"THEATRUM ARBITRI":
THEATRICAL ELEMENTS IN THE *SATYRICA* OF PETRONIUS.

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ABSTRACT.

The title of this thesis is "Theatrical elements in the *Satyrica* of Petronius". It is a literary study which deals with the possible influence that Roman comic drama (comedies of Plautus and Terence, theatre of the Greek and Roman mimes, the fabula palliata, fabula togata, fabula Atellana) might have exerted on the surviving extant fragments of Petronius' novel.

In the preface I summarise briefly the generally accepted view about the identity of the novel's author and the diverse nature of his work, and I explain the method and criteria which are to be used for the intended study of the novel.

The introductory chapter has two purposes: first, to delineate in a lucid way the theatre of the mimes and its main features, since this theatrical genre is predominant in the world of entertainment in Petronius' time; second, to provide a brief account of both the ancient testimonia and modern scholarly works which make fundamental comments on this novel from a theatrical point of view.

Chapters one to fifteen form the main part of the thesis: I follow the narrative thread of the Petronian novel in its episodic form and attempt to interpret the events in terms of visual role-playing and the stage.

The conclusion draws together the main themes of the thesis, and attempts to explain the strong impact of theatre and its intended function in the *Satyrica*.

The bibliographical material has been divided into three sections, due to its length, and for the convenience of the reader: a) editions and commentaries of texts referred to in the thesis, b) books and articles to which reference has been made in the footnotes, and c) other works consulted to form a more complete view of the problems concerning Petronius' text, the novel in general, and popular theatre, Greek and Roman.

A detailed theatrical study of the *Satyrica* is more than a mere enumeration of passages from a genre which influenced Petronius. It can shed light on the dispute over the delivery of the text and gives a clearer picture of how Petronius may have viewed his literary creation. Finally, the farcical features which recur throughout the narrative support the interpretation of this composite text as an eccentric innovation in the area of literature which, through sophisticated means, aimed to amuse without preaching moral lessons.

PREFACE.

The *Satyrica* or *Satyricon Libri*, nowadays regarded conventionally as a kind of novel, was written probably between 63 and 66 A.D. perhaps by Titus Petronius Niger, a man who led a most extraordinary way of life, if he was the same Petronius as the one described by Tacitus (*Ann.* XVI.18-19) as being appointed Elegantiae Arbiter in Nero's court, after Seneca had ceased to be the emperor's favourite in his literary coterie.[1] What has survived from the original is no more than fragments probably from books XIV, XV and XVI. We do not know how much more there was.[2] Similarly, we can only speculate on the way it was delivered to some of Petronius' contemporaries.[3] There are two main theories which have been formed to answer the vital question of the novel's purpose: one supports the notion that it was composed as literary entertainment and the other favours the more serious interpretation of moral preaching.[4] For many the question remains still open.

The surviving *Satyrica* tells the adventures of Encolpius and his occasional companions, Giton, Ascyltus and Eumolpus, around Italy, and should be regarded as a sophisticated synthesis of many different literary genres, including oratory, historiography, epic, elegy, satire, Greek romance and drama.[5] The outcome of this combination is a work of art unique in many aspects in the field of surviving literature.

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[1] A scholarly *consensus* seems to have emerged concerning the identification of Petronius the courtier with Petronius the author of this novel, view supported by Rose 1971. A recent brief account of the dispute can be found in Sullivan 1985(b), 1666-1668. I concur with the general view that T. Petronius Niger was the person responsible for both the evaluation of cultural and aesthetic matters in Nero's court, and the creation of Encolpius' fictional adventures. We shall see that this identification will explain a great deal of the theatrical aspect of the *Satyrica*, a comic narration composed in accordance with the artistic side of Neronian Rome.

[2] See Sullivan 1968(a), 34-38; Van Thiel 1971, 21-24.

[3] The question of the oral performance of the *Satyrica* in episodes, addressed only to trustworthy courtiers in Nero's reign, remains still open, since Slater 1990(b), 11-14 (with bibliography) argued strongly for reading as the primary medium of the novel's delivery. Against such a view see, recently, Schmeling 1991, 375. On the importance of *recitatio* as a means for the author to test the quality of his work before publication, in what could be termed theatrically as a 'dress-rehearsal' of the text's performance in front of a live, and critical, audience, see Lefèvre 1990, 9-15; Woodman & Powell 1992, 204-215.

[4] See Schmeling 1969(a); Sullivan 1972(b); Walsh 1974, 182-189.

[5] The seminal study is Collignon 1892. See, also, Sullivan 1968(a), 81-98; Walsh 1970, 7-30.

The present thesis aims to read this novel theatrically at three levels: the content; the level of style; the level of structure.

At the level of content there will be an examination of possible resemblances, which motifs or elements of the novel's plot might bear to the same motifs or elements of plot in surviving (Greek and Roman) theatrical texts.

Under the general category of style the following subdivisions are included:

i. comparison of the novel's characters with theatrical stock-characters;

ii. indication and evaluation of the function of explicit and implicit references in the Petronian text to theatrical genres or to names of theatrical personalities, historical or invented;

iii. similarities between the language of the *Satyrica* and the language of comedy and mime.

The novel's theatrical study at the level of structure denotes the dramatic reading of the novel as if it were the narrative equivalent of a farcical staged piece with the theatrical structure of a play produced before an audience.

These levels of content, style and structure are applied to the Petronian text following the order of each one of the scenes of the surviving novel: scene in the school of rhetoric (1.1-5.1.1-22); scene in the brothel (6.1-11.4); scene in the market-place (12.1-15.9); scene with the priestess Quartilla (16.1-26.6); scene at Trimalchio's feast (26.7-78.8); scene after the feast (79.1-82.6); scene in the art-gallery (83.1-90.7); scene inside the inn (91.1-99.4); scene on board Lichas' ship (99.5-115.20); scene at Croton (containing legacy-hunting adventures, the hero's love-affair with Circe, his troubles with the witch-like priestesses Proselenos and Oenothea, cannibalism) (116.1-141.11). Such a classification by episode, rather than by subject, allows a more coherent analysis of each scene separately in the form of a continuous theatrical narrative, and a clearer appreciation of the dramatic qualities of the novel as a whole.

The Harvard system of references has been used both in the footnotes of the text and the compilation of the bibliography. Abbreviations of periodicals follow the list of Peter Rosumek. 1982. *Index des périodiques. Supplément à L' ANNÉE PHILOLOGIQUE, tome LI*. Paris, Les Belles Lettres. Abbreviations of the names of ancient authors and of the titles of texts follow the list of *Liddell-Scott-Jones* and the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. All references to the text of the *Satyrica* come from the edition of K. Müller - W. Ehlers. [3]1983. *Petronius. SATYRICA. Schelmenszenen*. München, unless otherwise stated.

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INTRODUCTION.

I.

MIMUS IMITATIO VITAE.

The word mimus in both its meanings of an imitator, actor and a form of drama was taken over from the Greek into Latin, and a very great number of mimic performers came to Italy from Greek-speaking lands.[1] One should not think, however, that Roman mime was a purely Greek phenomenon transplanted to Rome. Greek mime or farcical comedy had flourished in Southern Italy and Sicily for centuries in the short comedies of Epicharmus from Syracuse, the prose mimes of Sophron, the burlesque Phlyaces and the plays of Rhinthon from Tarentum. With this native Italian mimic tradition the mime from the East was blended and formed what should be more correctly defined as the Graeco-Roman mime.

Before we look at how antiquity defined the mimic drama, it is useful to make a clear distinction between the early pre-literary form of mime, which was brief, crude and depended mostly on improvisation, and its later development during the late Republic into a form of literature in the hands of Decimus Laberius and Publilius Syrus. In both its forms it never lost its character of popular entertainment and from the Empire onwards it remained the most predominant form of comedy. The most detailed definition of the mime is that of Diomedes, who wrote in the fourth century A.D. (*Artis Grammaticae Libri III*, p. 491 Kiel):

> Mimus est sermonis cuius libet imitatio et motus sine reverentia, vel factorum et dictorum turpium cum lascivia imitatio; a Graecis ita definitus, μῖμός ἐστιν μίμησις βίου τά τε συγκεχωρημένα καὶ ἀσυγχώρητα περιέχων. mimus dictus παρὰ τὸ μιμεῖσθαι, quasi solus imitetur, cum et alia poemata idem faciant; sed solus quasi privilegio quodam quod fuit commune possedit similiter atque is qui versum facit dictus ποιητής, cum et artifices, cum aeque quid faciant, non dicantur poetae.
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> 'The mimic drama is an imitation of any kind of speech and irreverent movement, or the lascivious imitation of shameful deeds and words; it is thus defined by the Greeks: 'mime is an imitation of life containing

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[1] Among the numerous studies on the history of Roman mime, see Nicoll 1931, 80-134; Wüst 1932, 1743-1761; Duckworth 1952, 13-15; Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 1-17; Giancotti 1967, 13-42; Beare 1964, 149-158; Sandy 1974, 343, notes 33 and 34; Rieks 1978, 348-351 and 361-377 (with bibliography); McKeown 1979, 71-84; Horsfall 1982, 293-4; Kehoe 1984, 89-106; Dupont 1985, 296-306; Fantham 1988, 153-163; Beacham 1991, 129-139. My brief account of the characteristics of the mimic genre owes much to these studies.

licit and illicit subjects.' The word 'mime' comes from the word 'imitate' as if it were the only literary form which used imitation, although other forms of literature do the same thing; it alone, however, took hold of that common quality as a privilege; likewise he who makes verses is called a poet, whereas artists, although they also make something, are not called poets.'2

Diomedes' definition is not a successful one since it virtually limits the mime to the imitation of words and deeds considered obscene by the grammarian. The importance of dance, songs, music in the mimic drama, its religious connections, its secular character are not mentioned. It has been suggested that the authorship of the Greek definition of the mime belongs to Theophrastus. Yet other scholarly opinions differ in that matter. The proposed date, though not a definite one, for this Greek definition is the period from 300 B.C. to the beginning of the Roman Empire. What is important to keep in mind from that Greek citation is that all aspects of everyday life, and not heroic or divine subjects, is what a mime imitates.3

A description of the mimes which is perhaps dependent upon the definition of Diomedes, but which lacks its hostility, is that of Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh century (*Orig.* XVIII.49):

> DE MIMIS. Mimi sunt dicti Graeca appellatione quod rerum humanarum sint imitatores; nam habebant suum auctorem, qui antequam mimum agerent, fabulam pronuntiare[n]t. Nam fabulae ita componebantur a poetis ut aptissimae essent motui corporis.

> 'They are called mimes in Greek because they are imitators of human affairs; for, they used to have their own composer who announced in advance the plot before the performance of the play. The plots were composed by poets in such a way as to be most appropriate to the movement of the body.'

The ⸍ ‧ ‧ ‧ ‧ ‧ ‧ ‧ ‧ ‧ imperfect tenses (habebant, componebantur) show that Isidore is describing mimic performances of some previous age. From this description we see that mimic productions were not always the rudely improvised and unfinished affairs of the days of Cicero, who, in his *Pro Caelio* (65),4 discusses the story put forward by Clodia and tries

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2 All translations of Greek and Latin passages quoted are mine, unless otherwise stated.

3 A detailed discussion of the passage should be consulted in Giancotti 1967, 26-28.

4 See Austin (ed.) 1960, ad loc.

to show that not only is it mere fiction but that it has no real conclusion:

> Mimi ergo iam exitus, non fabulae; in quo cum clausula non invenitur, fugit aliquis e manibus, dein scabilla concrepant, aulaeum tollitur.
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> 'Its conclusion is not like that of an ordinary play; it is like the conclusion of a mime, in which, when no end can be found, the actor escapes from the hands of those who are holding him; the clappers give the signal, and the curtain rises.'

The mimes to which Isidore refers had both prologue and plot, and were composed by poets. That does not necessarily exclude variations of mimic plays in which the prologue was absent and the plot or intrigue was elementary. We are fortunate enough to possess the prologue which was recited by the famous mimic playwright Decimus Laberius himself when he was an old man and a knight, and was forced by Julius Caesar to compete with a much younger mimic actor and playwright, Publilius from Syria.[5] In that prologue, which, however, constitutes an exceptional occasion, there is no reference to the fabula which, according to Isidore, the speaker should narrate in advance. It seems that the mimic actor himself chose what means of self-expression he should stress in his performance: recitation, dance, gesticulations, song. Isidore's reference to motus corporis shows the importance of gestures and dancing in the mimes.

Both definitions of the mime thus far considered stress the fact that mime imitates ordinary life. This aspect of mimic theatre inevitably brings one to the famous subject of mimic realism. It is often assumed that mime with its imitation of base things and worthless characters was the only genre in antiquity which approached modern-day realism in literature and especially in drama. Mimes which present mythological subjects, although they appear in the late Empire, certainly constitute an exception to the rule.[6] Even in the plays whose titles suggest the treatment of a topic of everyday-life, we cannot be certain that the acting, the gestures, the facial expressions did not ridicule the whole theme and transform it into an exaggerated caricature.[7] If that is the case, it seems to me that it is better to refer to a parody, rather than an imitation, of ordinary low situations by the mimes.

Does this imitation or parody have any particular message to give to its

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[5] Laberius 139-170 (Bonaria). See the lengthy discussion of the lines in Giancotti 1967, 167-216.

[6] On the controversial subject of mythological burlesque in the mimes (detailed analysis of relevant evidence and earlier bibliography) see Kehoe 1969, 46-77.

[7] On mimic caricature see Richter 1913, 149-156; Cèbe 1966, 39-40, 45.

audience? According to Aristotle, tragedy imitates people as better than they are for the purpose of arousing high emotions in the minds of an audience (*Poet.* 1454b15). Comedy imitates people as worse than they are for the purpose of making ridiculous certain errors or vices (*Poet.* 1449a5). As far as we know, a mime aimed only at making its audience burst out laughing without having any moral attitude towards life.[8] This laughter (mimicus risus) was characterized by Quintilian (VI.iii.8) as

> res levis, et quae a scurris, mimis, insipientibus denique saepe moveatur
> 'a light thing, aroused generally by buffoons, mimes and brainless characters.'

Apart from a possible prologue, there were two main ingredients of a mimic play: the deverbia or spoken parts and the cantica or singing parts. The spoken parts are composed in what is defined as sermo plebeius, ordinary language of low-class people.[9] Metres which occur in the fragments of literary mimes by Laberius and Syrus are iambic senarii and trochaic septenarii. Although Sophron composed his Greek mimes in rhythmic prose, we do not have similar cases among the surviving Latin fragments.

In spite of the confusion of ancient grammarians in their attempts to define or describe mime and comedy,[10] it is essential to determine those characteristics

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[8] Johannes Lydus, *De Magistr.* 1.40 μιμικὴ ἢ νῦν δῆθεν μόνη σωζομένη, τεχνικὸν μὲν ἔχουσα οὐδέν, ἀλόγῳ μόνον τὸ πλῆθος ἐπάγουσα γέλωτι; Cf. Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 30 ἐπεὶ δὲ ὅλον παιδιά τις ἐστι τὸ χρῆμα, τὸ πέρας αὐτοῖς εἰς ᾠδήν τινα καὶ γέλωτα λήγει. πάντα γὰρ εἰς ἀναψυχὴν μεμηχάνηται καὶ ῥᾳστώνην.

[9] See Bonfante 1967, 3-21; Traglia 1972, 7-20; Boyce 1991, 8-9, 13-14.

[10] Besides the deliberate attempts of Diomedes and Isidore to define and describe, respectively, the mimic performances, there are some references of an incidental nature in which the mime is associated with comedy, usually as a variety of it. The emperor Marcus Aurelius (XI.vi.2) views the farcical mime not as a variety of comedy but as its successor (especially, as the successor of New Comedy). In the fourth century, mime is considered by Donatus (*exc. de com.* IV.1) as a form of comedy together with fabula togata, palliata, Atellana and others. A view radically opposed to those we have been considering is expressed by Choricius of Gaza (*Apologia Mimorum* VI.19), a sophist who wrote in the sixth century A.D. and was one of the few persons who defended the theatre of the mimes and stressed the benefits for its audience. Reversing the formula of Donatus he regarded *comedy* as a form of mime, and that he did quite naturally, since mime had virtually driven comedy off the stage many centuries before his time.

of the former which effectively distinguish it from the latter.[11] The first of these is obvious from the word mimus itself, which indicates that the mimic performances probably emphasized imitations to a greater degree than any form of comedy did. Cicero (De Orat. II.242) urges future orators to avoid excessive mimicry,

> 'for, if the imitation is exaggerated, it is a characteristic of mimic actors who portrayed characters, as also is obscenity. An orator must perform imitations without being noticed so that his audience may imagine more than it witnesses with its eyes; he must also present the nobility of his character and his modesty, by avoiding   shamefulness of language and   indecency of gestures.'[12]

And later on he adds with contempt (De Orat. II.251):

> This also must be taken into account, that not everything which is laughable is witty. For, what can be as laughable as a buffoon? Yet it is because of his face, his grimaces, his imitation of mannerisms, his tone of voice, his own body, in fact, that he is laughed at. I may call him funny, and such, not as I would like an orator to be, but as a mimic actor.[13]

Quintilian, following faithfully the Ciceronian doctrine, corroborates this notion:

> 'It hardly becomes an orator to distort his facial expression and his gestures, things which are generally laughed at in mimic plays.'[14]

The second important characteristic was that the mimic actors seem usually

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[11] According to Cicero (De Orat II.251-252) the characteristics of mimic wit were the following four: ridicule of human figures who exhibit particular vices, emphasis on mimicry, exaggerated facial expressions, and obscenity.

[12] Cicero, De Oratore II.242 Mimorum est enim et ethologorum, si nimia est imitatio, sicut obscenitas. Orator surripiat oportet imitationem, ut is, qui audiet, cogitet plura quam videat; praestet idem ingenuitatem et ruborem suum verborum turpitudine et rerum obscenitate vitanda.

[13] Cicero, De Oratore II.251 Atque hoc etiam animadvertendum est, non esse omnia ridicula faceta. Quid enim potest esse tam ridiculum quam sannio est? Sed ore, vultu, [imitandis moribus,] voce, denique corpore ridetur ipso; salsum hunc possum dicere atque ita, non ut eius modi oratorem esse velim, sed ut mimum.

[14] Quint. VI.iii.29 Oratori minime convenit distortus vultus gestusque, quae in mimis rideri solent.

not to have used masks in their performances.[15] A third feature peculiar to the mimic stage was the employment of women for female roles.[16] Yet another important feature of the mimic performances was their very heterogeneity. The great variety of performances that were called mimes in antiquity is probably the reason that the ancients found it so difficult to define the mime. The mimic performers are often named alongside jugglers and magicians and the mime itself seems to have derived from this circus milieu. Throughout its history the mime always retained the fundamentally popular character of circus entertainment. Its opportunistic nature sought amusement in any available topic, and was not afraid to ridicule anything or anybody, identifying itself on many occasions with the masses and earning the contempt of the upper class and learned people, although exceptions to this rule were not rare.[17] There is also an extraordinary variety in the style of the plays. In some mimes we find scenes of sadistic crudity and vulgar obscenity, and in others sophisticated apophthegms of highly moral standards.[18]

The head of a mimic troupe was called archimimus (or archimima, when a woman was in charge) or magister mimariorum. He owns the company, directs the plays and takes a part, sometimes, though not always, the chief role. There seems to have been a hierarchy in the division of parts:[19] the archimimus (or -mima) dominates the scene. Then there are the actores secundarum partium, tertiarum, quartarum, etc. The reference to secondary parts does not necessarily imply that these parts were of a lesser or inferior importance. The actor secundarum played the part of the stupidus, mimic fool (his equivalent in the Greek mime is the μωρὸς φαλακρός, the bald-headed fool), or the parasite. Horace (Ep. I.xviii.10-14)

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[15] To my knowledge, only Nicoll 1931, 91 is sceptical about this assumption: "There is not ... a single statement made by an earlier writer which stamps the whole mime drama as maskless; it seems probable that some parts at least required the use of exaggerated and comic masks." This is the case, I believe, in Tertullian's account of the mythological mimes (Apolog. XV.3): imago dei vestri ignominiosum caput et famosum vestit 'The image of your god covers the head of a shameless and infamous person'.

[16] See Nicoll 1931, 92-99.

[17] See Kehoe 1969, 168-173; McKeown 1979, 71-72.

[18] Mimes imitate both decent and indecent scenes: see Chor. Apol. Mimorum 88 ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ μίμησις ὑπάρχει τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα, ἑκατέρας δὲ ἰδέας μετέχει – νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐ σεμνὰ σχηματίζονται, νῦν δὲ πάσης αἰσχύνης ἀπηλλαγμένα – ...; Walsh 1970, 25.

[19] See Nicoll 1931, 85-90.

criticises a contemporary and says that he repeats the words of others and catches the phrases as they fall, as a schoolboy repeats the words dictated to him by a stern master, or a mime in secondary parts repeats what has gone before. There is the character of the old hag whose regular name seems to have been carissa; old, ugly, irritable, bibulous and wanton, she tries to retain her lost beauty with plenty of make-up. There is the flatterer, the slave, the adulterer, the jealous husband, the jealous woman, the mother-in-law, the foolish scholar. In his sixth century description of mimic characters Choricius (*Apol. Mim.* 110) lists:

δεσπότην, οἰκέτας, καπήλους, ἀλλαντοπώλας, ὀψοποιούς, ἑστιάτορα, δαιτυμόνας, συμβόλαια γράφοντας, παιδάριον ψελλιζόμενον, νεανίσκον ἐρῶντα, θυμούμενον ἕτερον, ἄλλον τῷ θυμουμένῳ πραΰνοντα τὴν ὀργήν.

'the master, the household slaves, the inn-keepers, the sausage-seller, the cook, the host and his guests, the notaries, the lisping child, the young lover, the angry rival and the man who attempts to soothe another man's anger.'

One can find evidence for more mimic characters in the surviving titles of mimic plays: Laberius' *Augur* 'The Soothsayer', *Piscator* 'The Fisherman, *Hetaera* 'The Courtesan', *Restio* 'The Rope-dealer', show that we deal with common human characters. In that sense we can say that in mime there are no stock characters who star in different comic situations every time, as they were, for example, in Atellan farces where we have four types (Bucco, Maccus, Pappus and Dossennus or Manducus) enacting funny plots.

The mimic repertoire included realistic subjects from everyday-life (adulteria 'adulteries', nuptiae 'mock-marriages', naufragia 'staged shipwrecks', mortes 'false deaths', fallaciae 'cunning schemes', veneficia 'poison-intrigues')[20] presented in a grotesque manner.[21] Political satire and literary parody, philosophical burlesque and mythological travesties were not alien to the genre. In spite of the hostile contempt of men of letters, the farcical mime managed to remain popular through the ages and, by Petronius' time, virtually to drive almost all other forms of comedy off the stage. It was inevitable that its preeminence in Nero's Rome of

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[20] Evidence for these topics will be given throughout the thesis when a connection between the mimes and the *Satyrica* will be made through a characteristic which both of them share.

[21] This does not imply that mimic plots lacked credibility: see Quint. IV.ii.53 *Est autem quidam et ductus rei credibilis, qualis in comoediis etiam et in mimis. Aliqua enim naturaliter secuntur et cohaerent, ut si bene priora narraveris iudex ipse quod postea sis narraturus expectet.*

spectacles[22] should have had a clear impact on the author of the *Satyricon Libri.*

II.
FERE TOTUS MUNDUS EX ARBITRI NOSTRI SENTENTIA MIMUM VIDETUR IMPLERE.

That the element of theatricality is a dominant feature in the *Satyrica* is hardly an original observation. As far as we can judge from our surviving ancient testimonia on this novel,[23] the first person who noticed the close similarity between Petronius' literary composition and the sub-literary mimic theatre, was the Christian apologist of the late fourth and early fifth century, Marius Mercator. Attacking on religious grounds the pagan emperor Julian, Marius refers to the obscenity of Julian's language in his writings and ranks him among the well-known mimographers, Philistion, Lentulus and Marullus.[24] It is then that, strangely enough, he mentions the epigrammatist Valerius Martialis and the novelist Petronius Arbiter as additional examples of the gross obscenity of the mimic theatre with which the emperor's licentious language is compared:

> Erubesce, infelicissime, in tanta linguae scurrilis, vel potius mimicae obscenitate. Vulgares tu dignus audire acclamationes: Unus tu, unus Philistion, unus Latinorum Lentulus, unus tibi Marullus comparandus; namque Martialis et Petronii solus ingenia superasti.[25]

> 'You should feel shame, you most wretched man, for such obscenity of your buffoonish -or, to put it better, mimic- language. You deserve to hear the cheering of the plebs: You, and you alone, can be compared with a Philistion, a Lentulus of the Romans, a Marullus; for, only you have surpassed the mind of Martial and Petronius.'

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[22] The festival of the *Iuvenalia* included mimes (Tac. *Hist.* III.62.2); Nero himself performed in pantomimes and favoured tragic roles, while there is evidence for the survival of Atellan farces still at that period (Suet. *Nero*, XXXIX.3); the reference to a performance of a *fabula togata* by Afranius should not be considered as evidence for the revival of the genre. Nero's artistic interests have been extensively discussed: see Charlesworth 1950, 69-71; Sandy 1974, 342, note 28; Sullivan 1985(a), 27-31; Sullivan 1985(b), 1676, note 17; (especially) Schmidt 1990, 149-163.

[23] See Müller (ed.) 1961, liv-lvi; Sullivan 1968(a), 111-114.

[24] For a brief account of the life and works of Lentulus and Marullus (first or second century A.D.) see Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 136-137. On Philistion (perhaps first century A.D.) see Wüst 1938, 2402-2405; Kehoe 1969, 146-159.

[25] Marius Mercator, *Liber Subnotationum in Verba Juliani*, c. IV.1 = Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 48, cols. 126-127. See Sullivan 1968(a), 112-113.

A little later Marius uses metaphorically the image of theatre to show the degree of lasciviousness that characterizes the works of Petronius and Martial, and then to state in hyperbole that Julian surpassed even these two authors in immorality:

> Eleganter scurra loqueris more tuo, et more quo theatrum Arbitri Valeriique detristi. Constat in illis prosatoribus generis humani fuisse libidinem insitam eorum naturae, quam quidem divinae Scripturae, non ut tu vis, libidinem solent, sed carnis concupiscentiam nominare, ...[26]

> 'Your speech is elegant, you buffoon, after your usual manner and the manner in which you wore away the theatrical performances of the Arbiter and of Valerius. It is generally known that in the case of these writers the lust of human kind, which the Holy Scriptures usually name not as lust, as you seek, but as concupiscence of the flesh, has been implanted in their nature.'

By Marius', and, in fact, by Petronius', time the mimes had prevailed over all other forms of staged theatrical entertainment;[27] it is reasonable, therefore, to assume that by the vague word theatrum Marius was referring specifically to the particular mimic genre. It is not easy, however, to conclude from the context of Marius' tirade whether he had in mind other characteristics of the farcical mime, apart from its obscenity, when he was making the connection between the mimic theatre and Petronius' novel: for example, the fact that the *Satyrica* can be read theatrically as if it were the narrative equivalent of a farcical staged piece with the dramatic structure of a play produced before an audience.

From a similar point of view John of Salisbury, writing in the twelfth century, comes closer to the essence of Petronius' novel in his condemnations of the people who over-indulge in theatrical performances (*Polycraticus*, III.8). According to him, comedy portrays the life of man on earth and life itself becomes a play where each person forgets his or her real self and plays the part of another person. John's contemporaries are excessively preoccupied with the stage-arts and this obsession will lead eventually to the damnation of their souls; for living constantly in self-deception will result in the inability to return at will to their true selves. The same thing happens to children -John continues his argument- who, after having imitated for a long time the way lisping people talk,

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[26] Ibid., c. V.1 = Migne, *P.L.*, vol. 48, cols. 133-134.

[27] On the evidence for what was actually performed at Pompeii around Petronius' time, see Horsfall 1989, 194 and 206, note 4.

find that they can no longer speak properly when they want to. John compares the sinful world of his age with the world as he thinks Petronius intended to represent it:

> fere totus mundus ex Arbitri nostri sententia mimum videtur implere.
>
> 'In the view of our Arbiter, almost the whole world seems to perform a mime.'

He will repeat the same idea later on, revealing another aspect of the novel's theatricality, the element of role-playing as a recurrent pattern in the behaviour of the novel's characters and action (*Pol.* III.8):

> fere totus mundus, juxta Petronium, exerceat histrionem.
>
> 'According to Petronius, almost all the world practises histrionics.'

Although a clearly moralistic tone is adopted for the motives which John believes made Petronius choose to use a theatrical substratum for the representation of the world in his novel, it is remarkable that mime and the connection with the Petronian novel have been selected again for the allegorical comparison between sin and theatre. We know that John of Salisbury had a personal copy of the *Satyrica*, more or less as it has come down to us.[28] His assessments will be justified by the dramatic analysis of each scene of the surviving *Satyrica*.

It has become almost a τόπος among modern scholars to accept the presence of theatricality in the novel we are studying, but there is considerable disagreement about the degree and the function of this element in the author's artistic intentions for his novel. A brief reference to the most important studies of the theatrical aspects of the *Satyrica* will show the necessity for a fresh evaluation of the whole question.

The first major contribution to the study of the influence theatre, and, especially, mime, might have exercised on Petronius' novel was made by Collignon in what constitutes the beginning of serious Petronian studies.[29] Collignon gathered passages from theatrical texts which exhibit verbal or thematic similarities with the Petronian text and argued that

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[28] Martin 1969, 319: "John's citations from the *Satyricon* of Petronius go back to three of the four traditions in which the work was circulating in his day, as K. Müller demonstrated in the preface to his edition of Petronius (München 1961): the shorter excerpts (family O), the longer excerpts (family L) and the Cena Trimalchionis; he did not, however, use the florilegium tradition ... (page 320) John's extraordinary knowledge of the *Satyricon* and his genuine appreciation of the narrative and characters were unequaled before the 17th cent."

[29] See Collignon 1892, 275-283.

il y a cependant de sérieuses raisons de croire que Pétrone a bien connu le mime populaire et en a utilisé pour son roman et les intrigues et le style.[30]

Nevertheless, he regards the theatre of the mimes and, to a much lesser degree, the *fabulae palliatae*, *fabulae togatae* and the theatre of Plautus and Terence,[31] as only one of numerous possible formative genres which influenced the novel's content.

A more detailed analysis of the mime's impact on the *Satyrica* was attempted in the dissertation by Rosenblüth where it also forms part of a comparative study of the Petronian text and Varro's Menippean satires, Theophrastus' *Characters* and Apuleius' novel.[32] The author diligently, and sometimes exaggeratedly, classifies material from our novel which shows a close similarity to the subject-matter, specific technical aspects and the language of the mimic theatre. Although this study forms an invaluable source of scholarly information, the author makes the basic mistake of taking for granted, before even starting his analysis, that

Petrons schriftstellerische Absicht war die Darstellung der Sitten seiner
Zeit, und zwar ohne jede moralische Tendenz.

Thus he ignores the novel's mimic atmosphere of pretence and caricature which distorts the realistic image of characters and events, and creates a theatrical façade of pseudo-naturalism. In Petronius' case such preconceptions, which are often misconceptions, lead, as we shall see, to the misinterpretation of most of the text. It is surprising that in his final chapter Rosenblüth does not give priority to the mimic influence but defines the novel as "Erfüllung der Form der Menippischen Satire mit dem Geiste des Mimus."[33]

Rosenblüth's dissertation should be read together with another written six years later which attempted to demonstrate that he was wrong in his evaluation

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[30] Collignon 1892, 275.

[31] Collignon 1892, 282: "La collocation de Pétrone avec les fragments de togatae réunis par Ribbeck ne permet de signaler que d' assez vagues rapports de situations et d' expressions ... Aussi rareşsont les rapprochements qu' on peut établir entre Pétrone et les auteurs de palliatae. Il ne semble pas que le romancier se soit inspiré directement des comédies de Plaute et de Terence. ... (page 283) Si Pétrone a fait des emprunts au théâtre latin, et on est autorisé à le supposer, ce sont les mimes surtout qu' il a dû mettre à contribution."

[32] See Rosenblüth 1909, 36-55.

[33] Rosenblüth 1909, 61.

of Petronius and the mimes. Moering notes that since only fragments exist from the mimes which do not allow us to form a complete picture of that genre, one has to conclude that

> Petronius non mimographorum sed eorum, quos supra commemoravi (i.e. Vergil, Lucan, Horace, Ovid, Seneca, Lucilius, Homer, etc.), et multorum aliorum scripta memoria repetiverit, ubi et in illis et in Petronii saturis inveniuntur.[34]

Moering is, of course, right in his scepticism of the mimic theatre as a primary source of material for Petronius' novel but he disregards the possibility that, although Petronius sometimes took material for his novel from non-theatrical texts, he used it in a ridiculous way which approached the grotesqueness of the mimes. Moering's mistake is due to the same preconceptions which Rosenblüth has about the *Satyrica*:

> Immo hoc enim interest inter mimum et Petronii saturas. Nam licet et mimi et Petronii saturae res de vita media sumpserint, mimus, vera dum imitatur, in ridiculum convertit efficitque, ut homines, condiciones, status extra modum veritatemque prodeant, cum Petronius facete ea, quae vita cotidiana docet, verissime depingat et exprimat.[35]

Finally, after examining the validity of Rosenblüth's arguments, and refuting them one by one, he unexpectedly reaches the same conclusion as his opponent:

> De toto genere saturarum si quaerimus, quaenam in Petronii saturis elementa mimica sint, meo iudicio nihil afferre possumus, nisi narrationem iocosi generis, quae eadem mimica ratione vitam cotidianam descripsit, qua mimus eandem vitam in scaena agit. Atque hactenus cedo ei, qui dicit Petronii libros esse saturas Menippeas indole mimica completas.[36]

A useful and often underestimated article on the same subject was published in the same year as Moering's dissertation.[37] Preston is particularly valuable in gathering adequate pieces of evidence to show that Old and, especially, New Comedy, at least in so far as it is represented by Plautus and Terence, should not be left out of the list of theatrical genres which might have worked as sources of inspiration for Petronius' imagination. Rightly, in my opinion, attention should be drawn to the influence on Petronius not only of the mime but also of theatrical performances in general. Throughout this thesis it will be demonstrated how the author of the novel does not confine himself to mimic

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[34] Moering 1915, 8.

[35] Moering 1915, 9.

[36] Moering 1915, 37.

[37] Preston 1915, 260-269.

techniques as his sole source of laughter, but experiments also with conventions of Plautine farce or, broadly speaking, with methods common to all kinds of comedy, from Aristophanic slapstick and the humorous indecencies of Atellan farce to role-playing in New Comedy and the organisation of contemporary games in Roman amphitheatres.

After Preston's article, a series of lesser contributions to the specific subject has augmented the Petronian bibliography, among which Sandy deserves special mention for

> sweeping up around the edges, concentrating on a few selected portions of
> the Satyricon where there is still scope for original proposals.[38]

A large gap in the study of the novel's theatrical dimension was covered recently by Slater.[39] The author attempts a reading of the surviving portions of the novel through the American model of reader-response theory and gives special emphasis to the dramatic perspective of the narrative.[40] Moreover, he is the first person who, to my knowledge, suggests that certain passages in the text imply solitary reading rather than an oral reading of the novel through its public recitation. Sandy's, Slater's and other scholars' contributions are discussed in the following chapters where there is a scene-by-scene theatrical reading of the whole novel.

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[38] See Sandy 1974, 329-346 and, especially, his note 1 for a handy compilation of the most important bibliography dealing with the connection between Petronius and the mimes.

[39] Slater 1990(b), passim.

[40] See, however, Roger Beck's review of Slater's book in Phoenix 46.1 (1992), 72: "In his initial, linear reading Slater highlights those sections where the characters most obviously and explicitly lapse into mime, but there is no synoptic treatment of it as popular artistic form in his second, genre-oriented reading. There should be, for the form is organic to the work."

CHAPTER ONE.
TAMQUAM SCHOLASTICI: *SAT*. 1.1-5.1.1-22.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine such indications in the opening scene of the *Satyrica* as show that what is presented as a serious conversation on the educational defects of the author's era,[1] is in fact a hypocritical performance by two rogues who sought, by making pompous statements clothed in grave academic clichés, to satisfy not their mental hunger but their physical one. The theatricality of the scene can be demonstrated by means of the conventionally theatrical *personae* which the main characters adopt, their role-playing in the speeches they perform, and the exploitation of the subject in question as a typical source of entertainment in staged productions.

The usual number of actors in brief mimic plays was three.[2] So in this episode the DRAMATIS PERSONAE are three: Encolpius, Ascyltus, Agamemnon. All of them appear to be 'on stage', when the fragmentary scene begins; Ascyltus will sneak out sometime during Agamemnon's speech (6.1; 9.10). The setting represents the colonnade of a school of rhetoric (SCAENA porticu scholae).

The opening scene of the surviving sections of the novel depicts someone, who turns out to be the narrator Encolpius (3.1), in the colonnade of a rhetorical school (3.1), declaiming vehemently against the educational system of his time[3] which makes complete fools of the young men because of the impractical and unrealistic lessons it teaches them before they make their way into the forum as speakers (1.3); Encolpius, the amateur-declaimer, cannot resist the temptation, for his own reasons, to expand his reproach against teachers (2.2) and their

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[1] General information and a bibliographical list on education in Rome are provided by Kennedy 1978, 171-172 and note 3 (page 171).

[2] See Walsh 1970, 26. This, however, is not true in later, more elaborate mimic productions. In the Χαρίτιον-mime [see Grenfell - Hunt (edd.) 1903, 44-47, 50-55; Page (ed.) 1942, 336-349], which dates probably in the second century A.D., there are seven speaking parts and at some time on stage we have, together with the principal characters, a number of attendants, barbarian guards and Amazons; see Nicoll 1931, 85-86. These remarks are valid also for the Christian mimes (on which see Reich 1903, 80-88; Nicoll 1931, 121-122) or for individual plays of a later date, such as the *Laureolus*-mime, on which see page 232, note 65.

[3] A comprehensive brief account of the development of rhetoric in Rome during the first century A.D. is in Soverini 1985, 1707-1710 (extant bibliography on the topic in page 1707, note 3).

preference for the Asianic style (2.7).[4] The perennial controversies about educational systems incline one to conceive these passages as edifying instructions to improve, or even put an end to, the faults of teaching in the first century A.D.[5] The twofold question to be asked here, raising what has been a constant dispute in Petronian studies, is whether one should perceive Encolpius' ideas as sincere or hypocritical, and whether one should identify in this particular scene Encolpius the narrator with Petronius the author, a similar dilemma to that in the famous apologia of 132.15. Both of these problems can be solved, I believe, by a theatrical interpretation of the scene.

Petronius' own views on the issue are not obvious, but are implicitly expressed through the contrast between the speaker's character and the nature of his speech.[6] Parody of similar criticisms by eminent rhetoricians is certainly not out of the question,[7] but it is his sophisticated humour, rather than his desire to

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[4] Kennedy 1978, 177, note 19 and Sinclair 1984, 231-232 and notes 4, 5, give handy summaries of the two opposite scholarly views concerning whether or not Encolpius' comment reflects Petronius' position on the issue of Atticism and Asianism; cf. Soverini 1985, 1713-1723.

[5] See Kißel 1978, 311 and note 3 for bibliography on the subject.

[6] Sinclair 1984, 237: "[Petronius] places Encolpius' speech against a recognizable literary backdrop, so to provide a level of entertainment which goes well beneath its surface. ... [The] purpose is probably humour, in particular that which stems from the incongruity between the character of Encolpius and the manner in which on this occasion he has chosen to present himself: he parrots Cicero but is in effect a sort of absurd anti-Cicero, a vir perditus dicendi peritus whose eloquence serves no higher goal than the sating of his appetite. He drastically overplays his part. Thus like the declaimers whom he criticizes (1.2) he too is temporarily in alium orbem terrarum delatus - a distant and unreal world occupied not by pirates, tyrants and pestilence (1.3) but by Demosthenes, Hyperides and pestilential Asianism." Cf. Kennedy 1978, 176; Anderson 1982, 100.

[7] According to Sinclair 1984, 234-236, the sources of Encolpius' tirade are two: Dionysius of Halicarnassus, De Oratoribus Veteribus, 1.6.7 and Cicero (Sinclair finds similarities between Sat. 2.7 and Brut. 8; 51).

castigate a vice in the serious manner of the Roman satirists,[8] that made him stage a farcical scene with pretentious pseudo-intellectuals declaiming (3.1) against declamations in the fashionable setting of a rhetorical school.

The hypocritical role-playing of Encolpius can be seen not only in his unscrupulous exploitation of edifying theories for mean purposes, but also in the hackneyed character and anachronistic values of the educational rigmarole that Petronius deliberately forces upon the novel's hero. Encolpius' intentions are revealed unquestionably through Ascyltus' reproaches: the hope of getting an invitation to dinner, not an urgent need to deal with learned subjects, had made him stay and prolong his conversation with Agamemnon:

> 'multo me turpior es tu hercule, qui ut foris cenares poetam laudasti.' (10.2)
> 'By Hercules, you are far more shameless than I am, praising a poet to invite you out to dinner.'

Wandering around in order to find a victim who would provide a free meal, the two companions reached the school of rhetoric where Encolpius spotted his man in the person of Agamemnon, who perhaps had been delivering a speech; he aroused the teacher's interest in him by expressing his ideas openly in the colonnade of the school.[9] From then on both he and Ascyltus have been posing as scholars (tamquam scholastici 10.6)[10] and they have managed to acquire what they wanted (26.8-10), although only after a considerable time. This is the first time that the modern reader of the fragmentary novel witnesses Encolpius' amazing ability to adapt his persona to the style of the person with whom he is dealing, and to project an image which will allow him to take advantage of the

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[8] Such an interpretation is given by Highet [1941] 1983, 195, who believes that Petronius attributes speeches with serious purpose to "funny characters because satire is σπουδαιογελοῖον, and its essence is ridentem dicere verum, ..." But Petronius is not writing pure Roman satire. Sullivan 1963, 82 believes that the disreputable characters of Encolpius and Agamemnon do not undermine the validity of the literary opinions expressed here for two reasons: "the consistency of these views ... and the fact that we have none but disreputable sources anyway for the serious criticism which we have postulated as part of Petronius' purpose in writing the work". Similarly, Coffey 1976, 192 speculates that "Petronius may have enjoyed teasing his readers by putting sound views into the mouth of a rogue and a time-server."

[9] On the reconstruction of these events, see Cosci 1978, 201-204; Soverini 1985, 1728-1730.

[10] See Kennedy 1978, 175: "Scholasticus is in fact the word regularly used by the elder Seneca to refer to those people who thronged to declamations as though to athletic events, but who were not themselves students and not necessarily teachers. They are the declamation-buffs, the aficionados, for the most part enthusiastic amateurs."

situation. The changes in his behaviour must be visualised in terms of the skilful role-playing of a pantomime-actor who changed roles during his performance.[11] Here Encolpius becomes a professional flatterer, a figure popular in comedy and mimes,[12] praising Agamemnon, another flatterer, who -as we shall see- lives parasitically by affixing himself to rich victims of Trimalchio's type.

The content of the conversation itself is no more than a fruitless repetition of a dispute which belongs to the past and has no real strength at Petronius' time. After questioning the actual existence of Asianism in the time of Petronius' novel, Sinclair rightly concludes that

> the effect of assuming that Petronius was prepared to take such a position
> is to saddle him with a critical principle which was risibly out of date and
> would have pointed ultimately to his own ignorance. It makes far better
> sense to acknowledge that 2.7 belongs solely to Encolpius, that for his local
> purposes the author is impersonating his narrator without identifying with
> what he says.[13]

All this is quite clear in the light of the following events, but even without going beyond Encolpius' speech, one will find that in his carefully improvised and highly declamatory tirade (1.1-2.9) the recurrent mingling of rhetorical examples with images of food (mellitos verborum globulos et omnia dicta factaque quasi papavere et sesamo sparsa 'honey-sweet little balls of phrases and all words and deeds as if they were sprinkled with poppy-seed and sesame' 1.3; omnia quasi eodem cibo pasta 'as if everything was fed on the same diet' 2.8) and the

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11 See Jones 1991, 113: "For Encolpius ... style is not generated as an appropriate response to raw material, but is imposed on it in an attempt to make it cohere with a preselected and rigid persona, or more precisely a preselected tone, since Encolpius often uses as models specific episodes in the 'lives' of his heroes and moves from model to model somewhat as a pantomime artist swapped roles during the mime narration."

12 Menand. Κόλαξ; see the conversation between Artotrogus, the flattering parasite, and Pyrgopolynices, the soldier, in Pl. Mil 1-78. In the mimes, see Sen. Nat. Quaest. IVA. Praef. 12 Eo quidem magis hanc eius prudentiam et in evitando inevitabili malo pertinaciam te suspicere confessus es, quia speraveras posse apertis auribus recipi, quamvis blanda diceres, quia vera dicebas..... Nolo tamen displiceas tibi, quasi male egeris mimum et quasi ille aliquid iocorum aut doli suspicatus sit; non deprehendit te sed reppulit.

13 Sinclair 1984, 233. Cf. George 1966, 358, note 10: "The much publicized opinion that Petronius is an atticist ... is contradicted by the narrative of the rest of the work."; Kennedy 1978, 177: "Later in the Satyricon (68), however, Encolpius claims to be a great lover of Virgil. If so, his passion for pure Greek is a pose. More likely, both statements are pose."

comparison of students of rhetoric with people who live in the kitchen (2.1), expose implicitly the motive hidden in Encolpius' mind.

Moreover, one can imagine the theatrical gestures and facial expressions which Encolpius performed when he was imitating the speech of the declaimers who are presented as figures tormented by the Furies (alio genere furiarum declamatores inquietantur 1.1). Rhetoricians were fond of gesticulations and changes in the tone of their voice; both these elements were taken over from the histrionic repertoire, and aimed at the creation of an impressing and convincing image a rhetorician should present in front of his audience.[14] Cicero and Quintilian condemn the excessive exploitation of such means and give lengthy accounts of what means of expression a good speaker should avoid and what he should use in his speech.[15] In his imitation of declaimers who appear possessed when they are speaking, Encolpius certainly would not have missed the opportunity to elaborate on similar kinds of theatrical mannerisms. Like an actor on stage who is chased by the avenging Furies,[16] he must have raised the volume of his voice (clamant 1.1), changed his tone from an ordinary to a tragic one, made gestures showing the imaginary wounds that he earned in his struggle for the people's freedom, and pretended to have weak knees which cannot support the rest of his body.[17]

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[14] See Quint. I.O. III.xi.1 ff.; XI.i.39; XI.iii.75-78, 80-81, 85, 88-89, 123, 125, 184; and Clarke 1953, 85-86, 88-89.

[15] Cic. De Orat. III.220 Omnis autem hos motus subsequi debet gestus, non hic verba exprimens scaenicus, sed universam rem et sententiam non demonstratione, sed significatione declarans, laterum inflexione hac forti ac virili, non ab scaena et histrionibus, sed ab armis aut etiam a palaestra; manus autem minus arguta, digitis subsequens verba, non exprimens; bracchium procerius proiectum quasi quoddam telum orationis; supplosio pedis in contentionibus aut incipiendis aut finiendis. Brut. 203 Fuit enim Sulpicius vel maxime omnium, quos quidem ego audiverim, grandis et, ut ita dicam, tragicus orator. Vox cum magna tum suavis et splendida; gestus et motus corporis ita venustus ut tamen ad forum, non ad scaenam institutus videretur; incitata et volubilis nec ea redundans tamen nec circumfluens oratio; Quint. I.O. XI.iii.57, 181-182.

[16] Vergil (Aen. IV.471-473) says that Dido was tormented like Agamemnonius scaenis agitatus Orestes, / armatam facibus matrem et serpentibus atris / cum fugit ultricesque sedent in limine Dirae. See Pease (ed.) 1967, ad loc., and Cosci 1978, 205-206.

[17] See Sat. 1.1 "haec vulnera pro libertate publica excepi, hunc oculum pro vobis impendi; date mihi [ducem] qui me ducat ad liberos meos, nam succisi poplites membra non sustinent". The words in italics show the possible points in his speech where Encolpius would have used dramatic gestures to emphasize his imaginary sufferings.

The theatricality of this episode through the role-playing of its characters becomes more apparent in the ensuing speech of Agamemnon (3.1-5.1.1-20), the teacher whom Encolpius was addressing all this time. The persona of the bad orator was a common feature in the later mime[18] and perhaps even in earlier times as an aspect of the character of the school-master figure.[19] It is also suggested that

> the risible scholasticus in a collection of mimic jokes of late classical antiquity going under the name Philogelos, sometimes attributed to Philistion, may depend on a tradition of rhetorical theory being ridiculed on the mimic stage.[20]

As we shall see, Agamemnon's hypocritical behaviour, according to which he performs none of the things he preaches, is strikingly similar to the attitude of a character Βουλίας, in Sophron 109,

> who, in making a speech (ῥητορεύων), οὐδὲν ἀκόλουθον αὐτῶι λέγει.[21]

Thus, there is a strong case for putting in the same mimic tradition Petronius' rhetorician.

Almost twice as lengthy in his answer as Encolpius was in his 'learned' discourse,[22] the teacher of rhetoric with the Homeric name[23] seems impressed by Encolpius' style (sermonem habes non publici saporis 'Your speech has an

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[18] Chor. Ap. Mim. 26 ἰατρὸν ἢ ῥήτορα ... ἢ μοιχὸν ἢ δεσπότην ἢ δοῦλον; 109 ἔνι καὶ στρατιώτας ἰδεῖν καὶ ῥητόρων ἀκοῦσαι. On rhetoricians performing in mimic plays at public fairs see Choric. A.M. 95 ἡδεῖα δὲ καὶ πλήρης ἁβρότητος ἡ πανήγυρις αὕτη. ἀφικνεῖται γὰρ ἅπασα τῆς πόλεως ἢ σκηνή, παραγίνονται δὲ καὶ ῥήτορες ἄνδρες τὰ μίμων ὑποκρινόμενοι οὐ φαύλως βεβιωκότες οὐδ' εὐγλωττίᾳ λειπόμενοι τῶν ὁμοτέχνων. Cf. Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro., xl.

[19] On the figure of the school-master, see Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro., xli-xliii and xlii, note 2.

[20] Sandy 1974, 339, note 21, referring to Reich 1903, 458-475. An English translation of the jokes concerning the stupidity of the scholasticus is in Baldwin (ed.) 1983, 1-20, 48-49 and 50. Sandy, ibid., notes, also, that the "incongruous juxtaposition of jocosus and pilicrepus with scolasticus in CIL 6.9797 may point to a tradition of a 'type-cast' clownish scholar." Cf. Trimalchio's 'intellectual' discussions at 55.4-56.6.

[21] Cunningham (ed.) 1971, 81; cf. Rosenblüth 1909, 54.

