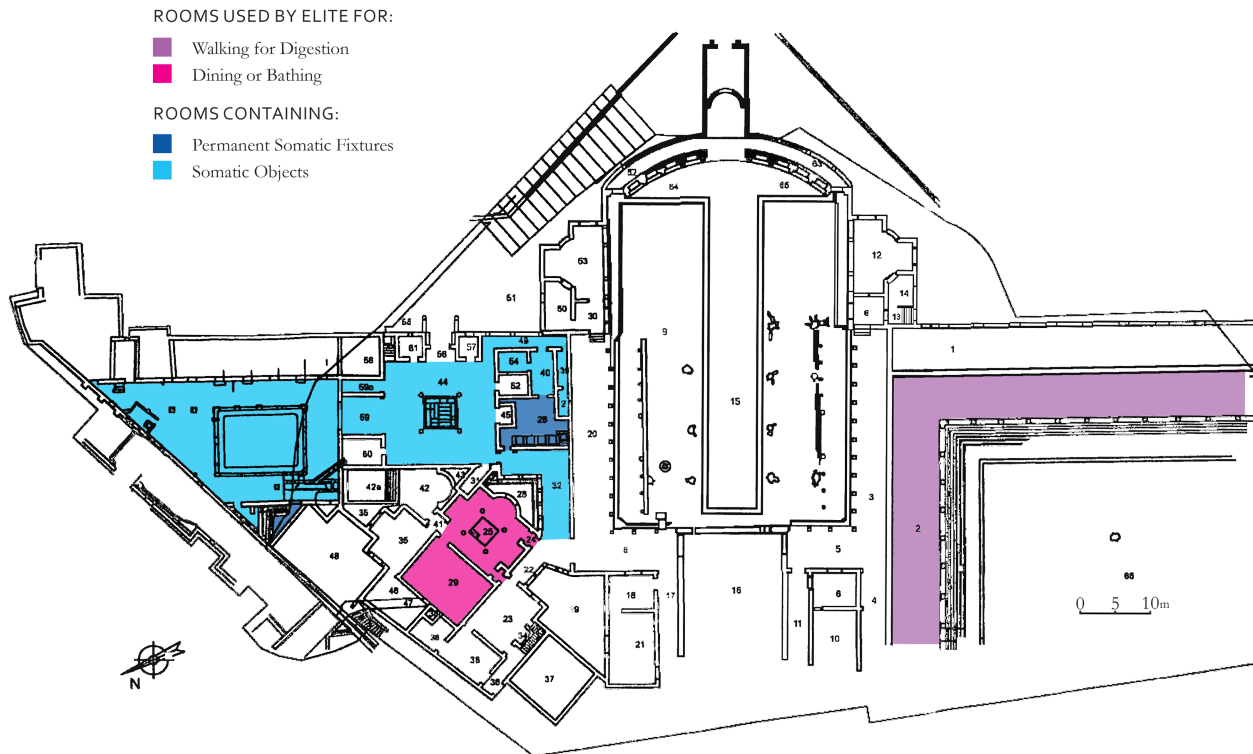


Figure 50: Villa San Marco: Possible Locations for Somatic Functions.

The atrium’s dual access points to the kitchen underscores that movement between the atrium and kitchen was significant enough to warrant two entrances. The separation of the kitchen and the latrine heightens the atrium’s central role in choreographing the movement of food and the disposal of waste. In fact, passage through the atrium is the only route available to the latrine, which served as the final point for bodily waste either personally deposited or brought there in a chamber pot. The proximity of the bath to the atrium also indicates an attempt to keep these activities contained to this portion of the villa. Hence, the atrium’s integral role in the management of the movement associated with food preparation and expelling of waste reflects what was observed in the Casa del Principe di Napoli. Moreover, the atrium’s isolation from a nearby ambulatory or peristyle garden spotlights the villa owner’s more stationary and supervisory position while in this area of the house as compared to the laborers travelling across it. Additionally, the inclusion of a triclinium with a

view to the sea, the large pool, and peristyle garden separates elite movement and activity from household areas that are more commonly associated with slaves (Figure 51).

