

Macalester College

DigitalCommons@Macalester College

Classics Honors Projects

Classics Department

Spring 5-4-2020

Ancient Foodies: Modern Misconceptions, Alternative Uses, and Recipes for Food in Ancient Rome

Francesca Gillis

Macalester College, fgillis@macalester.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/classics_honors



Part of the [Classics Commons](#), and the [Other Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gillis, Francesca, "Ancient Foodies: Modern Misconceptions, Alternative Uses, and Recipes for Food in Ancient Rome" (2020). *Classics Honors Projects*. 26.

https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/classics_honors/26

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Classics Department at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Classics Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact scholarpub@macalester.edu.

Ancient Foodies:

Modern Misconceptions, Alternative Uses, and Recipes for Food in Ancient Rome

Francesca G. Gillis

Honors Project

Department of the Classical Mediterranean & Middle East

Advisor: J. Andrew Overman

4 May 2020

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Methodology.....	5
Notable Factors in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome	8
Roman Currency	8
Trade and Expansion.....	9
Banquet Culture	9
Authors & Their Text.....	10
Apicius & <i>De Re Coquinaria</i>	11
Horace: <i>Carmina, Sermones, & Epistulae</i>	15
Juvenal: <i>Saturae</i>	18
Martial: <i>Epigrammata</i>	19
Petronius & the <i>Satyricon</i>	21
Pliny the Elder: <i>Naturalis Historia</i>	25
Varro: <i>De Re Rustica</i>	26
Food	28
Thrushes.....	29
Peafowl	34
Mullet.....	41
Dormice.....	48
Mediterranean Moray.....	54
Conclusion	62
Recipes.....	65
Works Cited	69

“Sed propter luxuriam, inquit, quodam modo epulum cotidianum est intra ianuas Romae.”

“But, he said, due to this luxury there is – in some manner – always a lavish meal within the gateways of Rome.”

Varro, *De Re Rustica* III.ii.16

Acknowledgements

Special thanks Andy, Beth, Brian, and Nanette for teaching me everything I know about languages and the ancient world – my college experience would not have been the same without your collective guidance and wisdom.

I would also like to thank Charlotte, Kayleigh, and Sophia for being the best classics girl gang ever.

Λεγιῶν ὄνομά μοι, ὅτι πολλοί ἐσμεν

Abstract: Over the years, food has always tended to reflect a specific society and its cultural values. This phenomenon is demonstrated in Roman cuisine which is well documented thanks to the text of authors and material culture. In this paper, I analyze five protein sources (thrush, peafowl, mullet, dormouse, and Mediterranean moray) which Romans often consumed. Using modern anthropological theory, I analyze this foodstuff using the contrasting principles of public/private, import/domestic, and consumption/other in order to determine the societal implications of the ingredient. This analysis has revealed that these five animals had multiple uses and implications in the Roman world far beyond their part in cuisine.

Introduction

The ancient Romans are infamous for their extravagant lifestyles – they pushed the boundaries of existing societal norms in ways not entirely fathomable to the modern mind. One field in which they especially excelled was the cooking and presentation of food. The Romans devised numerous recipes and found ingredients across the Empire that could create unique dishes. Modern Italy is already popular for its cuisine which utilizes its many natural resources; meanwhile, the Romans had the same advantage of such optimal land, and even more as the Empire grew. Most people already have a vague impression of ancient Roman cuisine, believing that they ate mice and fish whilst drinking lots of wine. These notions are somewhat true, yet the actual role of certain foods within Rome is quite complex. Even within the subfield of ancient Roman cuisine, there are many misunderstandings about foodstuff and its societal implications. These misconceptions are based upon misconstrued assumptions from both textual and material culture.

Often, a deeper look into these sources will reveal the true societal implications of foodstuff. Certain truths about foodstuff is revealed when looking at the work of authors such as Apicius, Horace, Juvenal, Martial, Petronius, Pliny, and Varro. These texts demonstrate the complexities of analyzing ancient ingredients but nevertheless shed some light upon their usages

both within and outside of the culinary arts. The thorough investigation of five sources of animal protein reveals how limited modern knowledge of ancient cuisine truly is, but nevertheless allows a glance into the world of Roman dining. The analysis of thrush, peafowl, mullet, dormice, and Mediterranean moray effectively conveys the dual usage of many foodstuff in the Roman world. These animal products also reveal that not all ‘luxury’ Roman food is as high-class as modern conceptions lead people to believe and that they have social coding outside of consumption. Thus, closer inspection of Roman cuisine is necessary for modern scholars to fully understand the societal implications and food culture in ancient Rome.

Methodology

This investigation employs numerous primary and secondary resources to analyze both modern and ancient conceptions of food in ancient Rome. I primarily use the texts of Apicius, Horace, Juvenal, Martial, Petronius, Pliny the Elder, and Varro for my primary written sources; I also utilize archaeological evidence from Italy as well as Roman provinces. These sources are useful as they speak to the actual and perceived luxury status of specific foodstuff. For instance, Martial may note that a mullet is luxury cuisine, but an archaeology site with the remains of numerous mullets could imply that it is actually common fare. Yet, these resources are useless to my investigation without theoretical analysis; thus, I will employ modern anthropological food theory to my query. In the past century, there have been many great advances in the anthropological subfield of food and eating since, after all, “next to breathing, eating is perhaps the most essential of all human activities, and one with which much of social life is entwined.”¹

¹ Mintz and Du Bois, “The Anthropology of Food and Eating,” 102.

Thus, there is no lack of theory on food sources in relation to humans; however, issues arrive in using modern theory in ancient contexts.

At the time of Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois' comprehensive summary of research within the field of food anthropology, most scholarly work focused on the overarching history of a singular food item.² While these works successfully analyze the anthropological uses of an ingredient from ancient to modern times, they do not specifically identify certain themes within a particular period of time (as I aim to do). Nevertheless, these overarching themes and theories apply to my study of societal coding in Roman 'luxury' cuisine. Anthropologists Pierre Bourdieu and Marshall Sahlins theorized 'contrasting principles' which help define social rank within cuisine: "formal/informal, exotic/homely, traditional/experimental, ... [and] inner/outer."³ These categories can help simplify and regulate my standards in the analysis of Roman foodstuff; yet, it is important to recognize that these two theories hold a certain amount of modernity. Their contrasting principles revealed the politicized and societal implications of food but are best demonstrated in modern capitalist societies – and are thus not fully applicable to my query for the Roman world.

Another prominent anthropologist, Mary Douglas, noted that "both [Bourdieu and Sahlins'] exercises are fired by the same just anger against modern industrial society that is characteristic of professional social thinkers of our day."⁴ Even so, Douglas kept these categories in mind when she stated that the first step to "thinking about food is to recognize how food enters

² For example, there is R. N. Salaman's *History and Social Influence of the Potato* (1949) and Virginia Scott Jenkins' *Bananas, an American History* (2000).

³ Douglas, *Food in the Social Order*, 9.

⁴ Douglas, 9. 'Our day' being the late seventies and early eighties.

the moral and social intentions of individuals.”⁵ While this statement seems simple, it gains complexity when the incalculable types of moral and cultural values are considered. When the moral and social codes of a multi-ethnic Empire are thought about in conversation with food, even more categories of classification begin to emerge. But within all of these considerations lies the core and unchangeable value of food: that it is a basic component of life. So while the social implications of foodstuff may become rather dense, there is always the straightforward value of food as a simple necessity for human life.

Thinking along the lines of Bourdieu and Sahlins’ theories of contrasting principles in relation with Douglas’ moral and social intentions, I have decided to create some categories to help better define the protein sources in my investigation. As such, I will analyze the animals by accounting for: private/public, imported/domestic, consumption/other, and luxury/common. Private/public refers to the more common setting in which the food is eaten, namely in the public sphere or a private meal. This section will include the method of preparation since dishes were often created differently if they were intended for a banquet rather than a personal meal. Imported/domestic ties into the resources which would be needed to afford such an ingredient. Consumption/other refers to whether or not the animal was merely eaten as a source of protein or if it held another role in society (i.e. a pet). Finally, luxury/common determines if the food was only eaten by the upper-class or if more common people had access to the ingredient as well. These four contrasting principles should help to define the societal implications of a certain food in ancient Rome. Moreover, these four categories can be defined through the literary and material culture that is available to modern scholars.

⁵ Douglas, 10.

Notable Factors in Late Republican and Early Imperial Rome

Roman Currency

In the scope of this research, it is useful to be able to fully comprehend the prices of certain ingredients; thus, a conversion from Roman currency into modern United States Dollars (USD) is helpful. Most authors note the cost of food with sesterces, but some use other denominations as well. As such, Roman currency denominations are as follows:

1 aureus = 25 denarii

1 denarius = 4 sestertii

1 sestertius = 4 asses

1 dupondius = 2 asses

1 as = 2 semises

1 semis = 2 quadrantes⁶

The above denominations are taken from various pieces of literature and correlate to the late republican and early imperial age. According to Andrews' conversion rate, 1 sesterce = .5276 modern USD.⁷ Being able to equvalate sesterces to modern USD helps us to truly understand the expensive cost of some Roman cuisine. By putting these prices in a modern context, people are able to see the true wealth of the Roman elite. But even though many ancient authors reveal prices for certain foods, it is important to remember that they are not reliable narrators. Since this investigation utilizes satire, it is common for these authors to exaggerate various details of their stories. Therefore, although price is a valuable tool for determining the status of a foodstuff, it cannot be completely relied upon due to the nature of my primary texts.

⁶ Reden, *Money in Classical Antiquity*, xv.

⁷ Andrews, "The Roman Craze for Surmulletts," 186. I took the liberty of using Andrews rate and converting it to modern USD (as of January 2020) since his paper was written in 1949.

Trade and Expansion

The wealth and expansion of the Roman Empire also led to extensive trade routes which allowed access to foodstuff not native to the Italic peninsula. Similarly, these new provinces allowed Rome to import food and therefore further implement Roman culture onto the native peoples. Imports can help track the importance and relative rarity of an item, “for example, in Gaul the luxury goods associated with the drinking of wine ... disappear completely as the importation of wine in amphorae and of mass-produced black glaze pottery increases (Morel 1990). Wine had become a much less rare, and therefore less prestigious good, and was distributed and drunk more widely.”⁸ The developing status of wine in Gaul exemplifies how some items became less luxurious as they were more widely imported. As such, a gourmet’s banquet was supposed to have exotic imported items in combination with local produce and livestock.⁹ Overall, trade makes a considerable difference when discussing luxury items. Since this investigation into luxury food spans many years, an ingredient that was once rare could grow more popular as Rome expanded and trade routes opened.

Banquet Culture

Banquet culture also shifted considerably as the Roman Republic fell and the Empire grew. During the Republic, the sumptuary laws attempted to prohibit excessive foods and parties; similarly, Augustus imposed moral codes to prevent Roman excess.¹⁰ These laws were lost after Augustus’ reign, but nonetheless were rarely strictly enforced when actually in effect.

⁸ Paterson, “Trade and Traders in the Roman World: Scale, Structure, and Organisation,” 149.

⁹ Schmeling, “Trimalchio’s Menu and Wine List,” 249.

¹⁰ Ruffin, *The Social Reforms of Augustus*, 35.

Therefore, the Romans, since the late Republic, were already infamous for their impressive banquets. These banquets slowly grew more and more elaborate as time passed so that eventually a theatrical spectacle was expected at most high-class feasts.¹¹ While the presentation of food is not essential to my analysis on the societal implications of cuisine, it still plays a significant role. For instance, a dish which Apicius recommends serving on a silver platter is clearly meant to impress guests rather than be eaten in private. Similarly, an author's account of a feast could help determine the wealth and status of a host – knowing about the host who serves certain foods could then correlate to the luxury status of a certain ingredient. Thus, it is important to know that banquets were a method of displaying wealth and mystifying guests.¹²

Authors & their Text

Undoubtedly, these seven authors provide invaluable information about life in ancient Rome. Without their social commentaries, scholars would have great difficulty when piecing together histories of Rome. But while these texts are vital to Classical studies, it still remains that the authors are unreliable narrators. All of my central primary source authors, except Pliny, are satirists and thus prone to exaggeration and fallacies for the sake of the art. Therefore, we should maintain a sense of skepticism when reading their texts.

¹¹ D'Arms, "Performing Culture," 302.

¹² As it stands, there are numerous essays about Roman dining habits and culture which can provide further context on this point. Thus, I recommend the following texts for further reading: *Performing Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful* by D'Arms (1999); *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality* by Dunbabin (2003); and *Changing Places: The Archaeology of the Roman "Convivium"* by Hudson (2010)

Apicius & De Re Coquinaria

Apicius is legendary within classical studies for his unrivalled account of Roman cuisine and for the myths surrounding him as a historical figure. While there is no debate that *De Re Coquinaria* provides an outstanding wealth of knowledge on Roman cuisine in the first century C.E., many people question its author. Roman histories provide information on three men with the cognomen Apicius who were notable epicures.¹³ One is a man who lived in the 1st century B.C.E. and was infamous for being absurdly excessive, at least according to both Posidonius and Athenaeus.¹⁴ Next, there is an Apicius who lived under Trajan and invented a method of safely transporting oysters over long distances – thus living up to his famous culinary surname, although not being the Apicius who is credited with the cookbook.¹⁵ Last, there are many mentions of Marcus Gavius Apicius who lived during the reign of Tiberius and to whom *De Re Coquinaria* is attributed. Apicius was an innovative gourmand whose name became synonymous with gluttony and wealth.¹⁶ Unfortunately, what (presumably) was the best biography of Apicius is lost to modern scholars, luckily there are still some legends of Apicius' gluttony.¹⁷

Ancient historians and satirists alike shared tales of Apicius' extravagance. Pliny the Elder writes that Apicius was the first to cook/eat flamingo tongue and pork liver pâté; two dishes which became staples at Roman banquets.¹⁸ He also notes that Apicius enjoyed pairing

¹³ Déry, "The Art of Apicius," 111.

¹⁴ Déry, 111. Posidonius was a philosopher of the late Republic whilst Athenaeus was a historian in the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries.

¹⁵ Déry, 111.

¹⁶ Thus, I believe that the later Apicius (who lived under Trajan and created the clever method of oyster transportation) to merely have adopted that name since it was already known for ingenuity with cuisine.

¹⁷ His 'best biography' being an essay called *On the Luxury of Apicius* by Apion who lived at the same time as Marcus Gavius Apicius. While the text itself is lost, a reference to it lives on in the work of Athenaeus.

¹⁸ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* X.lxxviii.133 & VIII.lxxvii.209, respectively.

mullets with a high-end fish sauce (*garum sociorum*) and a fish liver paste (*allec*).¹⁹ Yet these three facts, albeit notable in their own right, do not fully speak to the high levels of luxury for which Apicius has become famous. Athenaeus speaks poorly of Apicius in the *Δειπνοσοφισταί* when he writes (Athenaeus, *Δειπνοσοφισταί* I.12):

ἐγένετο δὲ κατὰ τοὺς Τιβερίου χρόνους ἀνὴρ τις Ἀπίκιος, πλουσιώτατος τρυφητῆς, ἀφ' οὗ πλακούντων γένη πολλά Ἀπίκια ὀνομάζεται. οὗτος ἰκανὰς μυριάδας καταναλώσας εἰς τὴν γαστέρα ἐν Μιντούρναϊς (πόλις δὲ Καμπανίασ) διέτριβε τὰ πλεῖστα καρίδας ἐσθίων πολυτελεῖς, αἱ γίνονται αὐτόθι ὑπὲρ γε τὰς ἐν Σμύρνη μεγίστας καὶ τοὺς ἐν Ἀλεξανδρεία ἀστακούς. ἀκούσας οὖν καὶ κατὰ Λιβύην γίνεσθαι ὑπερμεγέθεις ἐξέπλευσεν οὐδ' ἀναμείνας μίαν ἡμέραν καὶ πολλὰ κακοπαθήσας κατὰ τὸν πλοῦν ὡς πλησίον ἦκε τῶν τόπων πρὶν ἐξορμησαί τῆς νεῶς πολλῇ δ' ἐγεγόνει παρὰ Λίβυσι φήμη τῆς ἀφίξεως αὐτοῦ, προσπλεύσαντες ἄλιεῖς προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ τὰς καλλίστας καρίδας. ὁ δ' ἰδὼν ἐπύθετο εἰ μείζους ἔχουσιν: εἰπόντων δὲ μὴ γίνεσθαι ὧν ἦνεγκαν, ὑπομνησθεῖς τῶν ἐν Μιντούρναϊς ἐκέλευσε τῷ κυβερνήτῃ τὴν αὐτὴν ὁδὸν ἐπὶ Ἰταλίαν ἀναπλεῖν μηδὲ προσπελάσαντι τῇ γῆ.