[22] George 1966, 351 underlines Petronius' characteristic multileveld irony through the mutual parody of the rhetorical style which the two speakers practice upon each other.

[23] Slater 1990(b), 32 comments, rather over-confidently: "Though it should scarcely need stating, we are not to imagine that he and his assistant Menelaus were born with these names. There is a touch of pathos in the adoption of role here: a small-town teacher of rhetoric and his assistant recasting themselves as the sons of Atreus, heroes of the Trojan War."

uncommon flavour 3.1),[24] though, apparently, annoyed that folk have been listening to someone else, rather than himself, speaking for so long and so rhetorically (3.1). He regards Encolpius as someone worthy of sharing with him the mystery of his art (arte secreta 3.1) and seeks to refute one by one Encolpius' arguments evoking, in a banal manner, Cicero's authoritative ideas (3.2).[25] The comparison Agamemnon makes between the master of oratory (eloquentiae magister 3.4) and the fictional figures of the flatterers who are after the rich man's dinners, and say everything to gain his favour (3.3), discloses his self-confessed hypocrisy and classifies him as the stock theatrical figure of the parasite[26] (sicut ficti adulatores 3.3).[27] Such a character occurs frequently in the Roman comedies,[28] sometimes delivering a brief monologue in which he justifies in a comic manner his profession (Ergasilus in *Capt.* 69-90; Saturio in *Persa*, 53-61; Gelasimus in *Stichus*, 155-233; Gnatho in *Eun.* 248-264) and explains how he achieves his aim; there is a similarity here to Agamemnon's use of the image of the fisherman with the bait to account for his methods (cf. Peniculus in *Men.* 77-95). He skilfully absolves the teachers of Encolpius' accusation and eloquently puts the blame on the students' parents who have many ambitions for their children's future, but want those ambitions realised immediately (4.1-3).

Opportunities for comic situations derived from school-life incidents are appropriately exploited by Aristophanes, *Clouds*:

Socrates and his students are pale from their indoor life (103, 119 f., 198 f., 1112, 1171), and Chairephon in particular is 'half dead' (504). They are unkempt and dirty (836 f.), they wear no sandals (103, 362), their premises

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[24] The same admiration is expressed by Chrysis at Encolpius / Polyaenus' schema (126.8-9). Kennedy 1978, 176 implausibly suggests that Agamemnon has taken a fancy to Encolpius.

[25] Cicero, *Pro Caelio* 41 (referring to the Stoics) illud unum derectum iter ad laudem cum labore qui probaverunt, prope soli iam in scholis sunt relicti. See Austin (ed.) [3]1960, ad loc.

[26] See Rosenblüth 1909, 55.

[27] On ficti as a technical theatrical term see Ovid, *Rem. Am.* 755 illic (i.e. in theatro) adsidue ficti saltantur amantes, and cf. *Th.L.L.* s.v. fingo, I.C.3 (de arte histrionis).

[28] A list of parasites in Plautus and Terence would include: Parasitus (*Asinaria; Bacchides*), Ergasilus (*Captivi*), Curculio (*Curculio*), Peniculus (*Menaechmi*), Artotrogus (*Miles*), Saturio (*Persa*), Gelasimus (*Stichus*), Gnatho (*Eunuchus*), Phormio (*Phormio*). On parasites employed as theatrical figures by Greek and Roman Comedy, see Nesselrath 1985, 15-53; 65-70; 92-111. This character was usually played in mimes by the actor secundarum partium. On the type of the mimus edax, see Brugnoli 1982, 87-88.

and furniture are verminous (694 ff., cf. 144 ff.), and since they do nothing which the man in the street (or the field) regards as work (316, 334) it is not surprising that they are poor (175) and rely for a living on stealing other people's clothes (179, 497, 856 ff.). Anyone who enrols in the school must be prepared (414 ff.) to endure cold and hunger, and to abstain from wine and athletic exercise.[29]

Similarly, the scene of Herodas' Third Mime might be a school, although not necessarily one of rhetoric.[30] In that mime, Λαμπρίσκος, the rigid teacher, uses fruitless methods (chastisement) to improve his pupil's foul character (but note that, despite his seemingly honest promises at lines 82-83 and 86, Κότταλος manages to escape at line 93, shouting a swear-word), while Μητροτίμα, the mother of the young student Κότταλος, has the same demands for her son's education as the parents whom Agamemnon accuses as the cause of the educational decline (4.1-2).

As in comedies where educational methods of past and present are juxtaposed to provide a comic effect,[31] so Petronius employs the same contrast and ridicules it, since he puts it in the mouth of hypocrites like Encolpius (2.3-4) or Agamemnon (4.3-4). The solution to the educational problem, according to Agamemnon, lies in a programme of life where severity (4.3; 5.1.1) and frugality (5.1.3) dominate, precisely the two things which Agamemnon does not practise. In his following improvisational carmen (5.1),[32] he unveils his own tactics in the person of those he accuses:[33] he is a frequent cliens at Trimalchio's dinners (Agamemnon mihi carissime 48.7) and an expert in knowing how to get an invitation

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[29] Dover (ed.) 1968, Intro., xxxiii-xxxiv.

[30] Cf. Cunningham (ed.) 1971, 103.

[31] See Lydus' complaints in Pl. Bacch. 420-446; Barsby (ed.) 1986, 133-134.

[32] Cugusi 1967, 68 speculates that even the diversity of metres in Agamemnon's composition is evidence that "Petronio voglia rendere un' idea della vacua pretesa abilità di retore di Agamemnone: ci si troverebbe perciò di fronte ad una felice caratterizzazione del personaggio."

[33] George 1974, 132-133 compares the two literary critics of the novel, Agamemnon and Eumolpus:
"Both are professed admirers of the bona mens (Sat. 3.1; 84.4); both undertake the edification of Encolpius; both offer pastiche among their accomplishments; both are extremely conservative in their attitudes; both are incompetent hypocrites, who fail to practise what they preach so badly. One does not expect from them a serious critique of literature or education, any more than one would expect a profound religious experience at the hands of Quartilla, or a true model of the high Roman fashion in Trimalchio's triclinium."

(48.5; 52.7) / *cliensque cenas impotentium captet* 5.1.5; he prefers to underestimate the quality of his own intellect by praising Trimalchio's intellectual pretensions (48.7) and accepting all his peculiar whims (47.7) / *nec perditis addictus obruat vino \ mentis calorem* 5.1.6-7; finally, he applauds Trimalchio's tasteless histrionics and spectacular effects (40.1) / *neve plausor in scaenam \ sedeat redemptus histrionis ad rictus* 5.1.7-8.

A theatrical analysis of the scene indicates that Petronius was merely playing with conventional situations and stock figures, and should in no way be identified with Encolpius' *persona* in this particular incident. Both Encolpius and Agamemnon are hilarious caricatures of serious men of letters who care for the betterment of young students. Their role-playing, a recurrent motif and a constant feature in the characters of the other persons in the rest of the novel, defines this scene as a farce, not of action, but of words, where the mimic juxtaposition between illusion and reality, another favourite Petronian pattern, underlines the theatricality of the novel and creates an enjoyable atmosphere of fun and entertainment without drawing any serious psychological conclusion about the characters' personalities.[34]

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[34] Wooten 1976, 70-71, is misleading: "The characters in the *Satyricon* are intelligent and well-read; but they are immature, naive and shallow. From their education they have gotten an impression that life is romantic, dramatic, and exciting. When they leave school, they find that life, for most men, is mundane and dull (*alium orbem terrarum*); however, their education has turned them into romantic dreamers who cannot accept life as it is. They begin to long for the romance, the drama, and the adventure which they have seen in the lives of those fictional, or sometimes historical, characters about whom they have read. They attempt, therefore, to imitate the characters of literature, constantly casting around for literary parallels to their own lives, which destroys everything in their own personalities which is natural and spontaneous. Their emotions are the false and exaggerated emotions of the rhetorical declaimer; in their own lives they are attempting to act out the drama of the declamations."

CHAPTER TWO.

RIXA INTER ZELOTYPOS ET AMASIUNCULOS: *SAT.* 6.1-11.4.

Encolpius, pretending to be a scholar (scholasticus) interested in the decline of rhetoric, has succeeded in getting what he really wanted from Agamemnon: an invitation to dinner (cf. 10.2; 10.6; 26.9-10). The hypocrisy of his behaviour regarding the subject of rhetoric and education is shown clearly when the young amateur-rhetor grasps the opportunity and leaves the place of 'the broken bottles and the interpretation of dreams' (vitrea fracta et somniorum interpretamenta 10.1) and merges with a great crowd of students (ingens turba scholasticorum) which makes fun of the improvised declamation (extemporali declamatione) of another ambitious rhetor (6.1).

The passages of the novel from Encolpius' departure up to the scene in the market-place, despite the lacunose condition of the text,[1] can be divided into two main episodes: the scene in the brothel (6.1-8.4) and the rivalry (aemulatio) of Encolpius and Ascyltus for Giton's love (9.1-11.4), a rivalry which will reach its climax at 79.12 ff., where Giton will have to choose between his two suitors. The theatrical aspect of these events can be seen in the role-playing of the characters and the sexual 'comedy of manners' they perform, generated by Encolpius' excessive jealousy in his relationship with his lover Giton and his rival Ascyltus. The triangular pattern of the Dramatis Personae in both parts of the scene, is apparent once more: Encolpius / Ascyltus / old woman, and Encolpius / Ascyltus / Giton.

The brothel-scene is a topic for discussion by scholars mainly because it offers one of the best written descriptions of a Roman brothel.[2] This scene, however, does not provide a realistic description of a low-life incident, but is composed in order to present an amusingly obscene spectacle in a brothel where indecent innuendos are skilfully combined with highly sophisticated references to literary texts in Petronius' usual mimic manner. The constant juxtaposition of the sordid world, in which the characters move, and the theatrical fantasy, in which they actually live, makes it plain that the author did not intend a photographic representation of a specific social stratum of his era, but rather used that stratum as the starting-point for his narrative and as the means through which he would create his own theatrical world.

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[1] See Van Thiel 1971, 27-29.

[2] See Henriques 1962, 124 ff., for a description of Roman brothels. Reference to the *Sat.*-brothel is made on page 126.

It is generally assumed that the homosexual liaison between Encolpius and Giton, and the threatening appearances of rivals who take a fancy to either of the couple, are due to Petronius' deliberate parody of the ideal Greek romance where the beautiful and chaste hero and heroine encounter lustful strangers who intend to sunder the lovers.[3] Marital unfaithfulness, however, occurs as a standard motif also on the comic stage where it creates funny situations through the husband's attempts to conceal his peccadillo and the wife's investigations to reveal it.[4] Adultery on the woman's part became more popular as a topic for performance by the uninhibited theatre of the mimes, and here the humour emerges from the cunning schemes which the wife devises in order to hide her lover and fool her jealous husband.[5] Both of these situations (that is, jealousy and adultery) will be exploited for comic effects by Petronius through Encolpius' love-affair with the hypocrite Giton (79.9-80.8; 91.1-92.4; 100.1-2), and through Trimalchio's marital problems (74.8-17) later on in the novel. The first instance in the surviving text of Encolpius' jealous character which leads him into trouble is found here:[6] by underscoring constantly sexual jealousy as a primary feature in Encolpius' nature, Petronius transforms his hero into the typecast figure of the zelotypus, as we know it from Herodas' Fifth Mime or the Oxyrhynchus mime of 'The Faithless Wife' or Juvenal's graphic reference to the part.[7] The assumption of this role by the narrator defines the expectations and forms the reaction that the audience of the novel ought to have to the pathetic description of such events: the author implicitly instructs them to regard the sexual escapades of Giton and Ascyltus at the expense of poor Encolpius as nothing more than pure entertainment.

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[3] See Heinze 1899, 495-497; Walsh 1970, 8-9 and note 4 (page 8).

[4] See, for example, the couples of Demaenetus and Artemona (Pl. *Asin.* 878-937), Lysidamus and Cleustrata (*Cas.* 937-1008), Menaechmus I and Matrona (*Men.* 110-122). On the literary history of the motif of jealousy within a sexual context (among others there is a discussion of the theme in Old and New Comedy, Greek and Roman mimes), see Fantham 1986, 45-57.

[5] See below, pages 207-209 .

[6] See Preston 1915, 265-266: "The spasmodic jealousy of Encolpius is humorous only where it results, as it frequently does, in his personal discomfiture; in this he corresponds to what we know of the zelotypus as a recognised type in mime and comedy."

[7] See Juv. VIII.196-197 mortem sic quisquam exhorruit, ut sit / zelotypus Thymeles, stupidi collega Corinthi ? and cf. Mayor (ed.) 1881, ad loc. For the text of the Oxyrhynchus-mime, see Grenfell - Hunt (edd.) 1903, 49-50; Page (ed.) 1942, 352-360.

Following the theatrical plot we see that Encolpius seems to be anxious when he notices Ascyltus' sudden departure. We do not learn the cause of this anxiety, although it is likely that he is afraid of a love-conspiracy between his two companions behind his back. Here the element of role-playing, as evidenced in the scene at the school of rhetoric, continues: Encolpius follows Ascyltus hurriedly (cursim 6.2) but loses his way, walks round in circles and always comes back to the same point from where he started (6.4).[8] Totally exhausted and sweating, he asks an old woman for information about his lodgings (7.1) in the way that Aeneas inquired of his mother Venus when he reached Carthage.[9] It is important to note that this choice of persons -or, rather, roles- is not accidental but forms the result of Encolpius' initiative to portray his present desperate situation as if he were playing a heroic role.[10] Thus, not only does he become Aeneas, a role that will be adopted many times later on in the novel by the hero, but the old woman (anicula) becomes the divine Aphrodite (7.2).

However, in Petronius' mimic subversion of the Vergilian scene, Aeneas' mother is nothing but a clever bawd who has not necessarily read her *Aeneid* but certainly knows how to take advantage of a man's disorientation and lead him not where he lives but where he should live: in a brothel ('hic' inquit 'debes habitare' 7.2).[11] There is no description of her at all except for the country-vegetables (agreste holus) she is selling (7.1). By focussing our attention on the rural vegetable the author perhaps intends us to visualise this woman as an old lady in the comic tradition of the λαχανόπωλις or λαχανοπωλήτρια, a recurrent figure in Aristophanes' *Wasps* 497 and *Thesm.* 387, denoting a woman of low moral character.[12] Possible satirical influences on the old woman's personality should not be disregarded[13] but the method in which a bawd has turned into a divine

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[8] On the labyrinthine structure of this scene see Fedeli 1981(a), 169 and 1981(b), 110. Zeitlin 1971(b), 656 interprets wrongly this recurrent pattern of Encolpius losing his way as a device used "to heighten the senseless drift of experience."

[9] *Aen.* I.330 ff. Cf. Walsh 1970, 87; Slater 1990, 33, note 1.

[10] Collignon 1892, 118-131 has collected the relevant instances of such Vergilian role-playing.

[11] On the old woman's scurrilous improvisation see Corbett 1970, 98-99; 1986, 82-83; Slater 1990, 33.

[12] See Rogers (ed.) 1904, ad Arist. *Thesm.* 387. Adams 1982, 29, note 2 thinks, however, that the obscene interpretation of holus in this passage is "totally implausible".

[13] On invective against old women in Satire see Richlin 1983, 109-116; Currie 1989, 329, and note 29.

Roman mother while Encolpius, lost in a disreputable area, has become a wandering hero, supports the case for the possible impact the mimes may have had on the formation of this scene, especially since Vergil's poem seems to have been a standard source of material for stage-productions of this kind.[14]

The brothel itself, described as an obscure quarter (locum secretiorem 7.2) and a perverted place (loco tam deformi 7.5), does not lack theatrical references. There is a fabula Atellana by Pomponius under the title *Prostibulum* and many other comic fragments dealing with prostitutes.[15] Moreover, Plautus' comedies abound in examples where part of the scenery is the house of a courtesan or of a pimp.[16] The painted scene and the faintly preserved inscription on a beaker which dates to the first or second century A.D., have been considered as a scene from an anonymous mime whose setting may have been an expensive and fashionable bordello:

> The individual roles of the dramatis mimi can be hypothesized as follows: A Wine-drinker (A) appears barefoot near the door, perhaps carrying a jug of wine. As he attempts an exit - saying to himself (or in response) his gnomic pronouncements against the brothel's expensive courtesans - the Brothel-keeper (B) beckons him back. He offers him a different Courtesan, "Opora" (C), for his taking, but she protests that her master has called her from another customer. A Slave or Attendant (D) may serve as a type of narrator for the audience.[17]

Again, the British Museum No 1984 papyrus from Fayoum (circa second century A.D.) contains probably a mime-scene of a love-affair and may be taking place in

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[14] See Suet. *Nero* 54 (Vergili Turnum), Macr. *Sat.* V.17.5 (the love-affair between Dido and Aeneas), August. *Serm.* CCXLII.V.5 (*PL* 38.1136 Migne) (Aeneas' descent to the Underworld), Jerome, *Lett* XXI.13 (At nunc etiam sacerdotes Dei omissis evangeliis et prophetis videmus comoedias legere, amatoria bucolicorum versuum verba cantare, tenere Vergilium, ...). A list of more references to these farcical performances is available in Horsfall 1989, 87, note 46.

[15] Pomp.148-158 (Fras.); cf. Frassinetti (ed.) 1967, 107. The titles *Hetaera* (a fabula palliata by Turpilius), *Meretrix* (a fabula palliata by Caecilius), *Hetaera* (a fabula Atellana by Novius), *Hetaera* (a mime by Laberius) show the popularity of the motif. Herodas' Second Mime is connected with brothel-affairs: see Rosenblüth 1909, 52.

[16] See, e.g., Plautus' *Menaechmi, Persa, Poenulus, Pseudolus* and *Truculentus.* Cf., also, Terence's *Eunuchus, Phormio.*

[17] See Kotansky 1981, 87-92: the quotation comes from page 91.

a brothel with a pimp (?) involved.[18] Nevertheless, one should not go as far as to say that this scene of the novel was inspired when Petronius saw a mimic (or pantomimic) performance based on a Vergilian episode. The starting-point must have been everyday low-life events which were conceived by the author through the ridiculous improvisation of roles in the field of literary tradition and, especially, through the masks of theatrical life.

Trying to get away from that filthy place, Encolpius meets Ascyltus at the other entrance to the brothel (7.4). The reference to another entrance need not be interpreted only as the actual description of a brothel with two entrances but could help the audience of the novel to visualise the place as a stage with two opposite entrances. Ascyltus seems equally exhausted and half-dead (aeque lassus ac moriens 7.4) and Encolpius laughs (7.5), not only from relief because he happened to find in that horrible place the very person he was looking for, but also to mock Ascyltus, and ironically asks for the reason of his presence there (7.5). The comic point is that Encolpius is as exhausted and half-dead as Ascyltus is (cf. his description at 6.4); nevertheless, he does not see his own condition (how he was fooled by the anicula) but laughs at Ascyltus' appearance. The audience, however, understands that they both were somehow cheated. The motif of juxtaposition of two persons placed one opposite the other in comic contrast resembles the theatrical structure of a spectacle produced before an audience, and will be described more clearly at 92.8 (Eumolpus vs. Ascyltus at the baths) or at 140.11 (Eumolpus, Philomela's daughter and Corax vs. Encolpius and Philomela's son), to name but a few other instances in the Sat..[19]

The narrator's comment on the possible reason for this funny coincidence (putares ab eadem anicula esse deductum 'One would think that he was brought by the same little old woman' 7.4) prepares the audience for Ascyltus' forthcoming story. Ascyltus' scenario presents many striking similarities to Encolpius' story.[20] It is uncertain, however, whether we should accept Ascyltus' version as true or false. This decision depends partly on the vague phrase 'a little while ago' (paulo ante 9.4) which defines the period of time in which Ascyltus tried to assault Giton. On the other hand, one should not forget that precisely the same incident of

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[18] See Körte 1920, 4 and 8.

[19] See Gill 1973, 180, and my discussion of these passages on pages 195-196, 279.

[20] mater 7.1 / pater familiae 8.2; numquid scis ubi ego habitem? 7.1 / ducem se itineris humanissime promisit 8.2; in locum secretiorem venimus 7.2 / per anfractus deinde obscurissimos 8.3; etc.

someone making advances to Ascyltus will occur at 92.7-10, where the indefatigable man will eventually accept the sexual proposals of the infamous Roman knight. Due to the fragmentation of the text, one can only speculate on what had happened to Encolpius and Ascyltus at the brothel. It seems that a fight takes place induced by the strong influence of the aphrodisiac satyrion (8.4). The whole incident reminds one of a farcical scene, the drink and the fracas being popular motifs in slapstick theatre.[21]

Again because of the fragmentary state of the text, Giton's appearance in the scene is quite peculiar. This creature, whose actual description we learn only at 97.2 (puer ... annorum circa XVI, crispus, mollis, formosus 'a boy ... about sixteen years old, with curly hair, soft skin, good looks'; cf. 58.5 comula ista besalis 'this eight-inch curly hair of yours), looks to Encolpius' Vergilian eyes like a heavenly figure covered charmingly in mist (9.1). The author does not fail to point out the dramatic side of Giton's personality: the persistent refusal to tell the truth, the stubbornness, the tears, the hypocritical dignity (9.2-3); everything in his behaviour shows that the way he expresses his feelings is entirely artificial and false.[22] In fact, the boy's technique of expressing virtue[23] and his hesitation to disclose what happened, resemble strikingly Seneca's account (*Ep.* XI.7) of the methods which actors adopt to imitate modesty, and the tricky ways of slaves in Roman comedies in order to succeed in enticing other characters into a trap:

> Artifices scaenici, qui imitantur adfectus, qui metum et trepidationem exprimunt, qui tristitiam repraesentant, hoc indicio imitantur verecundiam: deiciunt enim vultum, verba submittunt, figunt in terram oculos et deprimunt. Ruborem sibi exprimere non possunt; nec prohibetur hic nec adducitur;
>
> 'Performers on stage, who imitate emotions, who depict fear and perturbation, who portray sorrow, imitate modesty with the following signs: they lower their gaze, reduce the tone of their voice, keep their eyes fixed on the ground and force them down. They cannot express blushing on their faces, for this emotion can be neither prevented nor induced.'

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[21] On the use of drinks in mime-plots see Plut. *De Sollertia Animalium*, 973E (καὶ φαρμάκου ποιουμένων ἐν αὐτῷ πεῖραν ὑπνωτικοῦ μὲν ὑποκειμένου δ' εἶναι θανασίμου); the Μοιχεύτρια-mime 42-43 Page. On the fracas as a comic device see below, page 202, note 39; page 233, notes 70 and 71. On drunkenness as a source for comic effects see below, page 71, note 68.

[22] Cf. Charinus' gestures to look sad in Pl. *Merc.* 599-600.

[23] verecundia; cf. 25.3 Gitona, verecundissimum puerum; 93.4 multaque alia moderationis verecundiaeque verba, quae formam eius (i.e., Gitonis) egregie decebant.

Similarly, when Tranio lies to Theopropides that his son, Philolaches, has bought a house, he must convince him that this new purchase is an excellent bargain; so he uses tricks, such as pseudo-hesitation and exclamations, and makes the old man insist on asking and thus fall into the trap (Pl. *Most.* 640-642).

Giton narrates the cause of his grief: Ascyltus tried to rape him (9.4-5). It is not clear from Giton's description if the actual rape eventually took place. We do not need to find out. The significant detail to be noted is that not only the description of the whole incident is made in an epic tone which frames the sexual events but that the actual rape-attempt is described as a role-game. Giton becomes the prudent Lucretia and Ascyltus the lewd Tarquinius, who uses his penis for a sword.[24] This incident is just a small sample of how Encolpius, Giton and most of the other heroes of the novel perceive their way of living: like acting roles.[25] This role-playing, however, has nothing to do with psychological or any other kind of anxiety or with the necessity for self-expression either by the main characters or by the author of the novel.[26] Ascyltus' historical framing of his attempt to rape Giton resembles strongly the kind of literary parody the farcical stage of the phlyaces or the theatre of the mimes would have practised in their stage-productions. Although legends and historical facts were a popular material in theatrical forms,[27] it is, however, far-fetched to claim that here also we have a

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[24] See Adams 1982, 21.

[25] The most complete analysis of Giton's character is, up to now, that of George 1966, 338-342. See his comment on 9.5: "Giton's habit of casting around for literary parallels to his actual situation is symptomatic of an outlook in life which has been drastically coloured by his knowledge of literature (we can imagine his approval of the terms, if not of the substance, of Ascyltus' threat [9.5]: "If you are playing Lucretia, here is your Tarquin") (pages 340-341). Cf. Wooten 1976, 71.

[26] See, e.g., Rankin 1969(a), 116: "The tragedy of people like Encolpius is perhaps that on no level are they capable of being taken seriously, though they are capable of suffering." Slater's brilliant remarks on the theatricality of the *Sat.* conclude, unfortunately, thus: "Encolpius' quest for meaning in the *Satyricon* takes two forms, then: a search for a frame which will allow him to interpret and manipulate experience outside himself, and a search for a role which will allow him to fashion a meaningful self (i.e., be able to contain and integrate his inner experiences) ... A similar sense of incompleteness and longing for meaning informs his intellect. Encolpius wanders from the declamations of the rhetorical schools to monuments of visual arts and the efforts of contemporary poetry, neither finding what he seeks nor ceasing to search ..." (1990b, 248).

[27] On the comic subversion of famous scenes (rape of Cassandra, Antigone captured, etc.) in the phlyax-vases of the fourth century B.C., see Trendall 1967, 15-17; Taplin 1993, 79-88. Cf. Plautus' *Amphitruo.* For the ridiculing treatment of mythological figures by the mimes see Wüst 1932, 1752, cols. 9-22; Rosenblüth 1909, 44-45; above, page 10, note 6.

similar actual theatrical piece of farce. The fact remains, though, that the element of the theatrical game is obvious -even though indirect- and quite amusing, since two of the most well-known characters of Roman historical tradition are used in such a low-life event.

The quarrel which follows between Encolpius and Ascyltus (9.6-10.2) is defined from the start as false, exaggerated, artificial. Surrounded by the verb 'pretend' (finxit 9.7) at the beginning, and by shouts of laughter (in risum diffusi 10.3) at the end, it suggests that one should interpret everything which is said in this exchange of assaults in its staged context and not necessarily accept it as a source of information for the lost parts of the novel or as a realistic sample of a homosexual's angry mood.[28] A close examination of the young men's insulting speeches reveals the rhetorical side of this most extraordinary dialogue through the symmetrical way in which the phrases are disposed and the innovative manner in which complicated and comic nouns of abuse are formed.[29]

It is true that the pieces of information which Ascyltus provides about Encolpius can tempt the contemporary reader to reconstruct Encolpius' past.[30] Unfortunately, we are not able by means of comparison with the rest of the text to check whether they are true or simply groundless accusations. The possibilities of murder, of participating in gladiatorial shows, of failing to have sex with a woman and of a sexual scene in a garden[31] stimulate the audience's fantasy and could fit with the nature of this novel. It has been thoroughly discussed whether the abusive allegations are true or not.[32] I believe that there is not enough evidence to prove definitely that we are dealing here with real facts of Encolpius' past, although these actions are not incompatible with his character. But the

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[28] Richardson 1984, 116 regards Ascyltus' violent behaviour (9.4-5; 11.4; 79.9) as an example of the quarrels between homosexual lovers as described in Xen. *Symp.* 8.4.

[29] See Walsh 1970, 87.

[30] For such a reconstruction see Daviault 1982, 165-172.

[31] *Sat.* 9.8-10. A lengthy discussion of these passages is provided by Soverini 1976, 99-107.

[32] See Highet's arbitrary comments, 1983,198. Bagnani 1956, 24-27 and Pack 1960, 31-32 regard the passages not as biographical but as abusive, although they paradoxically accept, together with Soverini 1976, 101, note 5 and 102, note 6, the event of murder by Encolpius as an actual fact. Mulroy 1970, 255 interprets rightly the references to gladiators in their proper sexual context. Cf., also, Soverini 1978, 265-266. Cerutti and Richardson 1989, 594 speculate that Ascyltus' abuses refer to Encolpius' having taken part in an obscene gladiatorial ludus, like those described by Seneca (*NQ* VII.31.3) and Juvenal (*S.* VI. 01-013).

double reference to the gladiators (gladiator obscene 9.8; meridiana harena 9.8)[33] certainly signifies that Ascyltus gives his words a fighting character (cf. pugnasti 9.10) and chooses to classify poor Encolpius in the category of the unsuccessful show-man. Gladiators were notorious for their virility[34] and by this characterization Ascyltus is able to summarise skilfully Encolpius' sexual insufficiency and his amphitheatre-persona.

During that breathless succession of name-calling[35] the audience is assured once and for all about the hypocritical behaviour of the hero in the scene at the school of rhetoric (10.2-3). The masks have fallen. Only one thing is left now to finish the fracas, the mimic laughter. It is found in many other 'theatrical' scenes of the novel (cf. 18.7; 19.1; 140.10), affirming the insincerity of the attitudes adopted, and constitutes an inseparable element of the mimic style.[36]

Encolpius insists on his desire to get rid of Ascyltus (10.7). The temporary postponement of their separation, due to their role-playing as scholars (tamquam scholastici 10.6), makes Encolpius express his feelings in an apophthegm, similar to those of the mimographer Publilius Syrus: tardum est differre quod placet (10.7).[37]

The ensuing love-scene between Encolpius and Giton while Ascyltus is watching through the door includes most of the motifs one will recognise mainly in the other sexual scenes of the novel with a theatrical pattern: the furtive glance at other people's love-making (cum Ascyltos furtim se foribus admovit 'when Ascyltus moved stealthily to the door' 11.2),[38] the explosive laughter (risu itaque

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[33] For this textual suggestion see Walsh 1967, 137-138. Kileen 1969, 127-128 accepts the text as it is, taking ruina to mean 'financial ruin'. Bagnani 1956, 27 takes, improbably, ruina to refer to the harena and not to the gladiator (he translates: 'whom the arena dismissed because of its collapse'), thus connecting the event with the actual disastrous collapse of the amphitheatre in Fidenae in 27 A.D.

[34] See Balsdon's comments, 1969, 297.

[35] Paschall 1939, 19-20 compares Ascyltus' abuse homo stultissime (10.1) with similar insulting expressions in the Roman comedy, especially directed against the comicos stultos senes (Caec. Stat. 243; Pl. Bacch. 945; Capt. 656).

[36] See Quint. VI.iii.8: Cum videatur autem res levis, et quae ab scurris, mimis, insipientibus denique saepe moveatur, tamen habet vim nescio an imperiosissimam et cui repugnari minime potest. On the mimicus risus see Nicoll 1931, 126-127, and below page 63, note 34.

[37] Cf. P. Syrus, Sent., 302: Longum est, quodcumque flagitavit cupiditas in Friedrich (ed.) 1964, 54.

[38] Cf. Sat. 26.4; 96.1; 140.11 and see Preston 1915, 262.

plausuque cellulam implevit 'thus he filled the small room with laughter and applause' 11.2),[39] the violent blows (lorum de pera solvit et me coepit non perfunctorie verberare 'he untied a leather strap from his bag and began to flog me diligently' 11.4),[40] the neologisms or sexual puns (vesticontubernium facis? 10.4).[41]

The scene is structured in the comic manner of what may be termed as a 'double audience-spectacle' pattern; according to this comic device, the playwright creates two theatrical levels on stage, and puts one group of characters on each level. The events which take place on one of the levels form the spectacle for the character(s) of the other, while the audience of the actual performance watches both groups and levels simultaneously.[42] This enables the playwright to create comedy through the effective contrast of funny situations. A structure of this kind differs from the 'play-within-a-play' scenes where the spectacle on one of the levels is a deliberately staged performance intended to trick the character(s) / audience of the other level.[43] Its essence is nearer to an eavesdropping-scene, although it differs slightly in that there a character usually

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[39] Cf. Sat. 18.7; 19.1; 140.10.

[40] The same maltreatment occurs in the Quartilla-scene, as well. It is better to see it in the tradition of pseudo-violence in the comedies or in the mime (e.g. Herodas' Fifth Mime or the Oxyrhynchus mime of the Μοιχεύτρια) than as an example of sadism in the novel, a covert sexual preference of the author (Sullivan 1968(a), 250 connects it, along with other instances, to scopophilia). See below, page 202, note 39.

[41] This word is not included in the OLD. Rose 1968, 253-254 collects the possible emendations and comments on them. He emends: veste contubernium ("are you setting up a home under your coat?"). I do not see why an emendation is needed. Why should not Petronius use a word that, as Fraenkel comments (see Rose 1968, 253), is more Plautine than Petronian? One should not forget the existence of another neologism in a similar context to that: pygesiaca sacra (140.5. This is, however, only Ernout's reading. In his third edition of the novel, Müller reads Aphrodisiaca sacra. See my discussion of this passage on pages 276-277).

[42] See, for example, Pl. Asin. 878-910: Artemona and the parasite are watching Argyrippus, Philaenium and Demaenetus revelling. Cf. Slater 1985, 162-165.

[43] See, for example, Pl. Cas. 621-719: Ampelisca pretends in a tragic manner in front of Lysidamus that Casina has gone mad; Pl. Mil. 1216-1280: Acroteleutium pretends to be enamoured by the pompous soldier, while Pyrgopolynices is listening to her conversation with her maid.

just listens carefully without making any comments or movements.[44] In the passage in the novel, Ascyltus is behind the door and silently watches Giton and Encolpius making love. The audience of the novel watches not only the homosexual couple but Ascyltus and his movements (*furtim se foribus admovit discussisque fortissime claustris* 'he moved towards the door without being noticed, and shook back the bolts very violently' 11.2) at the same time. The organisation as well as the function of the two spectacles is strikingly similar to the organisation and function of other spectacles: the Philomela-scene (140.11), the fracas-scene in the inn (96.1-2). This peeping through the door, which will prove to be a favourite Petronian technique, does not signify any scopophiliac tendencies[45] and should not be regarded as an influence emerging from the structure of elegiac poetry, as Schmeling has suggested.[46] It must be seen as a visual device for comic purposes, one unit in the whole context of farcical sexual adventures.

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[44] In Plautus' *Trinummus*, Stasimus, the slave, watches Lesbonicus and Lysiteles, the two young men, arguing on the matter of the dowry of Lesbonicus' sister (627-704). Although Stasimus withdraws at the beginning of the scene (625-626) and does not make any comments in between, at the end he functions as both the audience and the judges who give the prize of best comedy to Lysiteles (705-706). He even explains comically the criteria adopted for such a decision (707).

[45] See Sullivan 1968(a), 242.

[46] See Schmeling 1971, 338.

CHAPTER THREE.
TUNICULARIA: *SAT*. 12.1-15.9.

It is generally accepted by the majority of scholars who are dealing with the reconstruction of the *Satyrica*, that the scene in the market-place follows the theatrically presented love-making (vesticontubernium) of Encolpius and Giton (11.4), and precedes Quartilla's ritual orgies (16.1 ff.). The frequent gaps in chapters one to twenty seven of the surviving text make the plot of the novel difficult to follow[1] and, despite some phrases, which might function as links or signs for the correct order of the episodes,[2] there is not a firmly fixed coherence in the adventures before the Cena Trimalchionis. Sullivan rightly points out some of the questions this lack of coherence raises: are we to identify the woman accompanying the peasant (12.3; 14.5) with the one that precedes Quartilla into the heroes' room (16.3)? Should we take at face-value the robberies (latrocinia 17.4), of which Quartilla accuses the friends, referring to the theft of the cloak (12.2 raptum latrocinio pallium), or should we take it metaphorically? Sullivan's suggestion, however, is no more than speculation. For reasons not explained clearly, he is inclined to think

> that 16-26.6 only is a displaced portion of BOOK XIV and that 1-15 is a
> more or less continuous narrative and part of BOOK XV.[3]

None of the problems is solved, the situation still remains as chaotic as before.

Leaving aside these textual matters and keeping to the market-place scene alone, we realise immediately that we face one of the most complete and the most perplexing short stories of the *Satyrica*. The gaps are not frequent but the plot moves so fast that the audience can easily miss the thin line of the narrative-continuity. The two elements of brevity and continuity of episode, in combination with the absence of the sexual, make this a popular scene for analysis by Petronian scholars. My intention is to examine the text to see if it provides evidence for regarding this episode as a narrative equivalent of a theatrical piece. The staged aspect of the passages will be demonstrated through the analysis of the theatrical setting (time and place), the typecast character and the

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[1] See Van Thiel 1971, 27-29, 30-31, 33, 35-36.

[2] 16.3 Mulier autem erat operto capite [illa scilicet quae paulo ante cum rustico steterat] et 'me derisisse' inquit 'vos putabatis?' is such a phrase. The parenthetical sentence suggests that the Quartilla-scene comes after -and is connected to- the market-place scene. By bracketing, however, the sentence as an explanatory addition made by a scribe, Müller (ed.) [3]1983 destroys that link.

[3] Sullivan 1968(a), 46.

role-playing of the Dramatis Personae, the traditional exploitation of the central theme of the plot (the hidden treasure) by the comic stage, and the theatrical origin of the tricks used for the dénouement.[4]

Before the action begins the narrator takes care to establish in a concise manner the setting of the scene and the dramatic time of the events; both of these introductory notes aim at putting the deeds into a clearly defined frame, as if they were stage-directions addressed to an audience which has to know the particular time and place of the plot at the beginning of the play.[5] The adventures of Encolpius and Ascyltus are here located in the market-place (forum). The market-place as backcloth for the enactment of an amusing story occurs again in Apuleius' novel and it has been suggested that both the scene in Petronius and the one in Apuleius draw their origin from the Milesian tales.[6] Vitruvius informs us that one of the two entrances in the theatre was supposed to be a foro (V.6.8) and Plautus provides ample evidence for that.[7] The market-place is never the stage where action takes place in the surviving Roman comedies, but one cannot deny its use, though in a conventional manner, by the Roman playwrights.

The mention of time which immediately follows (deficiente iam die 'when it was already dusk' and obscuritas temporis 'the shadows of the time' 12.1) cannot pass unnoticed by a Roman audience, since

> in the evening, when legal and banking business was over and vehicular traffic was stopped, all manner of amusing hucksters would find room in the forum.[8]

Cicero and the Roman satirists describe colourfully, but with a strong feeling of

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[4] See Knoche 1975, 113; Corbett 1970, 49: "The whole episode is pure farce, an admirable plot for mime or Atellan play with stock characters, the dim-witted rustic, the needy scholar, the pettifogging lawyer. Petronius treats us to a slice of low life with the utmost realism of detail."

[5] Cf. the masterly way in which Terence informs his audience of the time, place and situation in the opening lines of the Adelphoe: Storax! - non rediit hac nocte a cena Aeschinus / neque servolorum quisquam qui advorsum ierant (26-27). See Gratwick (ed.) 1987, 229-230.

[6] Walsh 1970, 88: "Strikingly enough, there is in the Met. of Apuleius an adventure in the market-place, in which an official interferes with the hero's purchase; it is clear that the market-place anecdote is a favourite Milesian type in which the narrator recounts his discomfiture." More views on the significance of the Apuleian episode are conveniently gathered by Scobie (ed.) 1975, 126-127.

[7] Exhaustive -and exhausting- lists of forum-exits and entrances are provided by Rambo 1915, 429 ff.; Johnston 1933, 104 ff., for both Plautus and Terence.

[8] Gow (ed.) 1932 ad Hor. Sat. I.vi.13; cf. also Brozek 1972, 288.

contempt, the picturesque human types one could meet at the market-place.[9] In his comic account of what kind of people one must expect to find at a certain place, the choragus mentions (Pl. *Curc.* 474-476) that one will meet

> symbolarum conlatores apud forum piscarium.
> in foro infumo boni homines atque dites ambulant;
> in medio propter canalem, ibi ostentatores meri;
>
> 'joint-contributors of the symbola at the fish-market; in the lower end of the market good-natured and wealthy people walk. There, in the middle part near the gutter, those who make just an ostentatious display;'

The quoted texts do not simply underline that the quantity of things for sale (frequentiam rerum venalium 12.1) comes from suspect dealers (fidem male ambulantem 12.1).[10] In a way they foreshadow the following incident and warn the audience to expect an unusual series of events In a place where you can meet only persons whose honesty is doubtful. This is actually fulfilled: thieves are everywhere, even the night-policemen (advocati nocturni 15.2) who promise a solution through justice, are nothing but thieves (praedones 15.5) who look for an opportunity to take with them the precious garment.

It is almost impossible to say with certainty that Petronius modelled this scene focusing solely on real life, or on the theatre, or on satire, or on the Milesian tales. However, the choice of this specific theme, and the setting of the scene at that particular time, promises, before even the beginning of the actual facts, an amusing and unexpected spectacle.

The first characteristic that strikes the audience of this episode is not so much its 'theatricality' as the continuous employment of legal procedures (13.4; 14.1; 14.7; 15.2). The accumulation, however, of theatrical elements in the scene

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[9] Hor. *S.* I.vi.111-114　　　　　　Quacumque libido est,
　　　　　incedo solus; percontor quanti holus ac far;
　　　　　fallacem Circum vespertinumque pererro
　　　　　saepe Forum; adsisto divinis;

Appius Claudius in Cic. *De divinat.* I.132 non habeo denique nauci Marsum augurem;
　　　　　non vicanos haruspices, non de circo astrologos;
　　　　　non Isiacos coniectores, non interpretes somnium;

Juv. VI. 588 plebeium in circo positum est et in aggere fatum;

[10] This phrase must not be taken as a reference to the quality of the merchandise. For a collection and evaluation of the interpretations given see Aragosti 1979, 101, note 3, and Focardi 1986, 57, note 3.

is equally significant.[11] We do not really know if there is a special reason for Encolpius' and Ascyltus' visit to the market-place, but what is stated clearly in the text is that they take the opportunity to sell a cloak, acquired probably by theft (12.2), in a most amusing manner (12.2):

> atque in quodam angulo laciniam extremam concutere, si quem forte emptorem splendor vestis posset adducere.
>
> 'and we (began) to shake its extreme edge in a corner, in case the brightness of the garment could attract any purchaser.'

When the country-man (rusticus)[12] and the girl (muliercula) enter the market-place, the narrator comments on the timing of the arrival: nec diu moratus 'without delaying any longer' (12.3). This, at first sight, seems a natural statement on the period of time in the action. But if it is regarded in the light of the following events, it becomes a theatrical entrance where everything else is already staged and it is time a new persona entered in order to move the plot.[13] His first reaction is, indeed, appropriate to the stage:

> propius accessit ac diligentius considerare pallium coepit (12.3).
>
> 'he approached closer and proceeded to examine the cloak very carefully.'

Here we have the first hints of the tragic device of ἀναγνωρισμὸς which is employed in a farcical context and will be completed by the muliercula at 14.5 (mulier aperto capite ... magnaque vociferatione latrones tenere clamavit 'the woman who had her head veiled ... shouted in a loud outcry "Thieves" '); these are parallel with two more ἀναγνωρισμοί: Encolpius recognises, though gradually, the rusticus who had found their tunicula in the mysterious, remote spot (solitudine 12.3; 12.5) and Ascyltus identifies the tunica on the rusticus' shoulders as their own which had in some way, unknown to us, been lost (12.4). One can visualise the grimaces of wonder, surprise and amazement, being gradually expressed in the persons' faces, like mimic actors who amuse their audience with the distortion of their facial features.[14] It is a shock to the two young men to realise that their

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[11] Among the best discussions of these passages, Aragosti 1979, 101-119, has a detailed analysis of the theatrical dimensions of the episode.

[12] There is a title *Rusticus* among the fragments of the fabula Atellana by Pomponius which might imply that he was a stock-character in native Italian drama. See Frassinetti (ed.) 1967, 108.

[13] Aragosti 1979, 102: "l' acquirente, *nec diu moratus*, arriva con la puntualita di un ingresso scenico".

[14] See above, pages 10 and 12.

'treasure' was still intact inside the filthy garment (12.6-13.2); accordingly, the narrator does not limit himself to the actual statement of the ἀναγνωρισμὸς but goes even further to describe the impact this event made on the person involved: *ac subito exanimatus conticuit* 'and suddenly he was breathless and fell silent' (12.4), and *o lusum fortunae mirabilem* 'what a wonderful joke of Fortune' (13.1).[15]

These comments, in indirect speech, are equivalent to those made in direct speech by tragic *personae* at the moment of their recognition-scene.[16] And as in tragedies an ἀναγνωρισμὸς is not necessarily the happy ending, but the beginning of another series of difficulties which the tragic heroes must face together now, so in the *Satyrica* the two *fratres* must deal with similar legal problems. Once more, the hypocrisy and role-playing of Ascyltus, the declaimer, who adapts his behaviour to fit the circumstances, is subtly delineated by the author.[17] The major difficulty, however, is that above justice itself money rules the world. The elegiac verses on this subject (14.2) might have originated from a Publilian apopthegm (Publ. Syr. *Sent.* 458 Friedrich *Pecuniae omne regimen est*

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[15] According to Aragosti 1979, 103 this exclamation proves that Fortune functions as a plot-moving device and the main element which gives the scene a comic structure. Certainly, the monologue of the θεος Τύχη in Menander's Ἀσπίς 97-148 and Pseudolus' statement in Plautus' *Pseud.* 678-680 about the superiority of fortune over the human mind confirm his theory (cf. Pl. *Truc.* 217-222). For the prominence of fortune in mimic plots, see Cic. *Phil.* II.65 and Rosenblüth 1909, 46-47. On the Fortuna-motif as theme which links the episodes of this novel, see Callebat 1967, 289. A useful discussion of the original way in which Petronius perceives the instability of fortune in human affairs should be consulted in Auerbach 1953, 28-30. The possibility remains open, however, that Petronius took this motif from the Greek Romances, where Τύχη and Ἔρως move the threads of the plot: a selective bibliography on the subject is provided by Aragosti 1979, 104, note 11; for illustrations of the goddess Τύχη and her role in each of the surviving Greek romances see Hägg 1987, 26 ff.

[16] Cf. Orestes' speech when he recognises Iphigeneia (*I.T.*, 795-797):

ὦ φιλτάτη μοι σύγγον', ἐκτετιμημένος
ὅμως σ' ἀπίστῳ περιβαλὼν βραχίονι
ἐς τέρψιν εἶμι, πυθόμενος θαυμάστ' ἐμοί.

Iphigeneia has the same feelings which do not let her speak (ibid., 838-840):

ὦ κρεῖσσον ἢ λόγοισιν εὐτυχοῦσά μου.
ψυχά, τί φῶ; θαυμάτων
πέρα καὶ λόγου πρόσω τάδ' ἀπέβα.

[17] See Walsh 1970, 88: "Beyond such literary joking these verses convey in the Menippean manner a general message which is of course ironically intended ... the moral indignation of Ascyltus, as he condemns the corruption of the courts, is expressed with the passionate vehemence of a thief caught red-handed."

rerum omnium), and the contrast between the ridiculous farcical situation of the market-place and the highly moralising axioms could be justified and explained through the influence of the mimic stage.[18] But, since the power of money was a τόπος in different literary genres,[19] it is difficult to establish definitely Petronius' source.

The facts that the hidden-treasure motif is a stock-comedy theme and that the Petronian incident could have been based on such a theatrical tradition seem to have been disregarded by scholars. In that case, one should not forget that the forum-incident is only the *second* part of a story which started earlier when Encolpius and his friends had somehow acquired treasure and had hidden it temporarily putting it inside an old tunic in a lonely spot, until a country-man found it by chance and took it with him without knowing what he actually had on his shoulders. It would be speculative to adduce as parallel the *Aulularia*, a mime by Decimus Laberius, for the one surviving verse gives no hint on its content.[20] The *Tunicularia*, a fabula palliata by Cnaeus Naevius, is more promising, for its title suggests that it might have something to do with the significant role the tunica played in the novel as a means for hiding the treasure;[21] according to Donatus, the argumentum of Luscius Lavinius' fabula palliata, *Thensaurus*, is as follows:

> adulescens, qui rem familiarem ad nequitiam prodegerat, servum mittit ad patris monumentum, quod senex sibi vivus magnis opibus apparaverat, ut id aperiret, inlaturus epulas, quas pater post annum decimum caverat sibi inferri. sed eum agrum, in quo monumentum erat, senex quidam avarus ab adulescente emerat. servus ad aperiendum monumentum auxilio usus senis thesaurum cum epistola ibidem repperit. senex thesaurum tamquam a se per tumultum hostilem illic defossum retinet et sibi vindicat. adulescens iudicem capit, apud quem prior senex, qui aurum retinet, causam suam sic agit: ...

> 'A young lad who had squandered his family's property in vices, sends a slave to the monument of his father, which the old man had

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[18] See Collignon 1892, 280: "Le mime enfin admettait ces sentences morales qui font un si singulier contraste avec l' immoralité des scènes et du langage. On rencontre chez Pétrone ce mélange de libertinage et des sages maximes qui caractérise les mimes, ceux de Publilius Syrus entre autres."

[19] Aragosti 1979, 108, note 19 collects some of the relevant passages: Publ. Syr. 458 Fried.; Luc. 1120 M.; Alcae. fr.138 Rein. (=122 L); Pind. *Isthm.* 2.11; Varro, *Menip. Sat. (Sexagesis)* 499 (Astbury).

[20] See Laber. 10 Ribbeck [3]1898 = Laber. 23 Bonaria.

[21] Naevius 99-105 Ribbeck [3]1898.

prepared for himself with great financial expense when he was alive; the slave was to open it and bring in the sumptuous meal, which the father had decreed to be brought to him after the tenth year. However, some greedy old man had bought the field, in which the monument stood, from the young lad. The slave opens the tomb with the help of the old man and there he finds a treasure together with a letter. The old man retains possession of the treasure on the spot creating a hostile fuss, as if it were buried by him, and he lays claim to it for himself. The young man goes to court, where the old man, who retains the gold, pleads his case first with the following words: ...'[22]

One must not fail to recognise the scene of two persons disputing and fighting for the property of a treasure, as well as notice the multitude of Greek New-Comedy playwrights who have used the same motif in their plays.[23] It is likely that Petronius also took the hidden treasure-motif from the comic tradition, Plautus' *Aulularia* being the typical surviving example of the subject's treatment on the comic stage.[24]

The only means for the two *fratres* to get hold of their own property with the treasure is to buy it (14.1), but their financial situation does not allow them to do so. What amount of money they had is not easy to clarify, for the textual difficulties and the numerous emendations create considerable confusion.[25] Schmeling discusses this passage and offers another solution to the problem.[26] His suggestions are not totally original, since he is reviving and amplifying an earlier comment which connects the Petronian passage with two other passages

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[22] For a discussion of the Greek original of this play and a reconstruction of its plot see Garton 1972, 73-92.

[23] The citation comes from Ribbeck [3]1898, pages 96-97, who adds: cf. Θησαυρὸς Anaxandridis Archedici Cratetis Dioxippi Diphili Menandri; nam Philemonis fabulam Plautus vertit in Trinummo. Menandrum Luscii auctorem fuisse probabilis est virorum doctorum coniectura.