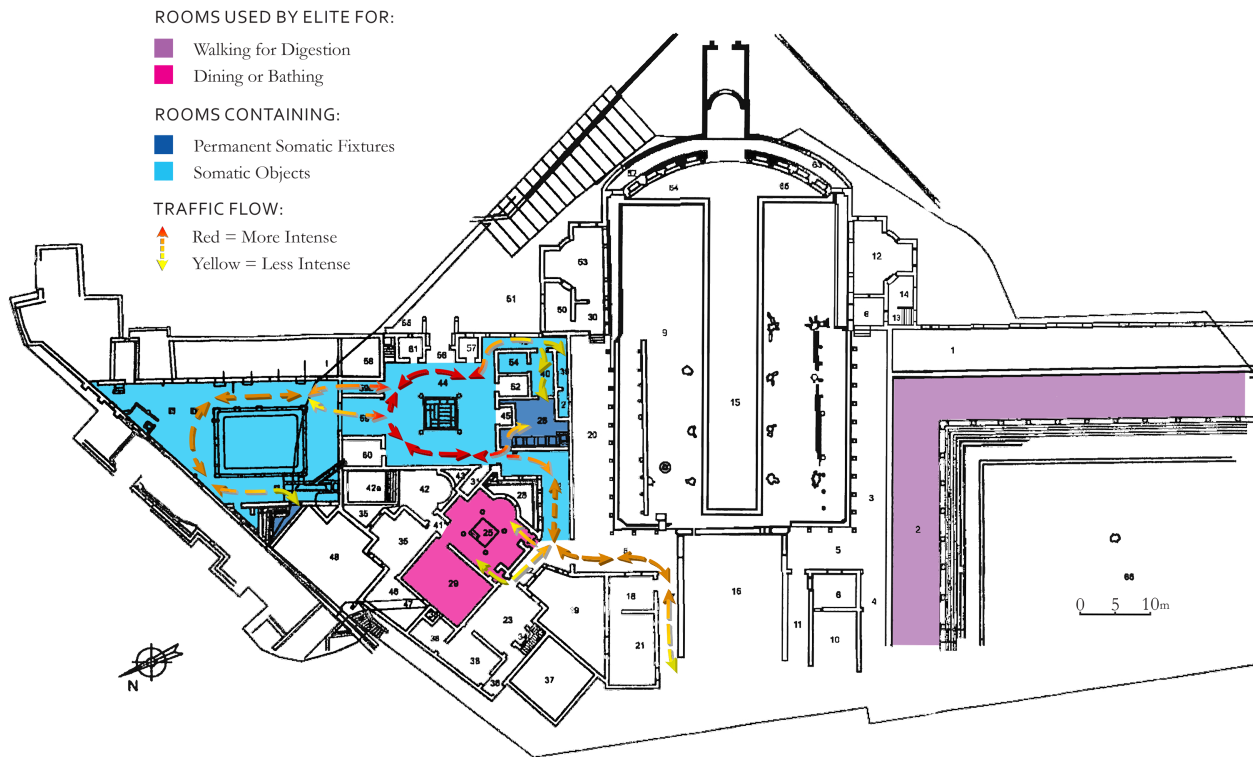
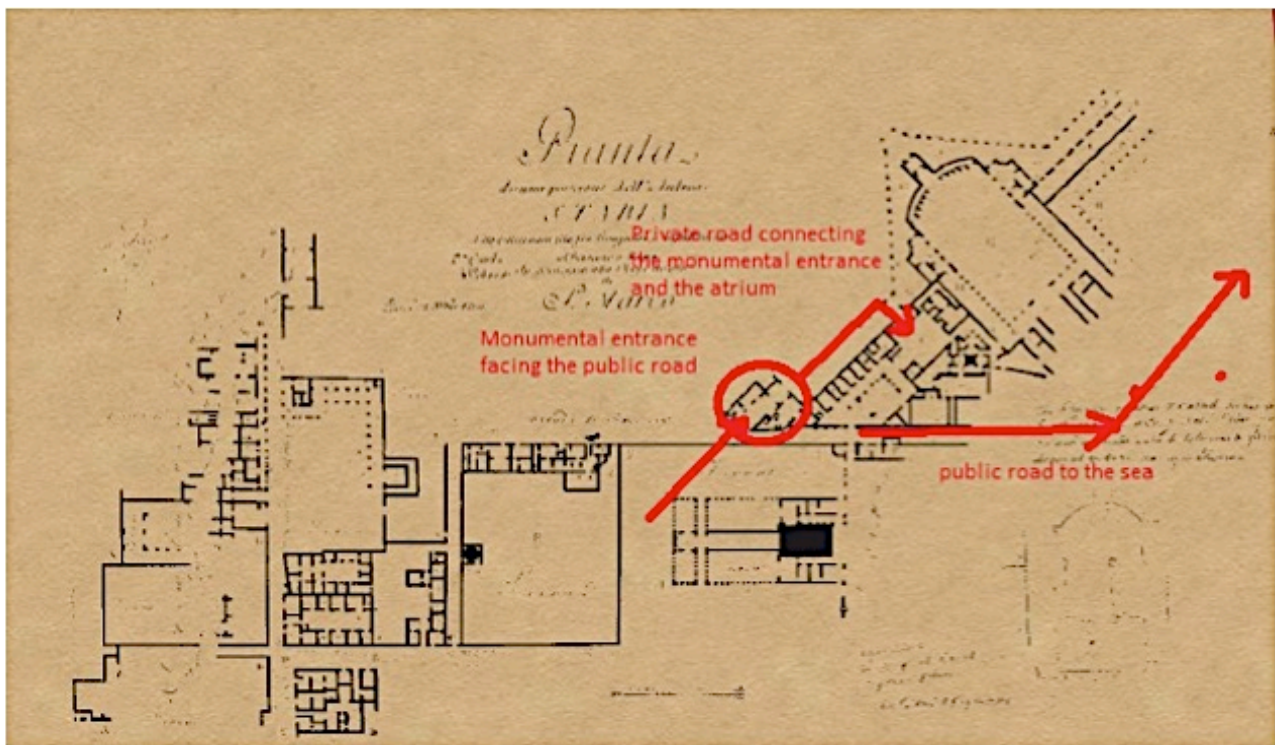


Figure 51: Villa San Marco: Possible Paths of Movement.

However, we need to be careful not to assume that the villa's architecture truly communicates a bifurcation of elite kinetic experiences from slaves' movements. Nor does the atrium's amplified role in orchestrating the labor associated with food preparation and the disposing of waste signal the diminishing of its function and importance. Rather the design of the Villa San Marco and the manner in which it attempts to articulate its household members' movement through its walls offers two juxtaposed stages that communicate the villa owner's powerful position to his

Figure 51: Villa San Marco: main entrance to house based on roads into town. Photo courtesy of Paolo Gardelli.

guest and reinforces his authority within the hierarchy of the villa's household members.<sup>445</sup> While the road today is completely underground, the main road into ancient Stabiae from the city runs along the north wall of the Villa San Marco. The group of archaeologists and architects currently working on the villa are certain that this main road joined another perpendicular road that provided access to the Villa San Marco and its neighbors. Rather than offering a seaside entrance like is found at the Villa A in Oplontis, these roads indicate that the atrium remained the principal entrance to the villa (Figure 65).<sup>446</sup>



<sup>445</sup> On the ambivalent visual language of Roman villas, see Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 205-208.