And during the time of Tiberius there was a certain man named Apicius, a most wealthy voluptuary, and from whom many types of flat cakes are named Apician. He lavishly spent considerable amounts towards his stomach in Minturnae (a city of Campania), and he spent time there eating many expensive shrimps; indeed, in that spot the shrimp become better than the largest shrimp of Smyrna or the lobsters of Alexandria. So hearing that throughout Libya there lived enormous shrimps, Apicius sailed there without a day's delay and was in much distress due to the sailing. As he came near the place, before he left his ship, the fisherman sailed towards him since a rumor of his arrival had spread among the Libyans. They brought to him the most beautiful shrimp and Apicius, seeing them, asked if they had any bigger to which they responded that they did not as they had already brought their biggest. And Apicius, remembering the shrimps of Minturnae, ordered the steersman to set a route to Italy and they left without even approaching the land.²⁰

¹⁹ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* IX.xxx.66

²⁰ All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

This tale, while certainly egregious and demonstrative of Apicius' excessive lifestyle, is still not as shocking as the mystery shrouding Apicius' death. Both Martial and the historian Cassius Dio write about Apicius' suicide and the excessive display of grandeur surrounding his death. Martial writes in his *Epigrammata* (Martial, *Epigrammata* III.xxii):

Dederas, Apici, bis trecenties ventri,
sed adhuc supererat centies tibi laxum.
Hoc tu gravatus ut famem et sitim ferres,
summa venenum potione perduxti.
Nihil est, Apici, tibi gulosius factum.

Apicius, you gave sixty million sesterces for your stomach
but still a comfortable ten million was left over for you.
You, having been burdened with this as you bore your hunger and thirst,
condemned yourself with poison as a final draught.
No deed, Apicius, is more gluttonous than this.

Cassius Dio later wrote in his *Historia Romana* (Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* LVII.xix.5.5-6):

... Ἀπικίου ἐκείνου ὃς πάντα ἀνθρώπους ἀσωτία ὑπερεβάλετο οὕτως ὥστε,
ἐπειδὴ μαθεῖν ποτε ἐθελήσας ὅσα τε ἤδη καταναλώκει καὶ ὅσα ἔτ' εἶχεν, ἔγνω ὅτι
διακόσμαι καὶ πεντήκοντα αὐτῷ μυριάδες περιεῖεν, ἐλυπήθη τε ὡς καὶ λιμῶ
τελευτήσειν μέλλων καὶ ἑαυτὸν διέφθειρεν.

... that Apicius who surpassed all men in prodigality that, as a result, when one day he wished to learn how much money he had already lavishly spent and how much money he still had. He realized that he had 2,500,000 denarii remaining to him. He then became distressed and thus feeling destined to die of hunger, killed himself.

These reports demonstrate the sheer luxury that Apicius was accustomed to as an epicure. Yet, it is difficult to determine if this tale is part of Apicius' true history or merely attributed to the myth of the man. It is important to note that 2,500,000 denarii was not petty cash – Apicius

could have lived a comfortable middle-class lifestyle with such funds.²¹ Nevertheless, the thought of eating ordinary food did not sit well with Apicius, at least according to legend. Subsequently, it is these types of stories which make Apicius an infamous gastronome; yet, part of his fame stems from his ingenuity within the kitchen. Although not recorded in *De Re Coquinaria*, Apicius' contemporaries note some of his clever cooking tricks. For example, Pliny shares “for soda preserves the green color (of cabbages) when cooked, like in Apician manner of cooking, when it is soaked in oil and salt before it is cooked.”²² This brief mention, along with others, suggest that Apicius, although not a chef, did create some innovative methods which allow greater weight to his title as a gourmand. Scholar theorize that Apicius may have published a book or essay on food which helped him gain influence in the culinary world.²³ Sadly, modern scholars cannot fully realize Apicius' true role within the Roman culinary sphere without further discoveries of literature or material culture – instead we are left with the few surviving tales of his extravagance and ingenuity.

The murky biography of Apicius continues to baffle modern scholars just as it confused ancient authors. When an unknown editor compiled the texts in the early fourth century C.E., the recipes were attributed to Apicius.²⁴ But even though this text is connected to the wealthy citizen Marcus Gavius Apicius, scholars doubt that a man of such high status wrote this text.²⁵ The Latin itself is rather simple and has varying styles which is consistent with multiple authors of lower

²¹ Grainger, “The Myth of Apicius,” 71.

²² Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XIX.xlv. *nitrum in coquendo etiam viriditatem custodit, ut et apiciana coctura, oleo ac sale, priusquam coquantur, maceratis*

²³ Grainger, “The Myth of Apicius,” 75.

²⁴ Déry, “The Art of Apicius,” 113.

²⁵ Nevertheless, I will usually refer to Apicius as the author of this text. I will do this for the sake of clarity, but it should not deduct from that fact that he likely did not write *De Re Coquinaria*.

education level.²⁶ Additionally, the text does not provide measurements or more exact instructions which implies that these recipes were meant for cooks who had prior training rather than the wealthy peers of Marcus Gavius Apicius.²⁷ Thus, scholars theorize that the text of *De Re Coquinaria* is actually a compilation of recipes from various chefs across Rome. This text had Apicius' name attached to it on account of his fame and ingenuity within ancient gastronomy.

Overall, the influence Marcus Gavius Apicius on Roman cuisine is palpable in ancient and modern text alike. Although it is debatable whether or not Apicius played a role in the creation of *De Re Coquinaria*, he was still a notable innovator and gastronome within cuisine. Apicius and the text attributed to him are essential in this research of Roman cuisine as they provide numerous recipes that contain many of the ingredients of this study. Given that *De Re Coquinaria* was likely written by freedmen cooks, the recipes are even more insightful to the initial research question of the societal coding in Roman cuisine.

Horace: *Carmina*, *Sermones*, & *Epistulae*

Horace's poetry provides witty commentary on various aspects of Roman life. In this paper, I mostly utilize Horace's *Sermones* (or Satires) which tend to cruelly mock the rich. Yet Horace's teasing nature seems to be an authorial persona rather than a personal vendetta against those with great wealth. As such, Horace (65 B.C.E. – 8 B.C.E.) was born in southern Italy to a freedman who worked as a public auctioneer (*coactor*). As a *coactor*, his father garnered a considerable amount of money – so much that he was able to send Horace to Rome and Athens

²⁶ Grainger, "The Myth of Apicius," 72.

²⁷ Edwards, "Philology and Cuisine in *De Re Coquinaria*," 255.

for his education.²⁸ During his own lifetime, Horace was rather famous among Roman poets. Part of the reason for Horace's success was his acceptance of Augustan morals within his writings, as common with many poets within the Golden Age of Latin Literature.²⁹ His writings were so popular that Augustus offered Horace a position on his *officium epistularum* which he declined. Nevertheless, Augustus commissioned Horace's fourth book of odes in which Horace lauds Augustus' Empire and family.³⁰

Throughout his poetry, Horace has a strong authorial person, so much that "many of [Horace's] 'biographical' details now look like genre-specific tropes."³¹ His authorial persona contributes to the manner with which he mocks the wealthy. Yet, his own personal involvement within the upper-class of Rome and fame as a poet entangles him in the politics of the early Roman Empire. Further, Horace's close relationship with the *princeps* influences his poetry in a tangible manner. While we can presume that the *Sermones* were not influenced by Augustus since they were written in 35 and 30 B.C.E. respectively, the *Carmina* and *Epistulae* are clearly manipulated (Horace, *Carmina* IV.v.5-8):

Lucem redde tuae, dux bone, patriae;
instar veris enim voltus ubi tuus
adfulsit populo, gratior it dies
et soles melius nitent.

Restore the light of your fatherland, good leader;
for the image of your face whenever you
appear to the people helps the day pass easier
and the sun glimmer better.

²⁸ Shorey, "Introduction," x.

²⁹ Shorey, xiv. Virgil and Livy were other authors who attracted the interest of Augustus.

³⁰ Shorey, xiv.

³¹ Gowers, "Introduction," 2.

This short section alone uses insistently positive language with respect to Augustus. The words *lucem*, *adfulsit*, *soles*, and *nitent* are all associated with shining lights which speaks to the inspiring influence of Augustus' presence. Having Augustan influence on Horace's poetry implies that Horace supported Augustus' moral reforms. These moral reforms aimed to better the Roman people by governing various aspects of social life in order to create a utopia of sorts.³² Romans welcomed this vision of a 'utopia' after numerous civil wars and other political strife prior to Augustus' reign. Augustus, therefore, attempted to renew 'good' Roman morals, meaning that he wished to rid Rome of its recent impiety, sexual depravity, and extreme luxury.³³ Knowing that Horace supported Augustus provides deeper meaning to his mocking of luxury in his later poetry; moreover, it suggests that there was a political edge to his teasing. But Horace's view on the rich cannot be entirely attributed to Augustus since, even before Augustan influence in the *Sermones*, Horace holds similar opinions. In his second book of satires, there is a poem on frugality in which Horace teases the rich.³⁴ This witty poem, which includes many comments on luxury cuisine, demonstrates that Horace always carried some contempt for the elite.

Overall, Horace's mockery is only surface level and reflects both his personal view on luxury as well as some of Augustus' opinion. It is impossible to determine what is Horace's authorial persona and what is Augustan propaganda but, luckily, Horace's *Sermones* indicate that he personally believed some foods to be excessive. Nevertheless, Horace is a vital author in my research but has definite and predetermined limits due to his affiliation with Augustus and

³² Bond, "The Augustan Utopia of Horace and Vergil and the Imperial Dystopia of Petronius and Juvenal," 31.

³³ Bond, 36.

³⁴ Horace, *Sermones* II.ii

subsequent pushing of imperial propaganda. These limits must be noted when reading his poetry but do not take away from the importance of his text to my investigation into the perceptions of cuisine.

Juvenal: *Saturae*

The sixteen satires of Juvenal (mid-1st century – mid-2nd century C.E.) are dispersed throughout five books and provide a strong opinion on Roman culture at the beginning of the second century C.E..³⁵ Scholars believe that Juvenal was a member of the elite class due to the fact that there is no dedication to a patron in his books.³⁶ But even though Juvenal may be a member of the upper-class, that does not prevent him from callously insulting them in his texts. Juvenal also wrote harshly about emperor Domitian, so much so that it is theorized that Domitian might have sent Juvenal into exile for a period of time.³⁷ Yet, neither of these theories can be confirmed and thus the personal life of Juvenal is relatively unknown – luckily his satires remain which allow glimpses into his thoughts on Rome. Although there is very little biographical information on Juvenal, he has a strong authorial persona throughout his satires.

Juvenal's early satires are characterized by his bitter tone as he is "shocked and horrified by the vice, crime, degradation, and folly that he sees all about him, [therefore] he declares (79) that indignation makes him write satiric poetry."³⁸ Each satire then focuses (mostly) on one aspect of Roman folly varying from the prevalence of adultery and sodomy to women's fashion

³⁵ Braund, "Juvenal."

³⁶ Braund.

³⁷ Highet, "The Life of Juvenal," 483. Domitian was the emperor just before Juvenal's first book of satires is thought to have been published. Domitian ruled from 81-96 C.E. and the first book was likely published around 101 C.E..

³⁸ Colton, "Juvenal and Propertius," 442. Juvenal *Saturae* I.i.79 *si natura negat, facit indignatio versum*

and the faults of Roman nobles. Juvenal's satires are especially cruel compared to other satirists – when compared to the first Roman satirist, Lucilius, it is noted that “we can see a smile or a snicker behind [Lucilius'] lines; Juvenal had time for neither snicker nor smile. [For instance,] he doesn't even bother to attack an individual Greek; he riddles them all with bullet-like hexameters.”³⁹ Scholars generally assent that Juvenal is especially harsh in his poetry; however, his intensity seems to lessen with each satire. His writings begin with a ferocious intensity and then slowly deteriorate to a bitter detachment.⁴⁰

Juvenal/s authorial persona and the severity of his satires must be kept in mind in relation to this investigation. On the one hand, knowing that he is an especially harsh critic of Roman society could imply that some of his facts might be exaggerated so that they may more properly suit his anger. On the other hand, his intensity suggests that other Romans might have shared these strong feelings about the alleged depravity within Rome. Overall, Juvenal's poems, although harsh, offer a unique and seemingly shared viewpoint on Roman cuisine and the extravagance of upper-class.

Martial: *Epigrammata*

Martial (ca. 40 C.E. – ca. 103 C.E.) is another satirist who often comments on Roman cuisine – in fact, he has a whole book dedicated solely to Roman foodstuff among his collection of *Epigrammata*. Martial was born in northeastern Spain but then moved to Rome in 64 C.E. where he lived for the next thirty-four years.⁴¹ During his time in Rome, Martial became

³⁹ Kuszynski, “Juvenal and Other Roman Satirists,” 112.

⁴⁰ Braund, “Juvenal.”

⁴¹ Citroni, “Martial.”

intimately connected to the courts of Titus and Domitian. He was so intertwined in their social sphere that scholars believe Martial left Rome due to Domitian's assassination and ensuing *damnatio memoriae*.⁴² Not much is known about Martial's personal life, but the fact that he is not a native to Rome is important. Additionally, his class is not entirely known, but scholars believe that he was rich enough to be equal to someone of equestrian rank.⁴³ These small details about his personal life play a small but nevertheless notable role in the analysis of his literature when he discusses banquets.

As such, Martial is most famous for his fourteen books of satiric epigrams which feature vulgar (both the ancient and modern meaning) language and clever observations of the Roman elite. Book XIII of his *Epigrammata*, titled *Xenia* (the parting gifts), offers invaluable information about what sort of foods were given as parting gifts at Saturnalia in the mid-80s C.E..⁴⁴ These couplets each feature a title and "gently humorous descriptions of everyday things, many of which speak for themselves, [and] are frequently framed as instructions for appropriate use; in effect, they combine to create a guide book to the domestic material culture of Flavian Rome."⁴⁵ Thus, Book XIII of Martial's *Epigrammata* provides three useful facts about the text which are pertinent to my inquiry: first, it demonstrates foodstuff that were mostly likely given away at an actual Saturnalia held sometime in the 80s C.E.; second, we can assume that the recipes/instructions are accurate; third, the poems suggest that most of these food items were upper-class, but not necessarily excessive since they were parting gifts.⁴⁶ These three facts and

⁴² Citroni. Martial apparently tried to become friendly with the new emperors since there are some dedications to them, but was overall unsuccessful and therefore returned to Spain.

⁴³ Citroni.

⁴⁴ Morgan, "Neither Fish nor Fowl?," 385.