[24] See Stockert (ed.) 1983, 8-9, 14-16.

[25] The most recent article on that subject is Daniel 1988, 347-351. Daniel summarises all the previous readings of the passage made by scholars and suggests, in his turn, a new reading: Sed praeter unum [dipondium] sicel lupinosque quibus destinaveramus mercari, nihil ad manum erat.

[26] Schmeling 1992, 531-536.

in Horace (*Ep.* I.vii.22-23) and Plautus (*Poenulus* 597-599);[27] Horace uses the image of real money, juxtaposing it with lupine-seeds presented as false money, in order to show the practical wisdom of a virtuous person:

> vir bonus et sapiens dignis ait esse paratus,
> nec tamen ignorat quid distent aera lupinis.

'A virtuous and wise man claims to be available for the worthy, and yet he knows well the difference between coins and lupine-seeds.'

Lupine-seeds were used for counters in playing games or for stage-money.[28] In Plautus' comedy, following the instructions of the cunning slave Milphio and his master Agorastocles, Collybiscus, the bailiff, pretending to be a foreigner, and some advocates, playing the part of witnesses, conspire in order to deceive Lycus, the pimp, make him swear a false oath and drag him to court; all this is done according to a plan similar to the one in the novel. They have to use money to entice the pimp to the trap, so a purse full of lupine-seeds is regarded as a purse filled with trecentos nummos numeratos 'three hundred coins counted out'. The audience, of course, has to know that false money is being used; therefore, the dramatic fiction must break and the advocates have to explain:

> Aurum est profecto hoc, spectatores, comicum:
> macerato hoc pingues fiunt auro in barbaria boves;
> verum ad hanc rem agundam Philippum est ita nos adsimulabimus.

'Spectators, this gold here is, in fact, a theatrical one: when this gold is made wet, the oxen in foreign lands become fatter; but in order to deal with this affair it is pure Philippean gold: that's what we are going to pretend.'

Schmeling's proposal for a theatrical interpretation of the Petronian passage is ingenious and fits the meaning of the scene perfectly:

> The stage is never far from Encolpius' mind, and, when we listen to him here, we should never let the possibility of stage allusions be far from our minds. Therefore when he mentions a coin and lupini in the same breath (the MSS read unum depondium sicel lupinosque), we should at least consider

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[27] See Schmeling 1992, 535, note 12, where he refers to Erhard in *Titi Petronii Arbitri Satyricôn quae supersunt*, ed. P. Burman (Utrecht: Vande Water 1709), 51: lupinos autem ex Horatio Plautoque alibi docuimus, veros assimilare nummos, id quod et hic locus confirmat.

[28] See Maurach (ed.) 1975, ad loc. Allen 1959, 1-8 and Comfort 1963, 34-36 discuss stage-money in detail but they fail to include in their list this Petronian incident.

the possibility of lupini being stage-money or counterfeit coins ... the lupini in our text (should) be considered stage money which Encolpius would use to fill up a small bag, on top of which he would place enough coins to cover the lupini.[29]

Tricks and schemes of deceit were a favourite topic in Roman comedies and in mimic plots, and Petronius' exploitation of theatre in other scenes of his novel suggests that the scheme Encolpius and Ascyltus chose to undertake, was a sample of the mimicae fallaciae Cicero mentions as a regular ingredient of a mimic argumentum:

> Audiebamus Alexandream, nunc cognoscimus. Illinc omnes praestigiae, illinc,
> inquam, omnes fallaciae, omnia denique ab eis mimorum argumenta nata sunt.[30]
> 'We had heard of Alexandria; now we know it; there all the tricks,
> there, I say, all the deceits, all the mimic plots were conceived.'

Consequently, one must not regard this trick as an isolated device for deceit, but consider it in connection with the rest of the theatrical game that is going on in this scene and in the whole of the novel.

The situation did not turn out the way Encolpius and Ascyltus hoped, for the woman recognised the stolen pallium and started shouting 'Thieves' (14.5). Moving in parallel actions the two friends did exactly the same thing (14.6). In front of our eyes a comic spectacle is staged with parallel movement of the gestures, actions, reactions and roles of the two groups. The narrator gradually creates all the necessary stage-management for a double audience-spectacle structure in the scene.[31] He first introduces the spectacle, two pairs of people fighting over a precious pallium and a torn tunica! Then he introduces his first audience, consisting of those who were already in the market-place, and describes their amusement and reactions to the whole incident:

> et cociones, qui ad clamorem confluxerant, nostram scilicet de more ridebant
> invidiam ... (14.7)
> 'and the dealers, who had flocked together because of the shouting,
> were laughing at our indignation, obviously in their customary way ...'

However, there is the second audience of the scene, consisting of those people

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[29] Schmeling 1992, 534.

[30] Cic. *Pro Rabirio Postumo* 35. cf. *Sat.* 106.1 nunc mimicis artibus petiti sumus et adumbrata inscriptione derisi; Artemid. *Oneir.* I.76. On schemes in Plautine theatre see Petrone 1983, 5-98, 153-209.

[31] See the discussion of this narrative device, adapted from the stage, on pages 39-40.

who were present at the recitatio of the novel. This double pattern is a recurrent device in the narrative technique and demonstrates clearly the theatrical conception of the novel in the mind of its author.

Moreover, other elements in the text demonstrate similar comic-theatrical qualities. The reactions of the two parties (i.e., Encolpius-Ascyltus / rusticus-mulier) are so fast that one could visualise the episode as slapstick farce. The two parties change their roles continuously.[32] Those who came to the market in order to sell end up wanting to buy, and vice versa. The legal aspects of these procedures are inevitably ridiculed by the uneven value of the pallium and the tunica, so the legal frame of the emptio and the rei vindicatio[33] adds a comic, rather than a serious, flavour to the action. From this interchange of roles and parallel development of actions -one party does the same thing the other party did a few seconds before-,[34] one could argue for a comedy with a double structure, in which the characters and their actions move in the manner of a comoedia duplex.[35]

A brief note should be added about that first audience of the scene, the cociones ('dealers') (14.7) and the advocati nocturni (15.2). Cocio is a rare word and occurs as a stage-character in the *Necyomantia*, a mime by Laberius.[36] He is

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32 Slater 1990(b), 36 comments on the role-playing: "Their [i.e. Encolpius' and Ascyltus'] only recourse is the swift adoption of the role of outraged crime victims themselves: they accuse the man with the tunic of theft. The irony here is that they are forced into pretending to be what they really are: victims of theft."

33 On the function of those legal terms on the narrative of the market-place scene, see Bagnani 1964, 231-232; Aragosti 1979, 107 and 109 ff.; Focardi 1986, 58 ff.

34 (12.3) The rusticus examines the pallium carefully. / (12.4) Ascyltus recognises the tunica on the rusticus' shoulders.
(12.5) Encolpius recognises the rusticus. / (14.5) The mulier recognises the pallium.
(14.5) The mulier starts shouting 'Thieves'. / (14.6) Encolpius and Ascyltus do the same thing, ne videremur nihil agere.
A similar farcical scene unfolds in Plautus' *Amphitruo* (fragments XV-XVI, Lindsay), where both Juppiter and Amphitruo accuse each other of having committed adultery with Alcumena. On the comic effect of the symmetrical reactions of the two parties see Gagliardi 1980, 49.

35 Aragosti 1979, 103: "E certo che il ruolo della fortuna, quasi evidenziato dall' esclamazione in cui esce Encolpio-narratore; lo sviluppo della vertenza, che coinvolge le rivendicazioni e i ricorsi di due coppie; l' importanza, infine, spesso segnalata dal testo, del loro duplice ruolo, può autorizzare a rintracciare nell' episodio il carattere e i meccanismi di una comoedia, addirittura *duplex*."

36 See Laberius 79 (Bonaria), and Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 117.

famous for his greediness.[37] But, did Petronius take this figure from the mime or from satire, or even from everyday-life? There could be no definite answer to this problem, if we did not have a description of one cocio, given for apparently no other reason than to point out precisely its mimic caricature:

> et nescio quis ex cocionibus, calvus, tuberosissimae frontis (15.4)
>
> 'and somebody from the dealers, bald-headed and with a forehead covered completely with lumps.'

The baldness of the head (mimus calvus) was one of the particular features in the figure of a mime-actor. Juvenal connects his shaved head with the blows (alapas) that he receives on stage, while John Chrysostom grumbles:

> 'Another mimic jester enters; he adopts obscene postures, he has rented himself for money to provoke laughter, he feels ashamed if he is not publicly beaten, he has made his cheeks ready in advance to receive the blows of the doors, he has shaved his hair with a razor, so that not even a single hair can intervene between him and the abuses against him.'[38]

This is not the only occasion on which the calvus-motif is employed in the Satyrica.[39] Combining the mimic feature of baldness and the juridical characteristics of a cocio (qui solebat aliquando etiam causas agere 'who used some times to plead cases at court' 15.4), the audience understands immediately that the following and the previous interventions by the cociones are nothing but false

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[37] Porphyrio comments on Hor. S. II.iii.25 (ed. W. Meyer): Mercurialem quasi lucrosum, quia Coctio (another reading for cocio) appellabatur. omnes enim coctiones lucro student.

[38] Cf. Juv. S. V.171-172 (pulsandum vertice raso / praebebis quandoque caput) and Duff (ed.) 1970, ad loc.; St. John Chrysostom, Περὶ Μετανοίας b´ 291 (Migne, P.G. 59.760) (Ἄλλος γελωτοποιὸς εἴσισιν, εἰς αἰσχύνην ἑαυτοῦ διατλάσασθαι μέλη, γέλωτι μισθώσας τὴν κεφαλήν, αἰσχυνόμενος ἐὰν μὴ δημοσίᾳ ῥατίζηται, καὶ τοῖς κτύποις τῶν πυλῶν προευτρεπίζων τὰς παρειάς, καὶ ξυρῷ τὰς τρίχας περιαιρῶν, ἵνα μηδὲ θρὶξ μεσιτεύηται ταῖς ὕβρεσι.); Gregory of Nazianzus, Carm. II.ii. 85-89 (Migne P.G. 37.1583) (Μῖμοι γελοίων, κονδύλοις εἰθισμένοι, / αἰδῶ τεμόντες τοῖς ξυροῖς πρὸ τῶν τριχῶν, / ἀσελγὲς αἰσχρότητος ἐργαστήριον, / οἷς πάντα πάσχειν καὶ ποεῖν, ἃ μὴ θέμις, / ἐν ταῖς ἁπάντων ὄψεσι, τέχνης μέρος); Nicoll 1931, 87 ff.

[39] The motif of the mimic bald-headed slave is employed more clearly in the scene on board Lichas' ship (Sat. 103 ff.): see page 225.

procedures in order to deceive and steal the valuable pallium.[40]

The same conclusions must also be applied to the advocati nocturni.[41] They seem to be a sort of night-policemen and Focardi might be right in recognising a juridical reference into the adjective nocturni, which the Romans without doubt knew and whose use they appreciated in the context of legal procedures,[42] but we are not in the same position as they were. On the other hand, nocturni might refer to nothing else than the character and the dishonest intentions of the councillors, the advocati, and, in that case, we turn to the specific Roman office which was often employed as a role in the Roman comedies.[43] One way or the other, these figures become essentially theatrical personae because Petronius uses them as such in his short story. They are not introduced for a realistic description of a Roman office but because the plot must get complicated and funny, the action must go on and have finally an end.

Encolpius and Ascyltus manage to obtain their tunica, but the cocio confiscates the valuable pallium; this, however, is not the end.

We never see the end of this story. At 15.8 Encolpius says et recuperato, ut putabamus, thesauro. The addition of 'as we thought' suggests they were to be proved wrong. Had something been substituted for the gold in the seams? Do they soon lose the money, perhaps offering it to Quartilla in the ensuing episode as partial compensation for the violation of Priapus' mysteries? Again, we cannot say.[44]

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[40] Cf. 15.2 advocati tamen [iam pene] nocturni, qui volebant pallium lucri facere, flagitabant uti apud se utraque deponerentur and 15.5 ceterum apparebat nihil aliud quaeri nisi ut semel deposita vestis inter praedones strangularetur et nos metu criminis non veniremus ad constitutum.

[41] The bibliographical survey on the strange meaning of this expression is quite old. Von Domaszewski 1892, 159-160 and Focardi 1986, 57-72 constitute its beginning and its end.

[42] See Focardi 1986, 57-72.

[43] Schmeling 1992, 532: "In Plautus' Rudens (1004) Trachalio tries to gain a share of the trunk Gripus found in the sea and demands that a sequester be appointed ... Advocati in Plautus' Poenulus (515 ff.) and Terence's Phormio (458 ff.) either conspire to deceive or confuse those seeking advice."

[44] Slater 1990(b), 36, note 25. It is interesting to find an actual reconstruction of the scene suggested by Merkelbach 1963, 191-192. His version runs as follows: "nolo quod cupio statim tenere / nec victoria mi placet parata ... < Als sie aber den Lumpenmantel genauer betrachten, stellen sie fest, dass das Geld nicht mehr darin ist. So haben sie erst das Geld verloren und nun den wertvollen Mantel dazu >." (page 192); cf., also, Van Thiel 1971, 30 and note 2.

What we have here, however, is not the usual ending of a comedy where the spectators assume in advance that the situation, however complicated it might be,, will be solved happily for its characters, and everybody -or almost everybody-will be satisfied; what phrases like illa est tunicula adhuc, ut apparet, intactis aureis plena 'this is the small tunic still filled, as it appears to be, with gold untouched' (13.3), and recuperato, ut putabamus, thesauro 'after we had regained, as we had believed, our treasure' (15.8), seem to suggest is an unexpected outcome inappropriate to the genre of comedy. Nevertheless, this is not a reason to go to the opposite extreme and conclude that a theatrical interpretation of the scene is not feasible. The unexpected ending of the market-place scene is not so unexpected if we take into account that all the short stories in the novel, which are Milesian tales ["The Pergamene Boy" (85.1-87.10) - "The Matron of Ephesus" (111.1-112.8)] or have characteristics of that genre [the stories of the werewolf (61.6-62.14), the witches (63.3-10), and the unbreakable glass (51.1-6)], have similar 'unexpected' and 'unfinished' endings.[45] One can rightly argue that this is a typical feature of the Milesian tale but it occurs also in the sudden conclusions of the mime.[46]

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[45] A detailed, though unconvincing, discussion on the plot-development and the unexpected ending in Petronius' Milesian tales, is in Schmeling 1991, 353-364; he does not take into account Petronius' most probable debt to similarly unfinished endings in the sub-literary genres of the Milesian Tales and the theatre of the mimes.

[46] Cic. Pro Caelio, 65 (text cited on page 10). Preston 1915, 262, commenting on the structural analogies between Petronius' novel and the farcical theatre, draws attention to "the manner in which the author accelerates action towards the close of an episode, if several characters are on the scene, engaging everyone in a free-for-all, or ending the incident abruptly by the rapid exit of one of the principals, accompanied often by a slamming of doors." See Sat. 6.2; 15.8; 78.8; 90.1; 91.3; 94.7; 138.3-4.

CHAPTER FOUR.
MIMICAE NUPTIAE: *SAT.* 16.1-26.6.

In the ordering of the surviving fragments of the *Satyrica*, which all the contemporary editors of the novel have followed, the Quartilla-episode (16.1-26.6) is placed before the Cena Trimalchionis[1] and provides the first shocking experience of the reader with the Petronian text because of its highly sexual tone. There have been many scholarly attempts to interpret this scene from different points of view and, especially, to justify the obsessive prominence of the sexual content that is employed both here and throughout the novel.[2]

My aim in this chapter is to apply (and test the validity of) the notions of role-playing and theatricality within a sexual frame in the lustful pervigilium that Quartilla, the insatiable priestess of the god Priapus, staged for Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus at the inn where the three lovers had rented a room (15.8; 19.2). Apart from the obvious reference the narrator makes to Quartilla's mimic laughter (omnia mimico risu exsonuerant 19.1),[3] scholarly observations on the theatrical qualities of this episode have been confined so far to the comparison between

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[1] Sullivan 1968(a), 45-47, complicates further, rather than simplifies, the fragmentary position of chapters 1 - 26.6, by suggesting that the Quartilla-scene should have been placed in the editions of the novel before the Agamemnon-scene.

[2] Schmeling 1969(a), 49 gives a fine summary, with bibliography, of the different scholarly interpretations, which regard Petronius as satirist, moralist, Epicurean, artist. Sullivan 1968(a), 251 suggests that the author "was directed by his own fantasies and sexual interest" in using various sexual perversions as themes for his novel. Zeitlin 1971(b), 656, note 59 sees sex in the *Sat.* as "either a source of frustration or an assault upon an unwilling victim." Slater 1990(b), 243 considers the Quartilla-episode as proof of lack of meaningfulness and integrity in Encolpius' self: "Quartilla's orgiastic assault on Encolpius and his companions shows that the self is not able even to control its own body against the combination of physical force and a more powerful improvisational imagination. When Encolpius can be made to perform sexually against his will, how meaningful are the concepts of 'will' and 'Encolpius'?". I find difficult to believe such a moralistic interpretation which has transformed an immoral orgy into a quest for the true meaning of life! Preston 1915, 266 rightly connects the high degree of sexuality in the novel with the obscenity of the farcical theatre: "It is clear that the sex interest in the main narrative of Petronius is incidental to a sort of rough phallic comedy ... their tone (i.e. of the sexual scenes) may be amply explained by assuming that in writing them the author was conforming to the conventions of an impure type of farce." Cf., also, Rosenblüth 1909, 52.

[3] The subject is mentioned by all studies which touch upon the theatricality of this novel: see, for example, Collignon 1892, 275; Rosenblüth 1909, 36, note 2; Preston 1915, 261; Sullivan 1968(a), 221; Walsh 1970, 24; Sandy 1974, 339 and note 23; Slater 1990(b), 43.

themes and characters in mimic plays, and specific motives of plot and characters in this part of Petronius' novel.[4] I will concentrate mainly on the visual aspect of Quartilla's histrionic talent, as it is expressed through gestures and facial expressions, and on further conventional theatrical techniques which she employed in order to strike a stronger impression on her victims and force them to indulge her wishes. Brief reference will also be made to the staged quality of the characters or incidents which are included in Quartilla's programme for the performance of her own Priapus-mime.[5]

Gestures and body language, in general, played an important part in the performer's attempt to act his role successfully and win the audience's applause. It seems that, at least in New Comedy, each part had its own movement, while such a distinction between different postures among different characters not only became a source of laughter and comic effects but also informed the audience about the category and nature of the theatrical type they had in front of them.[6] There are no explicit stage-directions in theatrical texts as we have them today,[7] but assumptions can be made based on words or phrases in the text[8] or on

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[4] Rosenblüth 1909, 52, and Preston 1915, 266 compare the obscenity of the episode with the impure kind of farcical mimes. Sandy 1974, 340 connects the sodomites of 21.2 and 23.2-5 with mimic κίναιδοι. Rosenblüth 1909, 53 and Sandy 1974, 340, note 24, speak of the pseudo-marriage between Giton and Pannychis (26.1-3) as an example of the mimicae nuptiae, while Walsh 1970, 26 sees the strong Priapic element of the scene in the tradition of the Priapus-mime.

[5] On the Priapus-mime see below, pages 66-67 and note 48.

[6] The posture and gestures which Palaestrio adopts in order to devise his scheme (Pl. Mil. Glor. 200-215) are characterized as typical of a slave in comedies: dulice et comoedice (213). In the same comedy, Acroteleutium must pretend convincingly that she is a high-class matron; therefore, she should dress like one (791), have her hair done (792), wear a linen headband (792), and walk decently (872) (cf. 897, 899). Pyrgopolynices must assume the posture of a celebrity (1044-1045; cf. Pl. Per. 306-308). See the discussion of the topic in Wiles 1991, 192-208.

[7] Exceptions to this rule may constitute some mimic texts in which there are directions for the musical background of the plot and the entrance of a character dressed in a particular manner: see Page (ed.) 1942, 338-339; Pavese 1966, 68.

[8] Imagine, for example, the gestures which accompany the simulated madness of Menaechmus II (Pl. Men. 828-875); the tender gestures of Menaechmus I in his attempt to soothe the anger of his wife (Pl. Men. 626-627); the bare fist with which Pistoclerus threatens his tutor, Lydus (Pl. Bacch. 147); the simulated movements of Charinus and his father, Demipho, during their competition in the imaginary auction (Pl. Mer. 433-440). See Taladoire 1956, 180-181.

ancient scholia.[9] Quintilian's amusing account of the repertoire and favourite gestures of the comic actors Demetrius and Stratocles (XI.iii.178-180), and his constant remarks on the details to which an actor must pay attention if he wants to act properly,[10] demonstrate both that the actors took care of the visual part of a performance, and that the audience diligently noticed and criticized any mistakes or deficiencies in the actor's gestures. The most enlightening example is Quintilian's suggestions for the proper acting of the opening lines of Terence's *Eunuchus* (46-48), where the actor, in order to show his anxiety, must make dramatic pauses, change the tone of his voice, move his hands, and turn his face this way and that (XI.iii.182 Hic enim dubitationis moras, vocis flexus, varias manus, diversos nutus actor adhibebit).

Gesticulation was equally important in the Roman mime, which was a dramatic representation of low life, usually without a coherent plot.[11] Isidore's reference to motus corporis 'the movements of the body' as a fundamental characteristic of the mimic theatre shows the importance of body-language and dancing in the mimes.[12] Cicero (*De Orat.* II.252) singles out emphasis on mimicry (genus ... in imitatione admodum ridiculum) and exaggerated facial expressions (oris depravatio) as two of the four characteristics of mimic wit.[13] But, although it is made clear that the theatre of the mimes emphasized mimicry more than other forms of comedy did, we do not really know what kind of movements a mimic actor or actress performed during the play, and that is so not only because mere

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[9] See Donatus on Terence's *Eunuchus* II.ii.1 (232) in hac scaena non stans sed quasi ambulans persona inducitur; constitit tamen aliquantum intuens spectatores, dum secum loquitur. DI INMORTALES admirantis exclamatio est cum parasiti gesticulatione; II.ii.43 (274) URO HOMINEM sibi hoc gestu et vultu parasitico dicit.

[10] The actor must adapt his voice to the part he is performing (I.xi.1; XI.iii.91) and to the content of his speech (I.xi.12). There should be modulations in an actor's utterance (XI.iii.57) while his gait must be appropriate to his role (XI.iii.111-112). In his theatrically inspired instructions for the image of the proper orator, Quintilian has a lengthy account of gestures meant to be used for the following parts of the body: head (XI.iii.65 ff.); glance (XI.iii.72 ff.); eyes (XI.iii.75 ff.); eyebrows (XI.iii.78 ff.); lips and nostrils (XI.iii.80 ff.); neck (XI.iii.82 ff.); shoulders (XI.iii.83-84); hands (XI.iii.85 ff.); fingers (XI.iii. 92 ff.); feet (XI.iii.124 ff.). On the significance of body-language in Quintilian's rhetoric and the connection between declamatory gestures and theatrical performances, see Maier-Eichhorn 1989, 29 ff.

[11] On the main features of the mimic theatre see above, pages 8-14.

[12] See above, pages 9-10, 12.

[13] See above, page 12, and note 10.

fragments survive from the mimic plays, but mainly because the success of the performance - and consequently of the player - depended mostly on his or her talent to improvise and evoke laughter from the audience. Evidence for stage-movements and gestures may be drawn with caution from the educational instructions that Cicero and Quintilian left to their students, urging them to abstain from histrionic gestures or facial expressions which could prove fatal to the result of their delivery in court and ruin their portrayal of the decent orator.[14] These edifying critical remarks, in conjunction with implicit stage directions carefully embodied in theatrical scripts, can shed new light, I believe, on the theatrical interpretation of the Quartilla-scene.

The action takes place in three parts, according to the three different rooms which constitute the scenery of each act.

A) 16.1-21.4. A cella in the deversorium (15.8).

B) 21.5-26.3. The proxima cella (21.5), i.e. the triclinium (22.3).[15]

C) 26.3-26.6. The cubiculum (26.3).

If there had not been so many gaps in the text, one could have drawn many conclusions from this distribution of the action. Nevertheless, it is clear that Petronius intended to create a series of events with a startling beginning, a central part full of action and a shocking climax. Such intention in the author's mind appears more clearly if we visualise what happens, in the shape of a pyramid, where the eye moves from a broad base towards a narrow climax. It has been rightly suggested of the author's artistic aims for the Quartilla-episode that

> Petronius has developed a telescope effect whereby the audience
> (spectator-reader) first takes in the scene broadly through the outside door,
> then more narrowly through the inside door, and finally all attention is
> focused through the chink in the inside door.[16]

The clues provided from the text itself show the discreet and constant attempts of the author to direct his audience's eyes towards a certain sight each time. Throughout this scene one has the strong feeling that a performance is being enacted in front of him with speech, dance, songs, comic situations, just like a Plautine comedy. This feeling becomes a certainty when one takes a

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[14] The relevant texts are quoted above, on page 12.

[15] It has been suggested, however, that the second part of Quartilla's staged orgy takes place not at the inn but at Quartilla's house: see Pinna 1978, 245, note 40.

[16] Schmeling 1969(a), 50.

closer look at each of those three parts, moving from a bigger to a smaller circle and ending up to a glimpse through a tiny hole. Stage-director is Quartilla herself. She is to be held responsible for everything, apart from the mimic interlude of the Syrian slaves (22.3-5). In fact, as the narrative will show (21.2; 21.7; 23.1; 24.4; 25.1), she is more of a director than of an actor, despite her spectacular entrance.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Encolpius-Ascyltus-Giton (already on stage, 16.1).

Enter ancilla (16.2-3), named perhaps Psyche (20.2).

Enter Quartilla (17.1).

Enter virgo (17.1), named Pannychis (25.1) .

Enter cinaedus (21.2).

Enter palaestritae complures (21.4).

Tota familia (22.2): duo Syri (22.3), pueri (22.6), tricliniarches (22.6).

Enter cymbalistria (22.6).

Enter cinaedus (23.2).

The (theatrical) props that are mentioned are: a small rug (lodiculam 20.2), two ribbons (duas institas 20.4), a drug called satyrion (medicamentum 20.6-7), a hair-pin (acu comatoria 21.1), a swab (penicillo 21.1), a rod made of whalebone (ballaenaceam virgam 21.2), olive-oil (oleo 21.5), three couches and the appropriate equipment for dinner (tres lecti strati ... et reliquus lautitiarum apparatus splendidissime expositus 21.5), plenty of soot (fuligine larga 22.1), oil-lamps (lucernae 22.3), table with silver dishes (mensa cum argento 22.4), a flask (lagoenam 22.3), a cup (poculum 22.4), bronze cymbals (aera 22.6), a flame-coloured veil like the ones worn by Roman brides at their wedding (flammeo 26.1), a wedding torch (facem 26.1) and an unclean cloth (incesta veste 26.1). The audience must not fail to realise from the reference to many small objects in the above list, how well-prepared Quartilla was in order to present a theatrical orgy the way she wanted it to be.[17] Without any doubt she succeeded.

Perhaps everything had already started earlier on, when Encolpius and his companions had witnessed a ritual in the shrine of Priapus (in sacello Priapi 17.8). We can only speculate on precisely what this ritual was. After all, this is not of great importance, for Quartilla's behaviour must be perceived within a context of

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[17] See Brozek 1972, 287 where he notes the theatrical, and not simply ornamental, function of the objects mentioned in Quartilla's episode.

role-playing and pretence, since the men's alleged sacrilege might have been only an excuse made up by Quartilla in order to have a lustful wake-night (pervigilium) with the persons to whom she took a fancy (16.4).

The audience must visualise a peaceful evening, during which Encolpius and Ascyltus enjoy the supper which Giton prepared (16.1), and take a rest after the adventure at the market-place (12.1-15.9). An aggressive knock at the door (16.1) causes panic (16.2),[18] which becomes inability to react when the securely barred door (15.8; 16.2) opens wide on its own (16.2), like a theatrical αὐτόματον which creates an atmosphere of mystery and magic, and introduces a spectacular entrance:[19] a veiled woman,[20] the ancilla Quartillae, enters, 'evidently the one who had stood with the country-man a little while ago' (illa scilicet quae paulo ante cum rustico steterat 16.3),[21] and in a vengeful tone declares that she is not deceived easily (16.3): unfortunately, we cannot be certain to what precisely she refers: the theft of the cloak Encolpius and Ascyltus had tried to sell at the market-place (12.2) or the inexpiabile scelus (17.6) the young men had committed watching the Priapic ritual (17.8). Quartilla had evidently used her maid, a stock character in Roman comedies,[22] to prepare her own spectacular and highly dramatic entrance but also to create the illusion in the narrative structure that a

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[18] Pellegrino (ed.) 1975, ad loc., regards the asyndeton aperi, iam scies as an example of the Plautine structure of a conditional sentence with iam; cf. Rudens 1007; Captivi 338.

[19] Cf. the entrance of the witches Meroe and Panthia in Apul. Met. I.11: commodum quieveram et repente impulsu maiore quam ut latrones crederes ianuae reserantur, immo vero fractis et evulsis funditus cardinibus prosternuntur.

[20] Note that both the maid and the Priapic priestess have their heads covered somehow when they enter (16.3; 17.3). It seems that the maid delivers her monologue without uncovering herself, whereas Quartilla removes the cloak off her head after she has performed her silent pantomime. The movement of revealing her head (superbum caput 17.3) completely in front of her amazed audience shows her intention to keep the reactions of her victims under control and signifies that the speaking part of her role is about to begin.

[21] Cosci (ed.) 1988, 48-49 summarizes briefly the scholarly dispute upon the authenticity of that parenthetical sentence. None of the conflicting views can be definitely accepted.

[22] A list of maids in comedy would include: Bromia in the Amphitruo, Pardalisca in the Casina, Halisca in the Cistellaria, Ancilla in the Menaechmi, Milphidippa in the Miles Gloriosus, Scapha in the Mostellaria, Sophoclidisca in the Persa, Ancilla in the Poenulus, Crocotium and Stephanium in the Stichus, Astaphium in the Truculentus, Mysis in the Andria, Phrygia in the Heauton Timorumenos, Pythias and Dorias in the Eunuchus. See, also, Preston 1915, 268, where he regards Chrysis, the go-between in the Circe-Polyaenos episode (Sat. 126 ff.), as "perhaps the most perfectly conventional comic type in the Satiricon."

spectacle is going to take place (namely, the speeches and gestures of both the maid and Quartilla) in front of an audience (namely, the three friends), like a performance in the theatre.

The brief monologue of the ancilla (16.3-4) serves as a kind of theatrical prologus for the ensuing events:[23] the maid introduces herself (16.3) to the double audience (i.e. Encolpius-Giton-Ascyltus and the auditor or reader of the small Neronian circle to which this novel is assumed to be addressed), gives a reason for her arrival (16.3), announces the entrance of a new persona on stage (16.4) using stock-comedy expressions and relevant gestures with the hands (ecce ipsa venit),[24] gives some pieces of information about her mistress' intentions (16.4) and makes insinuations on the sexual affairs that will follow (16.4).[25] The impact she makes is so strong that her audience is speechless (17.1). After her speech she withdraws somewhere in the room, leaving the whole stage available for Quartilla's melodramatic performance, and does not take an active part in the action until later on (18.7; 20.6). It is interesting to compare her speech with one of the genuine Plautine prologues,[26] the one in the *Trinummus* spoken by the persona of Luxuria. In much the same way Plautus divides the brief speech (22 lines) in similar sections: self-introduction (6-9), reason for coming and part of the plot (10-16), announcement of the entrance of new characters on stage (17), withdrawal (22). Similar observations concerning the division of an introductory speech into parts can be made in the Prologue to the *Aulularia* where the Lar familiaris introduces himself (1-3), explains why he is there in relation to events of the past (3-30), explains part of the plot (31-36), announces the entrance on

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[23] Cf. Cosci (ed.) 1988, 50: "...vengono sintetizzate, in ordine rapido e paratattico, le informazioni sull' antefatto e la presentazione del personaggio principale che sta per entrare in scena; così come avviene in genere nei prologhi della commedia; e a una dimensione scenica sembra riportare anche l' uso abondante dei pronomi personali (me...vos...ego...vos). Del resto, tutto quanto l' episodio si manterrà su di un tono spiccatamente 'teatrale'."

[24] Cf. the intensely theatrical gesticulations which the adverb ecce suggests that Giton performed in order to make his self-sacrifice more dramatic (80.4). Ecce occurs thirty two times in the surviving novel, thus underlining the staged atmosphere of each episode (see, for example, 7.4, 40.2, 60.3, 68.4, 83.7, 97.9, 99.4, 107.6, 109.7, 114.9, 136.4). Cf. page 178, note 24.

[25] Her flattering remarks to her audience at the end of the introductory speech (16.4 immo potius miratur quis deus iuvenes tam urbanos in suam regionem detulerit) are not unparalleled in theatrical prologues: see Pl. *Capt.* 67-68 valete, iudices iustissumi / domi, duellique duellatores optumi.

[26] See Gray (ed.) 1923, Intro., xxxvii-xxxviii; cf. Hornstein 1914, 104-121.

stage of the main character, Euclio (37-39); it seems, therefore, that the maid's monologue not only functions as a dramatic prologue but is conventionally composed like one.

As far as we can tell from the surviving theatrical texts, Quartilla does not seem to be a figure taken from the stage (although the type of the priestess exists: Ptolemocratia, a Sacerdos Veneris is included in the cast of Plautus' Rudens). Characteristics that had perhaps inspired Petronius to create his extraordinary priestess should be sought either in historical figures of Petronius' age[27] or in literary genres other than theatre (e.g. satire).[28] Certain aspects of her persona, however, are clearly theatrical.

Many elements in the description of Quartilla's actions and speech indicate so clearly the histrionic behaviour she adopts, that the hypocrisy of the expression of her feelings is beyond doubt. However, only after a considerable period of time do Encolpius, Ascyltus and Giton   find out that she was acting a role. Quartilla gives a convincing performance, and thus succeeds in maintaining suspense and verisimilitude in her scenario. The situation is strikingly similar to the one presented by Pardalisca in Plautus' Casina 621-715: Cleustrata and Myrrhina have instructed her to say that Casina has gone crazy and that she has a knife with her, with which she threatens to kill anyone who approaches her. Pardalisca, like Quartilla, acts her part brilliantly, she looks timida and exanimata (630), she is deliberately unwilling to speak (653-669), she trembles (622) and shouts (627); nevertheless, none of her multiple audiences (i.e. the old man Lysidamus, the actual audience of the performance, and we as modern readers of the text) realises that everything was staged in advance until Pardalisca herself, like Quartilla, says so (685-688).[29]

Like an archimima in her own production of a mimic play, Quartilla dominates the scene with her presence. Accompanied by a girl and not showing her face by ᵕ

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[27] See Walsh 1970, 89-90.

[28] Currie 1989, 330 speculates that Diotima "the wise woman of Mantinea, who allegedly taught Socrates τὰ ἐρωτικὰ (Symp. 201d5) contributed to the creation of Quartilla."

[29] For similarly constructed 'play-within-a-play' scenes in Plautus see Slater 1985, 48-49, 88 ff., 136-140, 162-165; and in Petronius see Gill 1973, 179-180.

having her head covered (17.3), she enters and makes a long pause[30] during which tears designed on purpose[31] fall like rain (17.3). The dramatic aspect of her lengthy monologue (17.4-9) is underlined by the fact that the narrator prefers to report it in direct speech, while he chooses to express his emotional confusion in indirect speech (18.2-3). Quartilla's mood changes rapidly[32] (17.1 diu flevit; 17.2 lacrimas ad ostentationem doloris paratas; 17.3 ut ergo tam ambitiosus detumuit imber; 18.1 lacrimas rursus effudit gemitibusque largis concussa; 18.4 hilarior ... facta mulier ... ex lacrimis in risum mota; 18.7 complosis deinde manibus in tantum repente risum effusa est; 19.1 omnia mimico risu exsonuerant), and this change reaches its climax at the mimicus risus (19.1), a dominant characteristic of the scene (18.4; 18.7; 19.1; 20.6; 20.7; 20.8; 24.5; 25.1) and a 'leit-motif' in the novel.[33] This laughter was usually the only aim of mimic performances, and a proof that what was happening on

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[30] On theatrically inspired rhetorical pauses and the gestures employed to accompany them see Quint. XI.iii.158: in hac cunctatione sunt quaedam non indecentes, ut appellant scaenici, morae: caput mulcere, manum intueri, infringere articulos, simulare conatum, suspiratione sollicitudinem fateri, aut quod quemque magis decet, <et> ea diutius, si iudex nondum intendet animum. Quartilla's pause falls in the same category of deliberate acting-techniques.

[31] *Sat.* 17.2 lacrimas ad ostentationem doloris paratas. For parallels in Latin literature see Cosci (ed.) 1988, 52-53. The same theatrical behaviour was exhibited by Giton at 9.2 consedit puer super lectum et manantes lacrimas pollice extersit; by means of false decency and pseudo-reluctance to narrate what happened, Giton achieves to make Encolpius' anger against Ascyltus grow more violent (see above, pages 35-36). See Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae*, 130 Didicere feminae flere ad mendacium (Friedrich). The same idea is expressed for Chrysanthus' wife at 42.6-7. False tears were frequently used in Roman comedies as part of the slave's scheme to deceive the pimp or the soldier: both Palaestrio and Philocomasium pretend to cry when they bid farewell to Pyrgopolynices (Pl. *Mil. Glor.* 1311 ff., 1324 ff., 1328, 1342-1343); Toxilus advises Saturio to instruct his daughter to cry in front of Dordalus to show that she remembers nostalgically her alleged past (Pl. *Per.* 152, 620-623, 656). Parmeno mentions a falsa lacrimula which Thais will produce by rubbing her eyes, as one of her powerful means to change Phaedria's disposition towards her (Ter. *Eun.* 67 ff.).

[32] On the extreme transitions and the comic effects of Quartilla's mood see Cèbe 1966, 214.

[33] See Korn - Reitzer 1986, s.v. rideo, risus; Callebat 1967, 290-294.

stage was mere pretence with no serious purposes.[34] In connection with the mimic laughter, gestures with the hands have a similar significant function for the ensuing acting: both Quartilla and her household (the maid, the little girl and the sodomite) clap their hands or crack the joints of their fingers[35] (17.3; 18.7; 20.6; 23.2; 24.2); the abruptness of these gestures is occasionally enhanced by a contrived laughter which has an even stronger impact on the audience (18.7; 20.6).[36] These exaggerated movements create an additional tone of cheap melodrama and underline the theatrical behaviour of the characters, since *complodere manus scaenicum est <et> pectus caedere* 'to clap the hands and beat the breast are tricks of the stage.'[37]

If one reads the Quartilla-scene as the narrative equivalent of a three-scene farcical stage-piece, it is surprising to find how well everything fits in the pattern of an obscene mime which consists of dance and songs, premeditated gestures and explosive laughter, sex and violence. The direct and indirect speeches in the text serve as the mimic script itself[38] while the narrator's descriptions of both the persons' psychological reactions and the actions which are carried out by Quartilla's co-operators replace . the visual elements and stage-directions of the

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[34] For the testimonia on the mimic laughter see above, page 11 and note 8; cf. Cic. *De Orat.* II.251 *Quare primum genus hoc, quod risum vel maxime movet, non est nostrum.* There is a useful discussion in Cotrozzi (ed.) 1988, 70, on the comparison between the mimicus risus, as it is described in the Petronian episode, and the ceremony of the Deus Risus, as it is presented in the Apuleian novel (*Met.* 3.1-11). Moering 1915, 9 puts forth a far-fetched theory against the mimicus risus as a mimic actor's laughter: 'Ducitur autem vocabulum mimici a vocabulo mimi, cuius sententia duplex est. Mimus enim aut fabula scaenica est aut is, qui fabulam agit. Qua de causa mimicum est id, quod pertinet aut ad fabulam aut ad histrionem. Iam vero mimicum risum oriri de fabula apparet. Nam histriones fabulam agentes efficiunt, ut rideatur, unde appellabantur γελωτοποιοί. Qua de causa perspicuum est mimicum risum non esse talem, qualem ei, qui mimum agunt, sed talem, qualem ei, qui mimicam fabulam spectant, fundunt.'

[35] Aragosti (ed.) 1988, 104 draws attention to the fact that Quintilian (XI.iii.158) classifies the movement of infringere articulos as a theatrical gesticulation.

[36] Preston 1915, 261 considers the theatricality of the risus-motif in connection with the plausus-motif and the repetitive combination of both (i.e. risus and plausus) in the novel. Sandy 1974, 339 refers rightly to the mimicus risus as "a studied type of laughter, perhaps stridently aggressive, possibly like that of the moecha in Cat. 42." On Catullus' passage see Kroll (ed.) 1959, 78.

[37] Quint. XI.iii.123. See Maier Eichhorn 1989, 134-135.

[38] See 16.2-4; 17.4-9; 18.2-3; 18.5-6; 19.2; 20.1; 20.5-7; 21.2-3; 21.7; 23.1; 23.3; 24.1-4; 24.6-7; 25.1; 25.3-6.

mimic performance.[39] A theatrical rendering of the surviving, though fragmentary, text (16.1-20.1) would be as follows:

SCAENA: cella in deversorio. DRAMATIS PERSONAE: Encolpius, Ascyltus, Giton (already on stage, 16.1). Enter ancilla (16.2-3), named perhaps Psyche (20.2). Enter Quartilla (17.1). Enter virgo (17.1), named Pannychis (25.1).

Encolpius (startled): Quis es ?

Ancilla (sharply): Aperi, iam scies.

(The siparium is being drawn aside and lets an actress enter on stage).[40]

Anc.: me derisisse vos putabatis? ego sum ancilla Quartillae, cuius vos sacrum ante cryptam turbastis. (Dramatic pause and gesture towards the door) ecce ipsa venit ad stabulum petitque ut vobiscum loqui liceat. (The three male characters on stage feel frightened, perhaps they stand up and show their intention to escape) nolite perturbari. (They stop moving) nec accusat errorem vestrum nec punit, (the maid changes the tone of her voice from a threatening to a mild one) immo potius miratur quis deus iuvenes tam urbanos in suam regionem detulerit.

Quartilla: (Improvisations on tragic gestures and dramatic movements) (aggressive style)[41] Quaenam est haec audacia, aut ubi fabulas[42] etiam

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[39] See 16.1; 16.2; 17.1-3; 18.1-2; 18.4; 18.7-19.1; 19.3-6; 20.2-4; 20.7; 20.8-21.2; 21.4-7; 22.1-23.2; 23.4-5; 24.1-2; 24.4-7; 25.1-3; 25.7-26.6.

[40] This curtain, which the mimes used as the background of their performances, serves as a door in the Μοιχεύτρια-mime, 43 (Page).

[41] The different parts of her speech enable Quartilla to change the tone of her voice according to the context of her monologue and to use different modulations in her utterance: see Quint. I.xi.12 Debet etiam docere comoedus quomodo narrandum, qua sit auctoritate suadendum, qua concitatione consurgat ira, qui flexus deceat miserationem; XI.iii.57 Quid enim minus oratori convenit quam modulatio scaenica et nonnumquam ebriorum aut comisantium licentiae similis? In a similarly erotic context Circe offers herself to Encolpius / Polyaenus, and modulates her voice to her gestures (digitis gubernantibus vocem 127.1).

[42] In the context of Quartilla's role-playing within an improvised scenario, her reference to fabulas (17.4) echoes similar references, which actors in Roman comedies make to the play itself during the performance (Pl. Merc. 1007; Pseud. 388, 564). Slater 1990(b), 43 observes that "Quartilla's first words cast Encolpius and Ascyltus in the roles of robbers and pirates of the Greek romances". Cf. Wooten 1976, 71: "... to Quartilla, who knows these characters, it is clear that they are always trying to act out their own lives in accordance with the stories which they have read (something which Quartilla herself is doing in this scene)." On fabula as 'a piece of play-acting' see OLD, s.v., 6b; Lodge 1909-1929, s.v., II.2.

antecessura latrocinia didicistis? misereor mediusfidius vestri; neque enim impune quisquam quod non licuit adspexit (authoritative style) utique nostra regio tam praesentibus plena est numinibus ut facilius possis deum quam hominem invenire. (condescending style) ac ne me putetis ultionis causa huc venisse, aetate magis vestra commoveor quam iniuria mea. imprudentes enim, (emphatically) ut adhuc puto, admisistis inexpiabile scelus. (sad and suffering tone) ipsa quidem illa nocte vexata tam periculoso inhorrui frigore ut tertianae etiam impetum timeam. et ideo medicinam somnio petii iussaque sum vos perquirere atque impetum morbi monstrata subtilitate lenire. (melodramatic tone) sed de remedio non tam valde laboro; maior enim in praecordiis dolor saevit, qui me usque ad necessitatem mortis deducit, ne scilicet iuvenili impulsi licentia quod in sacello Priapi vidistis vulgetis deorumque consilia proferatis in populum. (supplicatory tone and gestures) protendo igitur ad genua vestra supinas manus petoque et oro ne nocturnas religiones iocum risumque faciatis neve traducere velitis tot annorum secreta, quae vix tres homines noverunt (repetition of tragic improvisations).

Enc. (upset): bonum animum habeas et de utroque secura sis: nam neque sacra quisquam vulgabit, et si quod praeterea aliud remedium ad tertianam deus tibi monstraverit, adiuvabimus divinam prudentiam vel periculo nostro (perhaps he performs some gestures to show that he is making a formal oath).[43] Quart. (change of mood, and gestures): facio indutias vobiscum et a constituta lite dimitto. quod si non adnuissetis de hac medicina quam peto, (threatening tone) iam parata erat in crastinum turba quae et iniuriam meam vindicaret et dignitatem: (in a triumphant voice)[44]

> contemni turpe est, legem donare superbum:
> hoc amo, quod possum qua libet ire via.
> nam sane et sapiens contemptus iurgia nectit,
> et qui non iugulat, victor abire solet.

(More theatrical gestures and the mimic laughter. The heroes are at a loss. Quartilla continues in the same tone as before) ideo vetui hodie in hoc deversorio quemquam mortalium admitti, ut remedium tertianae sine ulla interpellatione a vobis acciperem.

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[43] On short gestures to express vow, wonder and interrogation see Quint. XI.iii.100-101.

[44] Quartilla sings a song in the prosimetric tradition of mimic plays: see Astbury 1977, 30-31, note 41; cf. the song of the cinaedus at 23.3 and the song of the barbarians in the prosimetric Χαρίτιον-mime, 95-98 (Page).

The frequent textual gaps which occur in the following passages do not allow further theatrical reconstruction of the ensuing incidents. Description of events and conversation in indirect speech seem to prevail over direct speeches which are hereafter confined to brief exchanges of witty dialogue (20.5-7; 24.1-4; 24.6-7; 25.3-6). Additional difficulties are presented for the proper evaluation of the text from a theatrical point of view, if we take into account the speculation that the usual practice of the scribe was to abbreviate events in a book, once he had got the flavour of each new episode.[45] However, as is apparent from the dramatic reading of 16.1-20.1, Quartilla, like a leading actress in a mime-company has an excellent role to perform, and Petronius seems to have portrayed her character keeping constantly in mind the visual techniques of dramatic performances.

At the beginning of her speech Quartilla mentions, among other things, that the divinity, whose ceremony the three fratres had witnessed ante cryptam (16.3) was Priapus (17.8). Perhaps that was the original cause for the famous ira Priapi towards the hero. The wrath of Priapus, which is shown repeatedly in many love-moments through Encolpius' impotence (20.2; 128.2; 132.2; 140.11), is said to have been the main link which connected the adventures of Encolpius and his friends in different places.[46] The extant use of the Priapic figure in different literary genres makes[47] it impossible to assert the inspiration for Petronius. Augustine, De Civit. Dei VI.7, speaks of a Priapus-mime and of the procession of that god's statue in the theatres:

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[45] See Sullivan 1968(a), 37.

[46] For a general survey of the role of Priapus in the Satyrica see Pinna 1978, 215-220. Schmeling 1971, 350-357 has a good analysis of the function of the gravis ira Priapi - motif in the novel, although his main focus is only the exclusus-amator poetry. Against the Ira Priapi as a basic plot motif see Baldwin 1973, 294-296. Coffey 1976, 185 accepts the existence of the motif with reservations, because, according to him, it does not justify adequately the theory of the parody of epic in the whole novel. Preston 1915, 266 regards the Wrath of Priapus as "a parody of a sort that was familiar to the mime and intimately connected with the phallic element therein." Beck 1973, 55, note 17 is sceptical about the subject: "Strictly speaking, all that we are entitled to claim is, I believe, (a) that Encolpius, the protagonist, a character whom we know to be hopelessly prone to fantasy and melodrama, imagines himself on certain occasions to be the victim of the anger of Priapus, and (b) that these imaginings are understandable in view of (i) the nature of his ailment at Croton (i.e. impotence) and (ii) his occasional entanglements with people such as Quartilla who are genuinely connected with the cult of Priapus."

[47] See O' Connor 1989, 23-38.

Numquid Priapo mimi, non etiam sacerdotes enormia pudenda fecerunt? An
aliter stat adorandus in locis sacris quam procedit ridendus in theatris?
'Is it not the case that mime-actors, but also priests, have portrayed
Priapus with an enormous phallus? Or does his statue stand to be
worshipped in sacred grounds, differently than it moves forward to be
laughed at in the theatres?'[48]

This, however, is not enough to assume that Quartilla's orgy comes directly
from that source. Moreover, the scarcity of actual mime-texts (the Priapus-mime
has not survived) does not allow us to draw any definite conclusions, as far as
the content of this mime is concerned, apart perhaps from the fact that it must
have been very obscene. But although Petronius might have introduced the
phallic god in his novel under the influence of a non-theatrical genre, he
elaborated on it and presented it as a spectaculum (26.5).

Quartilla's dream (17.7) is the first instance in the surviving text of the
occurrence of the dream-motif,[49] and must be considered within the theatrical
frame of her risible incubatio:[50] it is amusing to imagine the libidinous Quartilla
playing the part of a pious priestess, who seeks help through this ritual.[51] It is
worth noting that, although she makes so much fuss about the divine origin of her
plans, she nowhere states clearly where she went for advice or which god
appeared in her dream and sent her after Encolpius. It seems, therefore, that the
employment of that practise by the author lacks any serious intentions and that it
functions as part of the theatrical game that Quartilla has organised at the
expense of the three young men. This kind of dream can be paralleled with
another false dream, which also forms a part of a staged deceit at the expense of
the pompous soldier. In Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus* (381-392), Sceledrus, the slave

[48] This is the main piece of evidence for the existence of a mime with such a theme. Herter 1932,
228 provides a short bibliographical list on the subject. Wiseman 1985, 194 draws attention to
Priapus' presence in the prologue of a fabula togata by Afranius, and speculates that the two
Priapus-stories which Ovid has incorporated in his *Fasti* (I.391-440; VI.319-348), might have been
derived from stage-productions of Priapus-mimes.