<sup>446</sup> Personal communication with Paolo Gardelli, October 28, 2014.

Notably, entering the atrium (44) for its main entrance (56), a person notes that the *durchblick* that other scholars' have claimed played a powerful role in the architecture of many Pompeian homes is absent here.<sup>447</sup> That is, there is no view granted from the atrium into the more restricted areas of the house. Rather, one's gaze through the atrium hits the back northeastern wall. The only view that is granted from the atrium is through room 59 (Figure 52).

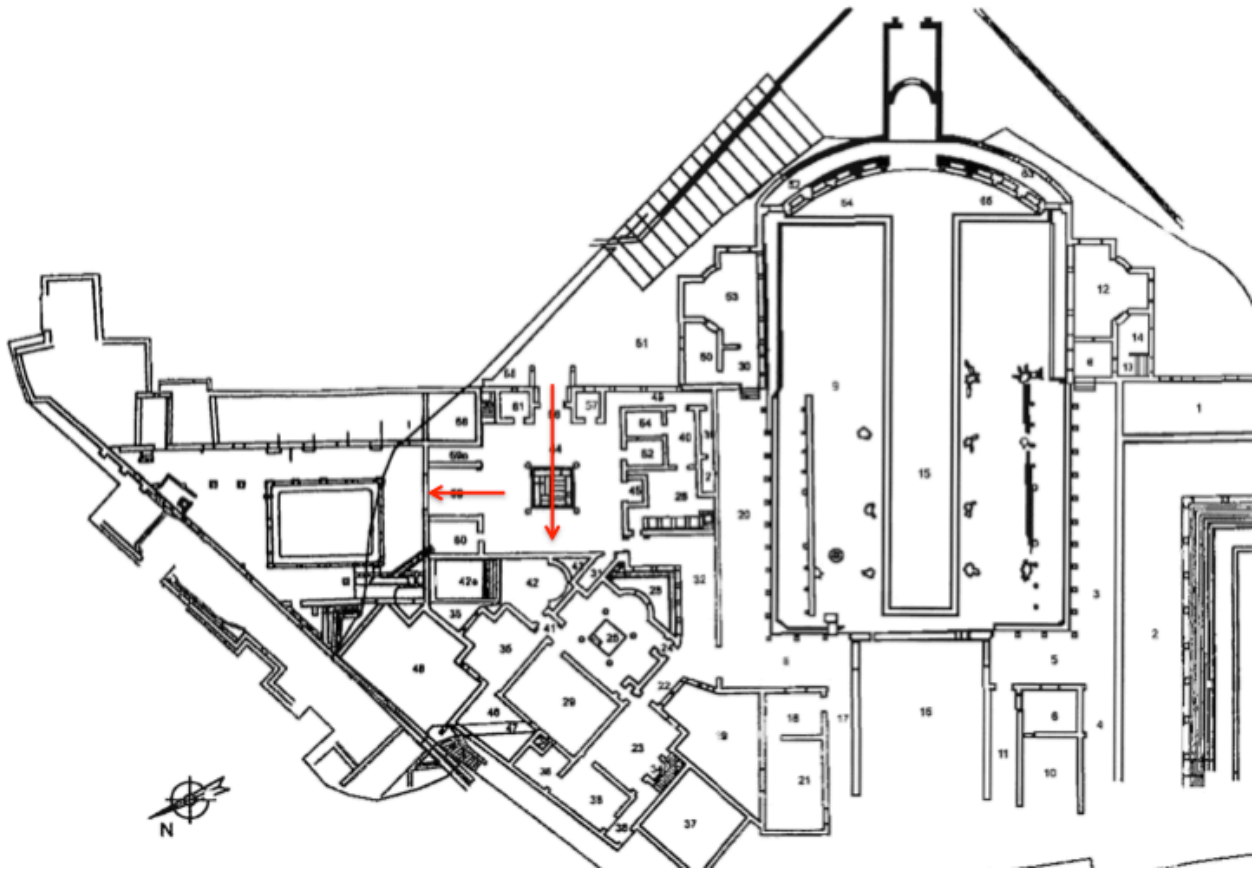


Figure 52: Villa San Marco: views from entrance into atrium and view from atrium through room 59.

<sup>447</sup> Clarke 1991,14; Heinrich Drerup, "Bildraum und Realraum in der römischen Architektur," *Römische Mitteilungen* 66 (1959): 1-24.

Although, as in other homes, this view could have been restricted with the use of a screen or door, the view that it might temporarily offer is telling.<sup>448</sup> That is, room 59 opens to the same courtyard that contains the villa's latrine. The most recent publications of archaeological studies at the villa have focused on only on exploratory trenches dug in 2011, which makes it still difficult to say anything about this courtyard with confidence.<sup>449</sup> However, its lack of wall decoration starkly contrasts it from not only the atrium but also the elaborately designed and decorated pool and peristyle portions of the grand house. Indeed, its absence of embellishment is more in keeping with that of the kitchen and its unadorned walls—except for the functional graffiti written there. If the courtyard's undecorated walls in combination with the latrine located within indicate that it too was used for some household labor, then it seems that the villa owner relied on the work that took place inside the villa to make his first impression on guests to his home. Indeed, the choice to flip the visual access of the atrium underscores what Wallace-Hadrill observed in the setting and structure of the Villa of the Mysteries.