⁴⁵ Blake, "Martial's Natural History," 357.

⁴⁶ Blake, 356.

the probable reality behind Martial's text indicate that Book XIII will be a vital part of this research paper.

Overall, Martial's text is incredibly useful to my query due to its direct relation to food and banqueting in Rome. Its limitations lie in the simple fact that Martial was a satirist and therefore prone to exaggeration for the sake of the art. Martial's ties to Flavian Rome should be noted, but actually seem to be an advantage since he would have a more accurate idea of the Saturnalia gifts. Thus, Martial's *Epigrammata*, specifically Book XIII, is a valuable source of information for banqueting food in Rome, but it carries the usual shortcomings that satire faces as a reliable source for historical accuracy.

Petronius & the *Satyricon*

Petronius, like Apicius, is an author whose personal life plays a key role in the analysis of their text, but the authors themselves have a relatively murky biography. The text of the *Satyricon* identifies its author as T. Petronius Arbiter – a surname which literally translates to ‘the Judge.’⁴⁷ In this sense, his name is rather accurate as Petronius does judge ideas of luxury with his biting commentary during the *Cena Trimalchionis*; yet, it is almost certain that Arbiter was not the actual cognomen of this author. However, it may have been one of his jobs since there are multiple records of a senator named Petronius who was in the court of Nero.⁴⁸ Within Nero's court, this Petronius acted as an *arbiter elegantiae* to the emperor which speaks to his inherent familiarity with luxury items. Petronius remained in Nero's court and acted as both a

⁴⁷ Heseltine and Arbiter, *Petronius*, vii.

⁴⁸ Smith and Griffin, “Petronius (2).” He is referenced by Tacitus, Pliny, Plutarch, tablet from Herculaneum, and a document from Ephesus. The praenomen of Petronius is thought to be either Gaius, Titus, or Publius but this is unclear as the texts, which all appear to be referring to the same man, contain different names.

consul and proconsul until he was forced to commit suicide in 66 C.E..⁴⁹ His suicide note insulted Nero and some of these same ideologies are also reflected in the *Satyricon*; thus furthering the likelihood of this historical figure being the legendary author. Nevertheless, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine the true identity of the author of this book. Like Apicius, it is possible that scribes later attached the name of Petronius to the clearly Neronian text.⁵⁰

The text of the *Satyricon* itself, and what is written between the lines, speak magnitudes about the author's view on social status and luxury cuisine. While significant portions of the *Satyricon* are lost or severely damaged, Book XV which contains the *Cena Trimalchionis* is nearly complete. This section of the book offers an incomparable look into Roman dining culture and the cuisine served at a freedman's banquet. The key to reading the *Cena Trimalchionis* is realizing that Trimalchio cannot fully understand luxury as a mere freedman, no matter how hard he tries. There are numerous points in the dinner scene which specifically reference Trimalchio's lack of decorum; but two underlying aspects of the dinner best demonstrate his ignorance. First, Trimalchio serves some of the same dishes which were present at his banquet the day before (Petronius, *Satyricon* XLI):⁵¹

Interim ego, qui privatum habebam secessum, in multas cogitationes diductus sum, quare aper pilleatus intrasset. Postquam itaque omnis bacalusias consumpsi, duravi interrogare illum interpretem meum, quod me torqueret. At ille: "Plane etiam hoc servus tuus indicare potest: non enim aenigma est, sed res aperta. Hic aper, cum heri summa cena eum vindicasset, a conviviis dimissus; itaque hodie tamquam libertus in convivium revertitur."

⁴⁹ Smith and Griffin.

⁵⁰ Harrison, "Petronius (1)"; Rose, "The Date of the Satyricon," 166. Scholars assert that Petronius wrote this text under Nero due to the many allusions to Neronian figures including the singer Menecrates and the gladiator Petraitas.

⁵¹ Schmeling, "Trimalchio's Menu and Wine List," 249.

Meanwhile I, who was having a private moment, was divided among many ideas as to why the wild boar had entered wearing a freedman's cap. And so, after I had devoured all of the sweat meats, I bucked up to ask my informant for an interpretation. As he turned to face me, he said, "clearly even your servant can proclaim this: for it is not a riddle, but straightforward. This wild boar, when it was served as the last course yesterday, was dismissed by the guests; therefore, today it returns to the dinner just as a freedman would."

This spectacle, albeit clever and suitable for Trimalchio's audience, reveals his recycling of food. A true epicure and elite citizen would never even dream of reusing food at a banquet as it shows the host's limited funds and also implies that the host thinks poorly of his guests.⁵² Beyond this, Petronius purposefully portrays Trimalchio as crude and low-class. Petronius' initial introduction of Trimalchio shows him playing ball with some slaves in the courtyard of his villa. Trimalchio then calls a slave with a chamber pot over so that he can relieve himself – all while continuing the game of catch.⁵³ Trimalchio's continued vulgar displays demonstrate his low-status to readers of the *Satyricon*.⁵⁴ Throughout the dinner scene, Petronius pointedly crafts Trimalchio as a crude character to reinforce the notion that Trimalchio cannot fully understand *elegantiae* as a freedman.

Additionally, Trimalchio himself notes that most of the ingredients of this banquet come from his own property.⁵⁵ The mere fact that Trimalchio is proud that he raised most of their dinner unequivocally establishes his frugality: "to Petronius, who dined often at the imperial table, such fare as provided by Trimalchio must have appeared plebeian and fit for a former

⁵² Schmeling, 249.

⁵³ Petronius, *Satyricon* XXVII

⁵⁴ George, "Style and Character in the *Satyricon*," 355.

⁵⁵ Petronius, *Satyricon* XLVIII: *deorum beneficio non emo, sed nunc quicquid ad salivam facit, in suburbano nascitur eo, quod ego adhuc non novi*

slave.”⁵⁶ An analysis of the ingredients mentioned in the text revealed that approximately 89% of the food was from his farm, whilst only 11% were imports.⁵⁷ This poor ratio reveals that Trimalchio did not host a dignified dinner even though he was considered a wealthy man. Moreover, it is interesting that most of the dishes served at this *cena* are variations of those present in Apicius’ cookbook – further suggesting the ordinary status of many of the dishes and ingredients.⁵⁸ Petronius furthers the irony of the frugal dinner by having both Trimalchio and his guests note the grandeur of Trimalchio’s banquet in comparison to others.⁵⁹ Thus, Petronius marks the scene with intense irony that is meant to entertain his upper-class readers.

Overall, it is clear that the cuisine present at the *Cena Trimalchionis* is not meant to represent luxury and excessiveness, rather Petronius uses the characterization of Trimalchio to demonstrate that *elegantiae* cannot be learned. Petronius’ likely background in Nero’s court plays a role in his writing, but more significant is the audience of this book. The audience was supposed to be entertained by the ridiculousness of Trimalchio’s banquet and laugh at all the social rules he breaks – keeping this in mind, the food that Trimalchio presents must be viewed in a similar light. Petronius offers various examples of Roman cuisine, but they are already clearly coded within his text.

⁵⁶ Schmeling, “Trimalchio’s Menu and Wine List,” 249.

⁵⁷ Schmeling, 249.

⁵⁸ Schmeling, 250. For instance, Trimalchio’s famous stuffed pig is similar to Apicius’ *porcellum hortolanum* recipe.

⁵⁹ Schmeling, “Battle of Banquets,” 219.

Pliny the Elder: *Naturalis Historia*

Pliny the Elder (ca. 23 C.E. – 79 C.E.) wrote the *Naturalis Historia* which contains contemporary facts on zoology, botany, mineralogy, geography, medicine, anthropology, and more subjects throughout thirty-seven books which are split into ten volumes. His position as a wealthy equestrian allowed him time to write what would eventually become one of the greatest sources of ancient knowledge available to modern scholars.⁶⁰ Although it is important to note that Pliny likely summarized or inaccurately stated certain facts, it remains that our knowledge of certain fields in antiquity would be greatly reduced without his text. Given that Pliny aimed to create an impartial and factual text, there is little of his personality within it; yet, it would be foolish to assume that none of his bias reached the pages of the *Naturalis Historia*. As such, it is important to note that Pliny was politically present underneath Nero but did not gain favor within Rome until the Flavians came to power.

The first ten books of the *Naturalis Historia* were published in 77 C.E. but the rest were posthumously published by his nephew Pliny the Younger after Pliny the Elder died in the eruption of Vesuvius.⁶¹ We can assume that the Younger made some edits, but no major changes, to the remaining books before their publication. In the preface to his text, Pliny the Elder makes an important note about this source material (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* I.iv):

rerum dignarum cura - quoniam, ut ait Domitius Piso, thesauros oportet esse, non libros - lectione voluminum circiter duorum milium, quorum pauca admodum studiosi attingunt propter secretum materiae, ex exquisitis auctoribus centum inclusimus xxxvi voluminibus, adiectis rebus plurimis, quas aut ignoraverant priores aut postea invenerat vita. nec dubitamus multa esse quae et nos praeterierint.

⁶⁰ Purcell, "Pliny (1) the Elder."

⁶¹ Purcell.

Take care of proper things – because, as Domitius Piso says, it is right to make treasures, not just books – and so having read around 2000 selected volumes, of which studious men touch a few things fully on account of secrecy of the material. I have included 36 volumes from examining one hundred authors, and having added many things, which either former people had ignored or which had been discovered after their lives.

Luckily, Pliny often cites his sources but not all of these texts have survived into the modern age. Nevertheless, those sources that modern scholars can cross-reference seem to agree with Pliny’s summary.⁶² Additionally, scholars have noted that Pliny “included not only the claims of the better known Greek physicians and scientists, but folk beliefs and oral reports as well. These he gathered from rustics, tradesmen, and a wide assortment of those whom he termed *inperiti*.”⁶³ This notion is important to my inquiry as I often cite Pliny for a food’s strange medicinal value and should be noted as I move through my investigation. Overall, Pliny presents a fairly unbiased presentation of information that is gathered from various ancient texts, common knowledge, and personal experience. The *Naturalis Historia*, while not perfect, is a fairly reliable source for the various uses of foodstuff within ancient Rome.

Varro: *De Re Rustica*

Marcus Terentius Varro (116 B.C.E. – 27 B.C.E.) was a Roman scholar and politician who is famous for writing around 620 books with fifty-five total titles.⁶⁴ Varro lived during a tumultuous time in Roman history, experiencing the decline of the Republic and just overlapping

⁶² Stannard, “Medicinal Plants and Folk Remedies in Pliny, ‘Historia Naturalis,’” 5.

⁶³ Stannard, 4.

⁶⁴ Kaster, “Terentius (RE 84, Suppl. 6) Varro, Marcus.”

with Augustus becoming *princeps*.⁶⁵ Although a prolific scholar, having studied with famous academics in both Rome and Athens, Varro was less successful in politics. During the Great Roman Civil War, Varro sided on the losing side with Pompey. Luckily, Caesar later granted him clemency, but after Caesar's assassination he was condemned by Mark Antony. With these many political defeats, Varro resigned from politics and began focusing full-time on his scholarly activities.⁶⁶ Since Varro was a scholar, modern academics used to believe that his work was mostly factual; however, he did not shy from satirical elements in this writing and as a man of equestrian-rank, some of his prejudice slipped into his text.

De Re Rustica is one of Varro's only surviving texts and serves as an 'agricultural treatise' to his wife. Luckily, all three books of this collection survive, and so modern scholars are able to ascertain many ancient farming techniques and facts. However, there is danger in taking Varro at his word since *De Re Rustica* was meant to entertain as well as inform readers. The text is "simultaneously a textbook, a comedy, and a satire" which speaks to Varro's great ability as a writer.⁶⁷ The satirical elements of this text come into full play during the introduction of the second book, when Varro – similar to Juvenal – mourns the decline in Roman agriculture. Varro states that the overall degradation of good Roman values is the cause of the agricultural downfall (Varro, *De Re Rustica* II praef. 3):⁶⁸

Igitur quod nunc intra murum fere patres familiae correperunt relictis falce et aratro et manus movere maluerunt in theatro ac circo quam in segetibus ac vinetis,

⁶⁵ Varro lived for a staggering eighty-nine years – an incredibly long life in a time when the average life-span (outside of infant mortality) was approximately sixty years.

⁶⁶ Kaster, "Terentius (RE 84, Suppl. 6) Varro, Marcus."

⁶⁷ Linderski, "Garden Parlors: Nobles and Birds," 114.

⁶⁸ Grant Nelsestuen, "Storing Produce and Staging Dinner Parties: Fruit-Galleries and Genre in Varro's *De Re Rustica* 1," 23.

Therefore, since most heads of families have now slunk into the city walls and have abandoned the scythe and plough, they prefer to move their hands in a theatre or a circus as opposed to a cornfield or a vineyard,

These lines reveal that Varro thought highly of farmers (which is later reflected in the text) and also hints at the satirical elements of this text. *De Re Rustica* is exceptionally useful in my inquiry since it details farming techniques within upper-class villas; yet, its use as a form of entertainment limits the text. Although a scholar, Varro did not produce unbiased textbooks and therefore some of his ideology slips into his writing and makes him an unreliable narrator. Regardless, *De Re Rustica* provides useful insight into Roman agriculture and is helpful to modern academics if the biases are properly noted. This text is invaluable for its explanation of agricultural practices, some of which directly relate to the husbandry of animals in my investigation.

Food

As previously stated, I analyze five protein sources in this investigation: thrush, peafowl, mullet, dormice, and Mediterranean moray. I chose to research peafowl and dormice due to their perceived esteem within Roman culture – as it stands, most people with some classical background can recognize these foods as ‘popular’ within Rome. Next, I chose to investigate thrush, mullet, and Mediterranean moray on account of their numerous mentions within ancient text. In my preliminary research, I noticed that authors commonly mentioned these animals in a culinary context and so I believed that they would be suitable research subjects.

Thrushes

The Romans ate a wide variety of fowl, but they did not view all birds as equal meals. The thrush is one such bird that appears to be luxury cuisine; however, it also holds a surprising role as a medicinal aid. This small bird had been a delicacy since the early 1st century B.C.E. when Lucullus held his infamous banquets. In Rome, Lucullus was well-known for his expensive taste and his peers often chastised him for his gluttony. This bird was initially a seasonal dish due to their limited availability in the winters; however, Lucullus domesticated the thrush so that they could be enjoyed at any meal regardless of the season. Their year-round availability allowed the thrush to be more easily accessed as medicine, although not everyone took advantage of this.

The historian Plutarch notes a tale of the consul Pompey growing sick in the winter with a gastral malady. When Pompey's physician ordered him to eat thrush, he is famously quoted as stating "so then if Lucullus was not living luxuriously, Pompey would have died?"⁶⁹ Notably, Plutarch uses the verb *τρυφάω* which has an alternate definition that means 'to be effeminate.' The connotation of this verb speaks to mock and scorn with which Pompey views Lucullus in regard to his insatiable appetite for luxury cuisine. Nevertheless, Lucullus' love for thrushes was soon shared by all Romans as people began fattening the birds on villas just prior to the reign of Augustus.⁷⁰ Varro writes that a farm generated 60,000 sesterces from the sales of thrush alone when it sold 5,000 thrushes for three denarii each.⁷¹ Such high sales were likely because of a

⁶⁹ Plutarch, *Lucullus* 40.2 οὐκοῦν, εἰ μὴ Λούκουλλος ἐτρυφάσθαι, Πομπήϊος οὐκ ἂν ἔζησεν;

⁷⁰ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* X.30. According to Cornelius Nepos.