[49] For a discussion of dreams in the *Satyrica* see below, pages 226-227.

[50] This practise can be used as a source of comic situations: in Plautus' *Curculio* 61-62, Cappadox,
the pimp, suffers from hepatitis and goes to sleep in the shrine of Asclepius.

[51] The most recent discussion on Quartilla's incubatio is Kragelund 1989, 445-446. He evaluates
this dream in the general context of dreams and their function in Petronius, and rightly comments
on the ironical employment of the motif that "Quartilla has a clear motive for talking so much of her
dream: the god's command entitled her to demand what she so ardently wished." (page 446).

of the soldier Pyrgopolynices, sees Philocomasium, the courtesan, who is kept against her will as the girlfriend of the soldier, embracing and kissing with her beloved Pleusicles. Palaestrio, the cunning slave, in order to deceive Sceledrus and hide the truth from Pyrgopolynices, tells him that the person he saw kissing the young man was not Philocomasium but her twin sister. At that moment Philocomasium exits and, instructed by Palaestrio, narrates a false dream: her mother and her sister with her lover have arrived in the same town and stay at the house next door. But her joy does not last for long because a slave accuses her unjustly of having an affair secretly from her master. In both cases the purpose of the dream is to convince and deceive at the same time. In both cases, the trick works.

After Quartilla had secured help from Encolpius (18.2-3), she changes her mood and reveals her true intentions: a whole troop was ready to avenge the wrong she had been done and restore her dignity, in case the young men had refused to co-operate (18.5).[52] In a threatening tone she announces that the cure of her tertian ague (remedium tertianae) is about to begin without any interruption (sine ulla interpellatione 19.2). Encolpius is terrified (19.3) and arranges in his mind the pairs of the fighters in a possible mimic brawl (19.5).[53] Three women attempting to assault sexually for religious purposes (!) three men, who are primarily homosexuals, would be a quite entertaining spectacle on stage. Encolpius asks for forgiveness in the manner of a gladiator who was beaten in the arena (20.1).[54] What follows his prayers is, unfortunately, in a fragmentary condition. Apparently, a kind of ritual takes place during which sexual stimulation

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[52] Cosci (ed.) 1988, 63 compares the expression indutias facere (18.5) with Plautus, *Amph.* 389 Immo indutiae parumper fiant, si quid vis loqui. The context, however, is not comparable.

[53] See Dell' Era 1970, 106; on the farcical brawl as a popular topic on stage see below, page 202, note 39; page 233, notes 70 and 71.

[54] See Cotrozzi (ed.) 1988, 77; 85.

(20.2), tying of the hands and feet (20.4),[55] aphrodisiac drinks (20.6-7),[56] slight tortures (21.1) and kisses (20.8) are used comically as means of punishment.

An additional calamity appears for Encolpius with the arrival of a new persona on stage: the mimic cinaedus.[57] Quartilla uses this grotesque figure to titillate Encolpius both at 21.2 and 23.2-5, but in both instances disgust (21.2; 23.2,4,5) and tears (24.1) rather than excitement is Encolpius' response. A similar kind of invasion is depicted on a Megarian (or Homeric) bowl of the late fourth or the early third century B.C..[58] The scene is a flour mill where the μυλωθροὶ and the donkey of the mill are shown to be engaged each in their own task, when five κίναιδοι intrude and destroy with their mischief the peaceful atmosphere. All of them wear loin-cloths and have on their heads the pilus, the pointed hat, so characteristic of a mime-actor.[59] Two of them are trying to hit with clubs the employees in the mill, one attempts to carry off a bag, one stimulates sexually the donkey, one is tied on to a pole about to be flogged by the τιμωρός, whereas the last one runs to the rescue. The bowl is believed to illustrate a scene from a mime, in which κίναιδοι played an important part. This, however, does not necessarily mean that Petronius used them in this scene bearing in his mind their theatrical importance, for effeminacy was a usual target of satire, as

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[55] On the significance of the details in this procedure as elements denoting the initiation in a Priapic ritual, see Cosci 1980, 199-201. On the other hand, Pinna 1978, 223-238 considers Quartilla's rites as a parody of religious ceremonies in honour of Dionysus and other deities of Oriental origin.

[56] The drink (we know only of sleeping drugs and not of aphrodisiacs used in mime-performances; see Kehoe 1984, 103, note 33) is introduced iam deficiente fabularum contextu (20.5), a peculiar phrase which, according to Sandy 1974, 340, may have theatrical associations: "Because the immediate context is lacunose, it is impossible to determine whether the expression means 'because the conversation was flagging', as at 37.1, or whether fabulae here mean 'play-acting', as at 95.1." Slater 1990(b), 44 cites Sage and Gilleland who interpret the same phrase as a reference to obscene mimes that have just been performed.

[57] On the prominence of the κίναιδος - figure as a mimic character see Sandy 1974, 340, note 25; in pantomimes, see Kokolakis 1959, 14-16. Cf. Non. V.16 cinaedi dicti sunt apud veteres saltatores vel pantomimi, ἀπὸ τοῦ κ[ε]ινεῖν σῶμα.

[58] Discussion upon the mimic dimensions of the scene on the bowl was originally made by Rostovtzeff 1937, 87-90. Sandy 1974, 340 was the first who pointed out the similarities of that scene with the 'invasion' of the κίναιδοι in the Quartilla-episode. Slater 1990(b), 44, note 20 refers to Weitzmann 1959, 87-89 for a discussion on the pictorial evidence for such mime-performances.

[59] See Nicoll 1931, 79, fig. 77; 88, fig. 81; 89, fig. 82.

well,[60] a genre which shares many features with Petronius' novel. The significant difference, though, is that, what the author might have taken from satire, he used in a mimic context. More specifically, the narrator takes care to describe these two figures with funny details in their outfit (myrtea gausapa, cingulo succinctus 21.2) and make-up (23.5)[61] to look like caricatures taken from a farcical piece. One of them is used as a kind of chorus who sings an obscene canticum (23.3) with the musical accompaniment of the cymbalistria (23.1), while later on he plays the rider to Encolpius' and Ascyltus' horses.[62] Finally, the strange pun on the origin of the word embasicoetas meaning both a drinking-mug and a sodomite (24.1-3), is verbal wit in the tradition of the Plautine or mimic jokes, in which a word with two different meanings is understood differently by two speakers or by one speaker and the audience.[63]

During the rest of the 'ceremony' which takes place after the participants have had plenty of food and drink (21.6), two Syrian slaves attempt to steal the valuable objects in the room (22.3-5). They quarrel in the division of the loot and from the noise they wake up the others who were sleeping. In order to save themselves, they lie down and pretend not only to have been sleeping for a long time, but also to snore, so that the whole deception would look more natural. This brief incident is interesting from a theatrical point of view, because it exhibits the

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[60] See Rudd 1986, 215-225.

[61] The image of thick make-up presented as a wall, which is being peeled by falling rain, is strikingly similar to a metaphorical expression in a fragment of a comoedia togata: see Afranius, *Augur* V (16) (Murus et fallaci aspectu paries pictus putidus). Daviault 1981, 146 thinks that "le fragment pourrait se rapporter à une personne qui cherche à masquer sa déchéance, à un senex par exemple." On the comic aspect of the sodomite's appearance and movements see Gagliardi 1980, 56-57.

[62] For indecent songs in the mimes see Quint. I.ii.8 omne convivium obscenis canticis strepit; Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 130 αἰσχρῶν γὰρ ᾀσμάτων ἀκρόασις – μίμοις δὲ ταῦτα σύνηθες ᾄδειν. Note that the musical contribution of the girl with the cymbals might have even been a vocal one: see Bücheler's conjecture at 23.1 adiuvit hilaritatem comissantis cymbalistria<e cantus>. On horse-play as source of visual comic effect on stage cf. Pl. *Asin.* 698-710 (the slave Libanus plays the rider to his master's, Argyrippus, horse).

[63] See Pl. *Men.* 49, 263-264; *Bacch.* 309-311, 731-732; and Castellani 1988, 67. For mimic word-plays see Capitolinus, *Marcus Antoninus,* xix.2 (pun on the expression ter, Tullus and Tertullus, the name of an adulterer); Suet. *Aug.* lxviii (pun on the double meaning of the words orbem ['drum', 'world'] and temperat ['beats', 'rules']); Nicoll 1931, 124-126; Marzullo 1958, 90-91; Sullivan 1968(a), 225-228; cf. Trimalchio's hoc est ius cenae (35.7) and Carpe, Carpe (36.7).

features that a mime-piece with such a theme would present:[64] it does not last for a long time, it has a lot of slapstick elements (the greedy quarrel over the silver, 22.3; the fall of the large jug, the table and the cup one after the other, 22.3-4; the blow on the head of one maid by a flying cup, 22.4;) and a funny ending (22.5).[65] In *Philogelos*, a collection of jokes whose one possible author may have been the mimographer Philistion, the following joke, which exhibits strong similarities with the brief sketch of the Syrian slaves, is recorded:

> 'An egghead who was sleeping with his father stood up on the bed in the night and began to eat the grapes which were hanging overhead. But no sooner had he stood up than his father flashed a lamp at him that he had hidden in a pot. Caught in flagrante delicto, the egghead froze on his feet and pretended to be asleep by snoring.'[66]

Slaves from Syria had become stage-figures because of their cunning minds and their greediness: a fabula Atellana, under the name *Syri*, must have shown similar situations.[67] Moreover, drunk persons (22.4) could provide a laughable sight on stage.[68]

The mock-marriage between seven-year-old Pannychis and sixteen-year-old Giton (25.1-2), which was originally suggested by Psyche and duly organised by Quartilla, constitutes the climax of the ritual orgy: there is applause everywhere (25.3), as if a crowd in the amphitheatre were showing its approval of a spectaculum (26.5) in the arena. Encolpius becomes suddenly a moralist and strongly disagrees with the idea by putting forth as arguments the true modesty of

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[64] See the brief discussion of the anecdote in Gagliardi 1980, 55-56.

[65] Preston 1915, 262 regards the recurrent motif of the breaking of dishes (cf. 64.10; 70.5) a source of comic effect in Petronius. Cotrozzi (ed.) 1988, 93 compares the pretended snoring of the thieves with the snoring of the husband, who pretends to be fast asleep, while his wife commits adultery (Juv. I.57). The Pergamene boy started snoring, as well, in order to advance the fulfilment of Eumolpus' prayers (*Sat.* 85.6).

[66] Translation by Baldwin (ed.) 1983, 8-9.

[67] Pomponius, *Syri* I-II (168-169) (Frassinetti). See, also, this editor's note, 1967, 108.

[68] See Pl. *Most.* 319 ff.; *Pseud.* 1246 ff.; Laberius, *Aulularia* 10; *Hetaera* 52. As a mimic subject it occurs in the fragment of a mime, dated in the second or first century B.C., which describes in vivid manner the conversation between a drunkard and a sober person: see Page (ed.) 1942, 332-333. The drunkenness-motif will be a continual source of laughter and theatrical surprises in the *Sat.*: Quartilla's chorus-women, 26.1; Trimalchio, 52.8, 73.3, 78.5; Habinnas, 65.7; Encolpius, 72.7, 79.2, 79.9; the slaves who pretend to quarrel, 70.6; the inhabitants at the inn, 95.7, 96.5. See Preston 1915, 264 and Abbott 1907, 49.

Giton's character (!) and the tender age of Pannychis (25.3). His objections are overruled by Quartilla who claims that she does not remember herself ever being a virgin (25.4-5) and strengthens her view with the proverb

posse taurum tollere, qui vitulum sustulerit (25.6)

'anyone who carried a calf, can carry a bull'.

Use of sayings of popular wisdom is not unknown in the low farcical theatre, as well as in other non-theatrical genres.[69] But in this case the employment of the motif is made in a distorted manner, since it is used to justify a ridiculous and extreme act of perversion.

Although attention has been drawn to the close similarities between this scene and contemporary events in Nero's Rome,[70] or disgusting details of Priapic rituals,[71] a consensus seems to have emerged that Petronius' inspiration for this scene was the theatre of the mimes, which used the pseudo-marriage-motif as one of its themes. The title *Nuptiae* occurs in a mime by Laberius and in a fabula Atellana by L. Pomponius,[72] perhaps as an adaptation of a New Comedy theme. Finally, there are the testimonies of the Elder Seneca (*Contr.* II.4.5) who

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[69] See Rosenblüth 1909, 40 ff. and, on this particular proverb, Rossbach 1891, 311. Moering 1915, 21-30 gives an extant list of proverbs in non-theatrical texts arguing that Petronius' use of proverbs is due not to the mimes but to the fictae fabulae (page 22).

[70] Walsh 1970, 91 notes that Tacitus (*Ann.* XV.37.9) describes with almost exact words the marriage between Nero and Pythagoras, which took place a few years before the supposed composition of the novel. This interpretation fits well in the pattern of Petronian satire which covers allusions to contemporary events under narrative fiction, while it would be an amusing comparison for the small Neronian circle who would have understood the joke. On the Tacitean passage, see Allen 1962, 104-107; Koestermann 1968, 232-234.

[71] Schmeling 1971, 347 suggests that Giton is forced by Quartilla to play the part of the fascinum Priapi, a stone-image of the phallic god, on to which, according to the Priapic ritual (August. *De Civit. Dei,* IV.11, VI.9), the wife should sit and be penetrated before her husband's arrival on the first night of their wedding. Although one has to stress the facts in order to find exact similarities between the two events, this theory has the advantage of considering the marriage-incident as an integral part of the Priapic religion, which Quartilla is supposed to have been practising upon the three companions from the beginning of the scene. On the other hand, it does not exclude any of the previous suggestions, but rather encourages more speculations: for example, is that what Augustine meant when he referred to the Priapus-mime (*De Civit. Dei,* VI.7) or what was enacted in Laberius' theatrical *Nuptiae*? If so, how can one be sure that Petronius took the motif directly from the ritual and not from a presentation of it on stage? The question remains open.

[72] See Laberius, 82 (Bonaria) and cf. Bonaria (ed.) 1968, 117-118; Pomponius, 82 (Frassinetti). See, also, Rosenblüth 1909, 53; Sandy 1974, 340, note 24.

refers to the relationship of a man with a prostitute as

> vere mimicae nuptiae <in> quibus ante in cubiculum rivalis venit quam maritus
>
> 'indeed, a farcical marriage, since he had gone in her bedroom as a
> rival in love before he went as her husband',

and of pseudo-Quintilian, who uses the theatrical theme within a rhetorical
context:

> ecquid semoto illo nuptiarum mimo atque inani tantummodo nomine virum esse
> cogitatis et dignum, qui abdicetur, quod hominem non occiderit?
>
> 'surely, if you exclude that farce of a marriage and its mere title, do you
> regard him as a man who deserves to be disinherited, on the grounds
> that he did not kill the person?[73]

The few lines that have survived from these theatrical texts are not enough
to show exact similarities with the marriage in the Quartilla-scene, apart from the
probability that a wedding ceremony took place on stage. One must keep in mind
that Giton's marriage has not been organised as entertainment for its own sake
but as the climactic part of a pseudo-religious ceremony,[74] an element absent
from the theatrical testimonia. On the other hand, what seems to argue strongly for
the theatrical inspiration of the scene is the risible gap in the narrative plot
between illusion and reality, a favourite motif in the farcical comedy and the
mimes. What really impresses the auditor or reader in the description of the
'marriage' is the care that has been taken to represent a traditional Roman
marriage.[75] Pannychis' head is covered with a flame-coloured veil, there is a
leading torch and a long procession towards the bridal chamber which is already
decorated appropriately. This impression of chastity, conveyed by the traditional
Roman elements in the ceremony, is undermined by many details: the bearer of
the torch is a κίναιδος (26.1), the procession consists of drunken women (26.1)
who make obscene jokes (26.2), the bedroom is decorated with an unchaste
cloth (26.1), the bride is only a seven-year-old girl (25.2). The comic effect is
similar to the one created in Plautus' *Casina* during the mock-marriage of
Chalinus (pretending to be Casina) and Olympio (together with Lysidamus):
Olympio is dressed like a bridegroom (767-768), a pipe-player is invited to play

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[73] See [Quint.], *Decl.* 279.17, page 139.21 Ritter, cited in Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 217.

[74] According to Collignon 1892, 280 the lack of any serious religious element and its treatment in a
parodic manner in Petronius' novel resembles the irreligion of the mimes and the Atellanae
fabulae.

[75] See Treggiari 1991, 161-170.

the music for the wedding-song while Olympio and Lysidamus sing the wedding-hymn (798-800), they bear a wedding-torch (840), Pardalisca gives, in a comic manner, traditional advice and wishes to the new bride (815-834), but the tender bride turns out to be the rough Chalinus (840-854, 875 ff.). In both texts the propriety of the ritual is undermined by fundamental irregularities in its details, and it is this contrast - favoured by Petronius, as one may judge from Eumolpus' pseudo-ritual at 140.5 - that generates partly the theatrical dimension of the scene.

Much to Encolpius' disappointment, Giton seemed not to resist the girl, nor was the girl frightened at the prospect of the ensuing 'matrimony' (26.3). What follows has been the cause for much scholarly dispute. Quartilla and Encolpius stay outside the wedding-room (ante limen thalami 26.4) and through a hole they watch the childish sports (lusumque puerilem 26.4), which are described as spectaculum (26.5). The structure of the episode after the pattern of a 'play-within-a-play' scene (Giton and Pannychis are the show, Quartilla, who is also the creator of the scene, and Encolpius are the audience, while all of them constitute the show for the auditor or reader of the novel) seems to be Petronius' favourite technique to frame sexual incidents in the narrative.[76] The aim of this device is to remind constantly the auditors or readers that they are watching something enacted on stage, and that everything in front of them should be seen as a play which is not to be taken seriously.

Opportunities for the delivery of speeches or the execution of actions in a histrionic manner are not confined to the description of Quartilla's staged orgy but are effectively exploited in other parts of the novel, when the narrator describes his visually stunning experience at Trimalchio's feast[77] or when he recounts his melodramatic love-sufferings in his relationship with the unfaithful Giton and his occasional rivals Ascyltus or Eumolpus (79.1-82.6; 92.1-99.4). The importance of the visual dimension that the narrator gives in the narrative

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[76] Cf. 96.1 (the mimic brawl at the inn between Eumolpus and the lodgers), 140.11 (Eumolpus' intercourse with Philomela's daughter), 92.6-12 (Eumolpus' adventure at the baths). The topic has been successfully analysed by Gill 1973, 179: "In a number of sexual incidents the same structure of actors-performance-audience is created, with the characters in the story acting as surrogates for author and audience. While some of the characters enact a parody of a normal sexual act -and themselves relish the comic and aesthetic aspects of what they are doing- others serve as the appreciative audience of those parodies."

[77] See Beran 1973, 227-251; Rosati 1983, 213-227; Jones 1991, 185-198.

structure of his past experiences argues for the strong influence that forms of staged entertainment exerted on the composition of the Satyrica,[78] and points out to oral delivery, rather than silent reading, as the most probable way through which this novel was made known to Petronius' contemporaries.[79]

This theatrical interpretation of the Quartilla-scene is more likely than an approach according to the spirit of the exclusus-amator poetry[80] (although the former does not necessarily exclude the latter), because it takes into account the role-playing throughout the novel. What must be rebutted, though, is the possibility that Petronius was applying his own sexual preferences in his novel.[81] The author of the novel was a person who wanted to shock and amuse at the same time. For that reason he built the base of his work upon a tradition that was mostly obscene, the low kind of theatre.[82]

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[78] See above, page 15, note 22.

[79] See above, page 5, note 3.

[80] Schmeling 1971, 338-9; 346-7; 349; 350.

[81] Sullivan 1963, 78-82 explains the gross amounts of sexual elements in the Satyrica as a product of the decadent and depraved society Petronius lived in. He claims that the obscene sections "would all titillate the tastes of the circle, much as gossip about the sexual activities of the Emperor was interesting to Petronius (Tac. Ann. 16.19)." (page 78)

[82] Anderson 1982, 151, note 27 compares the amoral obscenity of the Satyrica with the more obscene mimes by Herodas (II, V, VI, VII) and notes that "it would be absurd to suggest that the clever and eloquent brothel-keeper of II was intended as any kind of satire on moral hypocrisy, any more than that his counterpart in Apollonius of Tyre was meant as an attack on immorality."

CHAPTER FIVE.

SPECTACULUM TRIMALCHIONIS: *SAT*. 26.7-78.8.

The story of Trimalchio's dinner-party has been transmitted to our age in a more complete condition than the fragmentary state of the rest of the surviving novel. This has focus̆ed the attention of the majority of scholars on that part of the *Satyrica* more than on any other episode in the long series of adventures that befell Encolpius and his companions. Numerous explicit and implicit references to theatre are made during the feast and most of them have already been noted and analysed separately by Petronian scholars.[1] No systematic attempt, however, has been made yet to read this section of the novel from a theatrical point of view gathering all the relevant bibliographical remarks and considering this obviously staged dinner in relation to the other dramatically presented incidents in the novel. The present chapter aims to fill this scholarly gap in Petronian studies.

When the three hustlers, namely Encolpius, his lover Giton, and his ex-boyfriend Ascyltus, hear from Agamemnon's slave that they are invited to dinner on the same day at Trimalchio's (26.9), the audience of the novel and today's readers reasonably assume that they will confront themselves once more with an ironic tirade of a satirist against the conventional image of a vulgar nouveau-riche and his environment in the usual hackneyed manner established by so many writers before Petronius.[2] Even before the beginning of the actual feast, however, the element of theatricality will make its presence quite obvious in the eyes of the narrator; as the dinner goes on, Encolpius will start not only observing more eccentric details in the occurring incidents, but will also acquire a sensitivity to the continuous dramatic presentation of staged events, and thus interpret everything through the language of the popular farcical theatre.[3]

If we turn to literary descriptions of feasts by other writers, we realise how much these lack the consciously elaborated theatricality so evidently present in

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[1] See Rosenblüth 1909, 38 ff.; Preston 1915, 263-264; Sullivan 1968(a), 222-223; Walsh 1970, 27; Sandy 1974, 330-337; Rosati 1983, 213-227; Slater 1990(b), 50-86; Jones 1991, 185-198.

[2] A bibliography on sympotic literature is found in Sandy 1970, 471, note 15. See, also, Corbato 1982, 65-76; Jones 1991, 190-194. On 'theatre-dinners', i.e. "meals given in theatres and similar buildings and accompanied by visual entertainment", see Jones 1991, 194-197 (the quotation comes from page 194).

[3] See Bechet 1982, 54, note 16, who gathers the theatrical terms Encolpius uses during the Cena, in order to demonstrate the character's familiarity with the Roman world of shows.

Petronius' novel. Although both Horace and Juvenal effectively compare (and prefer) the crude manner in which the dinners of Nasidienus and Virro take place to a theatrical piece of farce,[4] almost nothing in their descriptions is comparable to the carefully planned spectaculum Trimalchio has organised for his guests. Fragmentary pieces of information concerning elaborately contrived amusements are described by commentators,[5] but the impression one gets overall is of a rather purposeless accumulation of entertaining pieces - a far cry from the diligently composed sequence of theatrical events that are interconnected through Trimalchio's stage-directions and aimed mostly at the impressive presentation of his not so impressive food.

It has been suggested that all the events which took place in the Cena fit into a pattern of ring composition which exists i) from 26.9 to 74.1-4 and ii) from 1-2 to 99.6[6]

> There are several functions which this rather extraordinary ring-structure fulfills. Not only does it provide the author with a framework for organizing the mass of material which composes the Cena, but ... it also serves a dynamic function in helping to shape each episode's meaning and the reader's perception thereof. Events gain something by being paralleled with earlier events which are similar, and in retrospect, the earlier events gain added significance as adumbration of something which will happen

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[4] Hor. S. II.viii.79: Nullos his mallem ludos spectasse; Juv. S. V.157-158: nam quae comoedia, mimus / quis melior plorante gula? and Mayor (ed.) 1886, ad loc.

[5] Pliny, Ep. IX.17.1-2 (Recepi litteras tuas quibus quereris taedio tibi fuisse quamvis lautissimam cenam, quia scurrae cinaedi moriones mensis inerrabant ... Equidem nihil tale habeo, habentes tamen fero. Cur ergo non habeo? Quia nequaquam me ut inexspectatum festivumve delectat, si quid molle a cinaedo, petulans a scurra, stultum a morione profertur); Spart. SHA (Vit. Hadr. 26.4) (in convivio tragoedias comoedias Atellanas sambucas lectores poetas pro re semper exhibuit); Quint. I.ii.8 (omne convivium obscenis canticis strepit, pudenda dictu spectantur); cf. Plut. Mor. 712E.

[6] See Hubbard 1986, 196-197, figure 1, and 204-205, figure 2: "nearly every element of the feast from the section before the freedmen's speeches is in some form repeated or parallelled after the interlude, in inverted order." (page 190). Similar attempts to read the Cena through thematic classifications have been made by Walsh 1970, 113-133 (four main strands in Trimalchio's characterization: vulgarity and buffoonery, pretentiousness to learning, arrogance, superstition and morbidity); Arrowsmith 1972 (themes of luxury and death); Barchiesi 1981, 131 ff. ("Il tema delle lautitiae, il tema del tempo e della morte, il tema della macchina e dell' automatismo; ... [il] tema 'delle trombe' ").

later on. Moreover, the mere fact of so many episodes constituting repetitions of earlier episodes is in itself significant: while the extravagant sights and sounds of the feast may be entertaining and enjoyable at first, they lead to tedium and satiety with repetition.[7]

The validity of this theory is questionable since many of the parallels pointed out are far-fetched and unnecessary. Moreover, the missing portions of the novel forbid us to place the Cena in the centre of the plot's development because we do not know whether the episode at Trimalchio's feast occupied a small or a large part in the work in its original form. An additional argument which reinforces the impression of the auditor or reader that incidents are heaped up, rather than follow a particular pattern in clear order, is the fact that in the feast itself there are occurrences which are out of even Trimalchio's control: for example, the fall of the acrobat (54.1), and the fight of the dogs Scylax and Margarita (64.9-10) are perhaps unforeseen incidents which, nevertheless, are exploited by Trimalchio to impress his guests (see 54.5; 64.11).

For the convenience of the reader I have divided this long chapter into sixteen shorter parts. The subdivisions were made by gathering events in the Cena, which are interconnected and form spectacles with some sort of beginning and end. The attempt to follow Sandy's suggestion and divide the narrative into nine 'skits' according to the nine courses of food,[8] has not been fruitful, because there are courses which are introduced through preparatory incidents and cannot, therefore, be separated from them: for example, the fourth course does not begin at 40.3 when the dish of the aper pilleatus is served, but at 40.1, when slaves change the scenery and dogs run into the dining-room. The first sub-chapter considers Trimalchio's Cena in the tradition of dinner-parties performed on stage either in the mimic theatre or in the comedies of Plautus and Terence. Sub-chapters two to sixteen follow the order of Petronius' narrative, and comment on the events from a theatrical point of view. The list of the events included in each sub-chapter is as follows:

I. Convivia poetarum et philosophorum.

II. Invitation to dinner (26.7-10). The overture to Trimalchio's dinner: the play-ground spectaculum (27.1-6). Spectacle of Trimalchio at the baths (28.1-5).

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7 Hubbard 1986, 201-202.

8 See Sandy 1974, 331, note 4.

III. Spectacles at the door of Trimalchio's house (28.6-30.1). Spectacles and incidents in the dining-room (30.1-31.2).

IV. (Enter cast) Reclining at the table. Singing of the slaves (31.3-7). First course: gustatio (31.8-31.11). Spectacle of Trimalchio (32.1-4). Spectacle of his game (33.1-2).

V. Second course: repositorium (33.3-8). Incident of the slave punished for picking up a dish (34.1-3). The Aethiopian slaves with wine instead of water (34.4).

VI. Falernian wine (34.5-7). Spectacle of the silver skeleton (34.8-10). Third course: ferculum (zodiac dish) (35.1-6; 36.1-4). Laserpiciarius mimus (35.6). The pun on Carpus (36.5-8).

VII. Gossiping about Fortunata and Trimalchio (37.1-38.16). Trimalchio and astrology (39.1-15). Preparations for the spectacle of the aper pilleatus (40.1-2). Fourth course: aper pilleatus (40.3-41.5). Impersonation of Bacchus (41.6-8).

VIII. The conversation of the freedmen: Dama (41.9-12), Seleucus (42.1-7), Phileros (43.1-8), Ganymede (44.1-18), Echion (45.1-46.8).

IX. Trimalchio's stomach problems (47.1-7). Preparation for the fifth course: the spectacle of three white pigs (47.8-9). Trimalchio's showing-off (Part One) (47.10-48.8). Fifth course: the spectacle of the stuffed pig (49.1-50.1). Trimalchio's showing-off (Part Two) (50.2-7). The story of the unbreakable glass (51.1-6). Trimalchio's showing-off (Part Three) (52.1-3). Incident of the slave who dropped a cup (52.4-6). Cordax, the actor Syrus, and madeia perimadeia (52.7-11). Reading of the archives (53.1-10).

X. Acrobats (53.11-13). Incident of the boy who fell on Trimalchio (54.1-55.3). Reciting of poems and the comparison of Cicero and Publilius Syrus (55.4-6). Discussion on professions (56.1-7). Spectacle of the apophoreta (56.8-10). Hermeros' tirade against Ascyltus and Giton (57.1-58.14). Trimalchio makes peace (59.1-2). Spectacle of the Homeristae (59.3-5). Fifth course and pantomime of Ajax (59.6-7).

XI. Spectacle of the ceiling that opens (60.1-3). Spectacle of the Priapus-dish (60.4-7). Trimalchio's Lares (60.8-9). The stories of the werewolf and the witches (61.1-64.1).

XII. Trimalchio remembers the past and imitates trumpets (64.2-5). Spectacle of the dogs Scylax and Margarita (64.6-11). Trimalchio's bucca-

bucca game (64.12-13).

XIII. Seventh course (65.1-3). Spectacle of Habinnas and Scintilla (65.3-7).
Conversation between Habinnas and Trimalchio (65.8-67.2). Spectacular
entrance of Fortunata (67.3-6). Trimalchio's arrogance (67.7-8).
Description of Scintilla (67.9). Habinnas' jokes (67.10-13).

XIV. Eighth course (68.1-2). Incident of the slave who imitated a nightingale
(68.3). The ludus of Vergil's recitation (68.4-5). Conversation between
Trimalchio, Habinnas and the jealous Scintilla about a slave (68.6-69.3).
The muleteer's pantomime by Massa (69.4-5).

XV. Ninth course (69.6-70.3). Spectacle of the quarrel of two slaves
(70.4-7). Anointment of feet (70.8-9). In a good mood: Fortunata and
Scintilla intend to dance, the cook imitates a tragedian (70.10-13).
Trimalchio's speech on slaves. His will (71.1-4). Spectacle of Trimalchio's
statue (71.4-12). Trimalchio suggests going to the baths (72.1-5). Farcical
incident of the heroes' attempt to escape (72.5-10). At the baths, where
Trimalchio sings (73.1-5).

XVI. In another dining-room. Spectacle of Fortunata's treasures (73.5-6).
The cock-crow incident (74.1-5). Trimalchio disinherits Fortunata (74.6-
17). Trimalchio's past (75.1-77.6). Preparation for and description of the
mock funeral (77.7-78.7). Exit (78.8).

I
CONVIVIA POETARUM ET PHILOSOPHORUM.

During the theatrical analysis of each one of the Cena-events, one witnesses that
the similarities between Trimalchio's feast and a staged mime transcend mere
coincidence.[9] Although no extant Roman mimes have survived to justify a clear
distinction between literary and non-literary mimes, Petronius' Cena has been
compared to one of the former kind - the literary mimes - on grounds of style,
language and characterization.[10] Recent scholarly speculation has gone even
further than this and argued, rather hazardously, that

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[9] Brugnoli 1982, 52 characterizes the Cena "un colossale mimo convivale".

[10] See Preston 1915, 263: "The Cena is ... a literary mime ... it may be compared with Theocritus
15, where we have, as in the Cena, a change of scene within the mime, and, to a less degree than
in Petronius, the introduction of new characters. The Cena compares also with Herondas and
Theocritus ... in many points of language and style ... the thing to be observed is the way in which
Petronius gives life, movement, and a dramatic climax to what might naturally have been a more or
less stationary picture. Cf. Gagliardi 1980, 64.

the contribution of popular theatre, especially mime, to Petronius'
arrangement of the cena may go deeper than the staging and stage-inspired
elements ... He may have drawn the basic concept of a burlesque convivium
from mime. This is not to ignore the prominent role of cenae in Roman satire
and the rich tradition of literary symposia, but what is clearly lacking in the
comic-satirical branch of table-talk where Trimalchio's dinner-party would
have its antecedents is the extended dramatization and exuberance of
character and incident that distinguish his.[11]

Our source for mimic convivia is mainly an excerpt from a now lost speech
by Cicero in the late testimonium of Jerome (Ep. LII.8.3).[12] Cicero condemns the
stupidity of vulgar people who are impressed by staged anachronisms without
challenging their veracity or value:

> Nihil tam facile, quam vilem plebiculam et indoctam contionem linguae
> volubilitate decipere, quae quidquid non intellegit plus miratur. Marcus Tullius,
> ad quem pulcherrimum illud elogium est "Demosthenes tibi praeripuit ne esses
> primus orator, tu illi ne solus", in oratione pro Quinto Gallio quid de favore
> vulgi, et de imperitis contionatoribus loquatur adtende: "his autem ludis -loquor
> enim quae sum ipse nuper expertus- unus quidam poeta dominatur, homo
> perlitteratus, cuius sunt illa convivia poetarum ac philosophorum, cum facit
> Euripiden et Menandrum inter se, et alio loco Socratem atque Epicurum
> disserentes, quorum aetates non annis sed saeculis scimus fuisse disjunctas.
> Atque his quantos plausus et clamores movet! multos enim condiscipulos habet
> in theatro, qui simul litteras non didicerunt."[13]

'Nothing is so easy as to deceive with a ready flow of words a
contemptible mob and an unlearned congregation, which admires all
the more whatever it does not understand. Pay attention to Marcus
Tullius, to whom that famous and finest remark was addressed:
"Demosthenes prevented you from being   the first orator,
you prevented him from being   the only one"; in his speech for
Quintus Gallius he says on the enthusiastic support of the common
people and the ignorant public speakers: "During these games - for I
am talking about what I myself have recently experienced - some
mimographer is in control, indeed, an extremely learned person; the

11 Sandy 1974, 337-338.

12 A detailed discussion of the ensuing quotations from Jerome and Seneca should be consulted
in Giancotti 1967, 119-128 (with earlier bibliography); Sandy 1974, 337-339.

13 The text is cited from the 1951 Budé edition by Jérôme Labourt.

authorship of 'Dinner-parties between poets and philosophers'
belongs to him; in it he makes Euripides and Menander, and, in
another passage, Socrates and Epicurus have discussions, men
whose lives we know to be separated not by years but by centuries.
And yet, what applause and shouting he evokes! For in the theatre he
has many fellow-pupils, who, as well as he, did not learn anything
from books".'

Choricius (*Apol. Mimorum* 110) refers to the host and his guests (ἑστιάτορα,
δαιτυμόνας) as roles in the mimic theatre, while Seneca the Younger (*De brev.
vitae* X.12.8) condemns the excessive level of luxury in which the leisured
people (otiosi) of his age live, and thinks that even the extravagant presentation
and criticism of this luxury by the mimes underestimates the immense degree it
had in reality:

> Multarum quidem rerum oblivionem sentiunt, sed multarum et imitantur.
> Quaedam vitia illos quasi felicitatis argumenta delectant: nimis humilis et
> contempti hominis videtur scire quid facias. I nunc et mimos multa mentiri ad
> exprobrandam luxuriam puta! plura mehercules praetereunt quam fingunt et tanta
> incredibilium vitiorum copia ingenioso in hoc unum saeculo processit ut iam
> mimorum arguere possimus neglegentiam.

> 'They really recognise their forgetfulness of many things, but they also
> pretend forgetfulness of many. Some vices amuse them as being
> proofs of their prosperity: to know what one is doing seems to be a
> characteristic of an insignificant and contemptuous person. Go on now
> and say that the mimes invent many things to make a mock of luxury.
> In fact they pass over many more than they contrive, and such an
> abundance of unbelievable vices has come forward in this age alone
> that by now we can accuse the mimes of negligence.'

Although it is impossible to identify with certainty the author of such farcical
pieces, or their plot (if, indeed, they had any), Cicero's testimony in Jerome
seems to argue firmly[14] for the theatrical (and, especially, mimic) context of such
banquets on stage: note the clear references to ludis, plausus, theatro, and the
comic character of anachronistic discussions, reminiscent of the competition-
scene between Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes, *Frogs* 830 ff.[15] New

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[14] It is worth noting, though, that Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 87 classifies the title Convivia Poetarum et
Philosophorum in the Fragmenta Dubia. Cf. Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 138. for poeta = mimographer
in Jerome's account see Sandy 1974, 338.
[15] For a discussion of this contest see Dover 1993, 10-37.

Comedy scenes of symposiastic merriment, in the way they are exemplified in Plautine comedies, have not been given adequate attention by scholars as a possible precedent of mimic presentations of banquet-scenes in the theatres, because by Petronius' time Plautine comedies had ceased to be performed. Yet such scenes constitute a standard source of entertainment in the farcical theatre of earlier days: in the *Mostellaria*, Philolaches and Callidamates with their respective girlfriends, Philematium and Delphium, organise a banquet; a small table, dice, and water for the hands are mentioned as props for the scene (308-309). The finale of the *Persa* is a banquet (757 ff.),[16] in which each person has a role to perform: Toxilus, Sagaristio and Lemniselenis are the diners, Paegnium the waiter, and Dordalus the butt of the company. Toxilus and Sagaristio impersonate the dancers Hegea and Diodorus by imitating favourite postures in their dancing movements (cf. the imitation which Trimalchio's cook performs of the tragoedus Ephesus at 70.13). Likewise, according to the general festive atmosphere, Stichus and Sangarinus arrange a feast in which they get drunk, eat tit-bits, invite the flute-player of the performance to have a drink and laugh at him; Stephanium, the girlfriend of both of them, dances to entertain them and they follow her example, performing various salacious and lascivious movements (Pl. *Stichus*, 683-775).

One cannot, however, exclude the possibility that Petronius' Cena may have originated from the satirical tradition of the cena as a vehicle for social criticism, the author elaborating on his model and presenting it with strong reminiscences of farcical events from the popular stage. Moreover, the theatricality of the Cena does not gain more in depth, if we assume that Petronius was inspired from a staged convivium rather than arguing that he added mimic events in a satirical prototype. It is probably true that the author of this novel is not writing satire in its conventional sense, but still there is a great deal of poignancy inside Trimalchio's feast. A step-by-step theatrical interpretation of the events that took place in the Cena Trimalchionis, will show that, regardless of his particular source of inspiration, Petronius, through his vulgar host, has composed the most spectacular dinner of ancient literary fiction.

II

The textual gap between the Quartilla-scene and the Cena Trimalchionis leaves many questions unanswered regarding the exact reason for the terrible physical

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16 See Woytek (ed.) 1982, 30-33.

and psychological condition of the heroes (26.7 tot vulneribus confossis; 26.8 maesti deliberaremus quonam genere praesentem ... procellam; 26.8 trepidantes; 26.10 obliti omnium malorum). An invitation to dinner changes the mood (26.10) and forms a brief introductory note to a dazzling spectacle. The first time the actual feast is mentioned in connection with Trimalchio's name is when one of Agamemnon's slaves announces in an appropriate rhetorical manner the name of the host and some characteristic details concerning his habits and personal preoccupations:

> Trimalchio, lautissimus homo ... horologium in triclinio et bucinatorem habet subornatum (26.9)
>
> 'Trimalchio, a most elegant man - he has a clock and a uniformed trumpeter in his dining-room.'

Although neither an actual horologium nor a bucinator subornatus reappear in the text as we have it (an imaginary horologium is mentioned at 71.11 as one of Trimalchio's personal wishes in the description of his funeral statue), the ideas which these images convey will recur constantly throughout the dinner; a closer look, therefore, at the significance of these first pieces of information is necessary in order to draw a general frame within which the events that constitute the Cena will take place.

The notion of taste combined with luxurious wealth is expressed by the adjective lautus, but the term lautitiae also refers to theatrically staged incidents of the Cena,[17] thus underlining the theatrical way in which Trimalchio shows his arrogant lack of taste. Obsession with time and death[18] is amusingly presented through Trimalchio's employment of both an inanimate object, a kind of clock,

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[17] At 27.4 it refers to the extravagant details of Trimalchio's appearance and behaviour at the playground; at 32.1 to the spectacular way in which the starters were presented; at 34.8 to the Aethiopians who offered wine, instead of water, to the guests to clean their hands; at 57.2 to the spectacle of the apophoreta which causes laughter (56.8-10); at 70.7 to the false quarrel of two slaves; at 73.5 to Fortunata's spectacular treasures. On the theme of lautitiae and its function in the Cena and the society of the first century A.D. see Barchiesi 1981, 132-134.

[18] This motif will be a recurrent one in the feast. For a lengthy discussion of the relevant passages see Grondona 1980, 9-75.

and a human being, a trumpeter,[19] to remind him constantly how much of his life is behind him (quantum de vita perdiderit 26.9). This morbid concern has a spectacular dimension, since the trumpeter appears dressed in a specific manner as if he were performing a role, his outfit probably consisting of exceedingly colourful clothes to match the vividly coloured garments of Trimalchio, his wife and the rest of their household. Moreover, Trimalchio seems to favour the noisiest of clock-sounds. The bucina was a kind of horn-trumpet used by sailors, to announce their arrival at a port, by ox-herds and swine-herds, to gather their herds together, and by the Roman army, to mark the night-watches or to summon and give orders to the soldiers.[20] Its use by Trimalchio, therefore, to announce the passing of time, displays his spectacular eccentricity together with a vulgar superstition, examples of which will occur repeatedly in the course of events during the feast.

The customary visit to the baths before dinner gives the hero and his friends the opportunity to witness for themselves the amusing spectacle their future host provides with his mere appearance, a spectacle which, in a way, forms the overture to his ensuing dinner (27.4 et quidem iam principium cenae videtis).[21] The picture of Trimalchio is introduced to the eyes of the narrator and the audience of the novel in an abrupt and startling manner.[22] He must have been among the groups of players (circulis ludentium 27.1) for a long time, but he is described by Encolpius as if he had just appeared out of nowhere. Everything in that description is significant for the future events in the Cena and Trimalchio's characterization, but the overall impression that must remain in the mind of the novel's audience is that here we are, above all, dealing with a spectaculum

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[19] On Trimalchio's bucinator see Baldwin 1978, 87. He is dressed up in a particular costume, subornatus (26.9). On similar usages of the verb suborno see Pl. *Per.* (Arg.) 4 subornata suadet sui parasiti filia; Petr. 36.2 leporemque in medio pinnis subornatum; *Rhet. ad Herenn.* III.xxi.34 Aesopum et Cimbrum subornari ut ad Iphigeniam in Agamemnonem et Menelaum. Meerwaldt 1921, 406-410 wrongly argues that Trimalchio's trumpeter was an automatic piece of machinery, attached to the clock.

[20] See Smith (ed.), *Dict. Antiquit.* s.v. bucina.

[21] See Barchiesi 1981, 129: "Sul piano della drammaturgia, le parole et quidem principium cenae videtis sono una didascalia da teatro, indirizzata ai due personaggi, Encolpio e Ascilto, che dello spectaculum saranno spettatori (raramente attori), e attravesro di essi a noi. La Musa ironica del *Satyricon* annunzia il grande episodio (principium cenae); Petronio ammica al lettore, con uno di quei giochi che a suo tempo ho chiamato 'meta-teatrali'."

[22] Note the adverb subito (27.1) and the use of the cum *inversum* (27.1).

(27.2).[23] Trimalchio's first appearance is enough to give evidence of the effeminacy and the eccentricity of his character. In the eyes of the narrator he is an old man (senem calvum 27.1). We do not know whether his baldness is due to his old age or to the shaving of his head (32.2). Whatever the case, the contrast with the long-haired boys (pueros capillatos 27.1) (he was one himself once, 63.3) is an obvious and amusing one.

Bright colours in outrageous combinations are a recurrent motif in the whole feast.[24] Trimalchio is now giving only a slight hint of the tasteless multicoloured costumes that will be worn by himself, his wife, his household and his guests. He is wearing a reddish[25] tunica and nothing over it (27.1). The usual colour of the tunic worn by the upper classes was white (Juv. S. III.179). This was also the appropriate colour for holiday-dress, even of the populace (Dio LXIII.4, LXXV.1). We find purple tunics given sometimes as gifts to oriental kings (Livy, XXVII.4.8), but tunics of this colour seem not to have been generally worn in Rome. Apuleius (Met. II.7) describes the maid Photis, just before making love with Lucius, as dressed in a linen tunic and having a band of this reddish colour tied under her breasts. The reddish colour is certainly not a respectable colour for the tunic of an average old man, but it is perfect for Trimalchio's effeminate extravagance.

The next point in Trimalchio's appearance, which characterizes him as a shocking public spectacle, is the fact that he is still playing ball at his age wearing his bedroom slippers (27.2). Sidonius (Ep. i.8) mentions, among other things, as examples of eccentric behaviour, the facts that

> student pilae senes, aleae iuvenes, armis eunuchi
> 'old men deal with balls, young men with dice, eunuchs with weapons'.

Trimalchio seems to surpass this eccentricity with his vulgar taste of wearing the

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[23] On elements of grotesque caricature in Trimalchio's three appearances (27.1-6; 28.2-5; 32.1-4) see Cèbe 1966, 224-225.

[24] See Lilja 1972, 31 and note 2; Beran 1973, 232 ff.; Currie 1989, 318 and note 4 (pages 318-319). Currie argues that the treatment of colours in the Cena is influenced from Ovid's appreciation of colour and visual form as seen in his works.

[25] Beran 1973, 232: "Russeus denoted a certain nuance of red, now extremely difficult to define precisely on the mere evidence of its uses known to us."

most inappropriate footwear for the occasion.[26] Wearing slippers in public was accepted only at dinner.[27] Trimalchio, however, is not at a dinner-party. It is rather vulgar luxury and the desire to make a strong impact in everyone's eyes that prompts him to dress in the way he does, and to prefer coloured balls for his play. Ovid (*Met.* X.262) speaks of embroidered balls (pictas pilas), but he has not reached the level of Trimalchio's startling ball, which together with the bright red of the tunic, is the first hint of Trimalchio's passion for dazzling combinations of bright colours.[28]

Trimalchio's game is the first in a series of games during the dinner. The vulgar host and his guests show an intense devotion to games, and such an excessive preoccupation has been aptly noted by Saylor who suggests that a strong gladiatorial element permeates the feast, and speculates

> that there is a game and a mentality of games beneath the literal level of the Cena, the game allusively done and in no systematic way (;) ... since the work is preoccupied with the idea of death which breaks forth in 70-71 in direct terms, it seems that the kind of game meant is a funeral game. One could envision the game as the funeral game for Trimalchio and his guests since it is their spiritual death that is the focus of the dinner and so of the game.[29]

He then proceeds to examine the games of the Cena against the background of the funeral games in Homer and *Aen.* V, but erroneously concludes that

> the trouble with Trimalchio's games, ... is that they are diminished,

degenerated, unsuited for and unable to bear noble modes of conduct.[30] According to Saylor, this deterioration points out the failure of Trimalchio's and his guests' mentality to confront death. When, however, we take into account, as Saylor did not, games such as 'backgammon' (33.2) and the 'bucca-bucca game'

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[26] At Rome it was not the custom to go about barefoot, and all free men wore boots or shoes when out of doors. Sandals and slippers were reserved for use inside the house; to wear them outside seemed to suggest effeminacy and was one of the things that scandalised the conservative Romans. Scipio the elder (Livy, XXIX.19.12), Verres (Cic. Verr. V.33), Antony (Cic. Phil. ii.30), Germanicus (Tac. Ann. II.59) followed this practice and were heavily criticized for doing so.

[27] Plaut. Truc. 367; Hor. S. II.8.77; Mart. Ep. III.50.3.

[28] Beran 1973, 232-233 notes that the adjective prasina in Latin "meant a dark green shade, sometimes with an element of blue." Cf. Väterlein 1976, 40, note 257.

[29] Saylor 1987, 599.

[30] Saylor 1987, 601.

(64.11-12), it is difficult to accept as likely a serious interpretation of images which were meant to be a source of amusement and ridiculous entertainment for the audience of the feast and that of the novel.

The game of the initial passage is probably what the Romans called the lusus trigo, and contains many of the bizarre elements the audience of the novel will witness before and throughout the Cena.[31] The players formed a triangle and threw the ball to each other, and a pilicrepus counted the balls that each player caught. If the ball was dropped, they would pick it up and start all over again.[32] Trimalchio tastelessly changes the rules. This change is two-fold:[33] Trimalchio never uses a ball that has fallen on the ground (27.2); he counts the balls that he has *missed* catching (27.3). The former of these incidents will be echoed in the incidents of the slave who was punished for picking up a silver dish (34.1-3) and of the slave who dropped a cup (52.4-6). The latter foreshadows the numerous kinds of changes that Trimalchio is going to practise at his dinner-party: for example, the transformation of food or the outrageous versions of his 'learned' accounts of mythology. The most important function of this game for the narrative is the fact that it displays, from almost the beginning of the Cena, Trimalchio's passion for games; thus it becomes a warning for the auditors and the readers of the novel to expect a dinner-party with a strong element of ludi inside it. It has been suggested that all these

> contrasts are used to make the picture of Trimalchio as absurd as possible.[34]

One should add, as comic and as theatrical as possible: the man himself, whose feast in every part is going to be a show, is introduced into the plot of the novel and is characterized right from the beginning as a spectaculum (27.2).

The picture of Trimalchio at the baths is an extremely funny continuation of the play-ground spectaculum. Trimalchio is being attended to[35] in a luxurious manner. One notices the compound form of the participle perfusus (28.2), which

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[31] See Horsfall 1989, 83-84.

[32] See Hor. S. I.vi.126; Sen. Ep. LVI.1; N.Q. VI.10.2; Väterlein 1976, 40-41; Balsdon 1969, 165.

[33] The changes are characterized before their description as res novas (27.3), 'new developments' (see OCD, s.v. 6a) and lautitias (27.4), ironically, at the end of the scene.

[34] Smith (ed.) 1975, 54.

[35] Note that all the verbal terms are in the passive voice: perfusus, tergebatur (28.2); involutus, impositus est (28.4); auferretur (28.5).

underlines the amount of perfume that is being spread on Trimalchio's body.[36] The reproach of the conservative Romans does not affect Trimalchio's way of bathing; for him linen towels are not appropriate for drying himself. His taste prefers longer pieces of cloth, blankets made of the softest wool. Once more we find out Trimalchio's predilection for quantity as a means of showing off his wealth and displaying his bad taste. On the other hand, the unusual size of Trimalchio's towel is employed as a visual effect which helps in the creation of another spectacular appearance.

