

In this paper I argue that the author of the *Satyrical*, a perceptive and refined reader of Horace's satires (cf. L. R. Shero, *CP* 18 [1923]: 126-43 and J. Bodel in *Latin Fiction* 1999: 39), picked up on several intertextual signals referring to the art of memory in the poem on the dinner at Nasidienus's (Hor. *Sat.* 2.8). Two elements of the *Satyrical* find a meaningful antecedent in the connection that 2.8 establishes with the tradition of the art of memory. *Satyrical* 60.1-3, the moment at which the ceiling of the banquet hall seems to collapse on the diners, connects Trimalchio's dinner with the threatened collapse of the ceiling/awning at Nasidienus's house and also with its legendary antecedent in the story of Simonides's invention of mnemotechnics (I. Marchesi, *TAPA* 135.2 [2005]). Second, *Satyrical* 66.1-7, the scene in which Habinnas engages in a short but effective display of culinary memory, recalls the mnemonic exercise in which Catus engages in Horace's satire. Catus's recitation of a dinner menu foreshadows and sets the tone for the allusive interest in mnemotechnics later evidenced in 2.8. After establishing that the intertextual evocation in the *Satyrical* of Horace's *Sat.* 2.4 and 2.8 targets passages specifically alluding to the art of memory, I propose to look at the Zodiac plate in the same light. The puzzling hors d'oeuvres (*Sat.* 35.1-5) that Trimalchio explains at 39.5-15 seem to be an integral element in a three-part exploration of the conception of time. Framed by other allusive dishes that evoke the alternating night/day and winter/summer sequence and the circular panchronic expanding of linear time into eternity, the plate refers readers to the astrological partitioning of the year by the constellations. In its structure, however, the plate is also reminiscent of a memorial artifice: the twelve-house memorial system based on the zodiac which Quintilian attributes to a mnemotechnic virtuoso contemporary of Cicero, Metrodorus of Scepsis (*Inst.* 11.2.22). According to Quintilian, Metrodorus had found 360 *loci* in the Zodiac which allowed him to perform astonishing memory feats. Trimalchio's first show-piece functions, albeit in a trivialized and possibly parodic form, as a self-enclosed, organized space, suitable of being used as a set of *loci certi* in which a meaningful array of *imagines agentes* can be arranged (F. Yates, *The Art of Memory* 1966: 6-13). Of course, his system of places and objects is merely self-reflexive at best and self-serving at worst, and it falls short of constituting a mnemonic tool, as Metrodorus's did. Since each place contains nothing more than the culinary icon of its sign, the plate is designed either to suggest a trivialized materialization of a mental exercise or to represent Trimalchio's own micro-memorial system: each food placed on the plate helps the host to remember the names of the signs (whose order is the only piece of information that Trimalchio gets right during the dinner). Whatever its designed purpose, however, the Zodiac plate invites readers to recall the discipline of mnemotechnics through the same cultural association of food and memory that Horace presented in his satire and that recurs in the *Satyrical* in the episodes of the opening ceiling and in Habinnas's recollected dinner-menu.