⁷¹ Varro, *De Re Rustica* III.ii.15. This is about 31,656 USD total and about 6.33 USD per thrush.

public triumphal banquet where a need for so many thrushes was necessary for the numerous high-class guests.⁷²

As noted in the tale of Pompey, one use of thrush is a healthy dish for aiding with dysentery and other bowel issues. Apicius has a recipe entitled *turdos aponcomenos* (thrush for health) purely for this purpose. This dish features fried thrush that is stuffed with pepper, laser, laurel berry, and a cumin garum while the outside is spiced with dill, salt, and leeks.⁷³ Remarkably, Pliny writes of a similar recipe in his *Naturalis Historia* when he recommends a thrush roasted with myrtle berries as a cure for dysentery. While these two recipes do not share an ingredient beyond the thrush itself, the use of laurel berries in Apicius' recipe and myrtle berries in Pliny's speaks to the healing properties of these berries that was mistakenly attributed to the thrush. Modern herbalists use both laurel (now more commonly called bay) berries and myrtle berries to treat stomach and intestinal issues. Yet, the Romans assumed that the healing property was the thrush as per the tale of Pompey and Lucullus. As such, these numerous testimonies of thrushes' medicinal value suggest that these birds were also treasured in Rome for their healing properties, along with their taste at luxury banquets.

This bird retained the air of luxury that it received in the Republic as Rome developed into a mass Empire. Martial writes (Martial, *Epigrammata* XIII.xcii):⁷⁴

inter aves turdus, si quid me iudice certum est
inter quadripedes mattea prima lepus

⁷² Varro, *De Re Rustica* III.ii.16

⁷³ Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria* excerpts xxix.497

⁷⁴ The thrush is also mentioned in books II, III, IV, VI, VII, IX, and XI of Martial's epigrams.

If any of my opinions is certain: between birds, thrush is the primary delicacy and between quadrupeds, a hare is best.

Clearly, Martial thought highly of the thrush as cuisine – this sentiment is furthered by Horace who has multiple mentions of thrushes in his poetry.⁷⁵ In the *Sermones*, he quotes Maenius saying “By Hercules, I am not astounded if someone eats well since nothing is better than a fat thrush [and] nothing is more fine than a sow’s fat womb.”⁷⁶ Martial and Horace’s high regard for thrush solidifies its place in luxury cuisine. Yet one of the most famous (fictional) Roman banquets is notably lacking thrushes. In the *Cena Trimalchionis*, thrush is mentioned three times; however, Trimalchio only serves different foodstuff made to look like the delicacy. The only instance of real thrushes is when live thrushes fly from the boar’s side in an act of showmanship, yet the dinner guests never actually receive cooked thrush. Thus, it seems that Petronius wanted to highlight the lack of such a delicacy at the *convivium* and therefore demonstrate Trimalchio’s lack of decorum. However, by serving food made to imitate a thrush, Petronius emphasizes that Trimalchio is merely pretending to have knowledge of upper-class banquets. Trimalchio wants to seem like a true elite citizen but he cannot fully comprehend banquet etiquette and hence serves faux-thrushes.

Although the Romans viewed thrush as one of the most valuable birds, there are only a few known recipes which use it as the main part of a dish. As such, thrushes seem to most commonly be an extravagant supplement to a dish, rather than the main course. Apicius notes six dishes which feature thrush throughout his text. One such dish is the *patina apiciana* (Apician

⁷⁵ Horace, *Sermones* I.v.72, II.ii.74, II.v.10; *Epistulae* I.xv.41; *Epode* ii.34

⁷⁶ Horace, *Epistulae* I.xv.39-41. ‘Non hercule miror’ / aiebat, ‘si qui comedunt bona cum sit obeso / nil melius turdo, nil uolua pulchrius ampla

dish) which layers crêpes between minced sow's belly, chicken, thrush (or figpeckers), and eggs. Apicius specifically notes that "an expensive silver platter would enhance the appearance of this dish materially."⁷⁷ This signifies that this dish is best served at some sort of banquet, rather than a personal meal. Interestingly, this meal is strikingly similar to the *patina quotidiana* (everyday dish) whose recipe directly follows the Apician Dish. The main difference between the *patina apiciana* and *patina quotidiana* is the absence of thrushes in the latter's recipe; instead, this dish uses fish in place of the luxurious bird.⁷⁸ Curiously, Apicius often notes that thrush is an optional ingredient and can be substituted with other small birds or brain. The fact that substitutions are available reveals two features about thrush. On one hand, this confirms thrush as a delicacy that not all could afford; hence, substitutes were needed for people with less money. On the other hand, this suggests that the flavor could be (at least somewhat) imitated by other small birds and brain which would lower the value of such a delicacy.

In two other Apician recipes, thrush is once again minced and used as an ingredient for a larger dish. The *porcellum hortolanum* (garden pig) instructs the cook to stuff a pig with a variety of meats, vegetables, nuts, spices, and eggs.⁷⁹ This dish is rather complex due to the fact that all of the ingredients must be cooked individually before being inserted into the pig. Moreover, the pig would have to be roasted with great care in order to maintain the integrity of both the pig and the food inside. Such a task would only be feasible for a skilled chef who came with a high price. The other recipe, *caccabinam fusilem* (stuffed chartreuse), uses minced roast thrush along with other meats and vegetables in a savory custard casserole. While the use of

⁷⁷ Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria* IV.ii.141

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, IV.ii.142

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, VIII.vii.378

thrushes in this recipe follows previous examples, this recipe is unique for its presentation. Such a dish is clearly meant for a feast as it “affords an opportunity for a decorative scheme by the arrangement of the various vegetables and meats in a pleasing and artistic manner, utilizing the various colors and shapes of the bits of food as one would use pieces of stone in a mosaic.”⁸⁰ A host could cleverly utilize such an elaborate decoration so as to both demonstrate their immense wealth but also their education in the arts and literature. Thus, thrush is an integral ingredient in two dishes which require advanced cooking skills and decoration, speaking to its role as a delicacy in early Imperial Rome.

The role of thrush within Roman society is juxtaposed between its use in elite banquets and its role in medicine. As it stands, the Romans seems to have merely eaten the thrush, which simplifies its societal coding to a certain extent. Yet, the thrush is present in both the private and public sphere of Roman cuisine. On one hand, the thrush seems to be a tasty bird that is difficult to attain, and therefore only present at special banquets. On the other hand, it is a popular remedy for gastral maladies – and such a meal would be eaten in private. Moreover, Apicius’ recipes range from a healthy roast to a complicated stuffed pig that only an expert chef could produce. These various elements present a dichotomy between when, where, and how the Romans served thrushes. Luckily, it is clear that the thrush is found within Italy and therefore the Romans did not need to import this foodstuff, automatically lowering the price of the animal. In fact, multiple sources claim that the Romans domesticated the thrush which both speaks to its popularity and the relative ease at which they could be attained within Rome. Overall, the thrush can be coded

⁸⁰ Project Gutenberg Book – F. Starr note 2 on excerpts ii.470

as a more expensive dish that was luxurious if prepared in a certain manner, but it also had a medicinal association that was equally valued among the Romans.

Peafowl

The peafowl is a well-known Roman delicacy, however, there are few examples of the actual consumption of the bird in primary texts which leads to doubts about its perceived role in banquets. Yet, there is substantial evidence that peacocks were, at the very least, eaten in late republican Rome. Pliny writes that Hortensius was the first Roman to slaughter and eat a peafowl while Lurco was the first to fatten a peafowl for consumption.⁸¹ Both Hortensius and Lurco were contemporaries of Cicero, so while the exact dates for these acts are not known, it can be assumed that this occurred in the early to mid-1st century B.C.E.. The newfound consumption is confirmed by Varro when he notes that Hortensius' precious dish gained considerable popularity among the elite.⁸² Varro, a contemporary of Hortensius, notes that after Hortensius' 'invention,' the price of peafowl rose substantially "so that an egg sells for five denarii and the bird itself easily fetches 50 denarii."⁸³ This information clearly notes that peafowl and their eggs were expensive delicacies during the late Republic. Varro also notes that Lurco actually profited from this fad since he earned over 60,000 sesterces a year for the husbandry of peafowl.⁸⁴

During the transition into the Imperial Age, peafowl did not lose their status as delicacies. Horace insults the rich by exclaiming "Now, being hungry, do you turn up your nose at

⁸¹ Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* X.xxiii. The men being Quintus Hortensius Hortalus and Marcus Aufidius Lurco.

⁸² Varro, *De Re Rustica* III.vi.6 *quem cito secuti multi extulerunt eorum pretia*

⁸³ *Ibid.*, III.vi.6 *ita ut ova eorum denariis veneant quinis, ipsi facile quinquagenis*. This is about 10.55 USD per egg and 31,656 USD per bird.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, III.vi.1

everything besides peacock and turbot?!”⁸⁵ This scathing commentary on the sheer wealth of certain peoples is furthered by Horace’s use of the verb *fastidio* which has a number of definitions, including ‘to snub,’ ‘to be haughty,’ and ‘to be snobbish.’ The clearly negative connotation of this verb speaks to Horace’s thoughts on those who regularly consume peacock – but Horace’s commentary does not stop there. In his second book of *Sermones*, Horace claims that the peacock tastes the same as chicken, yet the peacock is seen as better simply because it is a beautiful, rare bird and rather expensive. Horace jokingly asks if people eat the tail as well since that is what seems to make the bird so special.⁸⁶ Horace’s scathing commentary, beyond demonstrating the sheer luxury associated with the consumption of peafowl, shows that people were still eating peacocks around thirty years after the dish was introduced in approximately 35 B.C.E..

Martial has a similar approach to writing about peacocks when he criticizes the consumption of a bird for aesthetic purposes. He writes (Martial, *Epigrammata* XIII.lxx):

miraris, quotiens gemmantis explicat alas,
et potes hunc saevo tradere, dure, coco?

You are amazed whenever he displays his sparkling wings, so are you able to harshly betray him to the cruel cook?

By placing *miraris* at the beginning of the couplet, Martial emphasizes the wonder that people see when gazing upon the bird. Additionally, the negative vocabulary of the second line (*saevo, tradere, dure*) serves to demonstrate the callousness of those who cook and consume

⁸⁵ Horace, *Sermones* I.ii.115 *num esuriens fastidis omnia praeter pavonem rhombumque?*

⁸⁶ Horace, *Sermones* II.ii.23

peacock. The fact that both Martial and Horace note that peacocks are a popular dish merely because of their abundant plumage may speak to the thoughts of other Romans. While the peacock was likely consumed as a luxury dish, it seems that it may have been a controversial dish in Rome – these two satirists enjoy teasing wealthy people, but their comments on the peacock seem to go beyond normal jest. Additionally, given that these two authors would have held extravagant feasts themselves, their dislike of consuming peacock speaks towards the sheer indulgence of such a dish and its status among elite Romans.

Yet, even though the peacock is discussed by many authors, there are no texts which describe how peacock was cooked or served. In the *Satyricon*, Encolpius briefly believes that he receives fresh peahen eggs at the *Cena Trimalchionis*; but he quickly discovers that the dish is actually a pastry that contains a figpecker (a small bird) and yolk that is seasoned with pepper it.⁸⁷ This is a classic example of one of Trimalchio's dishes which question appearance versus reality. Trimalchio wants his guests to believe that they are being served a fine peahen egg, yet they receive a significantly less-expensive dish instead. Given that Petronius wants his readers to observe the frugality and faux-decorum of the freedman Trimalchio, this dish forces the readers to realize that Trimalchio does not have access to real peafowl eggs like a proper upper-class host would.⁸⁸ With this in mind, the luxury status that peafowl holds is highlighted through its absence.

⁸⁷ Petronius, *Satyricon* XXXIII

⁸⁸ Rose and Sullivan, "Trimalchio's Zodiac Dish (Petronius, Sat. 35. 1-5)," 180; Garnsey, "Food and Society in Classical Antiquity by Peter Garnsey," 114.

Moreover, it is rather curious that Apicius, the infamous epicure, does not have a specific recipe for peafowl – however, this is not to say that peafowl are never mentioned. Apicius writes (Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria* II.ii.6):

Isicia Sic Facies.

Isicia de pavo primum locum habent ita si fricta fuerint ut callum vincant. Item secundum locum habent de fasianis, tem tertium locum habent de cunicuis, tiem quartum locum habent de pullis, item quintum locum habent de porcello tenero.

Making Meatballs in a Similar Manner [to the recipe above]

The meatballs from a peacock have the first rank in this matter if they have been rubbed in order to eliminate the toughness. Moreover, meatballs of pheasant have second rank, then rabbits have third, then chicken have fourth, and the tender wild pig have fifth rank.

This statement confirms that Apicius highly regarded peafowl as a meat. However, there are a few issues with this part of the text. This first level of confusion is due to the complicated meaning of the term *isicia*. This term seems to be a ‘medieval graecification’ of the term *insicium* from the Greek *ἰσίκιον*.⁸⁹ Both the Greek *ἰσίκιον* and the Latin *insicium* mean ‘a dish of mincemeat,’ usually meaning some sort of meatball or dumpling of sorts. This translation gives scholars a method of preparation for peafowl since no other text hints at a method of cooking. However, some scholars argue that Apicius, in this section of the text, begins using the term *isicia* to instead mean ‘dishes’ in a more generalized sense.⁹⁰ Regardless, both translations of the term *isicia* still result in a ranking of meats. Whether it is for meatballs or generalized dishes is not terribly significant – it still remains that peafowl are at the top of the gastronome’s list.

⁸⁹ “The Project Gutenberg EBook of Apicius: Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome,” sec. Glossary-H.

⁹⁰ Apicius, n. II.ii.6 2.

Secondly, there is confusion due to the term *fasianis* which is actually not a Latin term but rather a transliteration of the Greek *φασιανός*. This Greek word means ‘pheasant’ and, although a somewhat common transliteration, demonstrates the lower status of (likely) the true author of this recipe due to the Greekness of his speech.⁹¹ The third point of confusion furthers the likelihood of the author being someone of lower status since there are three spelling errors within the text with the words *tem*, *cunicuis*, and *tiem*. *Cunicuis* is clearly meant to be written as *cuniculis* (rabbit) so there is simply one letter missing; however, *tem* and *tiem* are more difficult to discern. Based on the letter in those words and the fact that the author uses the adverb *item* twice, it seems likely that these two words are simply mistakes in writing *item*. These mistakes could have been perpetrated by either the original author or one of the many scribes who copied this text in later years. Nevertheless, these imperfections in the text demonstrate the peculiarity of its origins regarding the true authors of these recipes and the late compilation of *De Re Coquinaria* as a whole.

There is one more mention of peafowl within *De Re Coquinaria*, but this reference does not provide further evidence for methods for preparation. In Book VI on fowl, Apicius states that chapter v is going to focus on peacocks, but the text itself does not adhere to his initial table of contents. There are two plausible explanations for this inconsistency. The first explanation is that Apicius never had recipes for peacock and so the table of contents is a mere error. The second and more likely explanation is that their absence is a corruption of the text. Nevertheless, it is curious that nearly all recipes pertaining to peafowl are missing since peafowl seemed to be a rather popular food among the wealthy. The absence of peafowl recipes in *De Re Coquinaria*

⁹¹ Dubuisson, “Le Grec à Rome à l’époque de Cicéron Extension et Qualité Du Bilinguisme,” 189; Adams, Adams, and Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 15.

could be a result of common people composing the book but it is difficult to definitively determine why peafowl are absent in this text. Therefore, although peafowl appear to be a well-known dish for epicures, there is a surprising lack of evidence for the actual consumption. In all of surviving Roman text, there is only one suggestion of how they were cooked or consumed – and even this text is debated by scholars. Yet, there is still evidence of their domestication and consumption in Varro’s writing and other satire which suggests that at least some people consumed peafowl in Rome.⁹²

Additionally, peafowl are quite common subjects of art in the Roman world. Peafowl were usually included in artwork due to their beautiful plumage, their association with Juno and Dionysus, and their presence in utopian garden scenes. As such, there is an abundance of Roman peacock mosaics which have survived to the modern day. One of the most famous examples is from the House of Dionysos in Cyprus. This exceptionally preserved floor mosaic depicts a peacock with fanned feathers in the center of a geometric design. Scholars note that this mosaic “serves as a transition between the entrance area and the triclinium and peristyle” within the household.⁹³ The peacock is an appropriate transitional piece since the animal typically represented good fortune and wealth in Roman art. Some scholars believe that the fanned tailfeathers, with the full display of the ‘eyes’ on the feathers, were meant to ward off evil spirits in the household.⁹⁴ Yet peacocks were also portrayed in profile view with furled tailfeathers; these peacocks were often accompanied by other animals in utopian garden scenery.⁹⁵ In both

⁹² Varro has many notes of peafowl husbandry in Book III of *De Re Rustica*.