After the bath, Trimalchio is rolled up in a scarlet woollen coat (coccina gausapa 28.4), which serves him as a kind of robe. A gausapa is properly the material out of which the paenula (in Greek φαινόλης) was made. It was a kind of woollen cloth and had a long hairy nap; it was originally used for warm coverings and for heavy cloaks (Mart. *Ep.* XIV.145).[37] Apparently, Trimalchio must have worn a paenula which was a sleeveless cloak, generally worn in rainy weather (Dio LVII.13; Quint. VI.3.66), while travelling (Cic. *Pro Mil.* LIV; *Ad Att.* XIII.33.5), by muleteers (Cic. *Sest.* LXXXII), by the soldiery (Suet. *Galb.* VI; Sen. *Benef.* III.28.4; V.24.1; Mart. *Ep.* XIV.129), and by the company at the public spectacles in winter (Suet. *Galb.* VI; Tertul. *Apol.* VI).[38] It was used by both sexes (Ovid. *AA* II.300) and it fitted closely to the body (Cic. *Pro Mil.* LIV; Tac. *Dial.* XXXIX). Hence the participle involutus in Petronius' text (28.4), which describes vividly the funny image of Trimalchio, who is enveloped inside a whole rain-proof coat in order not to catch a cold after the bath! The theatrical vulgarity and the effeminate luxury of Trimalchio as seen in the use of the gausapa (the same cloth was worn by a cinaedus in Quartilla's orgy, 21.2) are intensified by the fact that the woollen coat is a scarlet one, a favourite colour of Trimalchio (his pallium is scarlet, 32.2), second

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[36] The excess to which the habit of using fragrant oils and the like was carried, appears from Seneca (*Ep.* LXXXVI.13), who says that people anointed themselves three and four times a day. These luxuries, however, in earlier less corrupt days, did not pass unrebuked by Scipio (Gell. *NA* VI.12.5), and in 189 B.C. the censors positively forbade the sale of exotic unguents (Plin. *NH* XIII.24).

[37] Pliny says that it began to be made in his father's time and that the tunica lato clavo began at that time to be woven in the style of a gausapa (Plin. *NH* VIII.193). In the time of Lucilius (586 Marx) and that of Horace (*S.* II.8.10), a purple gausapa was used for wiping dinner-tables between the courses, while Martial (*Ep.* XIV.138) speaks of it as a table cover to protect the costly tables of his time.

[38] For an illustration of a paenula see Wilson 1938, figures 52a-54.

in value only to purple clothes, sharply criticized by the Romans of the old school (Sen. *Ep.* CXIV.21; *NQ* VII.31.2; cf. Mart. *Ep.* I.96.6), but, nevertheless, a good choice for an unforgettable image.

Music constituted an inseparable element in the organisation of a dinner which a host had arranged in order to entertain his guests. Bonaria provides a clear account of the development of music at Roman banquets through the ages, from the time of the carmina convivalia and their solemnly religious connotations to the hilarious comissatio and the immodest extravagance of the Empire.[39] At Trimalchio's dinner, however, music performs an unusual and precise role: it is not used for religion, pleasure or for aesthetic reasons but it is employed either for trivial duties of the household or for the impressive introduction of the next spectacle (course, or event, or Trimalchio himself). It is now that this motif and its significant function enter for the first time in the Cena, before even the beginning of the actual meal:[40] while Trimalchio was carried away after his bath, a musician[41] played with miniature reed-pipes and entertained him all the way to his house (28.5).

The element of music will recur several times throughout the Cena with a function similar to the one in this episode. Trimalchio wants a private entertainment in a public place and the result of his arrogant desire is ridiculously described as a secretive communication (28.5 tamquam in aurem aliquid secreto diceret) rather than an enjoyable musical interlude; one imagines how funny the picture of the symphoniacus would have been: he must have been walking beside his master within a very close proximity to his ear, if he was to be heard only by him and if he wanted to produce with the tiny reed-pipes a sound which could have been audible to the human ear. Besides the tasteless use of

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[39] Bonaria 1982, 119-147.

[40] On the importance of music in Trimalchio's world see Sandy 1974, 331 and note 5; Bonaria 1982, 136-138; Rosati 1983, 217; Horsfall 1989, 197-198.

[41] symphoniacus 28.5; cf. Cic. *Pis.* LXXXIII; *Mil.* LV; *Verr.* V.73; Gaius, *Inst.* III.212. We do not really know what the word symphonia actually meant. Cicero (*Verr.* III.44.105) and Horace (*A.P.* 374 ff.) mention it as musical entertainment at banquets, and we learn again from Cicero (*Mil.* XXI.55; *Verr.* V.25.64) that there were specially trained slaves, called symphoniaci, who were kept by rich men in order to provide this kind of music. It is not easy to decide whether this music was instrumental or vocal, because there is evidence for both kinds. In any case, it is not as important for the audience and the readers of the novel to know this than to realise that, although the word symphonia can have the meaning of concord, a harmony of sounds, the way music (vocal and instrumental) was performed in Trimalchio's vulgar world would have been a real torture for his guests' ears.

music in the particular context, it seems that the trained slave marks with his musical performance the theatrical exit of Trimalchio and the end of his overall spectacle at the baths.[42] Music, therefore, is given the secondary role of accompanying and focusing on the main spectacle, which is either Trimalchio (as is the case here) or one of his elaborately constructed dishes.

III

A series of spectacles is being unfolded in front of Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus when they enter Trimalchio's house, where the ordinary is humorously combined with the ostentatious in such a manner as to create the vulgar. Each of the sights is eccentric enough to catch a stranger's attention and demonstrates a different aspect of Trimalchio's character: cruel dominance behind the mock-imperial threat of the inscription fixed on the door-post (28.7), ridiculous tastelessness behind the multicoloured image the porter (ostiarius) provides while performing his humble duty (28.8), a desire to surprise his guests behind the spectacle of the magpie which greeted visitors (28.9). It should be noted, however, that characterization is not the only aim of this description. The visual element, which will make its impact clear in a staged manner during the dinner, gains a predominant position even from the exterior space surrounding Trimalchio's private 'theatrical' dining-room.

Admiration (28.6),[43] already created by Trimalchio's image at the baths, is gradually giving place to amazement (29.1) and farcical fright (29.1) when a vividly painted cave canem mosaic surprises Encolpius who takes this well-known picture for an actual menace and collapses in fear (29.1). The ironical naiveté Encolpius presents here is surely meant to be seen as a comic point, similar to knockabout farcical incidents of the popular stage which would make an audience laugh.[44] Encolpius' friends reacted in such a manner (29.2) but he insisted on giving the impression of an eager auditor who avidly responds to all

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[42] Music signals the beginning of a certain spectacle at 32.1, 33.4, 36.1, 36.6, 47.8, 78.5-6 and the end at 28.5, 34.1.

[43] On the elements of admiration and surprise as contributors to the theatricality of the Cena see Rosati 1983, 218. Deschamps 1988, 31-39 has an interesting discussion on the motif of the 'unexpected', ἀπροσδόκητον, and its various manifestations in the Cena. He regards it as a conscious literary device, which aims at drawing the audience's attention, and is connected to the political, philosophical and aesthetic ideology of the Neronian era.

[44] See Slater 1987(b), 167-168, and Pl. Most. 849-856, where an imaginary pregnant dog, though quiet, is used jokingly as a false menace to Theopropides.

the visual messages that are sent to him as if from a stage filled with impressive surprises.

Trimalchio's inclination towards dramatic forms of expression is soon confirmed; Encolpius notices a colourful picture covering another part of the wall (29.3-6). Through a detailed account of subtitled pictures any visitor could find out how Trimalchio wants to introduce himself to his guests before he actually appears. Nero's entrance into Rome after his return from Greece[45] bears striking resemblances to the depiction of Trimalchio's triumphant entrance into the same city, to the world of knowledge which leads to wealth through his stewardship, and possibly to the distinguished office of the sevir Augustalis (30.2), one of whose duties was to organise the public spectacles.[46] Thus Trimalchio presents and establishes himself as the self-made man of the theatre and, indeed, the tasteless mixture of pictures from the Homeric epics and a gladiatorial fight corroborates this impression.

A plethora of inscriptions overwhelms Encolpius and his friends as they enter the triclinium itself,[47] the place which will constitute the 'stage' for the ensuing series of dramatic events. Exhibitionism (30.2), arrogance (30.3) and

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[45] Suet. Nero XXV.1 sed et Romam eo curru, quo Augustus olim triumphaverat, et in veste purpurea distinctaque stellis aureis chlamyde coronamque capite gerens Olympiacam, dextra manu Pythiam, praeeunte pompa ceterarum cum titulis, ubi et quos quo cantionum quove fabularum argumento vicisset; cf. Plin. NH XIX.24. Saylor 1987, 596-597, regards Trimalchio's procession in connection with the gladiatorial element in the Cena: "A procession or parade (pompa) started the games and was an essential part of the munus. ... There is no actual parade in the Cena but instead it is represented in the mural on the wall leading to the dining-room, and for this reason the mural is an important ekphrasis at the head of the dinner. The images of gods at the parade are the painted gods of the mural, ... The place of magistrates in the parade is filled by Trimalchio, for in the mural he is shown divided into different important persons ... at different stages of his career. He is also the munerarius of the parade since he will soon appear as giver of the dinner stylized with features of the munus." Similarly, cf. Rosati 1983, 218: "queste 'storie di Trimalchione' sembrano modellarsi, nel loro intento celebrativo, sulle pitture trionfali, la cui funzione precipua era quella di illustrare al popolo le gesta dei grandi personaggi della vita pubblica romana."
[46] See Campanile 1964, 125, who suggests that "la pittura osservata da Encolpio rappresentasse Trimalcione che, a testa alta e con legittimo orgoglio, si avvia ad occupare al teatro o al circo il posto che gli compete come sevir Augustalis elargitore dello spettacolo."
[47] Horsfall 1989, 202-203, believes that it was not a comic motive that induced Petronius to create so many inscriptions close to each other, but his wish to present Trimalchio as "laboriously literal-minded, determined that no detail shall escape the notice of his familia or visitors." On the other hand, one should note that Trimalchio is not to be regarded as a highly educated intellectual.

superstition (30.4) are conveyed by these visual signs which are ironically characterized as "delights" (voluptatibus 30.5), but they certainly achieve their aim in creating the feeling that Trimalchio is present, even though he is actually absent.

An additional element of surprise is presented when the new guests are reminded in a loud (30.5 exclamavit) and intimidating (30.6 trepidavimus) manner to enter on the right foot. The host's superstition expressed in his orders to his household is described from a comic point of view but the slave's startling voice marks also the crucial moment in the narrative when Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus enter the triclinium. One notices a climactic movement of the theatrical element which is parallel to the gradual movement of the heroes from an exterior space to a more interior one, ending in the most intimate place of the stage itself. If one visualises Trimalchio's house as a round amphitheatre, one can easily see that the events from 28.6 to 30.1 constituted the exterior part of the amphitheatre, the images from 30.1 to 30.6 formed the part of the arena which leads to the stage, while, once the guests as cast have stepped inside the triclinium (30.7), they find themselves participating in the show Trimalchio has prepared for them. This progressive movement is clearly signalled through the careful mention of doors and thresholds (28.8 aditu; 28.9 super limen; 30.5 in triclinium intrare; 30.6 limen transiret) and will be continued, from the moment the heroes enter the purely theatrical space of the dining-room onwards, through a series of events which are no longer mere impressive visual images but brief sketches of a farcical nature; in these sketches human beings (trained slaves or professional theatre-persons) together with inanimate objects (food) are transformed into risible actors preparing the atmosphere for the extraordinary climactic entrance of their director, producer and main actor, Trimalchio (32.1-4).

The first in this series of farcical events is the incident of the stripped slave who appeals to Encolpius' benevolence to help him avoid the punishment for losing the steward's cheap clothes in the public baths (30.7-8). The case seems routine and there is no obvious reason for assuming that this is part of a role-playing, diligently devised in advance by the host's theatrical mind. But everything is too simple to be true: the slave falls at the friends' feet the moment they enter (30.7) as if he were expecting them, he is already stripped for flogging (30.7), he has a ready excuse (30.7), the steward (dispensator) adopts an appropriately severe posture (30.10), evokes ridiculously sentimental reasons for

his anger (30.11) and, almost immediately, forgives and forgets in an absurdly unexpected behaviour. If there is something of a mimic spirit inside this event,[48] Trimalchio is sure to have used it not for its own sake but for his own benefit: as it turned out, the slave happened (!) to be the ministrator domini, the butler who would make sure that his 'benefactors' would have best quality wine (31.2), a fact which underlined the generosity of the slave as well as the wealth of the master.

IV

It is appropriate to look now, in the order in which Petronius' text refers to them, at the list of persons who are used both as the cast and the audience of the shows in the Cena Trimalchionis.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Encolpius (31.3)	Dama (41.10)	Plocamus (64.2)
Ascyltus (31.3)	Seleucus (42.1)	Croesus (64.5)
Giton (31.3)	Phileros (43.1)	Habinnas (65.3)
Trimalchio (32.1)	Ganymede (44.1)	Scintilla (65.7)
Vetus conviva (33.8)	Echion (45.1)	Ingens frequentia (65.3)
Fortunata (37.1)	Agamemnon (46.1)	Massa (68.4)
C. Pompeius Diogenes (38.7)	Hermeros (57.1)	servi (passim)
C. Iulius Proculus (38.11)	Niceros (61.1)	

The staged setting of the Cena is already evident from the time of Encolpius' reclining at the table.[49] The pouring of water on to the guests' hands and the paring of their hangnails by Trimalchio's slaves,who are natives of the luxurious Alexandria, is the first of many similar incidents which show the theatrical intentions that the host has for his dinner-party. Encolpius notes that during the performance of their job the slave boys were continuously singing (31.4 obiter

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[48] Rankin 1969, 109: "This little episode is too neat to be taken at face value. It has something of the mime about it, and an element of παρὰ προσδοκίαν. Probably it is framed to suggest to the reader that he should regard it as a device of Trimalchio's to enhance his own importance."

[49] Cèbe 1966, 225: "Non seulement ce festin comporte une multitude de plats à la présentation bizarre, 'surprises' puériles ou franchement absurdes, qui sont une application dérisoire de la technique du 'trompe-l' œil' alors en pleine faveur, mais il est réglé à la façon d' une pièce de théâtre, avec une répartition précise de tâches entre les esclaves, des intermèdes, des chants et des morceaux de musique, des changements de décor obtenus au moyen de machineries compliquées, des distributions de présents et des parfums."

cantabant).[50] One would expect that this happened in order to enliven such a boring task (tam molesto ... officio 31.4), but when Encolpius finds out that the whole household is ‴ trained[51] (31.6 paratissimus, excepit) to answer in a musical rhythm[52] to every order it receives, then the room is being transformed from a gentleman's dining-room (patris familiae triclinium)[53] to a choir of a pantomimic performance (pantomimi chorum 31.7).

The pantomimes, performances of a solo dancer who gesticulated to the sound of music and the song of a chorus,[54] were extremely popular in the Imperial Age, despite severe criticism of them by the conservative moralists. The mention of a pantomimic chorus just at the beginning of the actual feast and before any of the various spectacles has taken place, functions as a direct warning to the auditor and the reader of the novel that what is going to follow will be presented as a show. This does not necessarily mean that the show is going to be tasteful or that the musical pieces in it will be harmonious and pleasant to hear. On the contrary, whenever music and songs are mentioned in the feast, they are almost always not only performed at an incredibly high volume which makes them impossible to understand,[55] but they are harsh-sounding as well (31.6 acido cantico). Moreover, the mention of such a metaphor from the stage

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[50] On Trimalchio's trained slaves see D' Arms 1991, 173, who mentions that in Trimalchio's dining-room, "ministri, usually designated merely as pueri, make no fewer than thirty five separate entrances."

[51] Corbett 1970, 55 remarks that this training 'is reminiscent of the schools of theatre arts.'

[52] canticum (31.6) perhaps refers not to a particular song, but to modulated speech: OLD, s.v., 3.

[53] Sandy 1974, 330, note 2 cites, rather implausibly, Cic. De Orat. III.86-87 (Valerius cotidie cantabat; erat enim scaenicus; quid faceret aliud? At Numerius Furius, noster familiaris, cum est commodum, cantat; est enim paterfamilias, est eques Romanus; puer didicit quod discendum fuit) as a possible "frame of reference for Encolpius' response" when he found out that all the slaves could speak in a musical rhythm.

[54] See Luc. De Salt. 29 τὸ δὲ πρόσωπον αὐτὸ ὡς κάλλιστον καὶ τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ δράματι ἐοικός, οὐ κεχηνὸς δὲ ὡς ἐκεῖνα ἀλλὰ συμμεμυκός. ἔχει γὰρ πολλοὺς τοὺς ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ βοῶντας. On general pieces of information concerning the techniques and history of pantomime in Rome see Rotolo 1957; Kokolakis 1959, 30-54; Angrisani 1984, 173-183.

[55] The response of the slaves must have been very loud to remind Encolpius of pantomimic choruses. Friedländer, vol. II, 345-346, notes that in the pantomimes "the texts represented by the dancers were sung by choruses which, in the very large uncovered theatres, required a very powerful accompaniment, in entire harmony with the character of a spectacle, the chief object of which was to affect the senses."

reinforces the characterization of Encolpius himself as a person who conceives what he sees and hears through the language of the theatre and, in particular, through its popular low genres.[56] From his point of view everything has now begun to acquire a theatrical quality and it is in the same manner that the audience of the novel should enjoy the ensuing events.

It is hardly a surprising innovation that Petronius introduces the conventional motif of food in his satirical dinner, but the degree to which the courses are elaborately served is certainly neither hackneyed nor irrelevant to the theatrical scheme Trimalchio has in mind for his cena. Apart from the reinforcement of the element of surprise[57] and apart from any parallelisms between the food and the peculiar sexual encounters of the heroes,[58] the extraordinary ideas Trimalchio has about cookery and their fulfilment by his expert cooks are a clear example of the dichotomy between illusion and reality, or, rather, the 'theatrical' life which dominates the Cena. It has even been suggested that the part of the novel known as Cena Trimalchionis constitutes, in accordance with the elaborately disguised nine courses of food,

> a nine-scene 'skit' ... commencing with a startling, eye-catching entrance,
> often spiced with a variety of wide-ranging dialogue, the whole production
> ... concluded by the noisy, precipitate departure of Encolpius, Giton and
> Ascyltus to the accompaniment of trumpets in the manner of the raucous
> mêlée that served as the ending of a mimic performance.[59]

As I intend to show by the end of the chapter, this statement is no exaggeration, and what should be kept in mind as significant for the proper understanding of the complex scenes which follow, is the important part food has in the overall theatrical structure of the meal. Almost all the ensuing spectacles will aim to prepare the way for the next course in Trimalchio's usual vulgar manner. It becomes apparent from the hors d' œuvre that Trimalchio is not content to serve his food simply but has given instructions for a particular decoration of the course which would give the impression of food being prepared

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56 On Encolpius' and the other guests' special acquaintance with the stage see Rosati 1983, 218-219. On Encolpius' 'hamming' histrionics outside the Cena see Coffey 1976, 271, note 86.

57 See Preston 1915, 263.

58 See Gill 1973, 182.

59 Sandy 1974, 331. In spite of the fragmentary state of the surviving mimic texts, there are some references to food and drink, although we cannot know their context: see Brugnoli 1982, 86.

at the moment of the actual serving: a donkey carries the olives (31.9), the colour of the damsons together with the seeds of the pomegranate gives the impression of coals and burning fire, on top of which sausages are grilled and served hot to the guests (31.11).[60] Trimalchio's arrogance is evident, though discreet (in quarum marginibus nomen Trimalchionis inscriptum erat et argenti pondus 31.10), but the point lies far from the mere statement of the plate's weight in silver.

After two remarkable appearances at the playground and at the baths, Trimalchio enters the room of the actual feast dressed in a manner which constitutes the climax of his extravagance. The build-up to this climax had started at 31.3 when the guests, regarded as the 'cast', had taken their places and the gustatio (31.8-11) was served to the accompaniment of loud music. It seems that not only everything in the general organisation of things points towards Trimalchio but also the passive verbal forms (32.1 allatus est positusque) create the impression that someone or something is being conveyed to centerstage.[61]

Trimalchio's vulgar luxury is dictated by three factors: his effeminacy, his desire to show off his wealth, and his pretence to belong to a social class higher than he really does. His arrival is signalled by music (32.1 ad symphoniam), as if a new spectacle was about to take place or a celebrity, magistrate or emperor was entering an amphitheatre.[62] He enters propped on tiny cushions (probably a comic contrast with his fat body), quis maxillas et cervices delicatae mulieres suffulcire consuerunt 'with which refined women usually support their chins and necks, as Apuleius (Met. X.20) says of the pillows that were scattered on the floor of the room which the rich lady was going to use as a bridal chamber for herself and Lucius the ass.[63]

Trimalchio's dinner-garment, synthesis, cenatoria or cubitoria, consists of just the pallium. As far as we can tell from the surviving sources, the synthesis was a

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[60] See Rosati 1983, 222 on the illusionary dimensions with which Trimalchio intends to present the serving of his food. For similar displays of eccentricity which aimed at creating the impression that the food served was very fresh, see Sen. NQ III.17.2 in cubili natant pisces et sub ipsa mensa capitur qui statim transferatur in mensam; cf. Rosati 1983, 222, note 28.

[61] Sandy 1974, 331.

[62] See Saylor 1987, 596 and note 13. Music in the Cena is constantly used for this purpose (cf. 28.5; 36.6). Its conventional use, i.e. for the pleasure and enjoyment of the guests, does not appear in Trimalchio's dinner-party.

[63] Martial (Ep. III.82.5-7) gives a spectacular description similar to Trimalchio's of another pretentious effeminate, Zoilus.

composite costume, usually of rich material; it was sometimes white, but was more frequently dyed, especially green, or purple. It may have originated as a style for women, but in the Imperial period it was commonly worn by men at dinners and at the Saturnalian festivities. Apparently, there was a tunic, rather long and ungirded at dinner, and to that tunic was attached a small mantle, a palliolum, usually of fine material, used for utilitarian purposes, or merely to form a bit of conventional trimming.[64] Sometimes, as in Trimalchio's case, the pallium was worn instead of the toga at banquets, because it was of a more convenient size and shape for use while reclining, and could be as light and cool as the wearer wished, or as heavy as the winter season might require. It seems, however, that Trimalchio has not chosen a light garment for his appearance, since his shoulders are burdened by the cloth (oneratas veste cervices 32.2), a hint either about the weight of the cloth or about the multitude of decorative objects hanging from his pallium.

I have already commented on the significance of the scarlet colour in Trimalchio's wardrobe. The picture of him here (32.2) is within the satirical tradition of effeminate luxury (Mart. *Ep.* I.96.4-9; Juv. *S.* II.95-97).[65] It was certainly a colour which indicated wealth (Hor. *S.* II.vi.101-103) and social importance (Juv. *S.* III.282-284). Nevertheless, it is likely that this (or the purple) was the color improbus condemned by Seneca (*Ep.* CXIV.21). Apart from any similarities, unintentional I believe, with the picture of Maecenas as described by Seneca (*Ep.* CXIV.6), the combination of very strong colours (scarlet cloak, white napkin, purple stripe in the napkin, the pale pink of the bald head) suggests not only a person with a bad taste for mixing colours, but also a funny spectacle, which justly evoked laughter from the inconsiderate (expressit imprudentibus risum 32.1).[66]

Petronius stresses the incongruities in Trimalchio's appearance by the mention of small details which, on the one hand, show clearly his vulgarity, but, on the other, function as stage-directions for comic effects: the shaving of his head (32.2) is the haircut of a newly-made freedman; in spite of this, the napkin

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[64] See Brewster 1918, 131-143; MacDaniel 1925, 268-270; Wilson 1938, 169-172.

[65] Martial, however, seems to connect this colour with vulgar arrogance as well, when he mentions (*Ep.* V.35.1-2) that Euclides was dressed in scarlet when he was loudly proclaiming that sibi redire de Patrensibus fundis / ducena.

[66] For an imaginative illustration of Trimalchio see Fellini 1978, 17; *Petronian Society Newsletters* 15.2 (1984), 6 and 15.1 (1983), 8.

with a broad purple stripe (32.2) resembling that of a senator's tunic, displays Trimalchio's wish to pass himself off as something that he is not. Since Trimalchio cannot be a senator, he imitates partly a senator's dress, although he is forced to limit himself to a napkin around his shoulders! Martial (*Ep.* IV.46.17) mentions among the trivial gifts that were sent by a Picenian client *et lato variata mappa clavo*. Trimalchio does not seem to regard this as a trivial accoutrement. He has also put his personal taste in it, as far as we can judge from the fringes hanging from it here and there (32.2)![67]

In the Empire the wearing of rings reached ridiculous extremes. Seneca complains that

> we decorate our fingers with rings; in every joint a jewel is displayed[68]

while Juvenal says that one of the reasons that force him to write satire is

> when Crispinus, a blob of Nilotic scum, bred in Canópus, / hitches a cloak of Tyrian purple onto his shoulder / and flutters a simple ring of gold on his sweaty finger / (in summer he cannot bear the weight of a heavy stone).[69]

Trimalchio does not seem to be very extravagant, as far as the wearing of rings is concerned, if we are to believe Martial who mentions that

> Charinus wears six rings on each finger and does not take them off at night nor even when he bathes.[70]

This habit was certainly not regarded as either fashionable or decent in early Roman times.[71] By Horace's time (*S.* II.7.8-10) it was fashionable to wear three rings on the left hand, and Pliny (*NH* XXXIII.24) says that in his day only the middle finger, the digitus infamis, was not beringed.

Rules for the proper wearing of rings, such as those found in Quintilian (XI.iii.142), do not seem to affect Trimalchio's taste, for he wears two rings, a

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[67] Caesar also made a strong impact when he appeared dressed in a senator's tunic with fringed sleeves reaching to the wrist (Suet. *Div.Iul.* XLV.3).

[68] Sen. *NQ* VII.31.2 exornamus anulis digitos, in omni articulo gemma disponitur.

[69] Juv. *S.* I.26-30. The translation is by Rudd 1991.

[70] Mart. *Ep.* XI.59 senos Charinus omnibus digitis gerit / nec nocte ponit anulos / nec cum lavatur.

[71] Isidorus (*Orig.* XIX.32) says that apud veteres ultra unum anulum uti infame habitum viro and he goes on to mention that the first person to wear more than one ring was M. Licinius Crassus Dives, who in senectute duos habuit anulos, causam praeferens quod pecunia ei immensa crevisset.

massive gilt ring and a smaller ring decorated with iron stars (32.3). The latter is placed on the top joint of his third finger. Neither of the two is pure gold. Through his taste for rings, apart from the desire to show off, two other aspects of Trimalchio's character are revealed: his superstition and his pretentiousness.[72] Trimalchio prefers an enormous ring for his little finger not only for the eccentric antithesis that it would create (after all he regularly chooses to be seen in clothes of unusual size, cf. 28.4), but also because, as Juvenal (*S.* VII.139-140) puts it,

> nowadays no one would give two hundred to Cicero himself, unless he flashed a massive ring.[73]

The comic point in Trimalchio's case is that, in his attempt to look a Very Important Person, the excessive number of jewels and the vulgar combinations of colours in his tasteless wardrobe make him look more like a grotesque caricature of a VIP, taken from a farcical piece,[74] rather than an actual one.

We must imagine that Trimalchio was posing for a short while in order to let his expensive, but tasteless, outfit be well seen and admired by everyone. Then he made further revelations of the hidden jewellery he was wearing (32.4): a golden armlet and a circlet of ivory fastened by a shining metal plate. We do not know whether this golden armlet is the same as the one mentioned by Trimalchio himself at 67.7, and which is supposed to weigh almost twice as much as the whole of the jewellery that Fortunata, Trimalchio's wife, wears in public (67.7)!

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[72] The ius anuli aurei had been given to the equites by (probably) Tiberius, to distinguish them from other ingenui (Plin. *NH* XXXIII.32). The unscrupulous immediately found it a useful way to pass themselves off as what they were not. As the Younger Pliny says, for a freedman to wear a gold ring meant that he lied about his ingenuitas as well as his status, because the right was given only to those of freeborn fathers and grandfathers; it could, however, be given to worthy freedmen by imperial decree (Plin. *Ep.* VIII.6.4). Trimalchio was not given any such privilege, but cleverly combines regard for the law and personal ostentation. His smaller ring could deceive anyone, as is the case with Encolpius who, at first sight, thinks that it is totum aureum (32.3), but only later realises that it is ornamented with iron stars, thus having the force of an amulet. Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc. refers to the *Catalogue of Finger Rings, Greek, Etruscan and Roman, in the British Museum,* ed. F.H. Marshall, xxi ff., for an illustration of this ring. Trimalchio is as bad as Martial's frequent target, Zoilus, who similarly tries to pass himself off as an eques by obscuring the stone in a heavy golden setting, but Martial (*Ep.* XI.37) makes a fool of him.

[73] Juv. *S.* VII.139-140. The translation is by Rudd 1991.

[74] A mimic actor who would perform a caricature of a luxurious person would have appeared on stage like Trimalchio. See Sen. *De Brev. Vitae* 12.8 (cited on page 82). Cf. Gagliardi 1980, 65: "L' entrata ufficiale di Trimalchione ... s' accorda alla perfezione con la scenografia delineata: ... , provoca la stessa irrefrenabile risata che avrebbe provocato in teatro un numero del genere."

Showing off the jewellery seems to run in the family, as is apparent in
Fortunata's behaviour later on (67.6). Trimalchio's aurea armilla, although,
probably, an indirect reference to Nero's golden bracelet inside which he had
enclosed a serpent's skin (Suet. *Nero*, VI.4), fits perfectly with his own character.
Gold armlets suggest regal (Nepos, *Dat.* III.1) or effeminate (Plaut. *Men.* 530 ff.;
Fortunata wears them at 67.6) luxury. Trimalchio certainly personifies the latter
and tries as much as possible to personify the former. Of course, he fails, but
Petronius wishes to mock Trimalchio rather than to condemn him; Trimalchio's
lurid clothes and flashy jewellery contribute to the vulgarity and, at the same time,
to the theatricality of the character.

Although we cannot define with certainty either the rules of the game that
Trimalchio is playing as he enters the dining-room, or indeed the game itself,[75]
we can notice specific facts about it which contribute to the theatricality of
Trimalchio at his third entrance. He announces in a pseudo-polite manner his
intention to finish the game (33.2), in order to draw everyone's attention towards
him. The game was not already in the room, but, after Trimalchio's statement
which functions like a formal announcement of a spectacle and, at the same time,
as the cue for the slave who was probably waiting outside to hear the phrase and
enter, it is brought in by a slave and is introduced as the most charming thing of
all (rem omnium delicatissimam 33.2). Once more Trimalchio and the game-motif are
tightly connected (cf. 27.2-3; 64.11-12). The picture that the game itself provides
is indeed worthy of its player: the strong wood of terebinth, out of which the board
of the game is made, and the fragile crystal dice[76] make a laughable contrast, but
the combination of the two must have produced a striking image.[77] To this
splendour one must add the vulgar use of gold and silver coins (aureos
argenteosque ... denarios) instead of black and white counters; this substitution

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[75] Perhaps, the game in question is the ludus duodecim scriptorum, a sort of backgammon. For
its rules see Väterlein 1976, 55-57; for bibliography on the subject see Väterlein 1976, 55, note
381; cf. Horsfall 1989, 84.

[76] Trimalchio seems to favour crystal. The dog-fight at 64.10, where the dogs break all the crystal
in the room, indirectly suggests that the dining room was like a kaleidoscope.

[77] Plin. *NH* XXIV.34: Arborum differentia placet terebinthina odoratissima atque levissima,
nationum Cypria et Syriaca, utraque mellis Attici colore, sed Cypria carnosior crassiorque.
In sicco genere quaerunt ut sit candida, pura, perlucida, ...
Cf., also, Plin. ibid., XIII.54 nigri splendoris.

displays Trimalchio's ostentation and, at the same time, gives more vivid colours to the overall picture of the game.

V

The gustatio had not yet finished (gustantibus adhuc nobis 33.3), and Trimalchio is still noisily engrossed in his game, when the second spectacular course is brought in (33.3): a wooden hen in an egg-laying position on a tray (33.3) completes the theatrical pandemonium. The culinary illusion which the cook has prepared in obedience to his master's orders is four-fold: the hen is inedible (gallina erat lignea 33.3), it lays neither wooden nor ordinary eggs, but peahen's eggs (33.4), the eggs are not actual peahen's eggs, but balls of thick pastry (33.6), pastry is only their exterior cover, since they contain an unexpected delicacy (33.8).

The spectacle of this tray (repositorium) is staged in a theatrical pattern which has already been clearly observed in the serving of the starters (31.8-11) and will constitute from now on a regular scheme for dramatic surprise in the course of the culinary events: the discovery of something special in the menu is accompanied by loud and harsh music (33.4 symphonia strepente; cf. 35.6)[78] which intensifies the mock-grandeur of the whole spectacle; Trimalchio plays the worried and ignorant host while in reality he discreetly guides his guests' reactions as he wishes (33.5). Additional farcical dimensions to the incident are given by the incongruous contrast between the soft and fragile pastry eggs, and the excessively heavy spoons (33.6; cf. the same sort of contrast in Trimalchio's appearance in the baths at 28.4 or the dining-room at 32.2 or in his game at 33.2); by Encolpius' naiveté (33.7) and his fellow-guest's avid expectations (33.8). The theatricality of this disguised course is reinforced by the deliberate

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[78] Cf. Quint. I.ii.8. On strepo connected with harsh-sounding musical instruments see Verg. Aen. VIII.2; Hor. Carm. II.1.18; Sen. Thy. 575; Stat. Theb. IV.95.

choice of the word scaena (33.5),[79] referring to the unusual disclosure of peahen's eggs under a wooden hen, and by the masterly achievement of perfection in presenting these four deceptive levels through the repeatedly rehearsed performance of the same spectacle (continuo ... subinde 33.4; ut audivi veterem convivam: 'hic nescio quid boni debet esse' 33.8; cf. 36.8 at ille, qui saepius eiusmodi ludos spectaverat).[80]

Music signals that the time allowed (everything seems to obey a pre-scheduled programme) for the spectacle of the repositorium (33.3-8) has passed[81] and that the servants must clear the table for the next course. Trimalchio's originality in the use of music as an ancillary element in his show consists not only in the abrupt manner (34.1 cum subito) the symphonia is being performed, designed to draw everyone's attention and to make the point clear to everyone's consciousness that this part of the show has reached its end, but also in the singing and dancing movements that the attendants perform while they swiftly do their job (34.1 gustatoria pariter a choro cantante rapiuntur). The characterization of the waiters as a chorus by Encolpius seems to imply both the complete harmony and high volume of the singing during this staged act, and that the procedure of the identification in the narrator's eyes between Trimalchio's servants and a pantomime-chorus (cf. 31.4-7) has now been completed.

It was about time for the Aethiopian slaves to enter and offer water (or, as Trimalchio has planned it, wine, 34.4) to the guests to wash their hands after the gustatoria, but it so happens that one member of the household accidentally (or on purpose?) drops a dish and immediately picks it up (34.2). This gives the opportunity to Trimalchio to show his vulgar pretension, as far as his money is concerned, and his stern behaviour towards those who work for him: the slave

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[79] For parallels of the word scaena in this meaning of "a piece of artificial or melodramatic behaviour designed to impress" (OLD), see Apul. Met II.28 Propheta sic propitiatus herbulam quampiam ob os corporis et aliam pectori eius imponit. Tunc orientem obversus, incrementa Solis augusti tacitus imprecatus, venerabilis scaenae facie ...; Quint. VI.i.48-49 neque illum (scil. probaverim) qui, cum esset cruentus gladius ab accusatore prolatus, quo is hominem probabat occisum, subito ex subselliis ut territus fugit, et capite ex parte velato, cum ad †agendum† ex turba prospexisset, interrogavit an iam ille cum gladio recessisset. Fecit enim risum, sed ridiculus fuit. Discutiendae tamen oratione eiusmodi scaenae ... Cf., also, Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 165 scena, theatri locus aut ludus mimicus.

[80] See Sandy 1974, 330 and 332.

[81] The expression lusu intermisso (34.1) suggests for Sandy 1974, 332, a theatrical intermission which takes place even before the clearing of the tables.

has to be punished for underestimating his master's wealth and for not thinking that once a small plate has fallen on the floor, it is automatically considered as rubbish.[82]

The two long-haired Aethiopian slaves[83] enter immediately (34.4 subinde) after the annoyance which the incident of the silver dish caused to Trimalchio, and their appearance is strongly associated right from the beginning with the world of entertainment:

> quales solent esse qui harenam in amphitheatro spargunt (34.4)
>
> just like the men who sprinkle the sand in an amphitheatre.[84]

Their presence in the particular context seems to suggest not only that the stage, Trimalchio's dining-room, has to be cleaned after the accident of the silver-dish, but that another spectacle is about to follow, namely the silver skeleton. Encolpius identifies these slaves with slaves in the amphitheatre, whose normal duty was to sprinkle saffron-water in the arena, even though this duty is not fulfilled in Trimalchio's dining-room. This implies either that the slaves wore actual costumes in obedience to Trimalchio's orders and stage-directions, or that Encolpius' theatrical mind, which interprets everything through the code of popular spectacles, sees them as such, because he has conceived the Cena as a grandiose spectacle. Whether they are dressed as the slaves of the amphitheatre or not, the contrast between their large stature[85] and their tiny wineskins (34.4 pusillis utribus) adds to the comic effect. The ultimate intention of Trimalchio's plan is to offer wine, instead of water, to the guests to wash their hands. This action

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[82] On severe punishments inflicted on slaves who had committed peccadillos during their service, see D' Arms 1991, 175.

[83] Sedgwick (ed.) 1959, ad loc., notes : "Ethiopians never have long hair, so these must be ordinary slaves, dressed as Negroes." Cf. one of the disguises proposed on board Lichas' ship at 102.13.

[84] Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc., notes that "Encolpius is reminded of the attendants whose job it was to sprinkle the surface of the arena with water to keep down the dust and to freshen the air". The arena, however, was sprinkled with crocus, saffron, at the games: Mart. *Ep.* V.25.7-8; VIII.33.4; cf. Sandy 1974, 332, note 6; Braswell 1981, 152, note 2. Balsdon 1969, 258 and notes 66-67, says that saffron-water "was sprinkled on the stage, giving a strong and pleasing scent; to the performers it created an additional hazard, for, if it was sprinkled too liberally, they were liable to slip." One realises also how bright and colourful the yellow of the saffron would make the sand in the arena.

[85] For the tall stature and the general characteristics of Aethiopians as conceived in the Roman mind see Thompson 1989, 199.

may be distasteful and vulgar,[86] but is a good example of the manner in which Trimalchio wants to transform even the slightest and simplest duties of his household into an exotic illusion, which would impress the guests and would contribute to the overall metamorphosis of his dinner-party into a show.

VI

The spectacle of the skeleton is a trivial example of the memento mori-motif, which was frequently employed at dinners to show that life is short and fragile; consequently one must enjoy it as much as possible before death comes.[87] Petronius, however, takes this hackneyed theme and through Trimalchio's boorishness makes a comedy out of it.

Whereas all our other sources say that the use of this motif consisted of a simple procession of the skeleton paraded round the guests, in the Cena it is taken further. The larva that the slave brings in the room functions like a puppet[88] (34.8 sic aptatam, ut articuli eius vertebraeque luxatae in omnem partem flecterentur) and, indeed, is meant to do so. The mere presence of a skeleton would remind Trimalchio's guests that they will, sooner or later, die. There was, therefore, no need for additional elements, such as the silver, out of which the skeleton is made,[89] or the kind of improvised performance Trimalchio produced (34.9 aliquot figuras exprimeret)[90] when he threw the contrivance (34.9 catenatio mobilis) down on the table once or twice (super mensam semel iterumque 34.9). The fact is, however, that these needless details are there; this indicates the dramatic representation

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86 See Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc., who quotes Plut. *Phoc.* 20 as a similar vulgar incident.

87 See Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc. Cf. Arrowsmith 1972, 308; Coffey 1976, 188 and 268, note 50; Horsfall 1989, 199. Cf., however, Gagliardi 1980, 67, note 26, who connects this message especially with mimes: "Base comune tra epicureismo e mimo è il carattere terreno e mondano di entrambi, il contatto immediato con la realtà naturale e con la vita quotidiana."

88 Heron, *Autom.* XXII. 3-6 describes a tragedy (Sophocles' *Nauplios*) performed with marionettes; the storm in the sea when the Greeks left Troy and Ajax's death were the main subjects of the performance. On the comparison between the larva argentea and a νευρόσπαστον, a puppet, see Rosati 1983, 215, note 7. Barchiesi 1981, 135 refers to the spectacle of the skeleton as a "pantomima silenziosa sulla condizione dell' uomo".

89 Trimalchio seems to prefer silver to gold, but still he uses it in the most impractical situations: he has a silver matella (27.3), lanx (28.8), Lares (29.8), craticula (31.11; 70.7), pinna (33.1), clibanus (35.6), corona (50.1), pelvis (70.8). Apart from Trimalchio's desire to show off his wealth by presenting a silver skeleton, note the vivid and colourful image that the skeleton must have provided if it was bright silver.

90 For exprimo in the sense of 'adopting a theatrical posture' cf. Cic. *De Orat.* III.220.

of what in the hands of another, less imaginative, author would have scarcely been more than a κοινὸς τόπος.

The actual significance of the skeleton-spectacle is made clear when we consider it in connection with the next dish. The introduction of the zodiac dish (35.1-6) seems to be a consequence of Trimalchio's hackneyed poetical compositions on the instability and insignificance of human nature (34.10). When, however, one notices the regular pattern of spectacles which are used to prepare in a spectacular manner the way for the next course, then the whole performance of the skeleton acquires an auxiliary character, because it looks as if it was originally planned in advance by Trimalchio, who wanted to fulfil his primary aim, that is, to make smoother and more impressive the introduction of his next course, namely the dish (ferculum) with the zodiac signs on it. Sandy rightly discerns a chain which links the events before and after the skeleton-performance: the serving of the wine (34.6) is the cue for Trimalchio's banal moralisations which, in turn, serve as the cue for the skeleton-'pantomime'; this prompts Trimalchio to recite his verses (34.10)[91] and invite his friends to the next course (35.1).[92]

It should be noted that the famous zodiac dish (35.2-5) covers only the higher part of the elaborate culinary achievement and its peculiarity lies not in its extravagant size (35.1 plane non pro expectatione magnum) but in its originality (35.1 novitas tamen omnium convertit oculos). It constitutes the first part of an astrological discourse presented throughout the meal through either visual images (35.2-5) or misinformed theories (39.5-15). Trimalchio will finally justify his extreme interest in astrology when he will give a detailed account of his early life (76.10-11).

Attention has already been drawn towards the similarity between this zodiac dish and elaborately described dishes in later Greek comedy (Alexis, fr.

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[91] Baldwin 1979, 145 connects the idea expressed in the last verse of Trimalchio's short poem (ergo vivamus, dum licet esse bene) with Pl. Persa 113 dum mane est, omnis esse mortalis decet. Gagliardi 1980, 67, note 25 notes that "il tema cantato del Trimalchione in metro popolare (2 esametri + 1 pentametro) ricorre spesso nei mimi di Laberio e Publilio."

[92] See Sandy 1974, 332. Arrowsmith 1972, 315 interprets wrongly the theatrical device of the skeleton in a highly moralistic sense.

261 Kock),[93] but the source from which Petronius derived his inspiration both for the visual and the theoretical part of this risible incident may have been the theatre of the mimes which not only ridiculed philosophical theories but also exploited, perhaps in a series of astrological mimes, people's beliefs concerning stars and their influence upon the future.[94]

A period of time, necessary for the guests' inspection and admiration of the ferculum, passes by with the proper musical accompaniment of mimic songs (35.6). Everyone seems to have second thoughts about their invitation to taste what they see (35.7), but the trick played on them is, of course, that Trimalchio does not invite them to eat the particular delicacies but the hidden course on the second level of the dish (cf. 36.4); thus he merely wanted them to concentrate their attention on the dish and when he thought the time was right, he gave the cue ('hoc est ius cenae'. haec ut dixit, ... 36.1) for the music[95] to begin and the slaves to lift the upper part of the dish with the zodiac signs; everyone's attention is focused on the new elaborate serving-dish: birds, sow's udders, a hare dressed up as Pegasus, fish swimming in a spiced sauce which was running from the skins of the four figures of the satyr Marsyas at the corners of the dish (36.2-3);[96] the guests -or, at least, those who were there for the first time- must have been taken aback by the unexpected view of all this, while music provided, as usual (cf. 33.4), the introduction and the accompaniment throughout this spectacular course. An amusing picture is witnessed by Encolpius who notes that the slaves ran to obey their master's orders in time to the music and

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[93] See Horsfall 1989, 201 who also notes that "the most detailed recent study of the dish [S. Eriksson, *Stud. Gr. Lat. Gothob.* 3 (1956), 38-64] concluded most emphatically that Petronius does not attribute to Trimalchio serious prognoses à la Manilius, in the manner of orthodox recent astrology ... ; rather Petronius rings changes on the literal, verbal interpretation of the signs ... The 'literal' method is itself ancient, but Petronius takes it to comic extremes and thereby pokes fun at the entire art (Eriksson, 74-75)."

[94] On ridicule of philosophical theories by the mimes see page 112, note 115. On Laberius' astrological mimes (*Aries, Cancer, Gemelli, Taurus, Virgo*) see Walsh 1970, 26.

[95] ad symphoniam 36.1. The word occurs again at 32.1, 33.4, 34.1, 36.6, 47.8 and 28.5 (-cus).

[96] On how this automatic contrivance may have worked see Meerwaldt 1921, 410-411.

performed movements of a particular dance.[97] Trimalchio wants to dramatize the most insignificant details in order to make the presentation of his food more astonishing.

While the Egyptian slave was offering bread to the guests during the impressive display of the zodiac dish, someone, either Trimalchio or the slave himself, sang in a hideous manner a song from what seems to have been a mime under the probable title *Laserpiciarius* (sc. mimus) (35.6).[98] This passage is our only piece of evidence for the existence of such a title among the surviving mimic fragments,[99] and, although the form of this title resembles the forms of other mimic titles by Laberius (e.g. *Catularius*, *Centonarius*), attempts have been made to emend the text so that the theatrical reference disappears.[100] We know nothing of the popularity or the plot of this particular mime (if it ever existed), which might be important for the proper understanding of its Petronian context.[101] With regard to the history of the ancient theatre this is the most clear evidence for the existence of cantica, songs, in the mimes which always exhibited

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[97] The tripudium was a ritual dance in triple time: cf. Liv. XXIII.26.9; Sen. *Dial.* IX.17.4. Seneca (*NQ* VII.32.3) refers to that dance in connection with the effeminate corruption of the pantomimic stage: At quanta cura laboratur, ne cuius pantomimi nomen intercidat! Stat per successores Pyladis et Bathylli domus; harum artium multi discipuli sunt multique doctores. Privatum urbe tota sonat pulpitum; in hoc viri, in hoc feminae tripudiant; mares inter se uxoresque contendunt uter det latus mollius. This connection suggests a good reason for Trimalchio to choose the particular dance for his dinner-party.

[98] Recitation of mimic plays in Roman banquets was a frequent event. Brugnoli 1982, 84-85 lists the evidence for mimic representations in private dinner-parties from Cicero's time onwards.

[99] See Bonaria (ed.) 1965, ad loc.

[100] mimo: vino *Scheffer*. See Marmorale (ed.) 1947, ad loc.

[101] As far as the employment of plants in the mimic theatre is concerned, we find a reference to the faba mimus in Sen. *Apoc.* IX.3 and Cic. *Ad Att.* I.16.3. In Plautus' *Rudens*, 629-634, Trachalio, the servus, treats silphium and its product, the 'assafoetida', as gods, and he makes an oath on them. Sonnenschein's note ad *Rud.* 630 might justify the use of this plant as a subject for the vulgar mimes. Cf. also Collignon 1892, 280, note 2 who notes the importance of silphium in everyday-life and speculates: "Il est donc vraisemblable qu' il y ait eu un mime du marchand de silphium." Mr. P. R. Jeffreys-Powell suggested to me that the title of the mime might denote an importer of that plant's products, and that the mime might be set in an Italian sea-port or in an exotic place abroad.

a strong musical element in their plays.[102] The main point of significance in the Petronian passage is the appalling way in which the canticum is performed;[103] what might have been a popular song is transformed through Trimalchio's involvement into a vulgar spectacle, a torture for the guests' ears.

After the second part of the zodiac dish is revealed to everyone's amazed eyes, the slaves start clapping to suggest to the guests that it was time they applauded as well (36.4 damus omnes plausum a familia inceptum).[104] Trimalchio also seems pleased with his theatrical surprise (36.5)[105] and prepares himself for the performance of another trick on his guests, which he had no doubt repeated several times in the past (36.8).[106] Carpus, probably a trained slave, enters at his master's order and slices the meat in pieces to the sound of music (36.6 ad symphoniam gesticulatus). By using repeatedly the vocative form of his cook's name Trimalchio both addresses him and orders him to perform his duty (36.8); this wordplay, not immediately understood and appreciated by Encolpius (36.7), although it is rather clumsy and childish, shows Trimalchio's fondness for jests of any kind and belongs clearly in the tradition of the puns of the Roman popular theatre.[107] Cicero (De Orat. II.259) mentions in connection with the mimes the

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[102] See Plut. Sulla II.3 ὥστε μιμῳδοῖς καὶ ὀρχησταῖς τιθασοὸς εἶναι (Σύλλαν); Quint. I.2.8 omne convivium obscenis canticis strepit; Gell. NA I.xi.12 Quid enim foret ista re ineptius, si, ut planipedi saltandi, ita Graccho contionanti numeros et modos et frequentamenta quaedam varia tibicen incineret? Choricius, Apol. Mimorum 30 αἰσχρῶν ᾀσμάτων ἀκρόασις. Cf. more testimonia in Teuffel 1916, I.13. See, also, the stage-directions for music in the Χαρίτιον-mime, in Knoke 1908, 3-5; Skulimowska 1966, 175-178 (use of the terms τυμπανισμός, τυμπανισμός πολύς, τυμπανισμοὶ πέντε, τυμπανισμὸς ἀναπαιστικός, κροῦσις, κρόταλα, κρόταλα καὶ αὐλός).

[103] extorsit (35.6); see Th.L.L., s.v. extorqueo, I.C.1. taeterrima (35.6); cf. 64.5, 64.9, 70.7.

[104] Cf. the similar reaction of the household at 50.1 after the successful performance of the spectacle of the Porcus Troianus. On the function of the slaves' applause see Rosati 1983, 217.