Instead of a diminishing of the atrium's importance, the configuration of the kitchen, atrium, latrine, and possible work area amplifies its role in the display of the labor that the villa owner commands. The movement that accompanies food preparation and the disposal of human waste plays an essential role in the villa owner's performance of mastery over a grand estate and its laborers. Indeed, it profoundly speaks to his paramount position within the villa's internal domestic hierarchy, while also acting as an ideal setting for his status performance for his guests and peers. A view of the entire plan of the villa makes transparent the juxtaposition of the contained and immediate display of household labor in the atrium to more expansive and open portions of the villa that hold the pool and peristyle garden. In essence, the villa's structure and particular configuration

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<sup>448</sup> See note 32.

<sup>449</sup> Taco Terpstra, Luana Toniolo, Paolo Gardelli, "*Campagna di scavo APAHA 2011 a Villa San Marco, Stabiae: relazione preliminare sull'indagine archeologica*," in *Revista di studi Pompeiani* 27 (2011): 199-205.

of atrium, kitchen and latrine punctuates for both household members and visitors to the home the villa owner's privileged status.

### **III. Conclusion: Bringing Metaphor and Daily Routine Together**

The motion surrounding daily activities that were involved in caring for the digestive body's needs helps provides insight on Roman authors' reliance on the human body as a metaphor for built spaces. Cicero and Pliny the Elder present impressions of the body as made up of coordinated internal organs or movable limbs that effectively work together. Even though he is less enthusiastic about the body in general, Seneca the Younger, nonetheless, also implies his acceptance of the body internal teeming motion. Indeed, the only common perception of the body that these authors share is their acceptance of the body's inherent quality of movability. I have also argued Roman authors drew distinctions between their daily movements and that of those laboring on their behalf. I began this chapter with Pliny the Younger's observations on how he spends his days at his Tuscan villa, which activities include walking through his home and reading aloud in order to aid his digestion. Pliny the Elder and Celsus confirm that walking and reading out loud were perceived to be beneficial digestive habits. Notably, the younger Pliny's daily activities rely on, but blanket over, the slave labor required to support his physical and kinetic experience of his home. The motion of his slaves as they perform tasks to meet his demands tacitly underscores his remarks about how he goes about his days. Although Pliny does not mention his role in the orchestration of that labor, it is unobtrusive reliability is essential to his role as the owner of a well-managed villa. Notably, Columella's remarks about the *vilica's* duties indicate that well-organized household labor exhibited through the careful orchestration of slave movement seems to underline the slave owner's powerful position in his home as well as serve as stage for his status performance for guests to his home.

Architecture and artifact assemblages from three Roman homes offered case studies to explore where the movement that accompanied the most basic and repetitive daily routines involving eating, digestion, and excretion occurred and to test the hypothesis that the motion attached to these daily activities played an essential role in the home owners' display of status and wealth. For my case studies, I looked at the Casa del Principe di Napoli, Casa del Menandro, and the Villa San Marco. In these three homes, rather than being hidden away or always channeled into dark and narrow passageways, many pathways associated with these daily routines were directed through the atrium core of the house.

Because the motion that accompanied these daily activities takes such a central role in the house, we must ask whether these activities occurred at or limited to different times of the days. While other scholars have noted that the atrium served multiply functions for different household members, they generally assume that the atrium's ability to be utilized for different activities meant that it did not overlap with the *salutatio*, that most distinct Roman social ritual which solidified the relationship between a patron and his client.<sup>450</sup> However, a comparison of Roman authors' brief remarks on the time of day that the *salutatio* occurred to their passing comments on when cooking occurred in the house suggests that these two practices overlapped. For instance, Martial complains that an average Roman citizen had to wake up before dawn in order to put on his toga and rush over to his patron's home in order to greet him for this morning ritual (*Ep.* 5.22).<sup>451</sup> Cicero also indicates the early hour that he greeted clients (*Cic. Atticum.* 6.2.5). Returning to the flirtation between Lucius and Fotis in Apuleius' novel, we are reminded that food preparation in this account was also described as beginning earlier in the day, although not it is not specified when it started.

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<sup>450</sup> Allison *Pompeian Households*, 161-6.

<sup>451</sup> On the early hour of the *salutatio* and its development from the Gracchi to imperial women, see Fabian Goldbeck and Patricia Arena, "*Salutationes* in Republican and Imperial Rome," in *Ritual Dynamics and the Science of Ritual* (eds) Margo Kitts et al (Wiesbaden: Harrowitz Verlag 2010), 416, 423-42; On its early hour and the toga from the point of view of an average Roman citizen, see Michele George, "The 'dark side' of the toga," in *Roman Dress and the Fabrics of Roman Culture*, eds. J.C. Edmondson and Allison Keith (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 94-112; See also Ludwig Freedlander, trans. Leonard A. Magnus, *Roman Life and Manners Under the Early Empire* (London: Routledge, 1907, 1968), 207-212.

Additionally, Apuleius's tale hints at the duration of cooking. For example, Fotis is still in the process of preparing food before midday when Lucius returns to Milo's house after rising at dawn and leaving early to explore the city. Again, there is no exact time provided for his wanderings, but he is gone long enough to be able to wander around the city and end up at the food market, where he meets his aunt, Byrrhaena, and accompanies her back to her house. After their playful banter, Fotis is able to shoo Lucius away from the kitchen as she returns to work (*Met.* 1-6). Additionally, the humble farmer, Simulus wakes before dawn to stoke the flame that will cook his bread for breakfast and to mix together the various ingredients for the *moretum* that he will eat with his warm bread (*Verg.App.ad Moretum*).