⁹³ Kondoleon, “Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos,” 85.

⁹⁴ Kondoleon, 116.

⁹⁵ This depiction of peacocks is quite common in Pompeii.

instances, the peacocks are meant to both emulate and demonstrate luxury.⁹⁶ In this sense, the artistic representations of peacocks fits well with its apparent consumption since both were used as a symbol of wealth.

Overall, it is clear that the peacock was a symbol of luxury in ancient Rome; however, it is not clear if that luxury status is due to their consumption or a result of other factors. Satirists write that the elite consumed peafowl during their public banquets, but no recipes or specific examples survive. Apicius' cookbook might contain one method of preparation, but even that is contended among scholars. Additionally, their common portrayal in mosaics points to a public role since their imagery represented luxury and these mosaics were meant to be viewed by house guests. Such mosaics have been found all across the greater Roman Empire which speaks to their domestication within Rome. Therefore, their status of an import/domestic food varies depending on the time period since the peafowl would have originally been imported but were quickly domesticated in the Republic. The evidence leaves a murky picture regarding the role of peafowl in ancient Roman cuisine. Based on the lack of data to firmly substantiate their consumption, it seems that peafowl were more often used as a status symbol as opposed to a source of protein. Perhaps the peafowl were a luxury item that very few could afford to eat, but it is just as likely that their consumption is a fabric of Roman satire – yet such theories are far too speculative to claim. Therefore, the status of peafowl within cuisine remains unclear but their role as a status symbol within Roman culture is obvious.

⁹⁶ Kondoleon, "Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos," 117.

Mullet

Of all fishes, mullet is one of the most important and popular in the ancient world. It had a variety of uses including being the main source of protein, an ingredient in sauces, some medicinal purposes, and a unique role in a punishment for adulterers. In *De Re Coquinaria*, Apicius lists eleven mullet-based recipes which speaks to the sheer popularity of the fish in imperial Rome alone. However, the fish was fairly easy to obtain in the ancient world which confuses its status as a common and/or luxury food. As such, most primary sources discuss the trade and consumption of large mullets which were seen as more valuable. These texts present a contradiction in the supposed luxury of the mullet in relation to its actual uses in cuisine and Roman culture.

Catullus briefly mentions mullet in one of his poems when the fish is used in the fantasized punishment of a man who is lusting over Catullus' kept boy (Catullus, *Carmina* XV.17-19):

a tum te miserum malique fati!
quem attractis pedibus patente porta
percurrent raphanique mugilesque.

Ah, then you will be miserable and have a bad fate!
When you, having your feet drawn up and rear exposed,
Are stuffed with radishes and mullets.

These three lines depict a rather specific use of the mullet (and radish); namely, the punishment of *rhaphanidosis*. This punishment originated in Ancient Greece and was used to penalize male adulterers. If a man was caught in sexual acts with a free, married woman, then the husband could “could depilate his testicles and anus with hot ash and shove a radish up his

rectum.”⁹⁷ These two acts symbolically transform the man’s anus into a vagina since it was popular for women to remove their pubic hair at that time and the act penetration is inherently effeminizing.⁹⁸ Additionally, this punishment was fulfilled in the agora so that the man was publicly shamed and humiliated. With this, the wronged husband could fully assert his dominance over the adulterer in the public sphere and regain his masculine status.

Naturally, the Romans took this traditionally Greek punishment one step further by also inserting a mullet into the adulterer’s anus. The mullet once again served to transform the man’s anus into a vagina with the addition of a fishy smell that was typically associated with women’s vaginas.⁹⁹ Mulletts, according to the Romans, were infamously odorous so these fish were perfect for *rhaphanidosis*. Thus, the adulterer’s anus looked, smelled, and underwent penetration just like a woman’s vagina (at least according to the ancient Roman mindset). Yet not only did these men suffer humiliation and feminization, but the addition of the mullet to the *rhaphanidosis* incorporated a psychotropic element. Grey mullets have a toxin in the flesh which is known to cause temporary paralysis, uncontrollable diarrhea, and loss of coordination. Red mullets, on the other hand, are said to cause visual and auditory hallucinations.¹⁰⁰ The onset of the symptoms would also occur quickly since the rectum absorbs drugs fast. Luckily, Juvenal suggests that this punishment was illegal in Rome, but that does not mean that wronged husbands did not exact vigilante revenge.¹⁰¹ The *rhaphanidosis* explores a unique employment of this fish in ancient

⁹⁷ O’Byrhim, “Catullus’ Mulletts and Radishes (c. 15.18-19),” 325. The author also notes that radishes in the Mediterranean during this age were more phallic shaped, unlike the bulbous radishes that we eat now.

⁹⁸ Burke, “Ancient Masculinities,” 69.

⁹⁹ O’Byrhim, “Catullus’ Mulletts and Radishes (c. 15.18-19),” 327. Although thought to be a modern misconception, this rumored ‘fishy’ smell of women’s genitalia can be found in Plautus, Martial, and Ausonius’ texts.

¹⁰⁰ O’Byrhim, 328.

¹⁰¹ Juvenal, *Saturae* X.314-317 ...*exigit autem / interdum ille dolor plus quam lex ulla dolori / concessit: necat hic ferro, secat ille cruentis / verberibus, quosdam moechos et mugilis intrat.*

Rome. Although it was typically used in cooking, the mullet has a wholly different connotation which makes the popular consumption of this food even more curious.

Beyond this grotesque use of mullets, the fish also held some medicinal values. Pliny notes that the red mullet (sometimes called the surmullet) was a medicinal aid. He claims that the ash of a salted red mullet could cure carbuncles and chafing while the flesh of red mullet heals the sting of a stingray.¹⁰² Thus, Pliny presents three additional uses of the mullet in ancient Rome. However, the medicinal uses of mullet seem rare as only Pliny mentions this; but this could also be due to the relative rarity of the above ailments. Regardless, mullets appear to have had some presence within the sphere of medicine.

Of course, Romans often consumed mullets and many authors note their presence at the table. In Horace's poem on frugality, he teases: "fool, you praise a three-pound mullet which is necessary to cut into small portions."¹⁰³ This quote reveals that gastronomes celebrated heavy mullets but were often required to cut up the large fish as meal preparation which Apicius' recipes also imply. Thus, Horace does not understand the need for buying a larger, more expensive fish that could easily be substituted by multiple small mullets. Despite Horace's logic, the Romans continued to prefer the heavy mullets as Martial continues on this theme in his *Epigrammata*. One epigram in particular comments on the trials which people will unnecessarily endure in order to obtain such a delicacy as told through the story of Calliodorus (Martial, *Epigrammata* X.xxxi):

Addixti servum nummis here mille ducentis,
Ut bene cenares, Calliodore, semel.

¹⁰² Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXXII.1, XXXII.xxxix, XXXII.xi (respectively)

¹⁰³ Horace, *Sermones* II.ii.33-34. ...*laudas, insane, trilibrem / mullum, in singula quem minuas pulmenta necesse est.*

Nec bene cenasti: mullus tibi quattuor emptus
Librarum cenae pompa caputque fuit.

Exclamare libet: 'Non est hic, inprobe, non est
Piscis: homo est; hominem, Calliodore, comes.'

You, Calliodorus, sold a slave for 1,300 sesterces yesterday
So that you may try eating well for once.

Nevertheless, you did not eat well: a four-pound mullet has been bought
For you as the main course of dinner.

It pleases me to exclaim: 'This is not it – it is not a fish: it is a man,
Calliodorus, a companion of men which you wrongfully ate.

This epigram suggests just how valuable heavy mullets were to the Romans. Although satire, the epigram demonstrates the lengths at which people would go in order to obtain a high-quality mullet. As such, Martial suggests that a man sold a slave because he wanted to eat such a luxurious dish. Of course, he also implies that a mullet is not so lavish that it is worth selling a man; rather, Calliodorus wasted both his money and a slave with this purchase. Furthermore, this epigram is also important as it implies that a four-pound mullet sold for 1,300 sesterces – no small price. In other epigrams, Martial notes that a mullet must weigh at least two pounds in order for it to be suitable for a banquet and/or gift.¹⁰⁴

Other Roman authors also note the excessive prices for mullet. Juvenal claims that Crispinus once bought a six-pound mullet for 6,000 sesterces, a feat that would even offend Apicius.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, the historian Suetonius writes that market prices had inflated so badly that three mullets once sold for 30,000 sesterces – a price that is equivalent to about 15,830 in

¹⁰⁴ Pryce, Lang, and Gill, "Weights." One Roman pound (*libra*) is equal to 0.721 of the pound avoirdupois (the modern pound as used in the United States).

¹⁰⁵ Juvenal, *Saturae* IV.i.15. About 3,166 USD

modern USD. This sale was so outrageous that Emperor Tiberius proposed market regulations as a result of the indecency.¹⁰⁶ Even with these regulations, Pliny later writes that a man bought a single mullet for 8,000 sesterces.¹⁰⁷ These four specific notes on the price of mullets is curious. Although the prices could be factual, it seems more likely that these authors only write the prices in order to highlight the ridiculousness of such purchases. It is not surprising that the satirists mock the decadence of the upper class, yet the two historians emphasize the price due to their surprise. Thus, the prices serve to highlight the element of sheer luxury that was associated with the mullet.

But even though Martial ridicules those who fall for such ridiculous consumerism, he himself often indulges in a dish of mullet at various banquets.¹⁰⁸ Book II of Martial's *Epigrammata* mentions mullet in three epigrams related to various banquets that Martial has hosted or attended. The first mention is in reference to a banquet that Martial hosted himself; in this epigram, Martial harasses a guest for taking home too many leftovers in his napkin: included in this list is half of a mullet.¹⁰⁹ From the *Epigrammata* alone, it is clear that the mullet was commonly consumed at formal banquets and that a standard for banquet-appropriate mullets existed. Yet it seems that the mullet became too popular as a dish and Juvenal observes (Juvenal, *Saturae* V.92-98):

mullus erit domini, quem misit Corsica vel quem
Tauromenitanae rupes, quando omne peractum est
et iam defecit nostrum mare, dum gula saevit,

¹⁰⁶ Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum, Tiberius* XXXIV

¹⁰⁷ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 9.31. This is equivalent to about 4,221 USD.

¹⁰⁸ Martial actually references mullets quite often in the *Epigrammata*. They are mentioned on fifteen occasions in poems II.xxxvii, II.xl, II.xliii, III.xiii, III.xlv, III.lxxvii, VII.lxxviii, IX.xiv, X.xxx, X.xxxi, X.xxxvii, XI.l, XII.xlviii, XIII.lxxix, and XIV.xcvii.

¹⁰⁹ Martial, *Epigrammata* II.xxxvii

retibus adsiduis penitus scrutante macello
proxima, nec patimur Tyrrhenum crescere piscem.
instruit ergo focum provincia, sumitur illinc
quod captator emat Laenas, Aurelia uendat.

Your lord will have a mullet sent from Corsica or even the
cliffs of Tauromonium, since every mullet is gone
and now our seas are exhausted while gluttony rages.
Due to the incessant nets of the fish market surveying nearby,
the Tyrrhenian does not sustain fish which can grow to their full size.
Therefore the provinces provide for our kitchens – fish is taken
from there for the sake of legacy-seeking Laenas to buy and Aurelia to sell.

Nevertheless, the overfishing did not stop epicures from eating mullets as is proven in *De Re Coquinaria*. Apicius relates numerous recipes which feature mullet as the main dish or as the base in a sauce. The sheer number of mullet recipes (11 out of the 459 total in the cookbook), suggests that mullet was a more common food and therefore Apicius had more recipes to insert in his text.¹¹⁰ That being said, the mullet is almost always roasted in the text and tends to be served with pepper, rue, and/or mint. The first mullet recipe is rather simple, and probably meant for casual dining as opposed to an upper-class banquet. Apicius instructs readers to roast salted mullet in oil, then add honeyed or raisin wine with a dash of pepper before serving.¹¹¹ This dish could easily be prepared without the need for a chef – the only hardship more common people fared would be the price of the mullet and some of the spices.¹¹² One of the more complicated recipes in Apicius' text involves creating a pâté out of the mullet's liver, adding some salt and

¹¹⁰ Coney, "Mulled Thoughts: Mullus and Mugilis in Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* and the *De Re Coquinaria* of 'Apicius,'" 54.

¹¹¹ Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria* IV.ii.22

¹¹² For instance, black pepper cost four denarii per pound (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XII.xv) which is equivalent to approximately 8.45 USD per pound – compared to the modern cost of 3.00 USD per pound, that is quite expensive.

pepper, then using a fish mold when baking for presentation. Although not terribly complex, this recipe shows the range that the mullet held, especially when compared to the simple roasted mullet.

Material culture further indicates that mullets are not as luxurious as some authors write. In Pompeii, the mullet is the most commonly depicted fish in mosaics where it appears eight times throughout the city. In addition, the fish is in twenty-seven wall paintings throughout the city as well as the Frigidarium in the baths of the neighboring city of Herculaneum.¹¹³ In these artworks, the mullet is usually in a marine life scene or with other seafood. Additionally, the bones of the mullet have been found in houses throughout Pompeii and have been dated from the fourth century B.C.E. onwards. Yet, this evidence is in Pompeii alone – outside of the bay of Naples, archaeological evidence of the mullet can be found in Greece, Egypt, Israel, and other Roman provinces as far away as England.¹¹⁴ For some of these places, the mullet could be fished in nearby waters; however, for some locations, like northern England, imports would need to supplement the demand for red mullet whilst the grey mullet was more readily available in nearby waters.¹¹⁵ This material culture thus generalizes the mullet and suggests that it was available for a wider variety of people than the literature implies.

The mullet seems to fall somewhere in the middle of nearly all the contrasting principles. Evidence suggests that the Romans consumed this fish in both public and private settings. The satirists make note of the expensive cost and its popularity among the elite, speaking to its use as a status symbol in upper-class society. However, Apicius has a wide range of recipes in *De Re*

¹¹³ These numbers include depictions of both the grey and red mullet.

¹¹⁴ Van Neer et al., “Fish Remains from Archaeological Sites as Indicators of Former Trade Connections in the Eastern Mediterranean”; Mylona, “Archaeological Fish Remains in Greece.”

¹¹⁵ Locker, “In Piscibus Diversis; the Bone Evidence for Fish Consumption in Roman Britain,” 147, 157.

Coquinaria which suggest that the fish was also available to the average population for simple private meals as well. Additionally, the fish is native to the Mediterranean but, as Juvenal states, the Romans overfished the mullet and therefore imports were necessary. The Romans also imported this fish to parts of the Empire where the mullet was not native. Further, the mullet had a variety of uses within Rome – some of which are rather uncommon for a foodstuff. The mullet’s role in the *rhaphanidosis* and within medicine are highly indicative of its overarching role outside of cuisine. The societal implications of these three uses of the mullet (punishment, health, and consumption) is rather contrasting and reveals the multi-faceted implications of this animal within Roman society.