[105] Collignon 1892, 276 regards the word methodium, which refers to the disclosure of the upper part of the zodiac dish, in a theatrical sense: "une petite pièce qui se jouait après la grande." Cf. Bechet 1984, 51-52 and notes 4-6.

[106] 36.8 qui saepius eiusmodi ludos spectaverat; cf. 33.8 deinde ut audivi veterem convivam: 'hic nescio quid boni debet esse'. See Sandy 1974, 336: "Every showpiece has been carefully orchestrated to a degree of perfection made possible only by rehearsal or repeated performance, as Encolpius recognises with uncharacteristic astuteness when, as we have seen, he clutches at clues from veteran guests."

[107] See Rosenblüth 1909, 42; Schmeling 1969(b), 8; Sandy 1974, 332, note 7; Duckworth 1952, 345 ff.; above, page 70, note 63.

popularity of jokes concerning words taken literally and not metaphorically:

> Est etiam in verbo positum non insulsum genus ex eo, cum ad verbum, non ad
> sententiam rem accipere videare; ex quo uno genere totus est Tutor, mimus
> vetus, oppido ridiculus. Sed abeo a mimis; tantum genus huius ridiculi insigni
> aliqua et nota re notari volo;

> There is one more kind of joke which depends on language and is
> not dull at all; it is due to the fact that you seem to perceive an
> expression literally and not in the meaning intended: *The Guardian*,
> an old and entirely amusing mimic play, is full of just this kind of jokes.
> But enough of mimes; I just wanted this type of joke to be illustrated by
> some noteworthy and well-known example.'

The whole scene, however, is being presented to the audience through
Encolpius' conception of events as a gladiatorial show which makes a strong
impression upon the guests. A common cook is being transformed into an
essedarius, a chariot-fighter (36.6), while the first vague reference to the musical
accompaniment of the action (36.1 ad symphoniam) becomes a specific reference
to a particular musical instrument, the water-organ (36.6).[108] Since the essedarius
was famous for his bravery and swiftness in action (Caes. *BG* IV.33), the
metaphor shows clearly the skill of the cook.[109] Despite the indirect evidence of
Suetonius (*Nero* XLI.2) for the employment of musical instruments at gladiatorial
shows, Marmorale notes that

> gli spettacoli gladiatorii a suon d' organo sono posteriori all' eta che
> communemente si atribuisce al nostro Petronio; al tempo di Nerone gli
> organi non erano applicati agli spettacoli del circo e dell' anfiteatro.[110]

Petronius is not necessarily historically precise in the description of what
could be called a theatrical fantasy; nevertheless, the combination of the
references to the essedarii and the hydraules is not accidental, but functions at a
second level as an indirect and ironical image of the terribly noisy spectacle the
cook must have created;

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[108] The similarity to Nero's passion for the hydraulus (Suet. *Nero*, XLI.2; LIV) is probably a
coincidence. See Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc.

[109] See Rosati 1983, 215 and the equally skilful gestures of the scissor at Juv. V.120 ff., and cf.
Mayor's note ad loc. Cf., also, Juv. IX.110, XI.136; *CIL* IX.466. On a cook's skilful gesticulations and
the elevation of cookery from a slave's duty to a precious art see Livy, XXXIX.6 and Rosati 1983,
213 and 216.

[110] Marmorale (ed.) 1947, ad loc.

the hydraulus enjoyed some popularity during the late Hellenistic and Roman age, in part because the piercing sonority of the larger and more sophisticated instruments was eminently suitable to the spacious places where performances were held in that period (amphitheatres, circuses, arenas) and in part because their tuning permitted the execution of music in different tonalities ... This feature made the hydraulus particularly suited to producing music of the imitative and virtuosic sort, free from harmonic restrictions and from any obligation of tonal coherence.[111]

One gets the same idea of noise when one notices that the chariots of the essedarii

were purposely made as noisy as possible, probably by the creaking and clanking of the wheels.[112]

We can imagine, therefore, that the dissonant sounds of the symphonia and the fast mimic movements of the cook would have made the slicing of the meat a dazzling spectacle.

VII

The delightfully vivid gossip (longe accersere fabulas 37.1; tam dulces fabulas 39.1) on the Life and Times of almost all the guests, including Fortunata (37.2-7) and Trimalchio (37.8-38.5),[113] formed the starting point for Auerbach's famous discussion on Petronian realism[114] but is also a pleasing break from the gastronomic ordeals Encolpius has to endure (37.1).

Trimalchio's nonsensical lecture on astrology (39.5-15), which is delivered after he has assumed a particular pose, and let a period of time pass by (39.1-2), attempts to justify his pretentious belief that

oportet etiam inter cenandum philologiam nosse (39.4)

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[111] Comotti 1989, 73.

[112] Smith, Dict. Antiq., vol. I, s.v. essedum. Cf. Caes. BG IV.33; Tac. Agr. XXXV; Claud. Epigr. iv.

[113] The succeeding adjectives in Fortunata's characterization (37.7) est sicca, sobria, bonorum consiliorum reminds one of the similar expressions Vigilans ac sollers, sicca, sana, sobria (Afran. Divortium, 62) and Non mammosa, non annosa, non bibosa, non procax (Laber. 80).

[114] See Auerbach 1953, 30-33: "[the Cena] is closer to our modern conception of realistic presentation than anything else that has come down to us from antiquity; and this not so much because of the common vulgarity of its subject matter but above all because of its precise and completely unschematized fixation of the social milieu."

'one must not forget literary study even during dinner-time.'[115]

His theories are explicitly connected, through a pseudo-sophisticated Vergilian quotation (39.3 "sic notus Ulixes?"), with the zodiac dish served earlier on (35.1-6; 36.1-4), and should be considered as treating astrological material in the same risible way as mimes may have been exploiting it. One should not expect an example of edifying education from Trimalchio's mouth as he praises himself with his usual arrogance during his absurd distribution of specific attributes to people according to their stellar signs (39.8). He identifies himself with the clever king of Ithaca (39.3; cf. 39.14 nihil sine ratione facio) but both in his tricks and in his speeches he creates a grotesque caricature of the Homeric hero rather than an equally cunning rival. In addition, this long 'academic' discourse serves the practical function of filling the time during which the household will prepare the appropriate scenic apparatus and get ready to decorate the dining-room fittingly for the ensuing spectacle of the aper pilleatus.

Indeed, after the necessarily exaggerated compliments and applause of the host's incompetent wisdom (40.1),[116] the servants cover the couches with coverlets which portray hunting-scenes and equipment (40.1). Of course, no explanation has been given in advance and the company is at a loss, being ignorant of the reason for the change of the theatrical setting (40.2).[117]

> This scene ... is not so much meant to recall hunting in the wild as hunting
> in the guise in which it was most familiar to the citizen of a Greek or Roman

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[115] See Horsfall 1989, 200: "There is nothing incongruous in topics of popular philosophy surfacing at the banqueting-table, even at Trimalchio's level: philosophical themes occur with perhaps unexpected frequency on the popular stage - in the Atellana, there was the *Philosophia* of Pomponius; among mimes, the anonymous *Faba*, perhaps against the Pythagoreans, and in particular the (again) anonymous convivia poetarum et philosophorum, in which the non-contemporary Euripides, Menander, Socrates and Epicurus all took part." Cf. his note 49, page 208 and Sandy 1974, 338.

[116] Sandy 1974, 333: "The cheers that greet the 'routine' signal its conclusion to the waiting stage-hands, who prepare the stage for the next 'act' (40), an elaborate hunting 'skit', including hunting dogs (40.1-2)." Sandy then refers to *CIL* 10.1074 [Pompeii] as a commentary on this passage, but the animals referred to in these spectacular venationes are tauros, apros, ursos, not dogs.

[117] On the decoration of the background see Rosati 1983, 221 who, in order to show the bizarre effects at Roman banquets, cites aptly Sen. *Ep.* XC.15: qui invenit quemadmodum in immensam altitudinem crocum latentibus fistulis exprimat, qui euripos subito aquarum impetu implet aut siccat et versatilia cenationum laquearia ita coagmentat, ut subinde alia facies atque alia succedat et totiens tecta quotiens fericula mutentur, ...

city of the period, what in Latin is called venatio and in Greek *kynegion* or *theatrokynegesion* ... The décor could include trees, either specially planted or produced by stage machinery. That dogs were used is known from Martial and other sources; among the many varieties of animals killed, boars are frequently mentioned.[118]

The deceptive atmosphere of wild forests created by the painted coverlets resembles also that of the comic or mimic productions which had the necessary scenery painted on their backcloth (in the case of the mimes it was the siparium) during their longer or shorter performances. Like the breaking of the theatrical illusion in Plautine comedies through a direct address of the actor to the audience, the bafflement of Trimalchio's guests starts to gain realistic dimensions when they hear wild noises coming from outside and see, to their surprise, actual dogs, probably trained ones, intruding inside the triclinium (40.2); they do not seem, however, to be chasing a wild animal, for a huge wild boar on top of a tray comes *behind* them, not in front!

The elements which Trimalchio has combined in order to present in his unique manner the fourth course, derive their origin from the amphitheatre and from the elaborate Apician cookery. As we have seen, the entrance of the wild boar carefully reflects the techniques and routine of an arena whenever animal-hunting was practised; and it was practised frequently.[119] This metaphor will be continued later on in the imitation of bird-catching (40.5-6). The stuffed pig, porcus Troianus, took its place among the culinary delicacies of the Romans relatively early,[120] and the boar in question belongs clearly in the same tradition: numerous living fieldfares flew out when the cook cut his side (40.5). Extravagant culinary whims are transformed into spectacular pieces of public entertainment: the special servant who is appointed to cut the animal has a rough appearance (barbatus ingens 40.5) and is dressed suitably for the occasion:

> fasciis cruralibus alligatus et alicula subornatus polymita, strictoque venatorio cultro (40.5)
> 'with bands fastened on his knees, and dressed up with a light cloak of different colours, he drew a hunting-knife'.

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[118] Jones 1991, 186-187.

[119] See Balsdon 1969, 309-312; Ville 1981, 88-99, 106-116, 127-128, 168-173; Saylor 1987, 594 and note 8.

[120] See Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 40.4.

His gestures are skilfully performed in order to create the right impression (vehementer percussit 40.5); fowlers had been waiting to play their part at a moment's notice, (parati aucupes cum harundinibus fuerunt et eos circa triclinium volitantes momento exceperunt 40.6). If these people were not already professionals hired for the occasion, it is remarkable to note what deeds Trimalchio has trained his household to enact in order to build an image of a host whose dishes (in this case, fieldfares) consist of first class fresh food astonishingly served.

Further details in the description of the aper pilleatus render it a stupidly comic sight:[121] it appears to be a sort of hermaphrodite, for, even though Encolpius states clearly that pastry piglets, playing the part of apophoreta (40.4), were positioned around it as if they were sucking from it and so signified that the boar was a female one (scrofa) (40.4), he himself refers later on to the animal as male (41.1); the hilarious juxtaposition between the immensely big boar (primae magnitudinis aper 40.3) and the tiny baskets (sportellae 40.3) hanging from his teeth containing even smaller dates (40.3), ridicules the wild nature of the animal itself; the same effect is achieved by the mysterious presence of the cap (et quidem pilleatus 40.3),[122] a peculiarity which is absurdly broached by Encolpius as a highly important matter for speculation (41.1), but no adequate explanation could be provided despite his painful mental efforts (41.2). The vetus conviva is the last hope of satisfying his intellectual curiosity (41.2), and, indeed, the visitor, more familiar with Trimalchio's silly tricks, explains that the cap is a sign of the boar's being a freedman, because it was dismissed the previous day by the guests (41.4).[123] Both the interpreter's introductory remarks about the simplicity of the riddle (41.3), and the apparent sense the cap on the animal's head made after the explanation, created psychological problems for Encolpius, because he started worrying about his mental abilities and the possible disastrous consequences this stupidity might have on his social life (41.5). The self-irony of the narrator is an endless source of subtle humour springing out of ludicrously odd situations.

[121] Gagliardi 1980, 69 characterizes it as an "exodium farsesco".

[122] Baldwin 1970, 3, refers to Gellius (NA VI.4.1: Pilleatos servos venum solitos ire, quorum nomine venditor nihil praestaret) and suggests that the pilleus itself is a symbol for the deception and trickery which Trimalchio practises.

[123] Saylor 1987, 594 and note 9 connects this event with gladiatorial scenes when he notes that the word dimissus (41.4) "belongs to the language of the games and would be used of a beaten gladiator granted life in the arena." Thus Trimalchio's visual pun is two-fold: culinary and dramatic.

There follows an impersonation of Bacchus which is the first of a series of imitations in the Cena: Trimalchio copies the gestures of the actor Syrus (52.9), Trimalchio imitates trumpets (64.5), a slave imitates a nightingale (68.3), Massa, the slave, imitates trumpeters (69.4) and pipe-players (69.5), Trimalchio's cook pretends to be the tragic actor Ephesus (70.13).[124] A good-looking slave-boy with vine-leaves and ivy in his hair, two of Dionysus' conventional emblems, brings round to the guests a small basket of grapes, and recites Trimalchio's poetical compositions (41.6). A short sample of the boorish host's improvised poetry has already been given at 34.10. Following the tradition of all the reciters and singers at the Cena, his voice is so shrill (acutissima voce 41.6) that it must have pierced the audience's ears. This detail functions also as a stage-direction, since it points out vividly the theatricality of the incident through the combination of vision and sound.

It seems that subject-matter from Dionysus' life often provided instances of amusing imitations in dinner-parties or festivities.[125] But in the case of Trimalchio's dinner we do not deal with

> a parody of the practice in Dionysiac ritual whereby the leader of the worshippers tended to be identified with the god himself.[126]

The boy must have been performing three variations on the same pantomime-theme of Dionysus,[127] whereby the slave has been playing the part of both the dancer and the chorus who accompanied with his song the gestures of the silent pantomime.[128] We can, therefore, tentatively suggest that there must have been different postures and gestures for Dionysus' pantomime as Bromius, Lyaeus and

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[124] On this series of impersonations as "mimische paignia" see Rosenblüth 1909, 43.

[125] Xenophon, Symp. 9.2-6 gives a detailed description of a pantomime-performance in a private house by a boy and a girl who by means of dance, gestures and words represented the love of Dionysus and Ariadne in a most touching manner. Velleius Paterculus, II.82.4, describes the costume Mark Antony wore when he impersonated Dionysus in a procession at Alexandria to honour Cleopatra: redimitus hederis crocotaque velatus aurea et thyrsum tenens cothurnisque succinctus curru velut Liber Pater vectus esset Alexandriae.

[126] See Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 41.6.

[127] Lucian, De Saltat. 39, mentions in his list of pantomime-subjects καὶ Διονύσου ἀμφοτέρας τὰς γονάς.

[128] Note the element of transformation and theatrical performance in the verbal terms confessus (41.6) (cf. Ovid. Met. III.2; Stat. Theb. II.122) and traduxit (41.6), which suggests that the slave perhaps sang and mimed Trimalchio's poems (cf. 126.6 histrio scaenae ostentatione traductus).

Euhius, which need not necessarily be connected thematically with Trimalchio's poems. As is the case with most of the spectacles in the Cena, Trimalchio uses this one too to show off his tasteless humour in an arrogant manner (41.7-8).[129]

VIII

The ensuing five speeches of the freedmen (41.10-46.8) have formed the basis for the linguistic analysis of the sermo vulgaris of Petronius' time with all the necessary consequences that this study might have for the characterization of the particular fictional personae.[130] Without any doubt Petronius provides a faithful picture of the everyday language common people of his era spoke, and it is certainly not a coincidence that among the ancient literary genres only the theatre of the mimes portrayed human types speaking faithfully in the 'realistic' mode they would use if they were real people and not participants in a staged, imaginary farcical plot.[131] We should not forget, however, that the author of the novel does not aim at a linguistic classification or a pedantic recording of the lower classes' ordinary speech, but rather makes a character use specific wording and idioms only for this person's characterization in the overall frame of Trimalchio's vulgar dinner-party. Similarities in the way both Petronius and the theatre of the mimes used everyday language do exist, but due to the fragmentary (almost non-existent) state of the Roman mimic texts we cannot tell to what extent.

One could also argue that in the whole theatrical, or even mimic, structure of the Cena, the freedmen's speech functions as the prosaic part (diverbia) a staged mime would have in juxtaposition with its musical pieces (cantica), represented by Trimalchio's continuous lyric entertainment. However, both the uneven way Trimalchio's spectacles and the freedmen's speeches are distributed within the entire frame of Cena-events, as well as the fact that outside the Cena low-class persons (e.g. the Croton farm-bailiff, Chrysis, Giton etc.) speak in a sophisticated and rhetorical manner, uncharacteristic of their social standing, argue against this theory.

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[129] See Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 41.7-8 for the pun on the ambiguous liber / Liber. The same pun occurs on the comic stage: in Plautus' *Captivi* (577-578), Tyndarus plays on the words liber (= free) and Liber (= a proper name): AR. quid ais, furcifer? tun te<te> gnatum memoras liberum? TY. non equidem me Liberum, sed Philocratem esse aio. Cf. Cist. 127-8. And in satire: Hor. S. I. iv. 89-90.

[130] See Boyce 1991, 76-94.

[131] See Rosenblüth 1909, 38-39, 41-42, 45; above, page 11 and note 9.

The freedmen feel free to express themselves only after the domineering host leaves them to go to the lavatory (41.9),[132] and as each guest in turn takes up the thread of the narrative, he proves more loquacious than the previous speaker. Thus Dama's brief bibulous predilections, justified on the ground of being the best protection one could get against cold weather (41.10-12), are succeeded by Seleucus' moralising obsessions with death (42.1-7) in a sentimental manner full of proverbial sayings (utres inflati ambulamus. minoris quam muscae sumus, ... nos non pluris sumus quam bullae 42.4), so favoured by the popular mimic stage,[133] dramatic exclamations (modo modo me appellavit. videor mihi cum illo loqui. heu, eheu. 42.3-4) and hackneyed malevolent generalisations (medici illum perdiderunt 42.5; sed mulier quae mulier milvinum genus 42.7).

The increasingly boring morbidity (molestus fuit 43.1) of Seleucus' conversation is decisively interrupted by the cynical mind of Phileros who methodically reveals all the faults (43.1-3) of the person Seleucus was praising (42.3,5,7) and expands his remarks to a comparison of the character of the deceased with that of his brother's (43.4-8).

Practical Ganymede draws attention to more down-to-earth matters (44.1-3) using similar proverbial expressions (cum quo audacter posses in tenebris micare 44.7)[134] to those of his predecessors in the conversation (cf. longe fugit, quisquis suos fugit 43.5), to praise people and situations of the past (44.4-11), and to reproach the present times (44.12-14). Quite surprisingly he puts the blame not on the growth of man's materialism but on his negligence of religious affairs which evokes the wrath of gods against the human kind (44.16-18).

The longest, most vividly expressed and yet most blood-thirsty speech of all

[132] See Gagliardi 1980, 69: "Il sipario cala idealmente qui: la fine della prima parte dello spettacolo riceve conferma dall' uscita di scena dell' anfitrione."

[133] Cf. Herod. I.15 ἐγὼ δὲ δραίνω μυῖ᾽ ὅσον. Cf. Horsfall 1989, 84: "When Seleucus says that we are no more than a bubble, the proverb appears in Varro (RR 1.1.1) and Lucian ...; we are, he observes no more than flies - and similar remarks appear in Herondas and Suetonius ...; we walk about, he remarks, like inflated bladders - and that appears not only in Sophron and Epicharmus but on the walls on Pompeii. [See his note 52, page 208.] We observe a continuity in 'popular wisdom' transmitted, if we really do need a precise channel, through Sicilian comedy and the Roman popular stage, from the 5th cent. BC, to the walls of Pompeii, into which Petronius fits securely."

[134] Collignon 1892, 281: "On retrouve chez lui (i.e. Pétrone) des expressions qui nous sont données comme appartenant à la langue des bouffons, ainsi celle-ci (44.7). Cf. Fronton à Marc-Aurèle (L.I, ép. 2): Aliud scurrarum proverbium: cum quo in tenebris mices. Telle phrase de Pétrone semble une allusion à une scène de mime ou de comédie."

is by the centonarius[135] Echion (45.1-46.8), a rather unsympathetic character, who, professing to be satisfied with the present times (45.1-3),[136] manages to touch upon almost all subjects of Roman life, from cruel public spectacles (45.4-6; 45.10-13) and illegal sexual relationships (45.7-9) to pretended intellectualism (46.1-2) and a son's proper education (46.3-8).[137] His passion for spectacles in the amphitheatre has had a clear impact on the way he sees life. Among other events to which he eagerly looks forward is the quarrel of the amphitheatre-audience occasioned by the adultery of Glyco's wife with his steward, Hermogenes (videbis populi rixam inter zelotypos et amasiunculos 45.7), and Glyco's revenge upon the innocent slave (45.8-9). There is not enough evidence to prove that

> the rusticus seems to be referring to mimes like those featuring Latinus,
> Thymele, and Panniculus / Corinthus, zelotypus Thymeles.[138]

One can argue, at least, that Echion appears to classify real-life incidents (such as adultery) and the people involved in them (e.g. husband / jealous fool, adulterer / sweet lover) in the manner mimic stage productions had presented them: the jealous husband catches his faithless wife in flagrante delicto and after a rixa between him and the clever adulterer, revenge takes (or does not take) place.[139] It is no wonder that people like Echion who take the utmost pleasure in staged vulgar events feel so much at home with Trimalchio's dinner-parties.

<div align="center">IX</div>

Trimalchio had left the dining-room at 41.9 with the intention of relieving himself.

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[135] Note that there is a mime *Centonarius* among the surviving titles of Laberius' mimes (24-25): see Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 109. Baldwin 1976(b), 327 notes that Laberius is the only literary example, other than Petronius, who uses the word centonarius to signify a certain profession, although no definite decision can be made as to the exact meaning of the word (one who extinguishes fires by using mats or a clothes-dealer?).

[136] Note the peculiar way in which he expresses his satisfaction: "modo sic, modo sic" inquit rusticus; varium porcum perdiderat 45.2. Could he be quoting a line from a farcical staged event? Bagnani 1964, 235 defends the passage as it is, without the insertion of a cum after porcum and cites as parallel Laberius (apud Gellius, N.A. XVI.7.2): 'Hercle, hoc plus negotii est' inquit cocio, sex aediles viderat.

[137] Rosenblüth 1909, 54 compares the way in which Echion's son's teacher is sketched with the manner in which the character of the schoolmaster is described as a mimic type in Herodas III and in Philistion's (?) *Philogelos*.

[138] Kehoe 1984, 92-93; cf. Fantham 1986, 54.

[139] See below, pages 207-209, 210-211.

When he returns at 47.1[140] - putting a necessary end to the gossip of his freedmen-guests - he finds it proper not only to perform in public things which should have been done in private (that is, wash his hands: 47.1), but also, after a slight dramatic pause (spatioque minimo interposito 47.1), to give an embarrasingly detailed account of his stomach-problems (47.2-6),[141] a comic monologue which produces open or suppressed laughter in his audience (47.5; 47.7). But, according to the omniscient narrator (47.8), Trimalchio has not said his last word yet, for a new complex culinary spectacle unfolds[142] when the tables are cleaned to the sound of music (47.8 ad symphoniam; cf. 34.1) and three white pigs are brought in front of the company (47.8). The audience of the spectacle consists of the diners; the cast is Trimalchio (note his play-acting at 47.10-13; 49.3-5; 49.8), an announcer (47.8), a cook (47.11-13; 49.5-6; 49.9),[143] and four pigs, three of them alive (47.8) and one already cooked (49.1 ff.).

The usual pattern of music being employed for trivial duties of the household and for the spectacular introduction of the next course occurs

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[140] Gagliardi 1980, 72 conceives his re-entrance in theatrical terms: "Finito l' intervallo, la rappresentazione riprende col ritorno in scena dell' archimimus ..."

[141] Rosenblüth 1909, 40 compares Sat. 47.3 circa stomachum mihi sonat, putes taurum with Sophron 46 Kaibel ἁ δὲ γαστήρ ὑμέων καρχαρίας ὅκκα τινὸς δῆοθε. It seems that Trimalchio has similar stomach-problems to the ones that a character in a mime by Laberius has: see Parilicii 83 (Bonaria) foriolus esse videre: in coleos cacas.

[142] See Sandy's summary (1974, 333-334): "the pig that Trimalchio selected for preparation is returned in an unbelievably short time (49.1-2) and turns out to be a disguised receptacle for sausages (49.10), thereby defusing Encolpius' blustering threats (49.7). This automatum has completely outwitted the guests from beginning (47.10) to end (49.10). Its success depends on extensive dissimulatory play-acting (47.10-12, 49.3-6 and 8-9), which, as it involves more than one person, must have been well rehearsed, and on discursive, time-filling "patter" (48.1-8). Trimalchio's claque responds enthusiastically to this, the most elaborate of the automata (50.1), and the cook is honored with a crown as though he, perhaps like Eumolpus (83.8), has been victorious in an agonistic festival (50.1)." Cf. Rosati 1983, 223; Saylor 1987, 594-595.

[143] It is hardly necessary to mention that the cook was a standard figure in comedy and mime, Greek and Roman of all periods: see Gaskins Harcum 1914; Dohm 1964. Preston 1915, 268 notes that "the versatile and aggressive cook of Trimalchio (cf. 74.5; 70.12) has a strong family resemblance to the braggart cook in comedy" as represented in Plaut. Pseud. 790-890, Aulul. 280-349. It is not essential to assume that Trimalchio's cook is based on a theatrical cook. It could equally well have been the case that Petronius created that character out of his mind, or took him from a non-theatrical genre (for example, satire), but he certainly provided him with histrionic talents worthy of his master's theatrical personality.

again.[144] The whole act is so carefully stage-directed and repeatedly performed in advance that Encolpius is completely fooled (47.9; 49.7); one can imagine the pseudo-religious overtones that Trimalchio wants to convey to the image of his white pigs, and such an impression is reinforced when one notices that the pigs are ornamented with sacrificial emblems (tintinnabulis culti 47.8) when they are led into the triclinium. Apart from the general custom of hanging bells round the neck of various animals mainly for ornamental purposes, bells (tintinnabula) had a religious significance which appeared in different forms, starting probably from the general idea that they were a preventive against evil influences.[145] In Trimalchio's case, the bells must have been intended to function on both levels of apotropaic religiosity and ridiculous decoration: note the jingling sounds they must have produced while the pigs were walking into the room.

Furthermore, one observes another strange feature in the pigs' appearance: they wear capistra round their necks (47.8), which are halters or headstalls for controlling wild animals. We find such equipment used on horses and boars but not on tame pigs, whose wearing them would produce a risible spectacle. I suggest that this is the first reference to the gladiatorial image of the pigs that Trimalchio wants to add in the multi-levelled stage-direction of his fifth course. The pigs are presented as wild animals which have to be controlled in order to enter the arena, that is Trimalchio's dining-room. This image will be developed further later on when at 47.13 it is the pigs that lead the cook back to the kitchen, and not vice versa, (et cocum ... in culinam obsonium duxit) as horses driving a carriage on their way out of the arena.

The nomenculator, a slave whose duty is usually to remind his forgetful master of people's names,[146] announces the pigs' ages:

quorum unum bimum nomenculator esse dicebat, alterum trimum, tertium vero

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[144] See above, page 90, note 41; page 91, note 42.

[145] See Smith (ed.), Dict. Antiquit., s.v. tintinnabulum.

[146] On the general duties of the nomenculator see Baldwin 1978, 93; D' Arms 1991, 172.

iam se<xen>nem. (47.8)[147]

'One of them, the announcer said, was two years old, the second three, and the third was already six years old.'

This is the first time that Encolpius' premonitions will prove to be wrong, because, although he suspects that something related to the stage is going to happen, it turns out that the pigs are not trained animal-performers of the streets, as he had guessed (47.9).[148] No other reference to trained pigs and to the kind of gymnastics they would perform, seems to exist,[149] but what is significant for Encolpius' theatrical personality is that the subconscious connection in his mind between the three pigs and the tricks of street-entertainers characterizes him as a person acquainted with the manifestations of low-life popular diversion.

Trimalchio then, like an actor in a Roman comedy, breaks the dramatic illusion and, scorning culinary practices which he himself will use in other parts of his meal (74.5), directly addresses his audience, that is his guests, asking them to choose one of the three pigs to be cooked *immediately* (statim 47.10). So far everything can be explained through the usual arrogance of the host who wants to show off his household's abilities (47.10), but then a strange thing happens: without waiting for an answer, Trimalchio calls his cook and not only chooses himself which pig shall be slaughtered but also picks the oldest one[150] instead of the more tender meat of the younger ones (47.11). Trimalchio's play-

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[147] The age of the third pig, sexennem, is an emendation suggested by Wehle and accepted by all the modern editors of the novel, of the manuscripts' reading senem. If one wants to create a climactic scale for the animals' age, then the emendation is necessary in order to complete the trio of numbers: one, two, six and not one, two, old. On the other hand, though, even at the age of two a pig's meat is considered rather hard and, if it is a male one, it is likely that, even after many hours of boiling, it will stink. Not to mention the fact that a pig rarely is allowed to live for six years. Thus one can accept the manuscripts' reading as referring to any age after one or two years old (not especially six) when a pig's meat is hardly edible. Pepe 1965, 108-110 defends the reading senem by citing Juvenal VI.160 et vetus indulget senibus clementia porcis, as proof that pigs were sometimes allowed to grow old.

[148] On the circulatores 'street-entertainers' and their amazing tricks see Apul. Met I.4; Digesta XLVII.11.11; Booth 1980, 166-169; Corbett 1986, 55-56; Horsfall 1989, 84; Jones 1991, 187-189.

[149] See Jones 1991, 187 and 197, note 7.

[150] According to Whittick 1986, 8 this choice is deliberately made by Trimalchio in order to indulge in a "ludicrous and elaborate death-and-rejuvenation / rebirth episode", parallel to the same idea of rejuvenation and death expressed in the story of the Sibyl.

acting continues successfully when he raises his voice (47.11 clara voce), and in a formal manner inquires into his cook's former post (47.11-12) only to end up mock-threatening him in case he does not fulfil his master's orders perfectly and as expected (47.13).[151] The cook gets the message which at first sight seems to be Trimalchio's tyranny over him (potentiae admonitum 47.13), but is in fact the signal to prepare the entrance of the dish known as porcus Troianus (49.1). This dish is certainly not an innovation on Trimalchio's part, for Macrobius (Sat. III.13.13) refers to it as already known in the mid-second century:

> ... porcum Troianum mensis inferant, quem illi ideo sic vocabant, quasi aliis inclusis animalibus gravidum, ut ille Troianus equus gravidus armatis fuit.

> '... they serve on the table a Trojan pig, so called for the following reason, as if it were pregnant with other enclosed animals, as that famous Trojan horse was pregnant with armed soldiers.'

An angry face is not the proper behaviour of a host towards his guests, so Trimalchio adopts in an instant a polite and mild facial expression (48.1), which is, however, as false and pretend as the angry one was a moment before. His amusing chatting (48.1-8) includes, among others, a ridiculous discussion on rhetorical topics, an unhomeric travesty of how Odysseus outwitted the Cyclops,[152] and finally the famous story of the Sibyl in the bottle, which Eliot used as a kind of introduction to his moralistic Waste Land. It is out of its farcical context, though, to interpret Trimalchio's monologue, and especially the Sibyl-

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[151] Note that Trimalchio at 47.13 uses the verb ponere in his pseudo-menacing warning ut diligenter ponas. This verb, usually meaning 'put', 'arrange' something, can be used as a technical theatrical term in the sense 'put on, stage a play' (Pers. V.3; Cic. Fam. X.32.3; Petr. 101.7). Thus one could argue that Trimalchio in fact tells the cook to provide a successfully-staged spectacle and not to fail his master's theatrical expectations.

[152] For a summary of the interpretations of the story see Coccia 1978, 799-804; he takes the story not as Trimalchio's invention but as a reference to an incident in which the Cyclops cut Ulysses' thumb in order to prevent him from using the oars of a boat which would enable him to leave the monster's island.

scene (48.8), as a moralistic message of death,[153] since its only actual function is to fill the time before the proper entrance of the already cooked pig (49.1).

Trimalchio has kept his word and serves the pig to his guests cooked immediately and bigger than when it was alive (49.2). He seems pleased with the rapidity with which his household executes its tasks, but then he begins to look more carefully (deinde magis magisque Trimalchio intuens eum 49.3) and realises that something is wrong. One can easily visualise the changes in Trimalchio's facial expression, from pleasure when he sees the cooked pig brought in, through surprise, when he realises that something is wrong, to anger, when he realises the terrible mistake of the cook. It is not the puzzling growth of the pig's size that upsets him, but that it is not gutted (49.4). Could he have realised that just by looking at the cooked animal, or is this another clever example of Trimalchio's implicit stage-directions to advance the plot of his farce and deceive his audience? He perhaps makes some gestures in order to affirm his suspicions (non mehercules est 49.4), and instantly orders not his cook's punishment (at least, not yet) but his explanation for that culpable forgetfulness (49.5). The cook looks appropriately sad and guilty (tristis 49.5; maestus 49.6), and when, since he was told to play his part, he offers no other excuse for his act apart from his bad memory (49.5), Trimalchio becomes furious and ruthlessly commands his flogging (49.5). It is remarkable that everyone in the company is so involved in watching the whole performance that no-one dares to doubt Trimalchio's intentions (especially since the torturers are already there: non fit mora 49.6), or challenge the veracity of even simple facts: for example, would a cook ever forget to disembowel an animal before cooking it?

The scene is enacted in such a masterly way that it evokes the audience's live participation: the guests want the cook to be spared (note that they use gladiatorial dialect: rogamus, mittas ... nemo nostrum pro illo rogabit 49.6), while Encolpius feels that he has to express his sympathy towards his wronged host

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[153] So Bacon 1958, 262-276 and Cameron 1970, 337-339. In the same way, one should not search for truth in Trimalchio's version of the Cyclops and Ulysses (48.7), apart perhaps from the possibility that he has in mind mimic scenes of Homeric travesty of the kind found in the phlyax-vases. But, as Horsfall 1989, 80 rightly points out, "the story ... is not only an unhomeric phantasy but is in part lost to us through textual corruption." Similarly, the ridiculous manner in which Trimalchio engages in rhetorical topics (48.4-6) reminds one of the mimic figure of the risible scholasticus, on whom see Rosenblüth 1909, 54; Sandy 1974, 339, note 21, and cf. the opening scene of the novel (1-5).

(49.7). For a second time he is fooled, because it is his wronged host that turns Encolpius' blood-thirsty expectations upside down by suggesting that the cook's sin can be forgotten on the mild condition that he should gut the animal in front of their very eyes (49.8). The change in Trimalchio's face from anger to relaxed smiling (49.8) is, of course, due not to the Senecan generosity of a domineering master towards his defenceless slaves, but to the arrogant satisfaction of a theatrical trickster that everything up to then had gone as planned and nothing could now stop the astonishing, though vulgar, finale.[154]

Indeed, when the cook, more than eagerly (arripuit 49.9) but still pretending to be shocked (timida manu 49.9) from his ordeal, cuts, like a victorious bestiarius in the arena, certain places on the pig's belly (hinc atque illinc 49.9), the animal's guts, having being pressed all this time, flood out (49.10). The audience's admiration of the act, though they must have realised by then that everything was planned in advance and that they were being outwitted by their host's dramatic ambitions, is completed when they realise that the stomach has already been miraculously made into sausages and similar products of pig's guts (49.10). Once more the trained slaves have to start applauding (50.1; cf. 36.4), to show that the trick (50.1) has reached its end successfully and the guests must show their gratitude to Trimalchio's histrionic abilities.

Notice that the narrator uses the technical term automatum (50.1) to characterize Trimalchio's staged serving of sausages and black puddings. This word occurs twice more in the novel, the first time in the same sense of an automatic contrivance (54.4), and the second time to show the puppet-like nature of the movements of the sexual intercourse between the old Eumolpus and Philomela's daughter (140.11).[155] Suetonius (*Claud.* XXXIV.2) mentions that Claudius' favourite parts of a spectacle were automatum vel pegma, elaborated structures with several movable storeys meant to produce the stage-effects necessary for the audience's amusement. Juvenal (IV.122) mentions the machine and the boys that are ejected from it towards the curtains, and Martial (*Spect.* II.2) testifies to the height of these scaffolds. Seneca (*Ep.* LXXXVIII.22) gives an extraordinary account of what this machinery could do. We know, also,

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[154] Gagliardi 1980, 73 interprets this scene as "un' altra scena intensamente mimica, fondata sulla κίνησις comica provocata dall' ἀπάτη."

[155] For a detailed discussion of the term automatum and its function in the novel see Dimundo 1987(b), 208-214, who considers mechanical devices, together with the elements of lautitiae and velocitas, to be the three thematic lines which permeate the Cena.

of Heron of Alexandria, a mathematician and inventor, whose floruit was around 62 AD, very near to the supposed date of the novel's composition. Among other treatises he wrote one called Περὶ Αὐτοματοποιητικῆς, or *On Automata-making*, mostly on the construction of miracle-working devices used especially in temples; nevertheless, these could have equally well worked on stage as well. Could it be that the learned Arbiter of Elegance knew of such things and deliberately inserted them in his novel, not only here but also later on when the ceiling of Trimalchio's house opens in two and lets presents for the guests come down? Encolpius' use, though, of this term seems to suggest that Petronius may have been familiar with the stage even as far as the practical part of a performance (scenery, etc.) was concerned.

Trimalchio's full name is C. Pompeius Trimalchio Maecenatianus, and we see in the exclamation Gaio feliciter (50.1) his social pretensions and the finishing touch of the gladiatorial image, which began much earlier with the introduction of the three white pigs in the room. The diners - like the audience of an amphitheatre - express their formal thanks to the producer of the spectacles, Trimalchio. For his exceptionally convincing acting, the cook is offered a drink and a silver crown (50.1).[156] The porcus Troianus is, we see, not itself original to Trimalchio's menu, but such an elaborate way to present an ordinary culinary achievement can surely be characterized as farce with elements of amphitheatre-shows in it.

Taking as his starting point the Corinthian plate on which the ingenious cook's drink was offered (50.1), and Agamemnon's (false?) interest in it (50.2), Trimalchio, in order not to appear an ignoramus (!) (50.5), engages in an absurd historical account of the Corinthian bronze's origin;[157] he combines this with his usual stupid puns on his dealer's name[158] and the significance this may have for

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[156] Saylor 1987, 594-595 compares the incident with a gladiatorial event: "A cook who forgot to disembowel a pig (49-50.1) is stripped for punishment, but the diners ask that he be spared again using the language of the arena (mittas, 49.6). The cook is then treated like a victorious venator or bestiarius of the games. For he stabs his knife into the pig's belly which pours forth sausages. The diners raise the cry, 'Long live Gaius', and they award him a silver crown and a drink. The diners here behave like spectators in the arena determining who will be sent living from the contest, as before they have given the word (missus) for the boar."

[157] Baldwin 1987, 6 cites as indirect parallels of Trimalchio's confused account of the Corinthian bronze, Florus I.32.6-7 and Pliny, *NH* XXXIV.3.6-8.

[158] *Sat.* 50.4. Note the casual manner (quia scilicet 50.4) in which he explains why he is the only person to have genuine Corinthian plates, and how he manages to surpass Encolpius' expectations (50.3). Cf. the pun on his slave's name Carpus (36.7-8).

his wealth (Quid est autem Corintheum, nisi quis Corinthum habet? 50.4). All this time he keeps renewing the conversation (or, rather, his monologue) arbitrarily by asking questions and answering them himself (48.4; 48.7; 50.4; 50.5).

In this continuously changing manner he unexpectedly denies both his practical and theoretical interest in bronze, and states his unquestionable preference for glass (50.7). The reason by which he justifies his opinion (certe non olunt 50.7) is only the pretext he uses immediately to argue against himself and note the main disadvantage of glass: it is fragile! (si non frangerentur 50.7). The purpose of this complicated rigmarole is to make smoother the introduction to the folklore story of the unbreakable glass (51.1-6).[159] He then specifies his interest in metal more clearly and chooses silver as his favourite (52.1). Needless to say, this was already known to the silver-dazzled eyes of the guests as they contemplated Trimalchio's luxuries before and during the meal,[160] but Trimalchio grasps the opportunity to continue his senseless mythological travesties (52.1-2), as if he were speaking about vase-representations of Atellan or mimic farces; putting side by side education and passion for public spectacles reflects the priceless expertise of the ignoramus (meum enim intellegere nulla pecunia vendo 52.3).

A brief incident, similar to the one at 34.2-3, of a slave who dropped a cup and is heavily reproached by his master (52.4-6), spoils the humane image of a civilized personality Trimalchio wanted to attribute to his nature, but his fairly quick change of mood (52.6) and the reaction of the boy (like a spared gladiator in the arena dimissus circa mensam percucurrit ... 52.6) indicate that the scene may have been deliberately enacted as another short specimen of Trimalchio's imperialistic illusions (tandem ergo exoratus a nobis missionem dedit puero 52.6).[161] Sobriety has already started to recede from the guests' minds but Trimalchio is the worst of all when, in a happy state of near drunkenness (52.8), he encourages the introduction of more wine, with everyone's appreciative compliments (52.7), especially Agamemnon's who now shows the hypocrisy of his statements against flatterers and parasites in the opening scene of the novel (3.3-4).

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[159] On possible sources / parallels of the story see Horsfall 1989, 195-196.

[160] See above, page 105, note 89.

[161] Moreover, the repetition of the phrase nugax + sum (52.4; 52.6) may hide a pun or have a technical meaning, unknown to us.

The ebrietas-motif has already been used earlier in the novel and will continue to be a source of laughter and theatrical surprise.[162] The drunkard's condition has undoubtedly been exploited several times by the farcical stage for comic effects,[163] and so it happens in the *Satyrica* when the host invites his wife to dance a lascivious mimic dance, the κόρδαξ,[164] and insists that everyone should add their persuasions, since Fortunata, a former flute-girl (74.13), like a mimic actress, is expert in forms of indecent dancing (52.8). At the same time he proceeds laughably to imitate the favourite movements of Syrus,[165] an actor (erectis supra frontem manibus 52.9), with the correct choral accompaniment of the whole household (concinente tota familia 52.9).[166] The mere imitation would have been followed by a further disgraceful performance by Trimalchio (52.10), had not Fortunata intervened and censured this foolishness which she thought below her husband's dignity (non decere gravitatem eius tam humiles ineptias 52.10). The comic details of the event are not only the pseudo-respectable discretion Fortunata uses (ad aurem accessisset 52.10) or, indeed, the contradiction of her later desires (iam coeperat Fortunata velle saltare 70.10), but also Trimalchio's inner conflict between his unseemly wishes and the social requirements of his wife (52.11).

So far there has not been scholarly agreement about the precise meaning

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162 See above, page 71, note 68; Preston 1915, 264 connects Trimalchio's drunkenness with the same recurrent motif in mimes and New Comedy as adapted by the Romans: "This kind of comic effect is handled with particular skill in the *Cena*; the vinous exaltation of Trimalchio and his guests, increasing by slow but clearly indicated stages, gradually speeds up the action of the piece and culminates in the turbulent finale, where Trimalchio invites the celebration of his own funeral."

163 See Abbott 1907, 49: "It seems possible to detect certain differences between the style of Trimalchio drunk and Trimalchio sober. Plautus has brought out some of the comic aspects of drunkenness in his plays. The sentimental, helpless attitude of Callidamates in the *Mostellaria*, and his thick-tongued utterance furnish one type of the drunken man; the sternly moral tone and the fluent discourse of Stasimus in the *Trinummus* illustrate the effect of stimulants upon a different temperament, but no Latin writer has made so interesting and accurate a psychological study of the effects of intoxication as Petronius has in the case of Trimalchio."

164 See Sandy 1974, 337, note 16.

165 Schmeling 1969(b), 6 observes that the name Syrus is of servile origin and remarks that there are two slaves with that name in Roman comedy (Plautus' *Pseudolus* and Terence's *Adelphoe*). For a lengthy discussion of the identity of this Syrus and his possible identification with the mimographer and actor Publilius Syrus see Giancotti 1967, 231-234.

166 Cf. the slaves' impersonations of the dancers Hegea and Diodorus in Pl. *Persa* 757 ff.

or the origin of what the slaves sang in chorus in accompaniment to Trimalchio's mimic gestures (madeia perimadeia 52.9): sexual (μάδε' ἦια, περὶ μάδε' ἦια = genitalia meabilia, genitalia, valde meabilia or mentula mobilis, mentula valde mobilis) or encouraging (macte iam aperi, macte iam) connotations have been attributed to the phrase,[167] while De Lorenzi identifies the words madeia perimadeia[168] with the names of the famous witches Μήδεια and Περιμήδεια, and conjectures the plot of the mime (!) that Trimalchio and his household performed in order to invite Fortunata to dance, as follows:

> Il mimo di Siro si apriva dunque con un' operazione magica, in cui l' amante e il coro dei compagni suoi, innanzi alle ripulse della bella, invocava con un motto, che costituiva probabilmente il ritornello di tutto il carmen devinctionis l' intervento o l' ausilio delle due maghe famose, Medea e Perimedea.[169]

Most of the interpretations given by scholars, including the one just quoted, are so imaginative and diverse that Bonaria rightly concludes:

> Forse la miglior conclusione è quella del Collignon ..., del Maiuri e di Ernout-Meillet ..., i quali affermano di ignorare l' origine e il significato dei due vocaboli e che è vano tentare di capirne qualche cosa.[170]

What is remarkable, however, is the synchronization with which the slaves responded to their master's theatrical follies. Whether visualised as the lyric part of a mime or the chorus of a pantomime which sings what the actor (i.e. Trimalchio) expresses in movements, one cannot but admire the perfect timing and training of the familia, and visualise easily the outrageousness of the scene which betrays Trimalchio's superficial and ridiculous, yet actual, involvement in the professional world of histrionics.

X

Acrobats or petauristarii are seen by Encolpius as a source of relief (tandem 53.11) from the boredom caused by the reading of the 'court-circular' (53.2-10), a

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[167] See Perrochat (ed.) 1952, ad 52.9 (page 84). A full list of emendations suggested can be found in Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 88; Gagliardi 1967, 232-233, note 3.

[168] See De Lorenzi 1929, 10-11. Baldwin 1984, 295-296 reads, instead of μάδεια περιμάδεια, μάδαιε περιμάδαιε (or περιμάδαρε) and translates 'Baldy, baldy'.

[169] De Lorenzi 1929, 11.

[170] Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 139; cf. Gagliardi 1980, 74: "Un ritornello forse di mero valore fonico, ma certo l' inizio del cantico di un mimo, per la compresenza nella scena di danza, musica e gesticolazione."

pompous bureaucratic document which turned Trimalchio from his desire to dance (53.1). The name of these entertainers is derived from the petaurum, an apparatus, like a trapeze, used in performing various skilful exercises.[171] They were a regular source of entertainment at dinners[172] providing amazing spectacles, if we are to believe Martial (Ep. V.xii.3-4) who mentions that

> grandis Ninus omnibus lacertis / septem quod pueros levat vel octo
> 'huge Ninus with all the strength of his arms lifts seven boys, or even eight'.

From 47.9 we can assume that they also performed in the streets, accompanied by well-trained animals who executed wonderful tricks or amazing gymnastics.[173] At Trimalchio's dinner there are various parts to the spectacle. Someone, perhaps the leader of the group, who was characterized, probably from his physical appearance and the expression on his face, as baro insulsissimus (53.11),[174] was firmly holding a ladder and ordered another acrobat to jump from rung to rung with dancing movements. When he reached the top of

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[171] See Festus (250 L): Lucilius a peteuro appellatos existimare videtur, quando ait (1298): 'Sicuti mechanici, cum alto exiluere peteuro'. At Aelius Stilo <quod> in aere volent, cum ait 'Petaurista proprie Graece ideo quod is πρὸς ἀέρα πέταται'. On the petaurum see Väterlein 1976, 49.

[172] Encolpius is certain at 47.9 and 60.2 that they would appear. Cf. Cowell 1961, 171 and 174; Balsdon 1969, 288; Saylor 1987, 595: "Trimalchio's dinner is also like a gladiatorial show in having clowns, acrobats, mimes, actors, and rhapsodists of various kinds. These were common at the gladiatorial games."

[173] See Horsfall 1989, 84: "A circulus is a group of spectators and a circulator an entertainer who gathers such a group round him by various means: turns with animals (supra), snake-charming (Dig. 47.11.11), imitations (supra), swallowing swords and spears (at Athens, Apul. Met. 1.4), Blümmer, Sitz. Bay. Ak. 1918.6, 20." Cf. Scobie 1979, 233; Booth 1980, 166-169.

[174] The word baro will be used of the brave hominem Cappadocem (63.7) in the story of the witches. On its etymology, Pellegrino (ed.) 1975, 314 quotes Isidore (Etym. IX.4.31) barones Graeco nomine, quod sint fortes in laboribus. Βαρὺς enim dicitur gravis, quod est fortis. This noun certainly refers both to the physical strength of the acrobat and his stupidity (cf. Cic. Div. II.144; Lucil. 1121 M). With the mention of this detail the whole professional show of the acrobats becomes a ridiculous performance of not very skilful blockheads (the acrobat is going to fall at 54.1). This sense of stupidity is intensified by the superlative insulsissimus 53.11; cf. 23.2, Cic. Tusc. I.15, Catul. 17.12. Certainly, the mental abilities of those people reflect the mental abilities of the person who hired or owned them, i.e. Trimalchio.

the ladder he danced to the accompaniment of a song;[175] afterwards, he jumped through burning hoops[176] and picked up a wine-jar and holding it with his teeth (53.11). All these tricks, however, seem to be a boring and hackneyed performance, for Encolpius notes that

> mirabatur haec solus Trimalchio (53.12)
>
> 'only Trimalchio admired these events'.

Thus it is made clear that the spectacle was a tedious one.

Once more a popular show becomes a trivial sight prized only by the vulgar taste of Trimalchio, who, pretending to be a 'connoisseur' of shows, declares in a pretentiously bitter tone that acrobats are not usually received with the appropriate appreciation (53.12). He then goes on to condemn in a generalising manner all the spectacles apart from petauristarios et comic<in>es (53.12).[177] In spite of a multitude of Greek elements in his dinner-party, he wants to be represented here as a supporter of native Latin culture and not of foreign Greek influences. For the first time Trimalchio expresses openly his theatrical and musical taste:

> 'nam et comoedos' inquit 'emeram, sed malui illos Atell<ani>am facere, et choraulen meum iussi Latine cantare (53.13)
>
> ' "For I had even bought" he said "a troupe of Greek actors, but I preferred them to perform Atellan farces; I also ordered my pipe-player to play Latin songs.[178]

Stock characters, political references, obscene humour, everyday language

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[175] odaria saltare 53.11; Pellegrino (ed.) 1975, 314 quotes Hor. S. I.5.63 saltare Cyclopa and notes that "salto con l' accus. indica la figura rappresentata nella danza." This implies that Trimalchio's acrobat must have performed a kind of pantomimic dance. For the construction of the verb ὀρχεῖσθαι with accusative indicating the specific title-theme see Kokōlākis 1959, 12, note 9.