Taking these remarks about the timing of the *salutatio* and cooking, we can look anew at the significance of the placing of cooking areas in these three homes. While there is no way of knowing whether or not the homeowner of the Casa del Principe participated in the *salutatio* or that he acted as the patron receiving guests to his house rather than another man's client, the layout of the house indicates that it could nonetheless accommodate the reception of guests who visited the homeowner. Indeed, this modest house provides some insight into how mastery was displayed and performed. That is, the kitchen's proximity to the atrium and its shared wall with room *e* suggest that complete separation from the activities occurring in the kitchen could not have been maintained so as not to interfere with the homeowner's interaction with guests to his home. The same is true if some food preparation was occurring in the garden because rooms *e* and *f* share a window that opens directly onto this space. In fact, even if these activities were hidden from view behind closed doors or shutters, the smells of food and the noise of cooking would sometimes escape from the kitchen or ambulatory *l* and infiltrate the atrium during the *salutatio*—if that ritual occurred in this home. However, if we lay aside the assumption that the activities for food preparation were meant to be hidden from view, and instead rely on what Roman authors reveal about their perception of

domestic activity in conjunction with the artifact dispersal of this house, a very different picture emerges. In fact, the overlapping of slaves' preparing for the house's nutritional needs with the homeowner's social interactions with guests to his home provides a powerful image not only of the resources he commands, but also the mastery he commands, which is displayed through a well-ordered home that is busily working to accomplish his orders. Indeed, the storing of daily household items in the atrium, tablinum, and ambulatory *l*, and the implied the paths of movement suggest that—even if the activities specific to cooking were hidden from the homeowner and his visitor's eyes behind doors—the movement supporting it was not. Indeed, the visual image of slaves moving between rooms to prepare food in combination with succulent smells and sounds of labor being performed behind closed doors offer important glimpses into the homeowner's domestic resources. Moreover, the orchestration of labor put into motion under his supervision and for his needs speaks to his authority and indicate that the household activities were intrinsic to his performance of labor. Thus, for the Casa del Principe di Napoli, at least, the daily routines surrounding food preparation appear to have played a significant role in the home owner's display of status and wealth.

Again, although it is not possible to securely identify the owner of the Casa del Menandro, the house seems designed with the ability to receive guests should they be invited to the home. Additionally, its size and decoration indicate an expectation of wealth and perhaps a place that could serve the morning ritual of the *salutatio*. The spatial configurations that align food preparation and waste disposal in the Casa del Menandro suggest a different interpretation of the use of daily activities associated with cooking and disposal for status displays. First, the house concretely removes the smells and sounds of bustling kitchen activities away from areas where the homeowner and family conducted most of his daily routines and social interactions. Hence, the role that food preparation played in enhancing the homeowner's status performance in the Casa del Principe di

Napoli seems improbable given the layout of this home. Nevertheless, the movement associated with these activities is not entirely relegated away from the atrium or peristyle, as dishes or braziers seemed to have been stored here. In effect, it appears that this house spotlighted the homeowner's kinetic experience of the home alongside slaves' movements that supported his needs, while keeping the nitty-gritty business of cooking and disposing waste relegated. Additionally, the Casa del Menandro suggest that different areas might be assigned to care for the needs of enslaved members of the house that were independent from the supervision or notice of the homeowner. Although the latrine inside the kitchen speaks to how and where they would have excreted bodily waste, the Casa del Principe di Napoli offers no real insight on how its enslaved members prepared and ate their food. In essence, the Casa del Menandro offers a broader view of routine activities associated with somatic functions.

The Villa San Marco offers both the use of smell and sounds from the kitchen to enhance the villa owners' status display if he participated in the morning ritual assumed of many elite men. That is, the kitchen's proximity to the atrium might allow for occasional savory aromas to escape and enhance the owner's reception of guests to his home in the morning. Indeed, if cooking was a day-long activity, smells from the kitchen might be constantly present in villa's atrium. Additionally, the dual access to the kitchen off of the atrium underscores the role that movement through the atrium to the kitchen could play in demonstrating the villa owner's mastery over his well-organized home. Yet, the villa's structure also provides locations where his kinetic experience of his home is removed from those auditory and olfactory influences. Thus, the Villa San Marco capitalizes on its ability to display the labor that occurs in the villa and the space it provides for the owner's enjoyment and leisure.

In sum, by looking at the movement that accompanied somatic activities, I have argued that these homes manifest careful attention paid to creating different visual and physical experiences of

movement within the home. Additionally, the paths of movement that emerge from drawing lines from cooking and disposal focal areas to the storage of items within the home reveals that the motion accompanying the most repetitive and basic routines involved in caring for the body's digestive needs was, in fact, front and center in these homes. Indeed, Roman authors' tendency to use the body as a metaphor for built environments spotlights the kinetic quality of the Roman homes, almost making the house itself is a living thing—full of the same pulsating and connected movement that sustains the body's somatic needs.

## EPILOGUE

### EATING OUT: THE DIGESTING BODY BEYOND THE ROMAN HOME AND ELITE PERCEPTIONS



Figure 67: Relief of vegetable vendor, Ostia, Museo Ostiense.

In this work, I have examined Roman perceptions of embodiment as revealed by attitudes and practices focused on the body's most basic physical needs: hunger, digestion, and the elimination of bodily waste. Through textual and material analysis, I investigated changes in elite attitudes to the body within the evolving political and social context of the late Republic and early Empire. Throughout this work I have made two interlinked arguments. First, Latin authors' representation of somatic needs within the context of the material realities of daily household routines has made transparent that an underlying acceptance of hierarchical social relationships colored Roman authors' thoughts about the proper functioning of digestion and the practices associated with it. Second, I have pointed out that these assumptions influenced not only the design