Dormice

When discussing Roman food, many people are often shocked to learn that dormice were a popular in the ancient world.¹¹⁶ They were a common banquet snack throughout the Republic and Empire with both literary and material evidence speaking to their consumption over this wide range of time. Even though they were so popular, authors make fewer references to their consumption in literature which suggests a certain amount of ubiquity as a foodstuff. However, the *lex aemilia sumptuaria* of 115 B.C.E. banned them as a food at banquets which implies that they were considered luxury cuisine.¹¹⁷ Pliny also comments on the same law and states that

¹¹⁶ The dormouse, while not a popular food in the United States, is still eaten in some parts of modern Italy. The dormouse is part of traditional Calabrian cuisine and even served in some restaurants in that region. Although they are no longer domesticated, Italians hunt dormice in a manner similar to the ancient Romans before they developed a popular method to harvest them on farms. Besides Calabria, dormice are still eaten in certain parts of Basilicata, Puglia, Campania, Toscana, Liguria, and Lombardia as well. Nevertheless, it seems that dormice have become increasingly unpopular to eat even in these regions of Italy.

¹¹⁷ Miles, “Forbidden Pleasures,” 168.

dormice were prohibited at feasts along with shellfish and imported birds.¹¹⁸ Before this law was introduced, some authors like the late Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus note that scales were often present at banquets so that the dormice could be weighed. This unusual practice suggests that dormice were fattened to abnormal sizes in order to further please upper-class Romans. Keeping their sheer popularity in mind, Apicius and Petronius present two recipes for cooking dormice and Pliny notes medicinal uses for the animal. Thus, it seems that dormice have a complicated history within the Roman world as an illicit luxury food that becomes more common as the dormice are domesticated.

Varro writes about domesticated dormice in Book III of *De Re Rustica* which was written after the sumptuary laws, suggesting that at least certain aspects of these laws were ignored by citizens as Pliny also implies in his text. In this last volume, Varro writes about proper Roman farms in regard to what animals should be kept and in what manner. Dormice seem to be a staple animal on a thriving farm since Varro expected farmers to own numerous dormice and to be actively fattening them.¹¹⁹ Varro's exemplum farm - which he claims generates 50,000 sesterces per year - has dormice among a variety of other animals such as geese, bees, chicken, fish, boars, etc.¹²⁰ Through his writings, Varro makes it evident that the Romans have perfected the husbandry of dormice as he describes the standard, yet efficient, manner in which dormice are kept. This 'easy' set up has the mice kept in an enclosed area in which there are numerous nut trees and caves so as to promote eating and mating.¹²¹ Once the farmer deems the dormouse

¹¹⁸ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* VIII.xci

¹¹⁹ Varro, *De Re Rustica* III.ii.14

¹²⁰ About 26,380 USD

¹²¹ Varro, *De Re Rustica* III.xv.1-2. In more words, 'easy' is how Varro describes this set up since *neque enim magnum molimentum esse potest*

ready, he puts it in a *glirarium* where it is fattened before consumption. Varro describes these jars (Varro, *De Re Rustica* III.xv.2):

quae figuli faciunt multo aliter atque alia, quod in lateribus eorum semitas faciunt et cavum, ubi cibum constituent. In hoc dolium addunt glandem aut nuces iuglandes aut castaneam. Quibus in tenebris cum operculum impositum est in doleis, fiunt pingues.

Which the potters make very differently than others, because on the side of these pots they make paths and hollow spots where people may place food. In this jar they add either beechnuts, walnuts, or chestnuts; thus, the mice grow plump in darkness when the lid is placed upon the jar.

These specialized *dolia* were made in a manner which only allowed the dormouse to eat and sleep with limited space for movement. This design systematically fattened them for consumption.¹²² Luckily, the *gliraria* are not only present in literary sources, but material culture as well. Enough *gliraria* have been found so that archaeologists can sort them into three types: globular, bucket-like, and cylindrical.¹²³ As Varro describes, these jars have small shelves along the edge for nuts and they also have airholes along the body of the jar. The dormouse would be kept in complete darkness because this was thought to expedite the fattening process. Except for one jar which was found in Slovenia, all *gliraria* have been found within Italy.¹²⁴ Furthermore, “the geographic area of the finds, the villa areas of Italy, corroborates that the ‘conspicuous consumers’ of dormice were members of the Roman elite.”¹²⁵ Thus the material culture further corroborates the luxury status of dormouse and explains their mention in the sumptuary laws.

¹²² Beerden, “Roman Dolia and the Fattening of Dormice,” 230.

¹²³ Beerden, 230. There is debate around exactly how many *gliraria* have been found. Some scholars believe that we have found fifteen of these jars, while others believe that only nine of these fifteen jars are truly *gliraria*. Regardless, we have a substantial amount of material evidence to support Varro’s writings.

¹²⁴ Carpaneto and Cristaldi, “Dormice and Man,” 319. *Gliraria* have been found in Pompeii, Siena, Rome, Castelvenere, and the Vesuvian Plain.

¹²⁵ Beerden, “Roman Dolia and the Fattening of Dormice,” 232.

Moreover, archaeologists have found dormice bones throughout the greater expanse of the Roman Empire. As it stands, there are numerous species of dormice but the Romans preferred to consume the edible dormouse and sometimes the garden dormouse, both of which are native to mainland Italy.¹²⁶ Archaeologists believe that the Romans spread this species throughout Europe since bones of the edible dormouse have been found at various Roman sites, including those in southern England, the northern coast of France, and islands near Sicily.¹²⁷ While there is no written record of their formal introduction to non-native lands, scholars agree that the Romans would have imported such a popular food into these new regions. Varro briefly writes that a provincial governor brought dormice to his farm in Transalpine Gaul (now southern France) which provides some textual evidence of their importation throughout Roman territory.¹²⁸ These archaeological finds further demonstrate the importance of the dormouse in Roman cuisine since dormice were brought to the furthest provincial areas of the Empire.

Given the sheer popularity of the dormouse at Roman banquets, scholars would expect to find numerous recipes for dormice; however, Apicius and Petronius are the only authors who have surviving recipes. Apicius' recipe is more specific, as to be expected from the *De Re Coquinaria*, but it is an overall blander recipe. Apicius calls for the dormouse to be stuffed with minced pork and minced dormouse that has been spiced with pepper, nuts, laser, and broth. The stuffed dormouse is then roasted in the oven or boiled in a crockpot of sorts.¹²⁹ Apicius gives no details about a dressing or glaze for the mouse which likely means that the dormouse was then served as is. Petronius gives a less detailed recipe, but his variation is consistent for a wealthier

¹²⁶ Carpaneto and Cristaldi, "Dormice and Man," 305.

¹²⁷ Carpaneto and Cristaldi, 306.

¹²⁸ Varro, *De Re Rustica* III.xii.2

¹²⁹ Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria* VIII.ix.1

individual. In the *Satyricon*, Trimalchio serves dormice that are covered in honey and rolled in poppy seeds.¹³⁰ This appetizing rendition of the roasted dormouse demonstrates just a bit of the variety that was likely present at Roman banquet tables.

In other Roman literature, Martial mentions the dormouse in a manner that only vaguely relates it to cuisine (Martial, *Epigrammata* XII.lix):

Tota mihi dormitur hiems et pinguior illo
tempore sum quo me nil nisi somnus alit.

I sleep the whole winter and become fatter with time
where there is nothing to nourish me except sleep.

This couplet is one of the few references to dormice within Roman satire and Martial does not even directly mention its consumption, only its husbandry. Yet, this epigram does help to explain the etymology behind our modern English term for the dormouse which stems from the Latin *dormire* and *mus*. Therefore, the term ‘dormouse’ hints at the Roman belief that forcing the mouse to sleep will fatten it faster. Nevertheless, this epigram displays a drastic change from other luxury cuisine where satirists purposefully mention excessive foods in an attempt to tease the rich – no such mockery is related to the dormouse. Thus, the blatant absence of dormice in Roman literature is disconcerting. Although popular, the dormice might not be as luxurious as modern scholars have previously believed. Most other extravagant foodstuff is noted by the satirists when they tease the elite; yet, dormice seem to be left out of this banter which, along with archaeological evidence, suggests that they were not truly high-class cuisine.

¹³⁰ Petronius, *Satyricon* XXXI

Beyond its common consumption at Roman banquets throughout the late Republic and imperial age, Pliny writes of two medicinal uses of the dormouse which assist with ailments of the eyes and ears. Ashes of the dormouse's head and tail will improve sight if applied to the eyes. Apparently, a regular field-mouse can also serve the same purpose, but the dormouse is preferred.¹³¹ While this ocular remedy seems fairly uncommon, dormice appear to have frequently been used to treat various issues of the ears (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXIX.45):

gliris detracta pelle intestinisque exemptis discoquitur melle in vase novo. medici malunt e nardo decoqui usque ad tertias atque ita adservari, dein, cum opus sit, strigili tepefacta infundere. constat deplorata aurium vitia eo remedio sanari...

Having pulled back the skin and removed the intestines, the mice are thoroughly boiled in a new dish with honey. Doctors prefer to boil it down to one-third (of its original mass) with nard and thus it is saved. Thereupon it may, with work, be warmed and administered with an ear dropper. It is agreed that even despairing ailments of the ears can be cured with this...

Pliny's direct mention of *medici* demonstrates the popularity of this particular remedy. In other recipes that use animal parts in a similar manner, doctors are not usually mentioned which suggests that it is either an uncommon ailment or a home remedy. While home remedies can be popular and effective, Pliny's specific note speaks to value of the remedy. Additionally, the abundance of dormice within Roman world further corroborates the likelihood of the dormouse being a common medicinal aid.

Without a doubt, dormice were a popular appetizer at ancient Roman banquets. The archaeological evidence of their importation and the literature describing their domestication

¹³¹ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXIX.42. *murium capitem caudaeque cinere ex melle inunctis claritatem visus restitui dicunt, multoque magis gliris aut muris silvestris cinere aut aquilae cerebro vel felle cum attico melle.*

demonstrate that dormice were commonly eaten, however their absence in most satire suggests that these creatures were not luxurious cuisine. Literature suggests that dormice were a dish more commonly served at banquets, but there is not enough evidence on either side to definitively state the use of dormice in the public or private sphere. Dormice might have been considered a luxury item at one point in the Republic, as the sumptuary laws suggest, but eventually became more common as the animals were popularized on farms. Overall, literature surrounding the dormice is rather conflicted about their status in Roman cuisine. Authors present the dormice as both luxurious and common – but their absence in certain texts speaks more than their presence in others. Thus, dormice appear to be a more common dish, but nevertheless treasured in ancient Roman culture. Varro's *De Re Rustica* and the *gliraria* found throughout Italy demonstrate the sheer popularity of dormice within Roman cuisine and firmly establish that not only were dormice native to the Italic peninsula, but also easily domesticated. These domesticated dormice were mostly used for food, but dormice had a small role in the world of medicine as well. Hence, dormice can be categorized as common food with a small role outside of the culinary arts.

Mediterranean Moray

A variety of eels are found along Italy's coast, but the Romans developed a unique fascination with the Mediterranean moray – a large brown and yellow spotted eel that is infamous for being aggressive towards humans. These eels were both eaten as a delicacy and kept as pets which give them a unique status in Rome. As an animal, Romans were confused about the nature of the Mediterranean moray and their place within marine life. Although modern science classifies the Mediterranean moray as a type of eel, the Romans believed it to be

an entirely different type of fish.¹³² Some people claimed that only female Mediterranean moray existed and that they crawled onto land to be impregnated by snakes.¹³³ On the other hand, Aristotle notes that both male and female Mediterranean moray existed but that they simply look different. Regardless of their mysterious origins within the animal kingdom, the Romans highly regarded these creatures as both fine cuisine and as pets.

The Mediterranean moray, or *muraena* (sometimes spelled *murena*), are said to have been named on behalf of Lucius Licinius Murena who invented freshwater fishponds in Rome.¹³⁴ A consul in 151 B.C.E., Murena was known to keep many Mediterranean moray in his ponds and so his cognomen inspired their name.¹³⁵ Since that time and through the imperial age, Mediterranean moray remained popular among the Roman elite. As such, there are a more than a few tales of Romans treasuring their pet eels. It is said that M. Licinius Crassus, a late Republic general and politician, cried upon learning that his pet Mediterranean moray, whom he had trained to recognize its own name, had died.¹³⁶ When Crassus' rival and fellow censor, Domitius, learned of this, he publicly mocked Crassus for crying. While this may be seen as an attack on Crassus' overreaction, "the censors were supposed to chastise those who engaged in ostentatious displays of wealth. In effect Cn. Domitius was calling L. Crassus a hypocrite in the performance

¹³² Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* IX.xli. Pliny claims that the skin of the *muraenae* was thinner than that of an eel; therefore, they were not the same creature.

¹³³ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* IX.xli

¹³⁴ It should be noted that older translations, including the Loeb collection, tends to translate *muraena* as 'lamprey.' This is an inaccurate translation and actually a species of jawless fish as opposed to an eel. Recent scholars have agreed that Roman authors are referring to the Mediterranean Moray when they speak of *muraenae*.

¹³⁵ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* IX.lxxxix

¹³⁶ Ward, "Crassus' Slippery Eel," 185. This story is attested by Plutarch, *De Sollertia Animalium* XXIII.976.a; Aelian, *De Natura Animalium* VIII.iv; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* III.xv.iv; and Porphyry *De Abstinencia ab Esu Animalium* III.v.

of his duties.”¹³⁷ Thus it seems like Domitius was merely trying to highlight the irony of a consul, who was supposed impose the sumptuary laws, owning a luxury pet. This story highlights both the luxury status of the animal and the attachment that many people felt towards them.

Similarly, Quintus Hortensius, a famed orator in the late Republic, became so attached to his pet eels that he refused to eat any which he had raised and thus bought Mediterranean moray from the market for his banquets.¹³⁸ Pliny also writes that he cried when he learnt that his favorite Mediterranean moray had died.¹³⁹ In that same section, Pliny notes that Antonia (daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia) put earrings on her favorite Mediterranean moray and that others began to follow this trend. This behavior is strange given that the Mediterranean moray are known for being hostile creatures, as demonstrated in the extraordinary story of Vedius Pollio (Seneca, *De Ira* XL.2-4):¹⁴⁰

Fregerat unus ex servis eius crustallinum; rapi eum Vedius iussit ne vulgari quidem more periturum; murenis obici iubebatur, quas ingentis in piscina continebat. Quis non hoc ilium putaret luxuriae causa facere? Saevitia erat. Evasit e manibus puer et confugit ad Caesaris pedes nihil aliud petiturus, quam ut aliter periret, ne esca fieret. Motus est novitate crudelitatis Caesar et ilium quidem mitti, crustallina autem omnia coram se frangi iussit complerique piscinam.

When one of the servants had broken a crystal vase of his; Vedius order him to be taken away to die, and indeed in an uncommon manner; he was ordered to be thrown to the Mediterranean morays, which were kept in a large pool. Who would not think that he did this for the sake of luxury? It was brutal. The slave escaped from the guard’s hands and fled to the feet of Augustus in order to beg for any other

¹³⁷ Ward, 186.

¹³⁸ Cuvier, “11. The Golden Age of Rome,” para. 30.

¹³⁹ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* IX.xc. *hortensius orator, in qua murenam adeo dilexit, ut exanimatam flesse credatur.* This story is also shared by Porphyry and Macrobius.

¹⁴⁰ Pliny also shared this story in his section on *muraenae* (IX.41).

punishment and that he not be eaten. Augustus was moved by this novel form of cruelty and instead sent the slave off. Moreover, he ordered all the remaining crystal vases to be broken in the presence of Vedius and that the pool be filled up.