[176] Cf. Manilius, V. 437 membraque per flammas orbesque emissa flagrantes, quoted by Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 53.11.

[177] On his partiality for comicines cf. 78.5-6. Trimalchio's statement is not absolutely true. He is fond of other pieces of entertainment as well: imitations of musicians (64.5), gladiatorial shows (52.3; 71.6), all sorts of games (27.2-3; 33.2; 64.11-12). Bücheler's deletion of animalia (53.12) should not be adopted since the word makes a contrast with rebus humanis mentioned earlier on (53.12). On gladiators in the Cena see Horsfall 1989, 84-85.

[178] Trimalchio uses, comically enough, Greek words (comoedos, choraulen 53.13) to show his preference for Roman culture!

were some of the features of the fabula Atellana,[179] which managed to survive even in the Imperial period (Suet. *Nero* XXXIX; *Galba* XIII), although the mimes and pantomimes dominated the stage at that time. Trimalchio's predilection for Latin melodies and low farce with slapstick elements indirectly suggests that this is the sort of musical and theatrical entertainment one must expect to find at his dinner-party.

The spectacle of the acrobats takes an unexpected turn in the development of events at Trimalchio's feast. When all of a sudden the young slave, who was performing the acrobatics,[180] fell somewhere on Trimalchio's fat body (that place turns out to be his arm, bracchium 54.2),[181] a melodramatic scene is created in which everyone, except the suspicious Encolpius, participates in an excessively heart-rending manner.[182] Everything seems exaggerated and unnatural to Encolpius, who, having learned his lesson well from previous staged incidents during the feast, expects at any moment a new trick to appear and give a sensational ending to the whole spectacle of the acrobats:

pessime mihi erat, ne his precibus per <rid>iculum aliquid catastropha

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[179] For a bibliography of general surveys on the topic see Petersmann 1989, 135, note 1. Cf. Nicoll 1931, 65-79; Duckworth 1952, 10-13; Beare 1964, 143-148, Beacham 1991, 5-6.

[180] Baldwin 1985, 847-848 speculates unconvincingly that the boy who fell on Trimalchio's shoulder was not the acrobat but another of the careless slaves who had been waiting at the table. Baldwin thinks that this incident may have been based on a similar scene described in Sen. *De Ira*, III.40.2-4, although parallels between the two texts exist more in the content than in the language.

[181] Cf. the mortal accident of an impersonator of Icarus in one of Nero's shows (Suet. *Nero* XII.2: Icarus primo statim conatu iuxta cubiculum eius decidit ipsumque cruore respersit). See, though, Baldwin 1990, 8: "there is no need to connect the incident in Petronius with either Horace or Nero ... If a literary inspiration for Petronius is required, it is perhaps to be found in Xenophon, *Symp.* 11, where the guests are surprised and relieved that the female acrobat who turns somersaults through a hoop made all the more dangerous by its complement of upright swords managed to complete her act safely." Baldwin draws further attention to Manilius 5.439-443 and Phaedrus V.7.6-11 for more stage-accidents in Latin texts.

[182] conclamavit familia, nec minus convivae 54.1; ipse Trimalchio cum graviter ingemuisset 54.2; concurrere medici, et inter primos Fortunata crinibus passis cum scypho, miseramque se atque infelicem proclamavit 54.2. Preston 1915, 263 thinks that the fall of the acrobat adds to the farcicality of the whole scene. Note the ironically mentioned detail of the scyphus (54.2) which indicates Fortunata's bibulous nature.

quaereretur (54.3).[183]

'I was very worried that by means of his pleadings a 'coup de théâtre' was aimed at somehow jokingly'.

Once more the slave, who committed the sin, constantly begs for forgiveness,[184] while another slave is being beaten for not bandaging Trimalchio's arm with the right colour of wool.[185] Both these facts in combination with the incident of the cook who had purposely omitted to disembowel a pig in order to produce an unexpected and impressive spectacle (an incident which Encolpius had taken seriously and had, therefore, made a fool of himself; see 49.1-10), force Encolpius to watch out for some automatic contrivance,[186] which would justify his suspicion that the whole thing was set up from the beginning.[187] Nothing of the sort, however, happens. The surprise of this episode (there *has* to be one) is that Trimalchio is not angry at all with the slave, but gives orders for him to be

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[183] Encolpius is using the word catastropha in its technical theatrical sense of the last part in a comedy. See Evanthius, *De Fabula* IV.5 comoedia per quattuor partes dividitur: prologum, protasin, epitasin, catastrophen ... catastrophe conversio rerum ad iucundos exitus patefacta cunctis cognitione gestorum; Donatus, *De Comoedia* VII.1: comoedia autem dividitur in quattuor partes: prologum, πρότασιν, ἐπίτασιν, καταστροφήν. ... (VIII.4) καταστροφὴ explicatio fabulae, per quam eventus eius approbatur. Cf. also Don. Ter. *Andr.* 796, 849, 915; *Phorm.* 179; *Hec.* 488, 567, 623, 799; Juv. IV.122 and see Duff (ed.) 1970 and Mayor (ed.) 1886, ad loc.; Collignon 1892, 276. The *Th.L.L.*, s.v., 3 quotes the Schol. Juv. IV.122: per catastropham aut de pegmate excussos, thus implying that catastropha can also be a theatrical machine. This should not be surprising in the particular context, since Trimalchio's house is fully equipped with machinery used in the theatre (dividing ceiling, automata, etc.). Cf. Polyb. III.48.8; Her. *Aut.* 22.6.

[184] Note that the expression missionem rogare (54.3), which the slave uses in order to be forgiven, is a stock phrase in the language of gladiators who lost the fight: Livy, XLI.20.12; Sen. *Contr.* IX.6.2; Mart. *Ep.* XII.28.7; Suet. *Aug.* XLV.3. Cf. Petr. 52.5.

[185] Instead of conchyliata lana, purple-dyed, the slave applies alba, white (54.4). Cic. (*Phil.* II.67) and Suet. (*Iul.* XLIII.1) refer to that colour as a sign of disgraceful luxury. Note not only Trimalchio's pretentiousness but also the colourful image of himself he has in his mind.

[186] automatum 54.4; on its significant function as a link of events in the Cena see Barchiesi 1981, 139-143; cf. above, page 124-125 and note 155.

[187] Despite the ambiguous tamquam laesum (54.2), we cannot be sure if Trimalchio pretended to be in pain, or if the boy fell on purpose in order to give an opportunity to Trimalchio to show off his generosity, or even if Petronius created the whole episode as a reminiscence of real-life incident in Nero's life [cf. Suet. *Nero* XII; see Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc.]. The certain thing is that Trimalchio again gets hold of the situation, deliberate or not, and uses it to show off his liberal treatment of his slaves (cf., however, 52.4-5) and his mediocre poetical compositions on conventional subjects.

manumitted (54.5) and uses the incident as an opportunity to create an epigram on the hackneyed theme of the instability which rules the fate of men (55.2-3).[188]

This epigram gives rise to a serious (!) discussion on a whole series of poets, among whom a certain Mopsus from Thrace (unknown today, if he ever existed) was considered the leading figure (55.4). Trimalchio then puts forward quite unexpectedly the academic topic of the stylistic differences between Cicero and the mimographer Publilius Syrus (55.5), only to ignore, as usual, a possible answer from his audience, and proceeds to express both his own pseudo-authoritative opinion on the subject (55.5) and the recitation of what is generally believed to be a Petronian (or, even better, Trimalchionesque) imitation of the Publilian style (55.6.1-16).

The scholarly dispute on whether this poem is an original Publilian citation or not is a long one. The lengthiest discussion of the passage is in Giancotti's study of the mimes of Laberius and P. Syrus:[189] he discusses earlier bibliography, considers the authorship of the poem from different angles, and reaches a four-fold conclusion: a) although the emendation Publilium is much more likely, one cannot exclude the possibility that the fragment belongs to an unknown mimographer, whose name is hidden under the reading Publius of the manuscripts; b) it is improbable, but not out of the question, that Petronius himself composed the poem in order to attribute it through the mouth of Trimalchio to an unknown Publius, or to imitate partially and in a distorted manner a composition of Publilius Syrus; c) it is also possible, but no more than that, that the attribution of the poem to this mimographer is correct, in spite of the fact that it is made by Trimalchio within the ridiculous atmosphere of his Cena; d) it is better to accept the speculation that the fragment belongs to a known mime of another mimographer -although one cannot rule out the possibility of distortions and interpolations made by Trimalchio, and that this mimographer is Laberius.[190]

Giancotti's discussion is stimulating but not entirely convincing, since in his final, rather fanciful, speculation, he decides to attribute the authorship of the fragment to Cicero's well-known challenger, Laberius. Certainly the poem must be seen in the same absurd light of the comparison between the rhetorician and

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[188] See Barchiesi 1981, 140: "Trimalcione perdona con magniloquenza il colpevole, e 'improvvisa' versi. Ebbene, anche questo è un automatum, nel senso che fa parte del copione preordinato."

[189] See Giancotti 1967, 238-274.

[190] See Giancotti 1967, 265-266.

the mimographer (55.5). Sandy, however, has argued for the seriousness of that comparison and, consequently, the authenticity of the poem as a Publilian product.[191] He puts forward two passages, one from the elder Seneca (*Contr.* VII.3.8 ff.), the other from the Younger (*De Brev. Vit.* XII.8), which connect Cicero with Publilius, Laberius and Pomponius, and show that criticism against luxury could have been a mime-theme (cf., also, the indirect piece of evidence in Pliny, *NH* VIII.209). It would be strange to find here the unique example in the surviving novel of a genuine quotation without parodic intentions, and, although Sandy's arguments are not without force, it is too simplistic to classify this poem among our scanty mimic fragments, especially since its source is ambivalent Petronian humour.

Baldwin argues that neither Varro nor any other mimographer is the author of the poem which Trimalchio recites, but that this composition is a parody of Maecenas' poetry. Thus more aspects of the influence Maecenas' character had on Petronius' creation of Trimalchio are revealed.[192] Courtney proposes a new interpretation:

> the highly-coloured diction and the extravagant and ornate turgidity of the style forbid ascription to Publilius, and it would be pointless and out of character for Trimalchio to produce a long quotation like this. If the point of this fabricated piece lies within the characterization of Trimalchio, we have these alternatives: (1) Trimalchio is himself to be regarded as the author; implausible: (2) he attributes a piece by someone else to Publilius; the point of this would be weak. I conclude that the poem was introduced for a motive outside the characterization of Trimalchio, and suggest that the motive was to parody the quite frequent use of quotations from Publilius by Seneca to illustrate his moral teaching, and that the piece is itself a parody of such moral tirades ...[193]

The function of the poem is to draw the frequent Petronian antithesis between the content of the narrative itself and the actual practices of the person who speaks,

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[191] Sandy 1976, 286-287. Among those who shared this view before him was Cèbe 1966, 331-332, note 3.

[192] See Baldwin 1984(b), 402-403.

[193] See Courtney 1991, 21. Cf. Gagliardi 1980, 76, note 54, where he notes the incongruity created by the facts that Trimalchio remembers all these lines, but at 50.5 provides an absurd account on Hannibal, the siege of Troy and Corinthian pottery. See, also, his mythological travesties at 52.1-2.

in other words, Trimalchio's tirade against luxury and his own luxurious life; but in order for that to be made clear there is no need to assume the genuineness of the poem.[194] The question inevitably remains open, while the fact that this topic should be regarded as an arrogant whim of Trimalchio, who takes pleasure in touching superficially sophisticated clichés and forgets them when it suits him, is evident from the abrupt ease with which he passes on to the discussion about professions (56.1).

The materialistic and simplistic criteria by which Trimalchio evaluates professions and animals, and his absurd connection of these, may point to the nonsensical manner in which mimic productions could have exploited similar serious discourses.[195] The conventional offer of yet more apophoreta (56.8-9; cf. 40.4; 60.3-4) interrupts Trimalchio's academic aspirations and gives him the chance to practise his colloquial humour with Latin puns like these which abound in Plautus and Terence.[196] Again a special person has been entrusted with this duty (56.7),[197] which he seems to perform satisfactorily, if we judge from the fun and pleasure the audience derives from such verbal farce (56.10).[198] Only Ascyltus seems rather sceptical of the wit of these puns and begins to

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[194] Sandy 1976, 287 concludes: "We have established that literary theorists associated Cicero and Publilius and that the mimographer's repertoire included the condemnation of luxuria, possibly within the context of a staged cena. It remains only to explain what "dramatic" function in the *Satyricon* Trimalchio's discourse and citation have. I propose that the customary boomerang effect lies in the host's failure to recognise that the censure applies to his own lautitiae." Sochatoff 1970, 344 is more to the point: "Whether they [i.e. the lines of the poem] are actually from the pen of Publilius Syrus, as he [i.e. Trimalchio] declares, or mistakenly assigned to that writer with the blithe ignorance of literary facts of which he is often guilty is not so important as the irony contained in the fact that the exponent of vulgar luxury recites highly striking images condemning it."

[195] See Sandy 1974, 338: "The sarcastic references to Cynics, Pythagoreans and Democritus in scraps of Laberius' mimes [see his note 21 for references] may indicate that other kinds of weighty intellectual matters were treated for laughs on the mimic stage, possibly in the manner of Trimalchio's discourse on occupations and the lot of animals, which threatens to put philosophers out of work (56.1-7)."

[196] See Corbett 1970, 65.

[197] See Sandy 1974, 334: "Well-rehearsed entrances are particularly evident at 56.7-10, where one can easily imagine assistants off-stage awaiting cues to usher appropriate apophoreta into the dining room."

[198] For possible interpretations of the puns hidden behind Trimalchio's apophoreta see Rankin 1962, 137-142. Mr. Brown suggests to me that Encolpius' comment on the guests' fun and pleasure is ironical. Cf. the similar reaction to the horror stories: *miramur nos et pariter credimus* (64.1).

criticize Trimalchio's humour in the same sarcastic way (57.1) he had employed against Agamemnon's silly educational theories (10.1).

This time he has to face the reproaches of another guest, perhaps Hermeros (59.1), who, being Trimalchio's fanatical supporter (57.2), attacks first Ascyltus (57.1-4; 57.7-9), then Giton (58.2-14) in the manner of a comic *servus* who uses all sorts of farcical abuses and comic insults to denigrate those he does not like.[199] Hermeros' speech, full of verbal slapstick, displays a climactic movement, parallel to the guest's indignation, which is renewed every now and then through Ascyltus' and Giton's repeated reaction of unseemly laughter (57.3-4; 58.1-2). His tirade is interspersed by the speaker's own comments on his past life (57.4-6; 57.9-11; 58.7-8; 58.13-14), which he uses as a mode of comparison between semi-educated honest people (like himself) and educated parasites who grow like worms on tender meat (57.3) (like Ascyltus and Giton). The usual comic point is, of course, that this comparison is a false one, since he too is a parasite and a flatterer (non placent lautitiae domini mei? 57.2; ecce magister tuus, homo maior natus: placemus illi 57.8). The verbal insults seem likely to lead to a mimic fracas when Ascyltus stops laughing and feels like responding to the extant reproaches (59.1), but Trimalchio intervenes in the name of common sense and smilingly reproaches Hermeros for not remembering that he was equally impudent when he was younger.[200] Thus angry spirits are soothed.

The spectacle of the Homeristae is formally introduced at 59.2 by Trimalchio ('et Homeristas spectemus') as a means of dissolving the hostile atmosphere that had been created by Hermeros' tirade against Ascyltus and Giton (57.1-58.14). A group of actors performing an acroama at a dinner is hardly an innovation.[201] The Homeristae were low-class declaimers of Homeric themes, who appeared in theatres and used cheap but impressive tricks in their performances, such as

[199] Collignon 1892, 281 draws attention to the similarity of 57.4 with the pseudo-moralistic, arrogant speech of Stratophanes, the miles, in Plautus' *Truculentus*, 483-496, and the witty insults that Harpax, the soldier's attendant and Ballio, the pimp, exchange in *Pseudolus*, 1170-1173, and notes that the Petronian passage could easily have been "un vers d' une pièce de théâtre." Cf. Sandy 1974, 334. Rosenblüth 1909, 40 compares Petr. 58.6 recte, venies sub dentem with Laberius 28 simul sub dentes mulieris veni.

[200] Et tu cum esses capo, cocococo, aeque cor non habebas 59.2. Cf. a similar ornithological line in Afranius' *Cinerarius* 24: Id me celabat, cucurru! Daviault (ed.) 1981, 150 comments that cucurru is an "expression obscure, unique exemple", but connects it with this Petronian passage.

[201] See Horsfall's detailed remarks, 1989, 87, note 61.

retractable daggers or false blood. These performers, not to be confused with rhapsodists, seem to have appeared on stage for the first time in the time of Demetrius of Phaleron and, apart from Petronius' novel, they appear in our surviving sources only in public celebrations.[202] We do not know whether Trimalchio has hired their services for that night or owns this particular group of actors.[203]

They enter equipped with the appropriate Homeric costume[204] and signal the beginning of their performance by a clash of the spear on the shield (59.3; cf. the similar sound the cymbalistria makes in Quartilla's orgy at 22.6), a sign which harmonizes with the epic character of the following plot. During the performance a considerable din must have been produced, because, in addition to the actors who were conversing in Greek (ut insolenter solent 59.3), Trimalchio sat on a cushion and provided the equivalent of subtitles for those who did not understand Greek by reading excerpts from the Homeric text in Latin[205] in a droning voice (canora voce 59.3). Thus the pause that followed the end of the performance (59.3), dramatically inserted to evoke admiration and amazement from the audience, created a sharp contrast between the loud noise and the complete silence.

The ensuing summary of the fabula[206] is a senseless exposition of distorted events from Greek mythology. This absurd version of the Trojan war is reminiscent of the mythological travesties which one finds in the Atellan farce or the mimes.[207] It has actually been suggested that Trimalchio

is to be imagined reading from the scenario of an Atellan mythological

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[202] See Calderini 1911, 713-723; Kroll 1918, 1158; Heraeus 1930, 395-403; Sandy 1974, 334; Starr 1987, 199-200.

[203] factio 59.3; cf. Suet. Nero XVI.3 pantomimorum factiones. At 53.13 Trimalchio boasts of his own choraules and the comoedos he bought in order to perform Atellan farces. It is nowhere stated that he owns the Homeristae, as Starr 1987, 199 affirms.

[204] On their costume and their usual props see Calderini 1911, 718-719.

[205] Horsfall 1989, 80 notes that "a Greek version of such stuff, with comic-strip illustrations, actually survives": see P.Oxy. 42.3001 (P. Parsons).

[206] Trimalchio uses (59.4) the technical theatrical term for 'play, drama'; cf. Suet. Nero XLVI.3 fabulam cantasse, Cic. Tusc. IV.63.

[207] See Heraeus 1930, 395-402; Sandy 1974, 334, note 10.

travesty.[208]

Although we do not have extant fragments of this theatrical genre to support such a speculation, one should perceive the plot of the performance as based on Trimalchio's personal 'script', composed and adapted in order to fulfil specific aims in his staged dinner-party, rather than on an actual Atellan 'script' which could be regarded as one more testimonium for this dramatic form. The reason for the narration of the summary is not necessarily

> based on the assumption that his guests have comprehended the story
> neither as performed spectacle (through the gesture and actions) nor
> through his recital in Latin.[209]

One must not forget Trimalchio's constant desire to show off in every way he can, thus upstaging the actors.[210] Similarly, one must not assume that the mythological events were as described in the Homeric text which either the Homeristae performed or Trimalchio read.[211] The comic point of the outrageous Homeric version is not that it reflects inability to communicate nor that it indicates

> a distrust of the intelligibility of either performance or reading as a medium
> of communication,[212]

but rather that it shows Trimalchio's conceited semi-literacy[213] which becomes a cause for his ridicule and his audience's amusement.

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[208] See Sandy 1974, 334-335. One should not, however, take sincerely Trimalchio's statement at 48.7 about his perfect knowledge of Homer.

[209] Slater 1990(b), 72.

[210] See Baldwin 1978, 96: "the ill-bred Trimalchio, whose lack of culture is exposed in what follows (his idiosyncratic account of the Trojan War), cannot sit still and listen to a respectable gentleman's entertainment without soon interrupting with some irrelevancies."

[211] See Calderini 1911, 717: "Che libro fosse quello, da cui Trimalcione leggeva, e se avesse relazione con Omero e quale spirito di ironia abbia messo Petronio a riportare il comico riassunto, non è qui mio compito di indagare. Noterò solo che l' espressione fabulam agere, di cui Trimalcione si serve per indicare l' azione degli Ὁμηρισταί, è la solita espressione, che si usa per le rappresentazioni teatrali, e che l' ita nunc Homeros dicit pare confermi l' ipotesi che gli Omeristi in realtà recitassero veramente e diretamente Omero." Against such a view see Horsfall 1989, 81.

[212] Slater 1990(b), 72.

[213] Cf. the obscure story of Ulysses and the Cyclops (48.7) and Trimalchio's comically arrogant statement solebam haec ego puer apud Homerum legere (48.7).

Everything, however, seems carefully staged in advance,[214] when one notices the mention of Ajax as the last person in the hotch-potch (59.5), and the 'skit' of the insane Ajax coming from the kitchen (59.7): this character is seemingly introduced in the scene in order to finish off the performance,[215] but his actual function is to serve the next course in a spectacular way. The spectacle of the mad Ajax serves as the concluding piece (59.5) of the Homeristae-performance. In order to continue the show and keep the pretence that a madman is advancing towards them, the fellow-actors start shouting and the household runs about (59.6) creating an atmosphere of panic in the room. An enormous calf is brought in wearing a helmet (59.6), and the cook attacks and cuts it in slices (59.7) just as Ajax was supposed to have killed herds and flocks of farm animals in his madness.[216] The whole scene must have been rather boring, since it is ironically characterized as a skilful and impressive performance (tam elegantes strophas 60.1; note, also, the subtle irony conveyed in the description of the other guests' amazement at such an event: mirantibus 59.7; mirari 60.1). Although Trimalchio's Carpus (36.5-8) and Virro's carver (Juv. V.118-124) clearly demonstrate that even the serving of food had become a specialised 'art', the disguise of a trained cook as a legendary hero with a sword (59.7) instead of a kitchen-knife is certainly meant to be seen as a typical

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[214] Starr 1987, 200 rightly comments on the double function of the Homeristae in the structure of the novel: "(they) serve as an interlude between courses ... their performance, coordinated with Trimalchio and Ajax, epitomizes the Cena's interpenetration of spectacle and dining. ... In the Cena, theatrical illusion encroaches upon the sphere of the kitchen until the host and the servers become temporary members of the troupe of Homeristae."

[215] Trimalchio's expression argumentum explicabit (59.5) is a technical formula for the unfolding or finishing off of a theatrical plot on stage; cf. Cic. N.D. l.53 ut tragici poetae cum explicare argumenti exitum non potestis confugitis ad deum; Suet. Calig. LVII.4 Parabatur et in noctem spectaculum, quo argumenta inferorum per Aegyptios et Aethiopas explicarentur.

[216] See Calderini 1911, 718.

pantomimic performance[217] of well-known subject-matter[218] with well-rehearsed accompanying gestures (modo versa modo supina gesticulatus 59.7).[219]

Has the 'skit' reached its end? Perhaps not, since according to one scholar the pantomime has not yet finished:

> It is entirely possible that such a mimic dancer could have subsequently leapt upon a sword specially prepared for the occasion, the theatrical weapon described by Achilles Tatius (3.20.7; 3.21.4), the blade of which retracted into the handle during mock murders. Hesychius (s.v. συσπαστόν, cf. ἀναδρομητὸν) mentions that such a sword was used to portray the suicide of Ajax. It is indeed tempting to suggest that the Bazel statuette of Ajax offers convincing evidence that there existed already in the second quarter of the fifth century -at least in Italy- a tradition of a satyr-like dancer who mimicked the mad frenzy of the hero by dancing the *sikinnis* and leaping like an acrobat over a circle of upright swords to provide entertainment during banquets.[220]

This hypothesis would give a most amusing end to the episode, bearing in mind that the mimica mors was a favourite theme in low farce,[221] but the text implies that the spectacle of the dividing ceiling interrupted Ajax's pantomime (nec diu mirari licuit 60.1). It seems that the serving of the calf (not an end to the sketch) was Trimalchio's primary concern. He is not interested in providing a hackneyed pantomime just for its own sake or for his guests' amusement, but uses the spectacle for personal purposes (to serve the food), and aims not so much at the satisfaction of his audience's hunger as at its admiration of his staging abilities.

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[217] See Moering 1915, 12. Gagliardi 1980, 79 speculates that this scene might be an example of a mythological mime, adapted to the context of Trimalchio's purposes.

[218] Lucian, *De Saltat.*, 46 lists among other pantomime-subjects καὶ ἡ Αἴαντος μανία. The same author (ibid. 83-84) describes in detail an incident in which a pantomime-dancer exaggerated so much when he was pretending to be the mad Ajax, that he was thought himself insane. In Atellan farce see Pomponius' *Armorum Iudicium*, 10-11, with Frassinetti's note, 1967, 101-102, who connects it with Pacuvius' *Armorum Iudicium*. In Plautus' *Captivi* (615), Tyndarus wants to convince Hegio that Aristophontes is a madman, and for that reason he compares him with the figure of the insane Ajax on stage: ornamenta apsunt: Aiacem, hunc quom vides, ipsum vides.

[219] gesticulatus 59.7, 'to make mimic gestures'; cf. Apul. *Flor.* 18 histrio gesticulatur; Suet. *Nero* XLII.2 iocularia in defectionis duces carmina lasciveque modulata, quae vulgo notuerunt, etiam gesticulatus est.

[220] Davies 1971, 152-153.

[221] See below, pages 200-201; page 201, note 33; page 234.

XI

A ceiling that opens in order to let flowers, unguents or other presents be offered to unsuspecting and surprised guests was a fairly frequent device used in the dining-rooms of extravagant Romans. Examples more striking than Trimalchio's have been recorded by Roman historians,[222] and Seneca scathingly mentions the extremes this form of entertainment could take as a sign of sapientia among the corrupt wealthy circles of his time.[223]

Trimalchio's automatum which would disclose a new exciting theatrical surprise is described like an earthquake (60.1). It is interesting to note that everyone in the company, even the naive Encolpius, has become familiar with Trimalchio's staged follies and, although they certainly have feelings of fear about this strange and sudden noise from the ceiling, they expect,with the awe of a circus-audience, an innovation (quid novi) or, more specifically, an acrobatic performer (petauristarius aliquis 60.2), rather than some physical convulsion. This device with hidden entrances and spectacular effects, although not unusual, proves that Trimalchio has transformed his house into a stage, not only metaphorically through the constant use of farcical incidents and staged events, but also literally through the use of the actual theatrical apparatus frequently employed in the amphitheatre: the elaborate devices of the earth in the well-known spectacles recorded by Apuleius (Met. X.34) and Calpurnius Siculus (Ecl. VII.69-72) are characteristic examples of this usage.[224] Such structural devices, deliberately introduced by Trimalchio, are not confined, it has been argued,[225] to the interior of the dining-room, but extend to the entrance of the triclinium, which was deliberately made to resemble a theatrical pulpitum.[226]

Moreover, the repeated pattern of Trimalchio's dramatic surprises (an

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[222] See Suet. Nero, XXXI; Valer. Maximus, ix.l.5; Macrob. Sat. iii.13.8 and Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 60.1; Rosati 1983, 221-222.

[223] Sen. Ep. XC.15: Hodie utrum tandem sapientiorem putas qui ... et versatilia cenationum laquearia ita coagmentat ut subinde alia facies atque alia succedat et totiens tecta quotiens fericula mutentur, ...

[224] See Gehman 1922, 98-100; Saylor 1987, 596 and note 14. On the μηχανή of the Greek tragedy see Arnott 1962, 72-78.

[225] See Sandy 1974, 331 referring to Maiuri's commentary of the Cena (Naples 1945, 56).

[226] See Isid. Etym. XVIII.43 = Migne, P.L., lxxxi.658: scena autem erat locus infra theatrum in modum domus instructa cum pulpito, qui pulpitus orchestra vocabatur; ubi cantabant comici, tragici, atque saltabant histriones et mimi.

unsuspected item hidden in unexpected places: 33.8; 40.5; 49.10; 60.3; 70.6),
suggests that his concept of automatic contrivances which

> depend for their effect on a disguised 'entrance' may be inspired by the
> practice of the popular stage; a scholiast at Juv. VIII.186 remarks on
> siparium: Velum sub quo latent paradoxi, cum in scaenam prodeunt. Aut ostium
> mimi.[227]

It seems that the furniture and food in Trimalchio's house square with this
theatrical practice. In this passage the whole ceiling opens, and an immense
hoop appears, around which the customary apophoreta were attached (60.3).
Again the contrast between the trivial nature of the things offered, and the
spectacular manner in which they are offered, makes the whole scene absurd.

The dish with Priapus' image holding all kinds of fruit and grapes in his lap
seems to have been placed quietly on the table during the time when the guests
were busy collecting their presents from the huge hoop (iam illic 60.4), so as to
confront them with another pleasant surprise (avidius ad pompam 60.5; hilaritatem
60.5). Miller rightly draws attention to the fact that the word pompam

> must obliquely allude not just to any sacral procession, but to the ritual
> parade which opened such public entertainments in the Circus, ludi which
> ranked among the most popular in Rome. The most conspicuous feature of
> the pompa circensis was the procession of various deities' statues, decked
> out with their traditional attributes, a spectacle which was received
> enthusiastically by the Circus crowd. For a moment, then, the fantastic
> image flashes before us of this Priapus as one of the divine figures paraded
> , on such official occasions.[228]

This dish is visually astonishing, since it combines exotic food (omnis generis poma
60.4) with amusing obscenity,[229] but its pleasing peculiarity (nova ludorum
commissio hilaritatem [hic] refecit 60.5) lies in the hidden saffron which the fruit
contains and which is released when it is even slightly touched (60.6).[230] This
comic scene is another example of the way Trimalchio makes fun of his visitors;

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[227] Sandy 1974, 337; cf. Donat. De Com. VIII.8 pro quibus (i.e. aulaeis) siparia aetas posterior
accepit. est autem mimicum velum, quod populo obsistit, dum fabularum actus
commutantur.

[228] Miller 1989, 196.

[229] more vulgato 60.4, and see Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc.

[230] Meerwaldt 1921, 415-416 suggests reading ad imos (ad nos H) at 60.6, thus implying that the
saffron sprinkled even the remotest parts of the dining-room.

but it becomes purely farcical when one notices the avid gestures of the greedy guests (including Encolpius on Giton's behalf) (60.5; 60.7) and their ridiculous misinterpretation as a religious sign of what is only a vulgar trick in the tradition of the theatrical automata (60.7).[231]

In the atmosphere of such pseudo-religious δρώμενα the procession of Trimalchio's Lares[232] takes place. They are brought in, together with Trimalchio's image (!), by three young slaves (60.9) in a travesty of the ritual; here the Lares have the names of slaves, the slaves mimic the dress of the Lares,[233] and everyone has to kiss Trimalchio's golden portrait (60.9) wishing themselves mental and physical health (61.1).

Trimalchio's appeal for entertainment to one of his old scurrae,[234] Niceros (61.2; the other one is Plocamus, 64.2), introduces in a conventional manner[235] the common motif of the interpolated narrative within a text,[236] namely the chilling stories of the werewolf (61.6-62.14) and the witch-like demons (63.3-10).

Niceros is reluctant to start speaking, because he is afraid that the scholastici, that is, Agamemnon and his company, will laugh at him (61.4), and this hesitation has rightly been interpreted as a traditional technique to introduce a story. Choricius (*Apol. Mimorum* 109), however, mentions that the mimes exploited the comic contrast between the speech of an uneducated and that of a learned person for instructive purposes:

ἔνι καὶ στρατιώτας ἰδεῖν καὶ ῥητόρων ἀκοῦσαι, δυεῖν ἐνίοτε μίμων, τοῦ μὲν ἀλόγιστόν τινα μιμουμένου, τοῦ δὲ καλῶς ἐν λόγοις ἀχθέντα, ὥστε γελωμένου μὲν ἐκείνου, κροτουμένου δὲ τούτου λογισμὸς εἰσέρχεται τοῖς θεωμένοις ὡς δεῖ παίδευσιν μὲν ἀγαπᾶν, ὅπως

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[231] rati ergo sacrum esse fer[i]culum tam religioso apparatu perfusum, consurreximus altius et 'Augusto, patri patriae, feliciter' diximus. On the travesty of ceremonial elements in 60.1-9 see Rosati 1983, 224; Miller 1989, 192-202.

[232] Trimalchio has named them, according to his most personal materialistic desires, Cerdo, Felicio and Lucro (60.8). Schmeling 1969(b), 9, note 17 notes that the name Lucris as a false prostitute's name is used to create several puns in Plautus' *Persa*, 624; 627; 668; 712.

[233] See Miller 1989, 201-202.

[234] On the theatrical nature of this figure see Sandy 1974, 330; Corbett 1986, passim.

[235] On the conventional elements of the traditional interpolated narrative in Niceros' story of the werewolf see Sandy 1970, 468-469.

[236] On story-telling as a conventional form of entertainment at dinner-parties see Horsfall 1989, 194-195. On the tradition of the particular subjects of the werewolf and the strigae see Schuster 1930, 149-178; Horsfall 1989, 196-197.

ἐπαινοῖντο, ἀμαθίαν δὲ φεύγειν, ἵνα μὴ σκωμμάτων γένωνται πρόφασις.

'You can also see soldiers, and listen to orators, and sometimes to two mimes, one of them imitating some uneducated person, and the other a learned one, the result being that, when the former is ridiculed, while the latter is applauded, the spectators consider that they must pursue education, in order to be praised, and avoid illiteracy, so that they may not give cause for insulting jokes.'

Niceros' story has been extensively analysed as both a folk-tale and a source of colloquial Latin.[237] It is remarkable, however, that it appears also in native Italian drama: in Novius' fabula Atellana, Fullones Feriati (31-33 Frassinetti), we read:

I. vortit se in omnis bestias, comest quidquid tetigit tantum

II. nihil est pericli: dabo tibi validum virum / animosum

I. 'he is transformed into all animals, he devours everything that he just touches'

II. 'there is no danger: I will give you a strong and brave man'

The motifs of transformation and of the courageous road-companion can be easily recognised, although they do not offer any further similarity to the Petronian narrative; but it has been suggested that both in Novius and Petronius the story is introduced in the same context of an interpolated narrative within a staged banquet:[238] the banquet of the fullers who are on holiday and Trimalchio's feast. Indeed, the author records the story-tellers' own emotions during the dramatic time of the plot,[239] as well as commenting ironically on the feelings of admiration and superstitious fear which both stories evoked in the guests (63.1; 64.1), as if he were describing the adventures of an actor performing on stage, and the reactions of an audience listening to him.

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[237] See Boyce 1991, 85-87 (with bibliography on page 85, note 29); on the development of the werewolf-story from earlier myth into literary narrative, see Valenti-Pagnini 1981, 3-22.

[238] The interpretation of these fragments was first made by Rossbach 1920, 331 ff., followed by Frassinetti (ed.) 1967, 109-110.

[239] Cf. Niceros' reaction at 62.5 mihi [in] anima in naso esse, stabam tamquam mortuus, and Herod. III.3-4 ἄχρις ἡ ψυχή / αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ χειλέων μοῦνον ἢ κακὴ λειφθῆι. Rosenblüth 1909, 55 discerns characteristics of a mimic type in Niceros' persona: "wenn Niceros erzählt (62.12): domum fugi tamquam copo compilatus, so muß der "geprügelte Wirt" eben eine ganz bekannte Figur gewesen sein (vielleicht werden diese Worte durch die mimische Szene in cap. 95 illustriert, in welcher der deversitor Prügel bekommt.)."

XII

Drunkenness has helped to alter the exterior appearance of the dining-room in Encolpius' tipsy eyes (64.2), when Trimalchio, referring nostalgically to the passing of the good old days (64.3),[240] addresses his other scurra, Plocamus, urging him to amuse them in his usual manner (64.2).

Through this exhortation we are informed what additional forms of dramatic entertainment Trimalchio's past dinners have presented: recitations of comic dialogues to the accompaniment of music and the interspersing of lyric songs (canturire belle deverbia, adicere melica[m] 64.2; quid deverbia? 64.4) may point to the enacting of comedies, or, even more specifically, mimes, which usually consisted of these two ingredients, dialogue and songs (cf. the possible recitation of excerpts from the Laserpiciarius at 35.6 and the vulgar ludus of Vergil's recitation at 68.4-5). Pantomimic dance (Quid saltare? 64.4) or impersonations (quid tonstrinum? 64.4)[241] could have been easily added to the programme, since they form part of the current dinner (41.6; 52.8-10; 64.5; 68.3). The justification for a comparison between Plocamus and the one and only Apelles (64.4; Suet. Calig. XXXIII) displays amusingly the former's arrogance.[242] The deterioration in his health (64.3) is risibly blamed for the loss of his artistic graces, when the tuneless Plocamus whispers incomprehensibly some foul rendering in Greek (64.5). For old times' sake Trimalchio cannot help attempting an imitation of trumpeters (64.5), probably in a hideous fashion.

The dog-fight at Trimalchio's dinner is one of the most amusingly described spectacles in the Cena. After Trimalchio's mimicry of the trumpeters, the narrator focuses his interest on Trimalchio's favourite (he had appeared for the first time at 28.4), a bleary-eyed ugly creature whose dog constitutes another spectacular

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[240] Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 64.3 speculates that the strange phrase 'abistis dulces caricae', in the meaning "the good times are past", is perhaps an original quotation from a comedy or a mime.

[241] Gagliardi 1980, 81, note 74 thinks that there is a reference here to "il mimo del barbiere".

[242] See Schmeling 1969(b), 7: "Petronius chose historical characters from the bottom rung of society, and the level of realism he apparently intends for us to see is the lowest ... Petronius points out that the events in his novel take place among the dregs of society and the worst of officials, and so intends that the actions of the characters should not outrage, but rather amuse us."

example of vulgarity. The name of the dog, Margarita ('Pearl') (64.9),[243] harmonizes with the innuendos of wealth implicit in the name of her master, Croesus (64.5). The dog is small but unusually and indecently fat (catellam ... indecenter pinguem 64.6), probably because Croesus has always been feeding her as he does at 64.6. The image of the boy who insists on stuffing the dog's mouth with a piece of bread half a pound in weight,[244] while the dog keeps refusing it and is about to vomit (64.6), evokes not only disgust, but also laughter. The whole situation becomes worse for the dog, since she is wrapped in a piece of cloth (64.6).[245] The sight of Croesus fulfilling his duty towards Margarita reminds Trimalchio of his own responsibilities and, consequently, of his dog, Scylax, 'praesidium domus familiaeque' (64.7).[246] The 'Puppy' (a comic contrast between the name and the size of the dog) is the very opposite in size to Margarita (ingentis formae ... canis catena vinctus 64.7), but does not appear intelligent (admonitusque ostiarii calce ut cubaret 64.7).

A scene of jealousy follows, because Trimalchio had not fully appreciated the affection shown to him by Croesus (64.8-9); in order to take revenge, the latter absurdly urges Margarita to attack Scylax. The outcome of this fight is an awful noise filling the room (64.9, 10), Margarita's near dismemberment (64.9), the smashing of all the crystal in the room and the wounds that the hot oil from the lamp caused to some of the guests (64.10). This set-to is described in a highly dramatic manner in order to create the impression of a fight of wild

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[243] There is a gravestone for a dog named Margarita in *CIL* vi. 29896; cf. 64.7 [ut (i.e. Scylax) cubaret] with line 8 of the epigram ET NORAM IN STRATO LASSA CUBARE TORO and Pl. *Sti.* 620 (tantillum loculi ubi catellus cubet, id mi sat e rest loci). All the passages refer to a small and sweet dog, nothing like Trimalchio's monster. On the name Scylax see Columella, vii.12.13.

[244] There is no reason to change the manuscript's reading semissem into semesum, 'half-eaten', (Burmann), as Smith (ed.) and Müller (ed.) have done. There is no comic point in a half-eaten piece of bread as a means to feed a dog; on the other hand, the bigger the quantity of food, the funnier it will be when Croesus tries to feed an already well-fed and excessively fat dog.

[245] The ribbon is leek-green (prasina involvebat fascia 64.6) in order to make a vulgar contrast with the black colour of the dog (catellam nigram 64.6; but her name suggests white colour) and the yellowish colour of Croesus' dirty teeth (sordidissimis dentibus 64.6). The colours work on the level of visual impact on the audience's eyes, stressing the dramatic description of the events.

[246] See Theophr. *Char.* 4.10 and cf. Walsh 1970, 134 and note 1. Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc., speculates that "this phrase appears to be a quotation ... The high-flown phrase used by Trimalchio may be a parody (cf. *CRF* 53 te tutamen fore sperarat familiai, domuique columen), ... but it cannot be taken as a parody of the Theophrastus passage."

animals in an amphitheatre. More brawls of a similar kind will ensue: the fracas at the inn between Eumolpus and some of the lodgers (95.4-96.6); the mimic fight which will be staged on board Lichas' ship between Encolpius and his friends and the sailors with the help of Tryphaena's household (108.7-109.1).[247]

Two of the surviving titles of Laberius' mimes (*Scylax* and *Catularius*) suggest that dogs were somehow involved in the plot of the farcical pieces, although it is impossible to tell exactly how.[248] Real animals were sometimes used in Greek theatre;[249] however, on occasion practical difficulties or the need to make the scene more hilarious led to the introduction of dummy-animals.[250] There were actors dressed as animals, as in the trial-scene of the dogs in Aristophanes' *Wasps*,[251] or actual dogs well-trained for the occasion, like Trimalchio's canes Laconici (40.2), or the famous dog that enacted brilliantly a part in a mime some time between 75 and 79 AD (Plut. *De Sollert. Anim.* 973E-974A).[252]

Πλὴν ἕν γέ τι μάθημα κυνὸς οὗ δοκῶ μοι παρήσειν, γενόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ θεατής. παρὼν γὰρ ὁ κύων μίμῳ πλοκὴν ἔχοντι δραματικὴν καὶ πολυπρόσωπον ἄλλας τε μιμήσεις ἀπεδίδου τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πάθεσι καὶ πράγμασι προσφόρους, καὶ φαρμάκου ποιουμένων ἐν αὐτῷ πεῖραν ὑπνωτικοῦ μὲν ὑποκειμένου δ' εἶναι θανασίμου, τόν τ' ἄρτον, ᾧ δῆθεν ἐμέμικτο τὸ φάρμακον, ἐδέξατο καὶ καταφαγὼν ὀλίγον ὕστερον ὅμοιος ἦν ὑποτρέμοντι καὶ σφαλλομένῳ καὶ καρηβαροῦντι. τέλος δὲ προτείνας ἑαυτὸν ὥσπερ νεκρὸς ἔκειτο, καὶ παρεῖχεν ἕλκειν καὶ μεταφέρειν, ὡς ὁ τοῦ δράματος ὑπηγόρευε λόγος. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκ τῶν λεγομένων καὶ πραττομένων ἐνόησεν, ἡσυχῇ τὸ πρῶτον ἐκίνησεν ἑαυτόν, ὥσπερ ἐξ ὕπνου βαθέος ἀναφερόμενος, καὶ τὴν

247 See below, pages 232-233.

248 See Bonaria's brief comments, (ed.) 1965,109 and 120, respectively. Sandy 1974, 343, note 32 speculates "whether the gross language (i.e. of the mimes) (lines 34-35 in Bonaria) and the title of Laberius' *Catularius* indicate dog-style love-making, i.e., sodomy."

249 Amott 1959, 177-179 gives the following list: horses (*Agam.* 783; *Pers.* 159 ff.; ?*Eum.* 403 ff.; *Iph. Aul.* 590 ff.; *Rhes.* 370; *Elect* 988), mules (*Troad.* 572; and in comedy: *Frogs*).

250 *Wasps* 179-181; 903 ff.; *Cyclops* 224 ff.; *Birds* 20, 24. See MacDowell (ed.) 1971, 155 (ad vers. 178).

251 See MacDowell (ed.) 1971, 251 (ad vers. 899).

252 See Keller 1909, 134; Toynbee 1973, 102 ff., 107, 108; Jennison 1937, 72. Xenophon, *Oecon.* XIII.8, seems to imply similar skilful performances by trained dogs: καὶ τὰ κυνίδια δὲ πολὺ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ καὶ τῇ γλώττῃ ὑποδεέστερα ὄντα ὅμως καὶ περιτρέχειν καὶ κυβιστᾶν καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ μανθάνει τῷ αὐτῷ τούτῳ τρόπῳ.

κεφαλὴν ἐπάρας διέβλεψεν. ἔπειτα θαυμασάντων, ἐξαναστὰς ἐβάδιζε πρὸς ὃν ἔδει καὶ προσῆκαλλε χαίρων καὶ φιλοφρονούμενος, ὥστε πάντας ἀνθρώπους καὶ Καίσαρα (παρῆν γὰρ ὁ γέρων Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἐν τῷ Μαρκέλλου θεάτρῳ) συμπαθεῖς γενέσθαι.

'Still, I believe that I should not pass over one example at least of a dog's learning, of which I myself was a spectator at Rome. The dog appeared in a pantomime with a dramatic plot and many characters and conformed in its acting at all points with the acts and reactions required by the text. In particular, they experimented on it with a drug that was really soporific, but supposed in the story to be deadly. The dog took the bread that was supposedly drugged, swallowed it, and a little later appeared to shiver and stagger and nod until it finally sprawled out and lay there like a corpse, letting itself be dragged and hauled about, as the plot of the play prescribed. But when it recognised from the words and action that the time had come, at first it began to stir slightly, as though recovering from a profound sleep, and lifted its head and looked about. Then to the amazement of the spectators it got up and proceeded to the right person and fawned on him with joy and pleasure so that everyone, and even Caesar himself (for the aged Vespasian was present in the Theatre of Marcellus), was much moved.[253]

It seems probable that Petronius, as far as the incident of Scylax and Margarita is concerned, worked on a combination of two elements from the mimes: the use of trained dogs and the mimic fracas. Although it is an unforeseen spectacle, Trimalchio manages to take advantage of it and to use it as a means to boast of his wealth (64.11).

The game that follows is the last in the series of games that started at 27.2-3, and should be seen as a consequence of the dog-fight spectacle. As it is described in the text, it may be a complete game or a combination of different

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[253] Text and translation come from the LOEB edition (1957).

games, or it may include only some of the gestures of the original.[254] Nevertheless, it demonstrates Trimalchio's ridiculous behaviour, inappropriate to his age and rank (cf. 27.1 ff.), creating a risible spectacle for the guests and the audience of the novel. This scene is significant for Trimalchio's theatrical personality in that he has recourse to a game, and not to anything else, in order to show that he was not annoyed at the financial loss caused by the dog-fight (ne videretur iactura motus 64.11).

XIII

The gross appearance of the savouries pressed upon the guests by Trimalchio no longer evokes surprise or amazement, but rather terror (65.1). In the next course the thin fieldfares are replaced by fat chickens, one for each guest, and

⸱⸱ capped goose-eggs (65.2).

Theatrical wonders have become by now a tedious experience; the element of surprise is reinforced by the introduction of new characters on Trimalchio's stage. Their entrance is noisily signalled by the knock of an official attendant on the door, thus drawing everyone's attention in that direction, and by the shouting of a large group of people (65.3), whose inebriation is implicitly suggested by the drunkenness of their leader (65.7). This loud spectacle is dramatically effective, since it not only constitutes an impressive farcical incident in the theatrical tradition of the "trompe-l'œil", but also gives opportunities for slapstick elements to be developed, such as Encolpius' false alarm, when he thinks that the law is after him (65.4). Agamemnon, who is familiar with people and events in Trimalchio's social circle, explains to the bemused Encolpius the

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[254] Marmorale (ed.) 1947, ad loc., describes the game in its original form thus: "un fanciullo era seduto; un secondo gli poggiava la testa in grembo, curvandosi, e si faceva da lui bendare gli occhi colle mani; un terzo saliva a cavalcioni sul secondo e formava un numero con le dita distese (uno, duo o tre dita, a volontà) e il secondo doveva indovinare di quante dita era composto il numero. Quest' ultimo particolare si ricava dall' ritornello bucca, bucca che giustamente il Hoffmann *Umgangsprache*[2] p. 60 intende buccam tuam bis percutiens te rogo." Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc., notes that "the game described here resembles micare digitis (44.7) [see his note ad h. loc.] in that a player has to try to guess the number of fingers held up by his opponent; but to judge from the many related modern versions it differs in that the opponent mounts on his back before asking him to guess." Väterlein 1976, 60-61 describes the game of micare digitis, but does not refer to this Petronian passage; cf. Horsfall 1989, 84. Perhaps we have to deal here with a combination of a horse-game (cf. 24.4), a micare digitis-game and a bucca, bucca-game, invented by Trimalchio and Croesus at that moment.

identity of the new-comer, Habinnas, underlining those aspects of his persona (65.5 sevir est idemque lapidarius, qui vide[re]tur monumenta optime facere) which will be exploited by Trimalchio later on in the narration of the spectacular ἔκφρασις of his funerary statue (71.5-12).

Throughout the year there were occasions on which the dead were commemorated by funerary meals eaten at the tomb by their relatives and friends, on their birthdays and when the annual festivals of the dead were celebrated (novendialis cena). The appropriate colour for such a festive occasion was white; this is the reason for Habinnas' vestis alba, scented oil on his hair (cf. Tib. i.7.51) and garlands around his neck (65.7). His appearance clearly shows that he rushed from one feast to another just as he was: drunk, wearing the same clothes, with ointment running down his forehead into his eyes. Apart from any (intentional or unintentional on the part of the author) similarities between this entrance and the appearance of Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium*,[255] one must not disregard the fact that all these details are used for the characterization of Habinnas. He is portrayed as a greedy person with bad manners, who not only occupies the seat of honour, locus consularis or praetorius,[256] but also, without being asked first by the host, as is the custom (cf. Cic. *In Verr*. I.66), demands immediately something to drink (65.7). Nevertheless, he makes a strong impact on the naive eyes of his audience, that is Encolpius, who watches him with great astonishment (cum admiratione ingenti 65.6).

From the ensuing conversation between Habinnas and Trimalchio, it turns out that the former is a first class parasite (65.9) who shares most of the vulgar interests of the latter: food, 66.2-7,[257] his stomach-problems, 66.2, money, 65.10, master-and-slave relationships, 65.10-11, pseudo-rhetorical introductory sentences, 66.1. The detailed account of the funeral feast is comically enriched

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[255] Against the theory that Habinnas' entrance parodies Alcibiades' entrance see Gagliardi 1980, 82 ; cf. Boyce 1991, 87-88 (with earlier bibliography, page 88, note 37).