of domestic technologies and locations assigned to preparing, eating, and excreting food, but also the daily orchestration of human activity within Roman homes. I began with an exploration of elite imaginings of the alimentary canal and asserted that various writers' representation of the body's digestive functions rested on their contemporary socio-political values. Furthermore, Latin authors relied on dietary habits to categorize status, belonging, and deviance in Roman society. While showcasing their own humble dietary preferences and general dislike or distrust of luxurious, exotic, and perhaps even 'wild' food items, Roman authors nevertheless tried to give the impression that they had mastered the nuances of culinary techniques. When elite writers' demonstrable ignorance of the skills and practices associated with cooking is juxtaposed to their habit of including recipes and remedies in their works, the tension between these two discloses elite men's attempts to appropriate culinary knowledge as an expression of their authority as slave owners as well as an example of their own self-reliance. Indeed, Latin authors' concern with displaying and performing their powerful position in society even seems to bleed into the design of domestic tools and spaces assigned to assist bodily needs. Through the theoretical lens of actor-network-theory and object/human dependencies, I examined the material evidence for food preparation, consumption, and elimination within domestic spaces to demonstrate that the design of fixtures, utensils, and certain furnishings helped create, manage, and maintain domestic hierarchies. Finally, taking up the kinetic organization of household routines involving somatic function, I noted that, while some activities associated with basic bodily needs might have been removed from the most prominent areas of the home, the movement associated with these played a central role in the daily performance of mastery on the one hand and enslavement on the other.

Relying on Elias's observations that people forced to live with another in a new way become more sensitive to the bodily behaviors of others—and thus begin to categorize appropriate behaviors as a way of (re)establishing social order, I have attempted to offer a unique window into

the social and political developments of the late Republic and Early Principate.<sup>452</sup> While doing so, I have also tried to give voice to the ordinary, poor, and enslaved living in the Roman world through new readings of textual and material evidence. Nevertheless, my work has still privileged elite authors' views because these are the sources that we have. Yet, the more time I spend with the textual and material evidence, the more it seems some authors were reacting to new attitudes to class and gender that accompanied the social and political changes occurring during this period.

For example, reliefs from Ostia during the second and third century C.E. create a visual language that seems at once aware of the types of unspoken messages that I discussed in Chapter Four, while concomitantly offering different non-verbal codes that reject specific details of the exchange between human body and object. Significantly, these reliefs do not depict people cooking or cultivating food, but rather focus on the mercantile aspect of food production. The Ostia Episcopo relief that heads this chapter shows a woman selling vegetables; notably, she stands erect with her body facing forward behind a table like structure that displays some of the items she has for sale. Although her head and gaze is slightly turned away from center, the vegetable seller appears to address an external viewer of the relief. Indeed, in her novel and compelling research on images of women in Ostian work reliefs, Natalie Kampen observes that this vegetable seller holds her right hand up in a gesture that indicates a person is about to speak. What is more, it is a hand signal commonly seen in representations of orators.<sup>453</sup> In the Via della Foce relief, similar visual cues are employed: a woman selling poultry stands upright behind a structure that comes to her hips.<sup>454</sup> She hands a smaller individual fruit from the basket she holds out in front of her and looks directly at

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<sup>452</sup>Elias 62-63.

<sup>453</sup>Kampen, 62-3. Kampen also notes that the Ostia Episcopo's stand falls within the broader parameters of the iconography that is associated with vegetable sellers. She offers some framing for the stylistic choices evinced in these reliefs. She points out that the Ostian reliefs she examined fell into a second category of how work representations are generally portrayed in Roman art. For instance, she contends that the first path makes work subordinated to myth, entertainment or politics; but the second represents work for its own sake and communicates information directly. In these reliefs, she notes that "literal work imagery allows for more freedom of detail and observation of the real world," in which role identification—or occupation—is more important than realistic portraiture (82, 83-4).

<sup>454</sup>For image see, Kampen, Figure 28.

the person as she completes the exchange with him.<sup>455</sup> He acknowledges her actions by reaching out to take the fruit from her and returns her gaze. Thus, the unspoken messages associated with work performed within the commercial world of food production are markedly different from those found in representations of domestic food preparation or food cultivation. In lieu of the body's concaved posture bending to meet the demands placed on it by the structure, the counters in these reliefs rise to meet the demands of the women using them. Instead of being ignored while they labor, these women interact in either a respectful interaction with other people in the scene or use gestures demanding the right to be heard. In effect, the visual language that emerges from these two Ostian work reliefs suggests that these women were familiar with the unspoken messages sent in domestic representations of food preparation. They rely on similar elements—such as an intimate association between person and the tools used—but, rather than creating an instrumental view of the laboring individual as a tool, these reliefs highlight the dignity or worth gained through work. By doing so, they reinterpret and resist the tacit cues that are inherent in the design of tools for domestic food preparation.

Reliefs of butchers at work also present a similar type of exchange between human and fixtures that suggests this shared visual language was favored among those who sold food items.<sup>456</sup> The similarity in iconography in each relief demonstrates a shared visual language among butchers that indicates a self-identification with community held together by the bonds formed from occupational ties.<sup>457</sup> In three different examples, butchers stand at chopping blocks that almost reach their hips or are slightly higher. The heights of these stands allow each man to stand erect or have only slightly inclined shoulders as they work. In each case, they wield a large cleaver that is

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<sup>455</sup> Kampen 55. She argues that size here is most likely not an indication of status but rather a compositional choice to offer enough room for all the goods depicted for this shop to be on display.

<sup>456</sup> For images, see Kampen, Fig. 43-5.

<sup>457</sup> Sandra Joshel, *Work, Identity, and Legal Status at Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992) 92-122.

held near their face or above their head and that is aimed to slice various types of meat on the chopping block. Although these men are closely associated with the tools of their work that appears compositionally similar to the woman and her cooking bench on the silver cup from the Casa del Menandro, the details of the scenes signal different encoded messages for the viewer to interpret. Notably, as with the Ostian reliefs of women who sold poultry or vegetables, these butchers promote their position as members of a commercial class through the display of the items they sale. Additionally, the solitary nature of their work seems to underscore a sense of ownership over their labor. That is to say that unlike the groups of slaves anonymously and collectively laboring in a villa kitchen, these men seem proud to indicate that they toil alone. One man identifies so closely with his own labor as a butcher that he—or those who dedicated this relief to him—chose to place this imagery on his modest funerary monument. These men assert the value of their work through the reinterpretation and rejection of elite non-verbal codes for activities that involve the preparation of food by highlighting the diverse relationship their bodies have with the tools of their trade.