This brutal story exposes both the danger involved raising such creatures and their great importance as pets.¹⁴¹ It also exposes their dual usage as domesticated animals since they were sometimes beautiful creatures with earrings and other times man-eating beasts. Additionally, only rich people could afford to keep such pets in a pond on their villas. Varro writes that G. Lucilius Hirrus, whose income was 12,000 sesterces from renting his land, spent all the money he earned from these properties on food for his eels.¹⁴² Later, that his properties sold for four million sesterces on account of the ponds full of eels on the grounds.¹⁴³ The apparent domesticity of these eels suggests that they were favored in Rome for more than their flavor.¹⁴⁴ But while the Mediterranean moray were clearly luxury pets, that does not necessarily equate them to luxury cuisine as well.

Many satirists wrote of Mediterranean morays at various banquets throughout the imperial age. The Mediterranean moray is mentioned in Book XIII of Martial's epigrams where he specifically notes fine flavor of the Mediterranean morays from Sicily.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Varro and Pliny note that the best Mediterranean morays are from the shores of Sicily and Helops (near

¹⁴¹ Additionally, this story is similar to Martial's tale of Calliodorus who sold a slave in order to buy a mullet.

¹⁴² Thus, he spent approximately 6,330 USD on fish food.

¹⁴³ This villa sold for approximately 2,110,400 USD so his sizable investment in the *muraenae* worked in his favor.

¹⁴⁴ In my humble opinion, they seem to hold a status similar to a modern rabbit. At least in the United States, rabbits are an acceptable, yet not quite common, pet. They are also acceptable fare at restaurants but, once again, not quite common. Adding to my analogy, rabbits tend to be somewhat expensive as both pets and cuisine and require little care when domesticated as a pet or on a farm.

¹⁴⁵ Martial, *Epigrammata* XIII.lxxx. *Quae natat in Siculo grandis murena profundo, / non valet exustam mergere sole cutem.*

Rhodes).¹⁴⁶ Knowing that Mediterranean morays from these shores were of higher value plays into their overall status as a luxury cuisine because it allows a ranking of the eels based on both size and place of origin. Yet this is not the only mention of the Mediterranean moray within Martial's oeuvre, the eel is also mentioned in an epigram dedicated to Caecilianus. In this epigram, Martial condemns Caecilianus for taking too many items home from the banquet which Martial is hosting.¹⁴⁷ Among portions of mullet, pike, sow, chicken, and pigeon, Caecilianus takes home a side of eel. While this epigram was written to condemn Caecilianus' poor decorum, it reveals that Martial, a man with the equivalent of equestrian status who was favored in Flavian Rome, had Mediterranean morays at his banquets.

Mediterranean moray was also a 'takeaway' dish (*xenia* or *apophoreta*) in Petronius' *Satyricon*. Unfortunately, this is one of the few corrupted sections of *Cena Trimalchionis*; nevertheless, it is clear that Trimalchio presents Mediterranean morays as *apophoreta* at the banquet.¹⁴⁸ It is interesting that in both of these texts, the eel is used as takeaway and not mentioned directly in the context of a banquet. Additionally, both Martial and Trimalchio were not true Roman upper class as Martial was a poet from Spain who gained favor in the courts and Trimalchio was a mere freedman. Thus, the presence of the Mediterranean moray at these banquets suggests that the more average, yet rich, individual could buy the eel and serve it at his banquets. Pliny notes the high status of the Mediterranean moray when he calls it 'praised among

¹⁴⁶ Varro, *De Re Rustica* II.vi.2 *non enim, si murenarum optimarum flumarum sunt in Sicilia et helops ad Rhodon, continuo hi pisces in omni mari similes nascuntur.* Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* IX.lxxxviii. *murena in sicilia, elops rhodi, et alia genera similiter.*

¹⁴⁷ Although guests were expected to take home some portions of the meal, Martial believes Caecilianus to be excessive in his pickings.

¹⁴⁸ Petronius, *Satyricon* LVI

the rock fish.’¹⁴⁹ In this list, however, he also includes mullets which might suggest that the eel holds a similar false high status. Nevertheless, there are many available recipes which can help further clarify the Mediterranean moray’s status in the ancient world.

One recipe is actually preserved by Horace during the famous Dinner of Nasidienus scene in his second book of satires (Horace, *Sermones* II.viii.42-53):

adfertur squillas inter murena natantis
in patina porrecta. sub hoc erus “haec gravida” inquit
“capta est, deterior post partum carne futura.
his mixtum ius est: oleo, quod prima Venafri
pressit cella; garo de sucis piscis Hiberi;
vino quinquenni, verum citra mare nato,
dum coquitur — cocto Chium sic convenit, ut non
hoc magis ullum aliud — ; pipere albo, non sine aceto,
quod Methymnaeam vitio mutaverit uvam.
erucas viridis, inulas ego primus amaras
monstravi incoquere; inlutos Curtillus echinos,
ut melius muria quod testa marina remittat.”

A Mediterranean moray was brought on a plate, having been spread long between fishes. And so, “this creature,” says the master, “was captured whilst pregnant, since the meat would be worse after giving birth. The juice of the eel is mixed as thus: with oil, which is from the best storeroom of Venafro; with garum from the juice of the Iberian fish; with five-year-old wine, yet that which is from this side of the sea, while it is cooking – combine it thus with cooked Chian, as no other wine is better; with white pepper, not without vinegar, which will have been removed from the Methymnaeam vine due to error. I first boiled down bitter elecampanes¹⁵⁰ then green cabbage; Curtillus cooked the unwashed sea-urchins, as the brine it gives off is better than sea shell-fish.

¹⁴⁹ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXXII.lxi *inter saxatiles laudata*

¹⁵⁰ A type of sunflower.

This complex recipe gives two detailed methods of cooking the eel with inclusions of specific additional ingredients which create the ideal eel dish. Nasidienus' additional ingredients are from specific locations which implies that such places were highly regarded for their respective production. For instance, the Mediterranean moray was served in a sauce made from oil from Verafro, vinegar from Lesbos, garum from the Iberian fish, wine, and various spices. These additional high-class ingredients would be paired with an appropriate protein source. Besides Horace's recipes, *De Re Coquinaria* contains six separate recipes for sauce for Mediterranean morays. These six recipes reveal that the most popular methods of cooking the eel are boiling and roasting.¹⁵¹ These six recipes contain a wide variety of spices and liquids, but each one contains pepper and lovage.¹⁵² These spices were often added to the liquid in which the fish was cooked in order to give it more flavor and make a court-bouillon of sorts.¹⁵³ Apicius also writes a specific method of cooking the eel. Interestingly, this recipe is for the Mediterranean moray, another type of eel, or a mullet. Nevertheless, this recipe calls for mixture of liquids and sauces for the Mediterranean moray to be boiled in. Overall, these recipes reveal that the Mediterranean moray was a highly regarded fish given the sheer amount of spices and other ingredients necessary for its preparation. However, their presence within Apicius' recipes suggest that the eel was not terribly difficult to attain, seeing as the commoners who truly wrote these recipes were able to purchase Mediterranean morays for meals.

Like most foodstuff in the ancient world, the Mediterranean moray also holds some medicinal value. Pliny provides one ailment which the eel can cure and, ironically, that ailment is

¹⁵¹ Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria* X.ii.1-6, XI.xvi

¹⁵² These two spices are present in most sauces for marine animals which implies that they were critical for flavoring such dishes.

¹⁵³ "The Project Gutenberg EBook of Apicius: Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome," n. 448.3.

its own bite. The skin of the Mediterranean moray is known to be toxic due to a slime covering the entire creature; thus, Pliny states that “the bite of a Mediterranean moray can be healed with the ashes of the heads of those same eels.”¹⁵⁴ While the true medicinal value of this remedy is doubtful, it is nevertheless important that Pliny included such a remedy in his text. His inclusion reveals another use of the eel, albeit a minor and likely uncommon in its actual usage.

The Mediterranean moray is also prevalent in material culture, where the eel is subject of many mosaics across the Empire. Archaeologists have found depictions of the eel in modern Portugal, Tunisia, and Italy.¹⁵⁵ As such, most of these extant mosaics are from the late first century C.E. onwards.¹⁵⁶ This further demonstrates the continued fascination and use of the Mediterranean moray in Rome and its provinces. These mosaics typically have the Mediterranean moray poised with other sea creatures or as part of a fishing scene. In one such scene, from Pompeii, the Mediterranean moray is in a mosaic depicting predator/prey interaction between the eel itself, an octopus, and a lobster.¹⁵⁷ The various depictions of Mediterranean morays is not surprising given the Romans’ attachment to them as pets and their illustrious place in cuisine; however, it is intriguing that these eels are only portrayed in marine life or seafood scenes. Besides artistic representations, the bones of Mediterranean morays have been found in Egypt and islands off the coast of Spain.¹⁵⁸ These two locations deepen the presence of the fish

¹⁵⁴ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXXII.xxii *murenae morsus ipsarum capitibus cinere sanantur*

¹⁵⁵ Specifically: Portugal: Roman villa at Pisões; Tunisia: Roman city of Ammaedara, now called Haïdra; Italy: Pompeii, house VIII.ii.16 (Casa del Fauno), the Suburban Baths of Pompeii, and the modern city of Populonia in Toscana.

¹⁵⁶ Most of these mosaics appear to be from the late first century to the early second century C.E. but proper dating has not been completed at all sites.

¹⁵⁷ Meyboom, *The Nile Mosaic of Palestrina*, 173.

¹⁵⁸ Van Neer et al., “Fish Remains from Archaeological Sites as Indicators of Former Trade Connections in the Eastern Mediterranean,” 108; Garcia-Guixé et al., “ $\Delta^{13}C$ and $\Delta^{15}N$ in Ancient and Recent Fish Bones from the Mediterranean Sea,” 85.

in the Roman world, but do not diminish the luxury status of the eel since these provinces would have easily been able to fish for these eels and thus not rely upon imports.

Subsequently, the Mediterranean moray was highly valued within ancient Rome for its aesthetic and culinary purposes. The eel was a popular dish at high-class banquets, but also typically part of the takeaway which suggests a slightly lower status than other foodstuff. This could be a result of them being native to the Mediterranean and their domestication for markets. Nevertheless, the upper-class appears to have preferred keeping Mediterranean morays as pets within their ponds where they treated them with great care. Thus, the eels held a higher status as pets rather than as food. This presents a unique use of Mediterranean morays within ancient Rome and reveals that these eels were considered a luxury, but not necessarily for their part in the culinary world. However, their presentation within art links them with food, although it should be noted that the extant art containing the Mediterranean moray is fairly limited. Regardless, the occurrence of Mediterranean morays in artwork firmly puts the animal within the public sphere. Their public, ostentatious role is furthered through their consumption at banquets and status as pets for the upper-class. Even though Apicius has a couple recipes that more common people could prepare, their public nature outweighs their private consumption.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that it is difficult to fully determine the societal implications of food within the modern era, let alone the ancient Roman world. Luckily, the texts of various satirists and historians along with material culture provide some information on the reception of these five ingredients within ancient Rome. As a whole, this investigation has demonstrated that some

social codes can be found within how food is prepared, presented, and received. The contrasting principles of public/private, imported/domesticated, consumption/other, and luxury/common provide a solid outline in which the sources of protein can be evaluated for their various usages within ancient Rome. Yet all five protein sources blended at least one of these contrasting principles in some manner, proving that the societal coding of food cannot be so easily categorized.

Nevertheless, these ingredients, which people often believe to be luxury items in Roman cuisine, are not quite as extravagant as we once believed. These modern misconceptions are caused by (accidental) misinformation from modern scholars as well as confusion when reading the primary text. The true status of an ingredient in Rome can only be determined by looking at all surviving author's mentions of said ingredient, instead of simply relying upon a single textual reference. But even though it sometimes seems like Roman authors purposefully mislead their readers, it is important to remember that most authors were writing to entertain. Their desire to entertain leads to exaggerations and false details which can confuse modern readers and lead to inaccurate assumptions within academia.

Overall, this investigation has revealed that thrush, peafowl, mullet, dormice, and Mediterranean moray were all multi-faceted animals within Rome. First, literary sources demonstrate that the thrush was primarily consumed as both a luxury item and as a medicinal aide. Second, sources provide little evidence that the Romans actually ate the peafowl, but nevertheless there is no doubt about their use as a status symbol outside of cuisine. Third, the mullet was extremely versatile and there is evidence of it being both a luxury and common ingredient based on its size; nevertheless, there is no doubt about its contrasting societal role as an appetizing fish and then as a cruel punishment. Fourth, evidence proves that the dormouse

was a popular food among the Romans, yet it is not clear if it was a luxury item since it seems to be fairly easy to obtain. It is likely that the dormouse was once a luxury item but became more common with time. Fifth, the Romans enjoyed Mediterranean moray in their cuisine, but the elite seem to have preferred its role as a pet. There is significant evidence of the eel at upper-class banquets but it is often part of the *apophoreta* rather than one of the main dishes.

As a whole, these analyses merely touch upon the various implications of these animals within Roman society. Additionally, this investigation only demonstrated the various uses and conceptions of five sources of protein – further analysis could, and should, be completed on more ingredients in order to better our knowledge of ancient Rome. Ancient food is a fascinating topic which can help us better understand Roman society since cuisine provides a peek into daily Roman life as an essential part of living. The expulsion of misconceptions surrounding the role of foodstuff within Roman society is necessary to modern classical studies so we can better understand both the elite and common food in Rome. Thus, these clarifications on the societal implications for thrush, peafowl, mullet, dormice, and Mediterranean moray merely touch upon the greater societal implications of food within Roman society. Food, although a seemingly simple necessity, has unique societal coding which allowed it to play a beautifully complex role in ancient Rome.

Recipes

Turdos Aponcomenos | Thrush for Health¹⁵⁹ | XI.xxix

Teres piper, lasar, bacam lauri, admisce cuminum, garum, et sic turdum per guttur implet et filo ligabis. et facies ei impensam, in quo decoquantur, quae habeat oleum, sales, aquam, anethum et capita porrorum.

You will rub pepper, laser¹⁶⁰, laurel berry; mix in cumin, garum, and thus fill the thrush through the gullet and then you will tie it with a string. And you will outlay this, in which these may be boiled down, to which it may have oil, salt, water, dill, and the heads of leeks¹⁶¹.

Pisam Adulteram Versatilem | Tempting¹⁶² Versatile Peas | V.iii.8

Coques pisam. cerebella vel aucellas vel turdos exossatos a pectore, lucanicas, iecinera, gizeria pullorum in caccabum mittis, liquamen, oleum. fasciculos porri capitati, coriandrum viridem concidis, et cum cerebellis coques. teres piper, ligusticum et liquamen . . .

You will cook peas, then either brains, or little birds, or deboned thrush breast, then Lucanian sausage, livers¹⁶³ and gizzards of chicken – put these all in a pan then add garum and oil. Cook a bunch of leek heads and chopped green coriander with a small brain. You will grind pepper, lovage, and garum.

Caccabinam Fusilem | Stuffed Chartreuse¹⁶⁴ | XI.ii

Malvas, porros, betas sive coliclos elixatos, turdos atque isicia de pullo, copadia porcina sive pullina et cetera quae in praesenti habere poteris, compones variatim. teres piper, ligusticum cum vini veteris pondo duo, liquamen pondo I, mel pondo I, olei aliquantum. Gustata, item permixta

¹⁵⁹ Aponcomenos, also spelled Hapantamynos, is a strange Greek-derivative. The term cannot be found in dictionaries but commentaries on Apicius suggest that it means “to drive away all ailments” which fits with the various root words within it: ἄ + πάντα + ἀμύνω roughly can translate to ‘keeping away all things.’ Thus, most scholars ascribe this to mean keeping away all health issues, thus making this recipe a Thrush for Health.

¹⁶⁰ Also known as silphium. The genus which the Romans used is now extinct.

¹⁶¹ Could also be the heads of chives.

¹⁶² This is a common translation of *adulteram* for this recipe although (of course) not the common meaning.

¹⁶³ Likely a typo and should instead be *iecinora*.

¹⁶⁴ I took the common translation for this title since *caccabinam* more literally translated to ‘cooked rare’ or ‘undercooked’ and *fusilem* means ‘moulded,’ ‘molten,’ or ‘liquid.’ With these translations, the dish would translate to “Moulded Rare Food” – while this translation adequately explains the dish, it does not sound appetizing.

et temperata, mittis in patinam et fac ut modice ferveat. Et cum coquitur, adicies lactis sextarium unum, ova dissolute cum locate perfundes, patina, mox constrinxerit, inferes.

Mallows, leeks, beets or boiled cabbage sprouts, thrush and minced chicken, bits of pork or young chicken and other things which you have at hand – you will place together variously. You will crush pepper and lovage with no more than two parts wine, one part garum, one part honey, and a little oil. Having tasted it, also having mixed and proportioned it, set it in pan and make it so that it comes to a moderate boil. And when it is cooked, throw in one sixth part of milk with an egg having been dissolved in it. You will pour it over [the vegetable mix], as soon as it has set in the pan, you will serve it.

Patina Mullorum Loco Salsi | Dish of Salted Mullet | IV.ii.22

Mullos rades, in patina munda compones, adicies olei quod satis est ei salsum interpones. Facies ut ferveat. Cum ferbuerit, mulsum mittes aut passum, piper asparges et inferes.

Scrape the mullet, then place it in a clean pan, throw in enough oil so that it will intersperse in the salt of it. You will make it so that it boils. When it boils, you will place honey wine or raisin wine, then you will sprinkle pepper and serve.

Ius in Mullos Assos | Sauce for Roasted Mullet | X.i.11

Piper, ligusticum, rutam, mel, nucleos, acetum, vinum, liquamen, oleum modice. calefacies et perfundes.

Pepper, lovage, rue, honey, nuts, vinegar, wine, garum, and some oil. You will heat and pour it over.

Ius in Mullo Taricho | Sauce for Tarichian Mullet | IX.x.9

Piper, rutam, cepam, dactilum, sinapi, trito commisce echino, oleo, et sic perfundes piscem frictum vel assatum.

Pepper, rue, onion, date, mustard, mix rubbed sea-urchin, oil, and thus you will pour it over the fish which has been fried or roasted.

Salsum, Sine Salso | Fish Liver Pudding¹⁶⁵ | IX.x.10

Iecur coques, teres, et mittes piper aut liquamen aut salem. Adde oleum. Iecur leporis aut haedi aut agni aut pulli, et, si volueris, in formella piscem formabis. Oleum viridem supra adicies.

You will cook liver, you will grind it, and place pepper then either garum or salt. You will add oil. The liver of a rabbit, a kid, a lamb, or a chicken – and, if you want, you will shape it in a fish mould. Put virgin oil on top.

Glires | Dormice¹⁶⁶ | VIII.ix

Isicio porcino, item pulpis ex omni membro glirium trito, cum pipere, nucleis, lasere, liquamine farcies glires, et sutos in tegula positos mittes in furnum aut farsos in clibano coques.

You will stuff the dormouse with minced pork and the flesh from all limbs of ground dormice and with pepper, nuts, laser, garum. Then put the stitched-up dormouse in a crockpot then into the oven or you will cook it in an earthen dish.

Ius in Murena Assa | Sauce for Roasted Mediterranean Moray | X.ii.1

Piper, ligusticum, satureiam, crocomagma, cepa, pruna damascena enucleata, vinum, mulsum, acetum, liquamen, defritum, oleum, et coques.

Take pepper, lovage, dittany, the residue of saffron oil, onion, stone Damascus prunes, wine, honey wine, vinegar, garum, grape must, oil – you will cook this.

Aliter Ius in Murena Elix | Another Sauce for Boiled Mediterranean Moray | X.ii.5

Piper, ligusticum, careum, apii semen, coriandrum, mentam aridam, nucleos pineos, rutam, mel, acetum, vinum, liquamen, oleum modice. Calefacies et amulo obliges.

Pepper, lovage, cumin, parsley seed, coriander, dried mint, pine nuts, rue, honey, vinegar, wine, garum, and some oil. You will heat this and bind it with starch.

¹⁶⁵ Once again, I have taken the more common translation for this title. Literally, it translates to ‘salt, without salt’ which is a rather contradictory name.

¹⁶⁶ It is interesting that this dish has no clever name. This pain title could be due to this recipe being the only one containing dormice in Apicius’ text.

Murenam aut Anguillas vel Mullos | Mediterranean Morays or Eels or Mulletts | XI.xvi

Sic facies: purgabis, componis in patina diligenter. Adicies in mortario piper, ligusticum, origanum, mentam, cepam aridam, effundes vinum, acetabuli liquaminis dimidium, mellis tertiam partem, modice defritum ad cochleare. Debent autem hoc iure cooperiri, ut super cocturam supersit aliquid iuris.

You will do thus: clean, then carefully place it in a dish. You will add pepper, lovage, marjoram, mint, and dried onion. Then you will pour wine, half a cup of garum, three parts honey, and some grape must (about a spoonful). Moreover, it is necessary for the fish to be completely covered by this sauce so that some of the sauce may remain while it is cooking.

Works Cited

- Adams, J. N., James Noel Adams, and Senior Research Fellow in Classics J. N. Adams. *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Andrews, Alfred C. "The Roman Craze for Surmulletts." *The Classical Weekly* 42, no. 12 (1949): 186–88. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4342555>.
- Apicius, Marcus Gavius. *De Re Coquinaria*. Perfect Library. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.
- . "The Project Gutenberg EBook of Apicius: Cookery and Dining in Imperial Rome." Translated by Joseph Dommers Vehling. Accessed March 25, 2020. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/29728/29728-h/29728-h.htm>.
- Arbiter, Petronius, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, and Gareth Schmeling. *Satyricon. Apocolocyntosis*. Loeb Classical Library, lcl 15. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020.
- Athenaeus, and S. Douglas Olson. *The Learned Banqueters*. The Loeb Classical Library 204, 208, 235, 274, 345, 519. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Beerden, Kim. "Roman Dolia and the Fattening of Dormice." *The Classical World* 105, no. 2 (2012): 227–35.
- Blake, Sarah. "Martial's Natural History: The 'Xenia' and 'Apophoreta' and Pliny's Encyclopedia." *Arethusa* 44, no. 3 (2011): 353–77.
- Bond, Robin. "The Augustan Utopia of Horace and Vergil and the Imperial Dystopia of Petronius and Juvenal." *Scholia* 19 (2010): 31–52.
- Braund, Susanna Morton. "Juvenal." In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-3522>.

- Burke, Sean D. "Ancient Masculinities." In *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch*, 67–94. Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts. Augsburg Fortress, Publishers, 2013.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22h6s0c.6>.
- Carpaneto, Giuseppe, and Mauro Cristaldi. "Dormice and Man: A Review of Past and Present Relations." *Hystrix, the Italian Journal of Mammalogy* 6, no. 1–2 (May 20, 1995).
<https://doi.org/10.4404/hystrix-6.1-2-4044>.
- Cassius, Earnest Cary, and Herbert Baldwin Foster. *Dio's Roman history: in nine volumes. 7: Books LVI - LX*. Reprinted. The Loeb classical library 175. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006.
- Cato, Marcus Porcius. *On agriculture*. Reprinted. The Loeb classical library 283. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press [u.a.], 1999.
- Catullus, Gaius Valerius, Francis Warre Cornish, J. P. Postgate, J. W. Mackail, G. P. Goold, Tibullus, and Tibullus. *Catullus*. 2nd ed., rev. Loeb Classical Library 6. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Citroni, Mario. "Martial." In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-3987>.
- Colton, Robert E. "Juvenal and Propertius." *Traditio* 23 (1967): 442–61.
- Coney, William C. "Mulled Thoughts: Mullus and Mugilis in Pliny's Naturalis Historia and the De Re Coquinaria of 'Apicius.'" *Pseudo-Dionysius XVIII* (March 2016): 49–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2007.7.2.71>.
- Cuvier, Georges. "11. The Golden Age of Rome." In *Cuvier's History of the Natural Sciences : Twenty-Four Lessons from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, edited by Theodore Wells Pietsch, 359–75. Archives. Paris: Publications scientifiques du Muséum, 2019.
<http://books.openedition.org/mnhn/3769>.

- D'Arms, John H. "Performing Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful." *Studies in the History of Art* 56 (1999): 300–319.
- Déry, Carol A. "The Art of Apicius." In *Cooks & Other People: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, 1995*, edited by Harlan Walker, 111–17. Oxford Symposium, 1996.
- Douglas, Mary. *Food in the Social Order*. Mary Douglas: Collected Works. London: Routledge, 2003.
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=754411&authtype=shib&site=ehost-live&scope=site&custid=s8408921&authtype=ip,shib>.
- Dubuisson, Michel. "Le Grec à Rome à l'époque de Cicéron Extension et Qualité Du Bilinguisme." *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 47, no. 1 (1992): 187–206.
- Edwards, John. "Philology and Cuisine in De Re Coquinaria." *The American Journal of Philology* 122, no. 2 (2001): 255–63.
- Garcia-Guixé, Elena, Maria Eulàlia Subirà, Ricard Marlasca, and Michael P Richards. "Δ13C and Δ15N in Ancient and Recent Fish Bones from the Mediterranean Sea," n.d., 11.
- Garnsey, Peter. "Food and Society in Classical Antiquity by Peter Garnsey." Cambridge Core, April 1999. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511612534>.
- George, Peter. "Style and Character in the Satyricon." *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 5, no. 3 (1966): 336–58.
- Gowers, Emily. "Introduction." In *Satires. Book I*. Cambridge Greek and Latin classics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. http://bvbr.bib-bvb.de:8991/F?func=service&doc_library=BVB01&doc_number=024528627&line_number=0001&func_code=DB_RECORDS&service_type=MEDIA.
- Grainger, Sally. "The Myth of Apicius." *Gastronomica* 7, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 71–77.

- Grant Nelsestuen. "Storing Produce and Staging Dinner Parties: Fruit-Galleries and Genre in Varro's *De Re Rustica* 1." *Illinois Classical Studies* 41, no. 1 (2016): 21–40.
- Harrison, Stephen J. "Petronius (1)." In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-4906>.
- Heseltine, Michael, and Petronius Arbiter. *Petronius*. W. Heinemann, 1922.
- Hight, Gilbert. "The Life of Juvenal." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 68 (1937): 480–506. <https://doi.org/10.2307/283281>.
- Horatius Flaccus, Quintus, and Henry Rushton Fairclough. *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*. Reprinted. The Loeb Classical Library 194. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2005.
- Juvenal, Persius, and Susanna Morton Braund. *Juvenal and Persius*. Loeb classical library 91. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Kaster, Robert A. Kaster Robert A. "Terentius (RE 84, Suppl. 6) Varro, Marcus." In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-6699>.
- Kondoleon, Christine. "Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos." In *Domestic and Divine*, 85–117. Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Kuszynski, C. F. "Juvenal and Other Roman Satirists." *The Classical Outlook* 45, no. 10 (1968): 112–13.
- Linderski, Jerzy. "Garden Parlors: Nobles and Birds." *Studia Pompeiana et Classica in Honor of WF Jashemski, II, New York* 105 (1989).

- Locker, Alison. "In Piscibus Diversis; the Bone Evidence for Fish Consumption in Roman Britain." *Britannia* 38 (2007): 141–80.
- Martial, and D. R. Shackleton Bailey. *Epigrams*. The Loeb Classical Library, LCL 94-LCL 95, LCL 480. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- . *Epigrams*. The Loeb Classical Library, LCL 94-LCL 95, LCL 480. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- . *Epigrams*. The Loeb Classical Library, LCL 94-LCL 95, LCL 480. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Meyboom, P. G. P. *The Nile Mosaic of Palestrina: Early Evidence of Egyptian Religion in Italy*. BRILL, 1995.
- Miles, Deri Pode. "Forbidden Pleasures: Sumptuary Laws and the Ideology of Moral Decline in Ancient Rome." University College London, 1987.
- Mintz, Sidney W., and Christine M. Du Bois. "The Anthropology of Food and Eating." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 99–119.
- Morgan, Llewelyn. "Neither Fish nor Fowl? Metrical Selection in Martial's 'Xenia.'" *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 103 (2007): 385–406.
- Mylona, Dimitra. "Archaeological Fish Remains in Greece: General Trends of Research and a Gazetteer of Sites." *Zooarchaeology in Greece: Recent Advances* 9 (2003): 193–200.
- O'Bryhim, Shawn. "Catullus' Mulletts and Radishes (c. 15.18-19)." *Mnemosyne* 70, no. 2 (February 20, 2017): 325–30. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1568525X-12342251>.
- Paterson, Jeremy. "Trade and Traders in the Roman World: Scale, Structure, and Organisation." In *Trade, Traders and the Ancient City*, edited by Helen Parkins and Christopher Smith, 2005. <http://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=235415>.
- Pliny the Elder. *The Natural History*. Translated by John Bostock, Henry T. Riley, Karl Friedrich, and Theodor Mayhoff. Somerville, MA: Perseus Digital Library, 2006.

Pryce, Frederick Norman PryceFrederick Norman, Mabel L. LangMabel L. Lang, and David William John GillDavid William John Gill. “Weights.” In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-6883>.

Purcell, Nicholas. “Pliny (1) the Elder.” In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-5133>.

Reden, Sitta von. *Money in Classical Antiquity*. Key Themes in Ancient History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511763069>.

Rose, K. F. C. “The Date of the Satyricon.” *The Classical Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1962): 166–68.

Rose, K. F. C., and J. P. Sullivan. “Trimalchio’s Zodiac Dish (Petronius, Sat. 35. 1-5).” *The Classical Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1968): 180–84.

Ruffin, Mary Denmeade. *The Social Reforms of Augustus*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1922.

Schmeling, Gareth. “Battle of Banquets.” *Materiali e Discussioni per l’analisi Dei Testi Classici*, no. 44 (2000): 217–20. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40236159>.

———. “Trimalchio’s Menu and Wine List.” *Classical Philology* 65, no. 4 (1970): 248–51.

Seneca, Lucius Annaeus, and John W. Basore. *Seneca: in ten volumes. I Vol. 1: Moral essays [...]*. Reprinted. The Loeb classical library 214. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2007.

Shorey, Paul. “Introduction.” In *Horace: Odes and Epodes*, ix–xxxvii. The Students’ Series of Latin Classics. Boston, MA: Benjamin H. Sanborn & Co., 1911.

Smith, Martin Stirling, and Miriam T. Griffin. "Petronius (2)." In *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199545568.001.0001/acref-9780199545568-e-4904>.

Stannard, Jerry. "Medicinal Plants and Folk Remedies in Pliny, 'Historia Naturalis.'" *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 4, no. 1 (1982): 3–23.

Van Neer, Wim, Omri Lernau, Renée Friedman, Gregory Mumford, Jeroen Poblóme, and Marc Waelkens. "Fish Remains from Archaeological Sites as Indicators of Former Trade Connections in the Eastern Mediterranean." *Paléorient* 30, no. 1 (2004): 101–47.

Ward, Allen M. "Crassus' Slippery Eel." *The Classical Review* 24, no. 2 (1974): 185–86.