The possible implications of a real-life Trimalchio—a wealthy freed man who enjoyed extravagant meals and a loud, lively, and unstructured banquet helps me conclude my thoughts. Stephanie Camp's work *Closer to Freedom, Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* offers a window into a different perception of the social mobility and changes that marked the early Principate. Considering enslaved women's celebrations that included dancing and food, she contends that slaves had three bodies: the first body was a "site of domination" upon which "slave owners inscribed their authority;" the second body was the slave's "vehicle of feelings of terror, humiliation, and pain;" and, the final body was a thing "to be claimed and enjoyed, a site of pleasure

and resistance.”<sup>458</sup> Thus, she asserts that feeling bodily pleasure was its own reward for the enslaved, and this pleasure needs to be taken into account when considering the lives of people in the past, especially the enslaved and former slaves. Although Petronius tries to paint Trimalchio’s pleasure and playfulness in his extravagant meal as a lack of taste and a misunderstanding of elite practices, his description of Trimalchio’s diet and dining behaviors might more accurately indicate that, in fact, Petronius and his peers are the ones who are confused. After years of servitude, when their bodies had to endure the lack of physical integrity that legally-protected Roman citizens enjoyed, Trimalchio and the freedmen he represents claimed the pleasures and somatic functions of their bodies, and resisted the categories that the elite attempted to place upon them. In fact, the hostility with which Roman authors attacked those whose eating habits were not like their own, particularly the relationship they had with their bodies, belies elite concerns that they were being excluded from a way of living and being in the Roman world that found traditional elite practices and values as irrelevant.

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<sup>458</sup> Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 1-12.

## APPENDIX 1

### THE MATERLY STRATEGY OF DUNG PILES

The movement spotlighted in the *vilica's* household duties is echoed in Cato's counsel for keeping slaves busy during rainy weather. He recommends that slaves shovel and make dung heaps as well as wash and pitch vats, clean farm buildings, shift and thresh grain, and mend or make new ropes. As if to provide no excuse for inactivity, Cato tacks on the end of this list of deeds a final task, declaring that slaves can also patch their own cloaks and hoods when it rains (*Agri. 2*).<sup>459</sup> His list of productive undertakings during inclement weather underscores the same mastery and 'self'-sufficiency that he attempts to craft through his inclusion of recipes within his broader agricultural advice.<sup>460</sup> Cato's concern for finding useful and animated ways in which to keep his slaves employed during bad weather signals the importance he places on managing and sustaining constant activity within his home and holdings. By creating this list, Cato draws a line separating the supervisory and commanding role of the homeowner from the productive, time intensive, and sometimes dirty activities of slaves on his farm.

Cato's advice on the formation of dung heaps that will later fertilize crops and fields spotlight his efforts to manage the movement of slaves working on his land. Additionally, his suggestions about which crops respond best to particular types of animal and human excreta points to his preoccupation with the categorization of slave activities. For example, Cato recommends that a farm store every bit of excreta in order to make a large dung pile, which needs constant sorting and

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<sup>459</sup>*cum tempestates pluuiae fuerint, quae opera per imbrem fieri potuerint, dolia, lavari, villam purgari, frumentu transferri, stercus foras efferi, stercilinum fieri, semen purgari, funes sarciri, novos fieri; centones, cuculiones familiam oportuisse sibi sarcire.*

<sup>460</sup> On Cato's self-sufficiency, see Nicola Terrenato, "The Auditorium Site in Rome and the Origins of the Villa," *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 14 (2001): 24-25.

shifting to help it break down properly before it is carted out for use in the autumn (*Agri.* 5).<sup>461</sup> After offering his truncated instructions on how to create a dung heap, Cato notes that apples, quinces, and pomegranates do well if pig's urine or dung is placed on their roots (*Agri.* 7). However, he suggests that pigeon droppings are best for pastures, gardens, or other arable lands, and cautions that care must be taken when storing goat, sheep, and ox manure (*Agri.* 36). Cato's tips on favorable dung heap organization and his counsel on the specific advantages of pig and pigeon excreta intimately rely on, but make no mention of, the slave labor that must be rallied and directed in order to make use of this rich, but initially foul, domestic resource. Indeed, his comments reveal his tacit assumption that slaves will collect, move, and categorize various types of excrement in order to create dung heaps. Although unrecognized, this labor and activity is an essential component of his advice. The motion implied here is so expected and normalized that Cato does not feel the need to address it specifically in his work. In fact, despite his different subject matter, Cato, like the above-mentioned authors, conceives of domestic space and the activities that occur there as full of interconnected movement. What is striking about Cato's work, however, is the need to categorize that labor.

Similar to Cato's proposals, Varro's counsel about the most beneficial layout for a farm echoes Cato's awareness and reveals his attempt to oversee and ensure the teeming endeavors of those laboring on the farm. Varro offers advice on the best arrangement for a steading, noting that the stables and cow-stalls should be placed where it will be warmest in winter. Wine and oil should be stored on level ground while dry products (beans and hay) require a floored area. The owner also needs to provide a place for laborers to stay when they are tired from work, the cold, or heat so that they can recover. Varro additionally suggests that attention should be given to the location of the

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<sup>461</sup> On the reuse of human and animal excreta, see Miko Flohr and Andrew Wilson, "The Economy of Ordure," in *Roman Toilets: Their Archaeology and Cultural History*, ed. Gemma C.M. Jansen, Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow, and Eric M. Moormann (Leiden: Peeters, 2011), 147-56.

farm's kitchen, pointing out that food preparation begins well before dawn, especially in the winter (RR.1.8.4-7). After providing his guidance on the arrangement of stables, storage, and kitchen, Varro turns to his recommendations for farmyards and dung pits. He declares that a farm is best served by having two manure pits.<sup>462</sup> However, one heap divided into two parts can also be serviceable. The main point is that one pile or portion is reserved for fresh fecal matter while the other is for rotted dung. But, he warns that the sun can dry out manure that has been collected and placed in the pits to rot. In order to avoid the sun's dessication, he suggests that branches and leaves be placed on the heap to protect its top and sides from the sun. Additionally, he notes that experienced farmers allow water to collect in these pits, while others place slaves' latrines on them so that their bodily waste can help keep moist the rotting manure and contribute to its nourishing essence (R.R. 1.38.1-2).<sup>463</sup> Once the manure has aged long enough, Varro remarks that it can then be brought to the fields.

Like Cato, Varro also records that different types of excrement are more efficacious than other kinds. For instance, he includes in his manual Cassius' claim that bird manure (except marsh and sea fowl) is a great fertilizer—singling out pigeon excrement especially because it holds the most heat and helps the ground ferment. However, he warns that bird droppings should not be placed in a pile like cattle manure. Rather, one should fling it out on the land like seed. According to Cassius, the only other feces that packs as much nutrient punch as pigeon shit is human.<sup>464</sup> He then rates

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<sup>462</sup> On the formation and care of modern manure pits, see J. Ronald Miller, Frank J. Humenik, and Michael R. Overcash, *Managing Livestock Waste to Preserve Environmental Quality* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 2000). In one instance, these authors also recommend a dual manure pit system. However, their means of transportation of pig waste to pits relies on gutters that flush fresh manure to the first pit (97-107). They also take up odor concerns associated with dung piles (257-92).

<sup>463</sup> See also Varro RR 1.8.6-7 for his nostalgia for the good ole days when Roman men thought that a good villa was praised if it had a good kitchen, roomy stables, and cellars for wine and oil in proportion to the size of the farm, with a floor sloping to a reservoir. He laments that in his day a good villa must be large and beautiful with summer dining rooms that face to the west. Compare Cato and Varro's comments on dung piles to Columella *Rust.* 2.14-16.

<sup>464</sup> On the health hazards of using human excrement as fertilizer, see Scobie 421. For a recent work on the environmental benefits that result from composting human excrement, see Joseph Jenkins, *The Humanure Handbook: A Guide to Composting Human Manure*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Grove City: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2005). Responding to what he terms 'fecophobia,' Jenkins argues that the key to making sure that harmful bacteria, parasites, etc. that are sometimes

goat, sheep, and ass dung in third place, while horse droppings are the least potent of the bunch—except on grain land or meadows where it is most valuable (*R.R.* 1. 38. 1-3).

Cato, Varro, and Cassius' persnickety attention to the type, storage, and spreading of animal and human excrement provides a window into Roman slave owner's organizational thought process and their attempts at mastery. In order to understand Cato, Varro and Cassius' perceptions of the allocation of labor in their households, it is important to recognize that instructions for creating these dung heaps echoes a similar kind of compact communication that is present in recipes. That is to say, their instructions are type of shorthand that is best understood through performative actions and requires experiential knowledge to understand and carry out. What is implied in (and thereby squeezed out of) their instructions is all of the movement and effort of slaves to identify various types of excrement and to relocate animal and human droppings from their initial deposit locations to the appropriate dung pile. Additionally, Cato, Varro, and Cassius' advice truncates the time and effort of slaves' continued and lengthy care, surveillance, and sifting of manure in order to make sure that dung heaps age well, are free of flies and larvae that can infest a neglected manure pile, and their efforts to keep it moist enough to decay, but not too moist that it disintegrates.

When Roman authors use this shorthand language to gloss over all of the movement and activity that goes hand in hand with creating dung heaps, they hint at two elements that are intrinsic to slave owners' performance of status and their own perceptions of a well organized home. Notably, these authors are careful to point out the particular advantageous of bird, human, cattle, sheep manure, yet they are vague about how a person actually performs these tasks. Similar to the strategy that Cato adopts when recording his recipes, he, Varro, and Cassius try to appropriate the language and knowledge of farm laborers in order to demonstrate their mastery over everything that

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found in human excrement completely die off before using human crap as fertilizer is a well managed thermophilic composting system. Although he offers the exact temperatures and days needed, he basically states that you need to make sure that the temperature of the pile stays hot enough for a long enough time to destroy human pathogens (121-153).

happens on their farm. Although Plutarch records stories of Cato the Elder working in the fields alongside his slaves, it seems as unlikely that these agricultural writers would have gathered human and animal shit to form dung piles as it is that they would have entered kitchens to prepare food according to the recipes they provide in their manuals.<sup>465</sup> Nevertheless, this appropriation of knowledge of farm laborers demonstrates not only Roman authors' attempts at mastery, but also how they perceive the performance of mastery. Through their presumption of the slave movement needed to accomplish the necessary tasks to create manure piles and distribute the resultant fertilizer, elite authors make transparent their need to organize and direct slave movement. Moreover, their lack of concern about the time or cumulative man-hours these tasks might take underscores that Roman slave owners are not as concerned about slaves' punctuality or efficiency as they are about managing their activities and movements. Indeed, once the movement that is inherent but unmentioned in their instructions is pointed out, its function in demonstrating slave owners' sense of mastery becomes clear.

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<sup>465</sup> Plutarch, *Cato*. 3.

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