[256] Encolpius thought that Habinnas was a praetor (65.4); Agamemnon informs him that he is not and yet Habinnas sits in the praetorio loco (65.7)!

[257] Baldwin 1974, 294 speculates that the proverbial expression Pax Palamedes (66.7) in a food context could have been the Romanised version of Dionysus' sarcastic exclamation at Euripides' suggestions on Athenian policy (Arist. *Frogs* 1451): "Moreover, pax is really the Greek πάξ. Which is convenient to the argument, for (fortuitously or otherwise) extant examples of pax occur in contexts of food. Also, Palamedes the inventor was utilised by Eupolis in a joke concerning the invention of chamber pots by Alcibiades."

by the gestures of his wife, Scintilla, who keeps reminding her husband of more vulgar details of the meal (66.5). It is Habinnas who will demand the active participation of Fortunata in their company, thus giving rise to yet more risible vulgar events (67.4-6; 67.12-13).

Fortunata at last makes her appearance in the dining-room after the slaves have shouted her name four times or more (67.3). Her presence at the feast has been already mentioned (37.1; 52.10-11), but the author prefers to make a formal introduction of her only now, because this is the time when she is to join the others at the table. Her arrival is unforgettable.[258] What immediately strikes the narrator is her dazzling combination of colours. The greenish-yellow girdle, hitched probably higher than the level of her waist, is a laughable match with the cherry-red undergarment (67.4).[259] We must imagine that no part of Fortunata's body is uncovered; there is always something which is meant to show off her wealth, display the quality of her taste and, at the same time, point out the comic details of her persona as a grotesque 'nouveau-riche' housewife.

She is wearing anklets (67.4) which, according to Isidore (*Etym.* xix.31.19), were crurum ornamenta mulierum quo gressus earum ornantur 'ornaments of women's feet, by means of which their walking was decorated'. Pliny (*NH* XXXIII.39.152) says that plebeian women wore anklets of silver, whereas patricians wore gold. It is not difficult to guess what Fortunata would choose to wear, but the comic point of her anklets is not only the material they were made of, but also their shape. One wonders how they could fit on to her fat legs. After her periscelides, one notices her shoes (67.4).[260] I have found no parallel for a

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258 For illustrations see Murray 1985, 181; Fellini 1978, 17; the most successful reconstructions of Fortunata are the pictures published in *Petronian Society Newsletters* 15.2 (1984), 6 and 18 (1988), 12.

259 Note that Trimalchio's ostiarius (28.8) wore a waist-band in that colour. Certainly, Juvenal (*S.* II.95-97) and Martial (*Ep.* I.96.4-9) disapprove of that colour when worn by a man, but they do it on moral grounds. Similarly, Seneca (*NQ* vii.31.2) condemns the use by men of some colours which are appropriate only to prostitutes (meretricios colores), and claims that not even women should wear them. Perhaps the luxurious combination in Fortunata's clothes should be included in his list of prohibited colours. Petronius, however, comments not from a moral, but from an aesthetic point of view. To him, Fortunata, following the example and reflecting the bad taste of her husband, favours an eccentric appearance which is both tasteless and spectacular.

260 The phaecasia were elegant white Attic shoes (Appian, *Bell.Civ.* v.11), worn by Athenian gymnasiarchs (Plut. *Ant.* 33; Poll. vii.90), by philosophers (Sen. *Benef.* VII.21), by peasants (Hesych. s.v.), by Encolpius (82.3). They were worn usually with the pallium (Sen. *Ep.* CXIII.1).

woman who wears this kind of shoe, but even if Fortunata is not the only female person who wears shoes generally worn by men, she has embroidered them with gold probably in order to make them look more luxurious, extravagant and expensive. She is the kind of woman who cares more for extravagant appearance than for quality and elegance. The ironical twist in her appearance comes at the end of her description. Fortunata is clad in all these eccentrically-coloured clothes and is weighed down by jewels but she wears round her neck a sudarium, a piece of cloth used as a napkin (67.5).[261] It is used to wipe her hands, perhaps from the food she has been eating all the time as she wanders about giving orders. This small detail is a further proof of the vulgar contrast between her pretended image and her true self.

Fortunata performs a strip-tease of her jewellery like an actress performing in a low-class theatrical piece.[262] The excess of her vulgarity is marked from the first phrase in the text: eo deinde perventum est 'then the situation went So far' (67.6). It seems that Fortunata has reached the limits of exhibitionism. This procedure takes place gradually, starting from the biggest and ending up with the smallest objects of her ornaments. The narrator mentions first her armillae, which were bracelets or armlets.[263] Fortunata's taste evokes ironical comments by the narrator regarding the size of her arms. One realises from the superlative crassissimis not only the comic picture of Fortunata's arms squeezed into the armlets (notice, as well, the compound detraho, 67.6), but also her general corpulence. This does not worry her, because Fortunata seems to prefer not what suits her body but, without discrimination, what would decorate every inch of it. Perhaps, Fortunata has shown off other jewellery as well, for the phrase ultimo etiam (67.6) suggests that other objects came after the armillae and before the periscelides. Her hair-net is again an exception to the general rule (67.6). Whereas any hair-coverings (the Greek term was κεκρύφαλος), other than regular hats, appear to have been made of silk, byssus (Pausan. vii.24.7) or wool (Pollux, vii.66), Fortunata's reticulum is aureum, because in her opinion only this material is

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[261] It is used again at 67.13, where Habinnas made Fortunata's dress fly up over her knees and she covered the shame on her face with that napkin. Trimalchio has his handkerchief adorned with the purple stripe of a senator (32.2).

[262] On the nudatio mimarum see Mart. Ep. I.35.8-9, Val. Max. II.x.8, Lact. Div. Instit. I.20.5-8.

[263] For illustrations of armillae see Higgins 1980, pl. 60-62. They were worn at Rome by ladies of rank, but it was considered a mark of effeminacy for men in an ordinary way to use such female ornaments, Nero and Caligula being the most obvious examples (Suet. Cal. LII; Nero XXX).

worth decorating her head. She does not hesitate to assert to the admiring Scintilla that *her* reticulum is pure gold, tested in the way that Pliny (*NH* XXXIII.60) describes.

It is easy to conclude that good taste for Fortunata is extremely bright colours in strikingly impressive combinations and a huge quantity of jewellery. Nevertheless, the intentions of the author are not confined to a description of tastelessness; vulgarity is presented in such an excessive degree that the whole picture becomes an amusing sight rather than a revolting example of bad taste. Plautus pokes fun at the length of time women take to adorn themselves (*Poen.* 210-232), and effectively ridicules female extravagance in clothing (variety of names for the garments and multicoloured attire) (*Epid.* 229-235). When, in *Truculentus*, Phronesium's maid, Astaphium, appears on stage, she wears a short dress dyed dirty grey, silver bracelets (270-272), silver rings (274), earrings (275); she has daintily arranged her curly hair, and put perfume on (287-288), she has applied rouge or red ochre to her cheeks, and chalk all over her body (290).[264]

Scintilla is the only woman who, apart from Fortunata, is described in some detail (67.9). Her vulgarity is again used comically by the author who does not limit himself to ironical comments of low taste. As was the case in the detailed description of Trimalchio's and Fortunata's appearances, bad taste is presented through comic spectacle, and opportunities to create a vivid narrative equivalent of a boorish appearance on stage are certainly not missed. The elements that demonstrate Scintilla's boorishness are   the aureola capsella and the duo crotalia she wears (67.9). A capsa was, mainly, a circular box for holding books and papers. It could also be used as a toilet- or a jewel-case. If the boxes were wooden, they were called capsae, if metal, cistae, although the distinction is not always clear. We have silver and bronze cistae, but Scintilla's small box is unique in many aspects: it is made of gold, it is hanging from her neck and it has a name (Felicio, 'Good Luck'), the same name as one of Trimalchio's three Lares (60.8). The superstitious Scintilla seems to believe that only a golden case was appropriate for keeping and carrying her jewellery with her, simultaneously bringing good luck and giving her opportunities for showing off. Note that there is a touch of comic irony on the narrator's part in the adjective aureolam (67.9), since

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[264] On the various coloured garments that were worn by characters in New Comedy see Wiles 1991, 188-192.

the diminutive has passed from the noun to its adjective.[265]

What appears to be inside the capsella is a pair of earrings which rattle like castanets (67.9).[266] Scintilla follows the general fashion which favours impressive pieces of jewellery, but that does not necessarily indicate bad taste. What makes her taste correspond to her host's vulgarity is that she keeps the earrings inside a box hanging from her neck instead of wearing them. She does not even use them to look more beautiful but, just as Fortunata did (67.6), treats them as an excuse for showing off; even before her description the narrator comments that she was nec melior (67.9). Her husband displays the same vulgarity in his miserly anti-feminism (67.10)[267] and his crude manners towards his host's wife (67.12-13). All these elements, however, are presented within the context of a staged dinner full of dramatic surprises and should be conceived as occasions for visual farcical humour through social criticism.

XIV

An interval is necessary for the change of props in the dining-room when Trimalchio thought that it was time for the dessert (secundas mensas 68.1) to be served. His demand (secundas mensas Trimalchio iussisset afferri 68.1) is absurdly (or rightly?) taken literally by the servants who pick up the existing tables and bring in a new set of furniture (68.1). This incident is clearly the narrative equivalent of a usual Plautine or mimic joke where one character conceives literally (and reacts according to his conception) what another has said metaphorically.[268] The element of slapstick farce is derived from this misunderstanding, and the situation becomes more comical when the second character gets angry with the action of the first. Trimalchio's excessively wealthy pretension allows him simultaneously to make what he considers to be a witty pun and to show off.

In order that the setting may change completely for the introduction of a new

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[265] Cf. Plautus, Cist. 306 mulierculam exornatulam; Epid. 223 quid erat induta? an regillam induculam an mendiculam?

[266] For illustrations see Ferté 1956, pl. xliii.2; Ogden 1982, pl. 30. Speaking about pearls, Pliny (N.H. IX.114) describes the type: hos digitis suspendere et binos ac ternos auribus feminarum gloria est, subeuntque luxuriae eius nomina externa, exquisita perdito nepotatu, siquidem, cum id fecere, crotalia appellant, ceu sono quoque gaudeant et collisu ipso margaritarum; cupiuntque iam et pauperes, lictorem feminae in publico unionem esse dictitantes.

[267] Cf. the similar comic complaints of Periplectomenus, who does not want to get married because of the great expense his wife is going to put him into (Pl. Mil. Glor. 685-700).

[268] See above, page 70, note 63.

course, Encolpius mentions that the slaves sprinkled the floor with sawdust coloured with saffron and vermilion (68.1); in addition they use powdered mica, a spectacular innovation, at least in Encolpius' eyes (68.1). By this point in the narrative both the audience of the Cena and the audience of the novel have realised the essential part that colour-images play in Trimalchio's theatrical world. The host has not, however, chosen these particular coloured substances without a reason. We know that ordinary sawdust was used in the amphitheatre for cleaning (Hor. *S.* II.4.81; Juv. *S.* XIV.66), but the bright colours of the arrogant host's exotic combination

> were the prerogatives of the majesty of princes, to whom Trimalchio, of course, would equate himself. Caligula, for example, had the Circus strewn with red-lead and chrysocolla, a gleaming mineral, varying in colour from blue to copper-green, whenever he held special games ... (Suet. *Calig.* XVIII).[269]

Similarly Nero had the streets of Rome scattered with saffron when he returned from Greece (Suet. *Nero* XXV).

Deliberate or accidental similarities between Petronius' emperor (or other emperors) and the way Trimalchio is presented can easily be found in this part of the novel,[270] but the theatrical point of the creation of an imaginary Circus in Trimalchio's dining-room can be further developed:

> the use of powdered mica may be compared to the strewing of small flakes (ramenta) of mica in the Circus Maximus during the ludi circenses that the resulting gleam and glitter might acclaim the contestants, ut sit in commendatione candor, as Pliny the Elder so aptly puts the idea (36.45). At the Cena beneath the glow of many lamps the specks of mica-dust would have glistened most attractively.[271]

Thus until the end of the dinner the ordinary floor of the triclinium will remain transformed by the aid of the conventional apparatus of the amphitheatre into the race-track of the Circus Maximus.

The brief musical incident of the slave from the luxurious Alexandria, who imitated the voice of a nightingale while he was offering hot water to the guests, is staged by Trimalchio as an accompaniment to the secundas mensas of 68.1-2

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[269] Davis 1957, 361.

[270] See Walsh 1970, 138-139.

[271] Davis 1957, 361. On the use of saffron in the Circus see also Rosati 1983, 219, note 16.

(interim 68.3). Again, the connection between food and musical entertainment (or rather the ancillary nature of musical entertainment to the serving of food) is apparent. The imitation of this bird is only one among many vocal imitations in the Cena (cf. 64.5; 69.4; 69.5).[272] Phaedrus (V.5 Scurra Rusticus) mentions a comic competition between a buffoon and a farmer as to which will imitate a pig better. Seneca (*Ep.* LXXVI.9) compares the voices of humans to those of animals and regards the song of nightingales as dulciorem mobilioremque. Pliny (*NH* X.59.120) alludes incredibly to .

> luscinias, Graeco ac Latino sermone dociles, praeterea meditantes assidue et in diem nova loquentes, longiore etiam contextu.

> 'nightingales that were apt to learn Greek and Latin, and, moreover, practised regularly, and spoke new phrases each day, in a still longer continuous series.'

The song of Trimalchio's well-trained slave must have been not only melodious, but also extremely varied in tone, if we are to believe Pliny (*NH* X.43.81-82) who describes the song of nightingales which lasted for fifteen days and nights continuously with elaborated changes every now and then.[273] If the slave performed even half of these changes in tone, the obscure meaning of Trimalchio's order (muta 68.3) becomes clearer: while the slave was imitating nightingales, Trimalchio was repeatedly[274] using a technical musical term

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272 The *Th.LL.*, s.v. luscinia, 2 quotes, as a parallel to the Petronian passage, Max. Taur. *Serm.* 73.5 M imitare ... minutissimas aves mane et vespere creatori gratias referendo; et si es devotior, imitare lusciniam, cui quoniam ad dicendas laudes dies sola non sufficit, nocturna spatia pervigili cantilena decurrit. Plautus (*Bacch.* 38) offers an amusing joke with a proverbial tone concerning the pleasant singing of the pretty little nightingale. See Horsfall 1989, 84 and 88, note 88 where he refers to Plut. *Mor.* (*Agesilaus*) 191B and Blümmer, *Sitz. Bay. Ak.* 1918.6, 24.

273 Pliny's account is as follows: primum tanta vox tam parvo in corpusculo, tam pertinax spiritus; deinde in una perfecta musicae scientia: modulatus editur sonus, et nunc continuo spiritu trahitur in longum, nunc variatur inflexo, nunc distinguitur conciso, copulatur intorto, promittitur revocato; infuscatur ex inopinato, interdum et secum ipse murmurat, plenus, gravis, acutus, creber, extentus, ubi visum est vibrans - summus, medius, imus; breviterque omnia tam parvulis in faucibus quae tot exquisitis tibiarum tormentis ars hominum excogitavit, ... Cf. Jennison 1937, 116.

274 The iterative nature of Trimalchio's theatrical instruction to his slave is shown in the text by the adverb subinde (68.3) = saepius, 'repeatedly'. See *OLD*, s.v., 2a and cf. Pellegrino's comments, (ed.) 1975, 245.

(muto)[275] in order to give instructions to a trained member of his vigilant household (cf. 31.5-6) as to when he should change into a different melody of the nightingale's song.[276] This incident is a good example of how a trivial and insignificant job, like the serving of water, can become through Trimalchio's theatrical directions an impressive and funny spectacle.

The event that ensues is introduced by the expression ecce alius ludus (68.4), a significant phrase for the proper understanding of the Cena and of the way in which the events that constitute it are structured. The recitation of what at first sight sounds like Vergil,[277] but is actually a mixture of Vergilian grandiose epic hexameters with low farcical Atellan verses,[278] is described in advance as ludus (68.4), a performance intended to amuse, a show.[279] This noun characterizes not only the banquet itself as a series of entertaining pieces structured in the manner of theatrical spectacles, but Encolpius himself as a person who perceives and interprets everything in the language of the theatre (cf. 36.6; 31.7; 34.4; 95.1).

The indefinite pronoun alius (68.4) functions on two levels: in the particular context it seems to imply that the previous imitation of the different tones of the

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[275] For muto in the sense of 'to alter in relation to the modulation of voice and musical tones' cf. Cic. Orat. xviii. 59 Ergo ille princeps variabit et mutabit omnis sonorum tum intendens tum remittens persequetur gradus; Gell. NA XIII.21.10 si aliter dixeris mutaverisque et aliquid tamen auris habeas, sentias suavitatem sonitus claudere; Gell. ibid. XVIII.12.8 Varro libris, quos ad Marcellum de Lingua Latina fecit "In priore verbo graves prosodiae, quae fuerunt, manent, reliquae mutant"; "<mutant>" inquit elegantissime pro "mutantur".

[276] This could be the answer to the question put forward by Smith [(ed.) 1975, ad loc.] who notes that "it looks as if muta is possibly a topical catch-phrase or conceals some obscure joke." Other, less plausible, explanations are that Trimalchio, who sings terribly, cannot bear the sound of the melodious nightingale's voice or that the slave imitates the nightingale's voice in a hideous manner. Hendry 1993, 9 argues unconvincingly that in this passage Trimalchio puns on the imperative muta (final a long) and the vocative muta (final a short); thus, "Trimalchio is calling the boy 'mute', and [is] implying that he is female, as well."

[277] Horsfall 1989, 87, note 45 provides a lengthy list of evidence for public readings or performances of Vergil. For pantomimes on Vergilian themes see his note 46, page 87, where he refers, among others, to Macr. V.17.5, Suet. Nero LIV, Flor. Virg. I.6, Aug. Serm. CCXLI.5 (Migne, PL 38.1136), Hier. Ep. XXI.13.9.

[278] Horsfall 1989, 78 believes that the fifth book of the Aeneid was not chosen accidentally by Petronius as the literary text which was memorised by the slave for an entertaining performance, since "there are indeed moments in that book tinged with farce (172-182, 327-333, 357-358, 443-449)."

[279] Cf. Cic. Fam. VII.1.3; Verg. Georg. II.381; Livy, VII.2.12; Juv. XI.179.

nightingale's voice was a ludus; in a general sense, it conveys the idea that we have to deal with a series of spectacles in the dinner-party. The adverb ecce (68.4) focuses everyone's attention on the pseudo-Vergilian recitation and is not, at least as far as we can tell from the text, directly connected with the nightingale-spectacle. We have seen that many of the events that take place in the Cena are interconnected in order to create one spectacle with lots of different stages. Nevertheless, here the use of the adverb ecce suggests that the spectacles as a whole follow no particular order nor fit any specific pattern, but are described as they are seen by Encolpius' satiric eye, which shifts incoherently from one place to another, captured by a different impressive picture each time.

The main features of this ludus which transform it, along with the rest of the spectacles in the Cena, into a distasteful torture for the guests' eyes and ears are: the sing-song tone of the slave's voice (68.4 proclamavit ... canora voce) (cf. Quint. I.8.1 Superest lectio, in qua puer ut sciat ... quando attollenda vel summittenda sit vox), the startling manner in which it begins (68.4 subito), the unharmonious and hideous style in which it is performed (68.5 acidior percussit, errantis; cf. 31.6), its duration (68.6 lassus tamen cum aliquando desisset), the barbarous nature of the manner of delivery (68.5 barbariae; cf. OLD, s.v., 2.b.a) and the interspersing of Atellan verses in the Vergilian text.[280] The inclusion of these verses in epic poetry totally inappropriate to the low theatrical genre harmonizes with Trimalchio's vulgar fondness for the popular farcical theatre (cf. 53.13), but, nevertheless, shows no understanding, respect or appreciation for Vergil's masterpiece. The result of all these factors was that in both aspects of content and delivery, the performance was insufferable. The words ut tunc primum me etiam Vergilius offenderit 'so that even Vergil got on my nerves for the first time in my life' (68.5) show Encolpius' disapproval of the way in which the spectacle was performed. It is a common phenomenon in Trimalchio's house to transform an enjoyable experience into an unbearable torture. Everything that is connected with the stage clearly reflects Trimalchio's vulgar tastes.[281]

The ensuing conversation between Habinnas, Scintilla and Trimalchio about the mental and physical graces of the slave Massa reveals Habinnas'

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[280] Sandy 1974, 336 points out that "the slave's mingling of different verse forms is reminiscent of Livy's famous description of the introduction of drama, i.e. Atellan farce, to Rome (7.2.11)."

[281] On the auditory dimension of this episode see Beran 1973, 241. Cf. also Encolpius' comment on the Homeristae-performance Graecis versibus ..., ut insolenter solent (59.3) and the 'murder' of Menecrates' songs by Trimalchio at the baths (73.3 Menecratis cantica lacerare).

peculiar interest in his slave (he has had him educated by the street-entertainers: 68.6 circulatores),[282] Scintilla's jealous character (69.2 zelotypa)[283] and Trimalchio's vulgar frankness in uncovering the hypocrisy that women, like Scintilla, exhibit as far as their relationships with slaves are concerned (69.3). This brief discussion could have been the 'script' of a short mimic piece in which the stock-character of the Jealous Woman[284] would accuse one of her slaves of being a pimp (69.1 agaga) and threaten him with branding,[285] because he was the object of her husband's affection. The comic point in the dialogue is that they argue about someone who is squint-eyed, circumcised and snores (68.8)! Massa and his histrionic abilities occupy the centre of attention for at least the next half hour (amplius semihora 69.4). At first, he imitates trumpeters with a clay lamp and to the accompaniment of Habinnas who produces a whistling sound by pulling down his lower lip (69.4).[286]

It is not without reason that the impersonation of trumpeters is chosen as a spectacle. The tibicines were normally called to enliven feasts (Quint. I.10.20), but in dramatic performances they accompanied the singers (Hor. A.P., 202-204) and amused the audience during the intervals between the acts (Pl. Pseud. 576). In a similar way Massa's impersonation functions as an entr' acte before another spectacle, the staged course in which everything was made out of pork (69.6-70.1), begins. The ultimo etiam (69.5) implies a gradual succession of events (cf. 67.6), thus connecting the trumpeters' impersonation with the pipe-players' imitation (69.5).[287] The element of illusion and deception has been expanded

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282 On this type of entertainers see above, page 121, note 148; page 129, note 173.

283 Fortunata acts in a similarly jealous manner at 74.9. Could it be that, by making Trimalchio use the word zelotypa, Petronius pointed at the particular mimic type of the Jealous Woman (see following note) and thus indirectly induced the audience of the novel to perceive Scintilla in such a manner? Cf. Fantham 1986, 54.

284 The type of the zelotypus (husband / wife) is strongly connected with the farcical stage: see the Oxyrhyncus-mime of the Jealous Woman, Herodas' Fifth Mime and Juv. VIII.196-197: mortem sic quisquam exhorruit, ut sit / zelotypus Thymeles, stupidi collega Corinthi?.

285 at curabo, stigmam habeat (69.1); cf. the similar orders that the jealous Bitinna gives in Herodas' Fifth Mime (ΖΗΛΟΤΥΠΟΣ): Κόσιν τέ μοι κέλευσον ἐλθεῖν τὸν στίκτην / ἔχοντα ραφίδας καὶ μέλαν. μιῆι δει σε ὁδῶι γενέσθαι ποικίλον (65-67), and the cruel punishment proposed by the κυρία for Ἀπολλωνία and Αἴσωπος in one of the Oxyrhynchus-mimes (1-10 Page).

286 See Horsfall 1989, 84.

287 On the popularity of pipe-players see Juv. VI.77 and Suet. Nero LIV.1; on their use in banquets see Mart. IX.77.6.

from the presentation of food into the dramatic entertainment: again, the real instrument is not used but something which looks like it; in the case of the trumpeters there was a lucerna fictilis (69.4), now there are harundines quassae (69.5);

> using these broken reeds he pretends to be playing a pipe made from reeds of various lengths so as to produce different notes.[288]

It seems, however, that this second imitation is somehow connected with the obscure imitation of the mulionum fata (modo ... choraulas imitatus est, modo ... mulionum fata egit 69.5), on which Smith provides a lengthy but misleading discussion.[289]

Certainly, the text itself is general and the surviving mimic fragments not at all helpful in defining precisely what it was that Massa performed. But there are good reasons to believe that this piece must have been related in some way to a subject of a mimic or pantomimic plot. A technical term of the theatre is used for Massa's performance (egit 'to act' 69.5; cf. Pl. Amph. 88; Varro, LL VI.77; Suet. Jul. XXXIX.2; Juv. VIII.186); the subject-matter, the mulionum fata,[290] must have been obscene enough for a mime (cf. 126.6; Sen. Ep. XLVII.15) and has actually been included in the list of theatrical entertainments (cf. 68.7 itaque parem non habet, sive muliones volet sive circulatores imitari);[291] the lacerna and the flagellum (perhaps the caligae, as well) (69.5) must be considered as the actor's

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288 Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 69.5. Cf. Trimalchio's imitation of the trumpeters at 64.5.

289 Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc: "mulionum is a simple conjecture for molionum H. It fits lacernatus cum flagello and dono tibi caligas, although it introduces a contrast between choraulae, professional entertainers of some standing (cf. 53.13), and muleteers (for their low status even among manual labourers see Sen Ep. 47.15...) George tentatively suggests morionum, 'clowns'. This would link choraulae with another kind of entertainment, and it might explain why the slave is humorously addressed by the name Massa (cf. schol. on Juv. I.35 Massa morio fuisse dicitur); but would remove any obvious explanation for the outfit worn by the slave. In any case fata is doubtful. Some claim that a mime 'Life of the Muleteers' is referred to, but this does not sound altogether plausible as a title. George conjectures fatua."

290 On fatum in the sense of vita cf. Sen. Ep. LVII.1; Ov. Tr. V.5.62; Livy, VIII.24.2. See Th.L.L., s.v. B.1 and Friedl. ad h.l. Therefore, there is no reason to emend the text. Corbett 1970, 72 notes that the muleteers' "varied experiences among different people in many lands made them a favorite subject for caricature in mime and farce."

291 For imitators in general see Horsfall 1989, 89, note 90 who refers, among others, to CIL 6.4886, "a slave of Tiberius, apparently both a silent and a speaking mime, and the first man to imitate court pleaders, causidici."

equipment,[292] in the same way that ivy, vineleaves, small basket and grapes (41.6) were part of the costume in the earlier pantomime on Dionysus (41.6-8). Consequently, we must assume that here we are dealing with a pantomime in which both parts are enacted alternately by Massa: he is, at the same time, the silent dancer who describes the action and the choraules[293] who accompanies the gestures of the dancer.

XV

The last course of a long series of 'theatrically' staged and served dishes is the climax of the gastronomic travesties invented by Trimalchio's amazing imagination: pastry with raisins and nuts in the shape of fieldfares (69.6), quinces covered with thorns in the form of sea-urchins (69.7), ham in the shape of a fat goose with all sorts of fish and birds around it (69.8; 70.1). Trimalchio manages to outwit the guesses of his guests, including Encolpius, concerning the ingredients of the last dish (69.8-9), but this game is no longer amusing to Encolpius, who considers even starvation a better alternative to eating the stuff (69.7).

Transformation of food is, of course, only one part in the whole game of deception which takes place in Trimalchio's illusive world.[294] This travesty, however, is not a sign of moral degradation, springing up from the pretentious luxury of a corrupt Roman, or a challenging test of cleverness, but, rather, an amusing surprise whose comic character is derived both from the actual metamorphosis of the food itself and from the self-irony which the narrator uses to comment on his ingeniousness (69.9). After the shocking revelation of the original material of the last dish (70.1),

Trimalchio proceeds to praise the man responsible for the culinary disguises

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292 On the lacerna as an actual muleteer's cloak see Cic. Sest. LXXXII. Cf., also, Eumolpus' definition of the necessary props for a mime: utinam quidem sufficeret largior scaena, id est vestis humanior, instrumentum lautius quod praeberet mendacio fidem 117.2.

293 Does the fact that Massa chose to imitate a choraules, and not an auletes or a citharoedus, indirectly suggest that the guests of the dinner and the audience of the novel are meant to add in the cast of that pantomime an imaginary chorus, as well? (cf. pantomimi chorum 31.7)

294 On the general tendency of extravagant Roman hosts to serve food at banquets disguised in such a manner that it looked completely different from what it really was (cf. Apicius, iv.2.11 nemo agnoscet quid manducet) see Rosati 1983, 220. Trimalchio, however, takes the custom to its most vulgar extremes.

during the meal (70.2; 70.3): his real name is not stated, but in harmony with his tremendous cooking abilities, Trimalchio has named him Daedalus (70.2), a perfect choice, since the legendary architect of the Cretan labyrinth personifies not only the deceptive and perplexed reality of Trimalchio's culinary world but also the labyrinthine structure of the whole dinner, and, indeed, of Trimalchio's actual house.[295] Moreover, the same name belongs to an ingenious cook in a play by Philostephanus[296] and it is not difficult to imagine the theatrical effect that a name like Daedalus would bring to the characterization of a cook on stage.

The brief incident of a quarrel, staged in advance, between two slaves shows how Trimalchio uses slapstick elements in order to present his guests with another dish of exotic food. Without a moment's break (70.4 subito) from the self-indulgent exhibition of the present that Trimalchio has bought for his cook (70.3), two slaves enter carrying water-pots on their necks (70.4), and display to Encolpius by their appearance that not only they had been at a water-tank, but also that they had been involved in a fight there (probably, they were wet). The manner in which the episode is developed may depend on an actual farcical incident taken from the mimes.[297] Trimalchio organises an impromptu mimic court in which he decides who is right and who is wrong (70.5). Strangely enough, Encolpius gives details of neither the actual reason for the fight nor Trimalchio's final judgement. This hints at both the rapid development of events and the role-playing of those involved in them.

The unexpected turn that things take, namely that both slaves scornfully ignore their master's wishes and start fighting in front of everybody (70.5), amazes and confuses all the guests. Everything happens so fast that the only thing one can do is to sit and watch in shock:

> consternati nos insolentia ebriorum intentavimus oculos in proeliantes (70.6) 'amazed at the impudence of these drunkards, we stared at them fighting'.

The situation, however, becomes clearer when the two slaves hit with their sticks and break each other's amphorae. A variety of sea-delicacies poured from the

[295] See Fedeli 1981(a), 165 and 1981(b), 104-105; Petrone 1988, 68.

[296] See Schmeling 1969(b), 6 and note 5, where he refers to Schmidt 1902, 185.

[297] Pellegrino (ed.) 1975, 348 points out to the similarity between this scene and Livy, I.40.5 (the assassination of Tarquin by two shepherds). Nevertheless, Révay 1923, 408 rightly thinks that, despite some similarities, which after all are limited to a certain degree, "Petron in diesem Falle das Livianische Vorbild in mimischen Sinne umgearbeitet zu haben."

broken pots (70.6), which were supposed to contain only water. Trimalchio's real aim in organizing all this pretence was to serve scallops and oysters! A slave picks them up and brings them round on a dish (70.6), but this is not the end of the episode: in order to give the final touch to these lautitiae (70.7), snails served on a silver grill are brought in by the ingenious cook. What is significant for the theatrical aspect of Trimalchio's character is that he creates a whole sub-plot to serve a course and that he uses farcical elements (a mimic fracas, a pseudo-court scene), popular in Plautine slapstick comedies and in the mimes.[298] As usual, harshness of sound and lack of taste accompany Trimalchio's stage-directions of these comic events: Trimalchio's cook, as he hands round the snails, performs a song with a tremula taeterrimaque voce (70.7; cf. 35.6).

Encolpius seems shocked at the extravagance of the ensuing events (70.8): the unusual custom of anointing the guests' feet with oil, which was later poured into the wine-jar and the lamp (70.9), gains additional comic features through the ridiculous ornamentation of their feet and heels with garlands (70.8). This extravagant treatment of his guests is emphasized by the keen desire of the seemingly respectable Fortunata to dance, probably the κόρδαξ (52.8), a lascivious mimic dance, to the repeated plaudits of the cheerful Scintilla (70.10). The joke is that she had made Trimalchio desist from it earlier on (52.10-11).

The organization of the dinner's theatricality now seems to be out of Trimalchio's control, for he creates more anarchy by inviting his slaves to join them (70.10),[299] thus making Encolpius suffer from the terrible smell of the cook who sits next to him (70.12). The cook's imitation of Ephesus (70.13), a tragic actor, unknown to us, must have been as outrageous to listen to as the imitations of Trimalchio and the other staff, but it clearly suggests that the vulgar host's theatrical preoccupations have passed through to his household.[300]

The morbid spectacle of Trimalchio's mimic death now begins, when

[298] See below, page 202, note 39; page 233, notes 70 and 71; pages 230-231.

[299] According to Sullivan 1968(a), 132-135 and 1985(b), 1682, Petronius parodies here Seneca's philosophical ideas about the equality of slaves and free men. Seneca himself, however, refers to the respectable treatment of slaves as a feature of the mimes: Ep. Mor. XLVII.14 Ne illud quidem videtis, quam omnem invidiam maiores nostri dominis, omnem contumeliam servis detraxerint? Dominum patrem familiae appellaverunt, servos, quod etiam in mimis adhuc durat, familiares.

[300] At least two of Trimalchio's slaves have names found in Plautine comedies: Stichus (77.7; cf. the slave Stichus in Plautus' comedy) and Cario (71.2; cf. the cook in Plautus' Miles).

Trimalchio, declaiming in a pseudo-Senecan manner his personal beliefs about the equality of free men and slaves (71.1), proceeds to reveal the contents of his will (71.2-3) in order to receive the appropriate thanks from his heirs. The climactic scene of Trimalchio's staged death (78.5 ff.) has its dress rehearsal at this point with the moaning and mourning of the household accompanying the reading of his testament (71.4; cf. 72.1).[301]

The description of the statue that Trimalchio asks for from Habinnas after his death (71.5-12), recapitulates Trimalchio's life, as he wants to represent it, and functions in a similar manner to the ἔκφρασις on the exterior of his house which introduced his character to those who visited him (29.3-6). The ἔκφρασις of Trimalchio's funerary statue, symmetrically placed near the end of the Cena, as the wall-painting had been described shortly after its beginning, argues for a ring-composition of this part of the novel. Trimalchio himself justifies the pedantic manner in which he deals with the statue (71.7), but the detailed description of the sculpture gives the impression that Trimalchio is embarking on another spectacular entrance, this time into eternity, similar to and, surely, more extravagant than the one he had made earlier on in his dinner (32.1-4).

The guests would probably not have been surprised by the plethora of ornamental secondary scenes on the statue, since most of the elements there, destined to underline Trimalchio's unique figure, have already occurred in the sequence of the Cena in connection with the host: dogs (71.6; 71.11 / 40.2; 64.6-10), garlands (71.6 / 50.1; 60.3; 70.8), perfumes (71.6 / 28.2), gladiatorial scenes (71.6 / 29.9; 52.3), food and drink (71.7 / passim), inscriptions (71.7; 71.12 / 28.7; 30.2; 30.3-4), Trimalchio's arrogant illusions (71.9 / 32.2), his passion for rings and money (71.9 / 32.3), Fortunata (71.11 / 37.2 ff.), Croesus (71.11 / 28.4; 64.5), the sundial revealing its owner's morbid preoccupations with time and death (71.11 / 26.9); everything is summarised there.[302]

Trimalchio, however, does not want to create an atmosphere of static events, and, indeed, he manages to give movement to the imaginary sculpture

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[301] See Gill 1973, 182: "... in the culmination of the Cena, the scene in which Trimalchio anticipates his end and the others respond with lamentation (71-72), a scene which is virtually a staged 'death' of Trimalchio, the way in which characters use their words and reactions to create a travesty of an organic event is analogous to the way characters employ their bodies and responses to construct a grotesque machine for sexual intercourse in Eumolpus' bedroom at Croton."

[302] On the significance of these scenes for Trimalchio's career and private life, compared to other funerary inscriptions, see Pepe 1957, 293-300.

by suggesting the engraving of three scenes: ships in full sail (71.9), dining-rooms with people enjoying themselves (71.10), and a broken amphora and a guilty slave (71.11). It should be noted that Trimalchio entered his triclinium not on foot (allatus est positusque 32.1), and a desire to create an impression of superiority is in his mind when he speaks of naves ... plenis velis euntes, which, perhaps, would have been effectively used for the dramatic entrance into the amphitheatre of a public figure or an actor during the ludi.[303] Similarly, the triclinium which has been aptly transformed into a background for staged incidents such as the broken amphora (cf. 70.4-7; 52.4-6; 34.2-3), has its appropriate place in the whole setting of images carefully selected by Trimalchio's theatrical mind. The final inscription is a long and pompous account of Trimalchio's personality and career (71.12), the climactic arrogance of the laconic ending ("vale: et tu" 71.12) being in accordance with Trimalchio's behaviour towards his guests during his dinner (33.1; 34.7). The vulgar host must have narrated several times in the past his personal post mortem wishes to Habinnas (aedificas monumentum meum, quemadmodum te iussi? 71.5), and certainly it is not for the stonemason's sake that Trimalchio embarks on another detailed description. Even his funerary statue should be interpreted as one more visual, though imaginary, challenge to his guests' expectations who by that time have got used to perceiving and interpreting the signals they receive through the code of popular theatre.

In the same way that Quartilla's pretended sadness was suddenly transformed into hysterical laughter, thus showing that her previous mood was nothing but crocodile tears (18.7-19.1), Trimalchio's tears, which came as a result of the description of his funerary statue and functioned as a cue for everyone else, even for Encolpius, to start crying (72.1-2), are abruptly changed into a cheerful message to enjoy life and, in particular, the luxury of a hot bath (72.2-3). This change of theatrical setting inside Trimalchio's huge house has been diligently prepared in advance on his orders to create an atmosphere of mourning and grief, so that a bath, with all the necessary games and songs to give it a theatrical colour, comes as a welcome suggestion. Indeed, Habinnas approves eagerly of the idea (72.4), but Encolpius and Ascyltus have other plans (72.5-6). Trying to avoid an unbearable sequence of Trimalchio's arrogance in his hot (72.3) bath, they quite unexpectedly end up having a cold bath. With

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[303] Pepe 1957, 296-299 argues that the image of ships sailing in full sail on Trimalchio's tomb points to his successful commercial past, but also functions as a symbol of the vessel by which Trimalchio's soul will be conveyed to the Underworld after his death.

Giton leading their way to the exit, the three friends are startled by a huge dog (perhaps Scylax, cf. his description at 64.7), and in a comic manner Ascyltus first and Encolpius second, the latter in his attempt to help the former, fall into the fish-pond (72.7). The Vergilian undertones of the incident are evident both in the quietening of the dog with pieces of food (72.9; cf. *Aen.* VI.417-423) and in the Sibylline statement of the atriensis:

> erras ... si putas te exire hac posse qua venisti. nemo umquam convivarum per eandem ianuam emissus est; alia intrant, alia exeunt' (72.10).

> 'You are wrong if you think that you can go out through the door you came in. None of the guests has ever been let out through the same door; they enter one way and they exit another.'

Newton has compared the scene in Trimalchio's bath with what Aeneas saw as he approached the Underworld (*Aen.* VI.642-659), and concluded:

> If Petronius intends that the scene in Trimalchio's bath recall Vergil's vision of the Elysian Fields, the already existing humor of the scene takes on a new dimension of comic inversion and incongruity. The rascal Encolpius becomes a sort of anti-Aeneas, the singing Trimalchio an unlikely Orpheus, and the collective guests a poor substitute for the heroes who fell at Troy and gave their lives for their country.[304]

However, the attempt of the three friends to escape from Trimalchio's labyrinth is clearly presented as a farcical scene with the conventional, and popular, slapstick elements of amusing accidents and risible hopelessness. Petronius' sophisticated humour is, of course, responsible for the epic references hidden behind the farce, but farce itself has employed mythological, and even Vergilian, subjects to produce a performance of entertaining burlesque with intellectual undertones.[305] It may be suggested that the author knew of these performances and wrote this scene as if it were the equivalent of a mimic *exodium* in prose which would ridicule the particular Vergilian episode.

After the freezing (*trementes* 72.8) experience in the fish-pond , the young companions begin to appreciate the idea of a hot bath (73.1), especially since the present situation of Ascyltus and Encolpius is not only pathetic, but also ludicrous. Having got rid of their wet clothes, which would have been dry if they had followed the others in the first place, they now have to tolerate the egotistical

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304 See Newton 1982, 318. Cf. Courtney 1987, 409.

305 See above, page 33, note 14.

boasting of Trimalchio (73.2), who, in his usual awful way (73.3 lacerare, sicut illi dicebant qui linguam eius intellegebant),[306] begins to sing popular songs (73.3 cantica) chosen from the repertoire of Menecrates, the citharoedus.[307] The entertainment in the baths has the same structure, although on a smaller scale, as the theatrical diversion which was offered to the guests inside the dining-room: apart from the tuneless singing there are at least three kinds of games (73.4), all of them laughable and hardly appropriate to the guests' age or, perhaps, even to their physical fitness. The whole scene is clearly farcical.

<div align="center">XVI</div>

The setting changes again into another dining-room (73.5), the place which will constitute the final background for the ensuing events: Trimalchio's row with Fortunata (74.8 ff.), and the staged death of the host (78.5 ff.).

The lautitiae exhibited (73.5) by Fortunata's vulgar taste are treated with discreet contempt by Encolpius' snobbish irony.[308] The situation would have returned again to the usual pattern of 'let's eat and drink while we're alive' on the occasion of a slave's shaving for the first time (73.6), if a cock had not crowed and caused panic to Trimalchio's superstitious feelings. The sudden change of mood created in the room is effectively expressed by the short sentence which states only the fact of the cock's crow (haec dicente eo gallus gallinaceus cantavit 74.1). One can visualise easily the dramatic pause during which Trimalchio's cheerfulness disappeared, and silence preceded the abrupt and immediate succession of superstitious reactions on Trimalchio's part (74.1-3). Superstition is the starting point for the drawing of a comic picture: Trimalchio conceives the cock not as a bird but as a trumpeter (bucinus 74.2) whose signal may mean fire or death (74.2); thus he shows that music, and, consequently, public spectacles, were firmly fixed in his mind as the code through which he interpreted events of his life. A vaguely defined reward is established (74.3) and everyone chases the innocent cock whose only fault was that he had crowed, probably because dawn was coming. The bird is caught even before Trimalchio has time to give his orders (74.4); capital punishment, where everyone participated in some way or

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306 Nero sang in a similar manner, according to Suet. Nero XX.1 (exiguae vocis et fuscae); cf. Bradley (ed.) 1978, ad h. loc.

307 On Menecrates see Suet. Nero XXX.2; Dio LXIII.1.1 ὅ τε γὰρ Νέρων ἐν τοῖς κιθαρῳδοῖς ἠγωνίσατο, καὶ νικητήρια αὐτῷ Μενεκράτους τοῦ τῆς κιθαρῳδίας διδασκάλου ἐν τῷ ἱπποδρόμῳ ποιήσαντος ἡνιόχησε; Baudot 1973, 83; Wille 1977, 157.

308 See Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 73.5.

other (74.5), thus indulging Trimalchio's wish, is performed by Trimalchio's expert household at an incredibly fast speed. What the superstitious host and his guests do not know is that a fire, though an illusory one (78.7), will eventually bring the meal to an end, but, apart from this ridicule of superstitions,[309] Petronius does not miss the opportunity to compose a hilarious scene where the elements of extravagance (74.1) and unbelievable speed (74.4) make it almost farcical.

The result of Fortunata's jealousy (another example of her Ζηλότυπος theatrical character) of Trimalchio's affection towards a slave (74.8; at 75.4 he justifies his behaviour on spiritual grounds and not on reasons of physical appearance) is to ruin the peaceful happiness of the guests (74.8), and to create a melodramatic scene of marital fighting (74.9-75.9), during which insults of a Plautine kind (74.9; 74.13; 74.14; 75.6; 75.9) and actual violence (74.10) take place in a most amusing and unexpected way:[310] Trimalchio throws a cup at his wife's face. Note the dramatic and exaggerated manner in which everything is performed:[311] Fortunata's hands tremble, she shouts, covers her face, quivers all over her body, cries and groans, while a cold wine-jar is pressed against her cheek in order not to let the blow leave a bruise on her face (74.11-12). Fortunata is over-acting and reflects Trimalchio's reactions when he was injured by an acrobat (54.1-2). It is interesting, however, to discover from her husband's tirade against her that Fortunata was an ambubaia, a flute-girl (74.13), an occupation which indirectly points to her low morals, but equally shows that her past was connected with the stage.

It is Trimalchio's turn to become the indignant partner who is fed up with his wife's unreasonable and envious behaviour, and (just as Βύτιννα has complained about her slave Γάστρων)[312] to recall bitterly her ingratitude since he

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[309] On superstitious persons as a target of mimic satire see below, page 228, note 53.

[310] For a parallel in Plautus see the quarrel between Artemona and Demaenetus, because the latter was caught in the act by the former kissing Philaenium (Asin. 878-937).

[311] See Gagliardi 1980, 88-89.

[312] Herod. V.15: ἐγῷμι, Γάστρων, ἤ σε θεῦσ' ἐν ἀνθρώποις. Cf. Sat. 39.4; 57.5.

was the person who raised her to a higher social circle (74.13).[313] Fortunata's ridiculously ruthless punishment, ironically called fulmen (75.1), consists in her exclusion as a figure from Trimalchio's funerary statue, and in the abolition of the privilege of kissing her husband on his death-bed (74.17). She seems to regard these decisions as the worst thing that could have happened to her, for she is still crying at 75.9.

From then on Trimalchio's psychological mood allows him easily to start a long and sentimental confession of his humble past and the struggle he had to make in order to achieve his present position (75.8-77.6).[314] This exposition of Trimalchio's life should under no circumstances be interpreted as an edifying curriculum vitae of a homo novus. It functions as the supplementary piece of information which would complete the picture Trimalchio has given to his guests about himself already from the painting outside his house (29.3-6) and the detailed ἔκφρασις of his funerary statue (71.5-12). The highly rhetorical tone of the speech and the tedious details in it (the misfortunes in his sea-journeys at 76.3-6;[315] the particular items of his merchandise at 76.6; the exact quotation of the astrologer at 77.1-2; the enumeration of the rooms in his house at 77.4) corroborates Trimalchio's characterization as a gloriosus, despite his constant attempts to avoid such a label (taceo, quia non sum de gloriosis 75.11; quid multa? 76.2; ne multis vos morer 76.3).

It is now that in a rather casual manner the idea of death is introduced quite vividly into the dining-room. The atmosphere becomes really morbid when Trimalchio orders his slave Stichus[316] to bring his grave-clothes and funeral

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[313] Likewise in Plautus' *Menaechmi* 110-122, Menaechmus I delivers a long tirade against his wife (Matrona), who inquires every movement he makes, although he provides her with all the goods she wants. Trimalchio says that Fortunata is a codex, non mulier, and Paschall 1939, 22-23 notes that "Terence has caudex 'tree trunk', 'log' in a list of epithets quae sunt dicta in stulto (*H.T.* 877) ... In the same list as caudex, stands its synonym stipes, which is also used several times by Cicero, while one of the freedmen in Petronius' novel refers to a friend who has made a bad will as ille stips (43.5)."

[314] Fantham 1986, 54, note 28 speculates that "Trimalchio's own success-story, achieving by gratifying both master and mistress (75.11) was another theme derived from mime, in which comedy would be drawn from their mutual jealousy."

[315] Rosenblüth 1909, 41 compares *Sat.* 76.4, factum non fabula, with *P.Oxy.* 413, 183a, ἀληθῶς, οὐ λόγῳ.

[316] Schmeling 1969(b), 6: "it is highly unlikely that Petronius did not know he was borrowing that famous name [i.e. Stichus] from Plautus [i.e. his *Stichus*]."

ointment (77.7). Without foregoing his arrogant exhibitionism (78.1), and adopting now a cruel (78.2) and then a sentimental (78.3-4) attitude, Trimalchio asks for a new spectacle[317] to take place, his death.[318] One cannot be sure whether this is pre-scheduled or not, but the fact remains that this scene has all the essential theatrical characteristics which we have found throughout the staging of other spectacles during the Cena. Trimalchio is acting the comic role of a dead person with the appropriate musical accompaniment. He is the stage-director of his own death. As soon as he has taken the right position on stage (78.5 cervicalibus multis extendit se supra torum extremum), he gives the general plot of what is going to follow (78.5 'fingite me ... mortuum esse'), and asks for the participation of the musicians (78.5 dicite aliquid belli)[319] and, undoubtedly, of his audience, guests and household. Once more, and for the last time, the motif of music is used by Trimalchio in order to fulfil his own purposes, to underline the mournful tone of the scene. Nevertheless, Encolpius' description of the sound the cornicines produced (78.6 consonuere, strepitu) shows that the noise must have been terrible and that this mock-funeral was a loud, discordant farce rather than a successful imitation of a solemn funerary procession.[320] This noise created the impression that Trimalchio's house was on fire and the night-watchmen (vigiles) put an unexpected end to his feast by a violent incursion into the house, thus creating more noise and confusion (78.7).

The sudden end of the Cena, with the hasty departure of the heroes (78.8), a favourite Petronian motif, resembles strongly the abrupt endings of the mime-performances (Cic. *Cael.* 65), but even the false fire might be regarded as a subject which was presented on stage in, perhaps, the performance of Afranius' *Incendium*, although the ten surviving fragments are not helpful in indicating how.[321] Apart from the historical parallels of mock-funerals which may have

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[317] novum acroama 78.5: On this technical theatrical term see *Sat.* 53.12; cf. Smith's note (ed.) 1975, ad loc.; Horsfall 1989, 79: "the word [acroama] can refer to any sort of performance executed to entertain the ears."

[318] See Rankin 1969(a), 111.

[319] On dico in the sense of 'perform a musical piece' see *SHA, Heliog.* XXXII.8; Apul. *Met.* VI.24.

[320] On a moralistic interpretation of this scene according to the pattern of the 'luxury / death' motif in the novel see Arrowsmith 1972, 306 ff.

[321] See Daviault (ed.) 1981, 190-191, note 1. Suetonius (*Nero* XI.2: inducta Afrani togata, quae Incendium inscribitur, concessumque ut scaenici ardentis domus suppellectilem diriperent ac sibi haberent) speaks of a real fire when this play was performed in Nero's age.

influenced Petronius in the description of this scene,[322] it must be pointed out that the motif of false death also occurs in fiction, and especially on the Roman mimic stage.[323] Although certain details in Tacitus' (*Hist.* iv.45) and Seneca's (*Brev. Vit.* XX.4; *Ep.* XII.8) accounts of such morbid scenes are strikingly similar to some details in Trimalchio's death, it is plausible that Trimalchio, who has conceived every part of his dinner as a theatrical entertainment, should have staged his death according to the rules of the farcical drama of which he is so fond. One must not assume, therefore, that this scene is intended to be taken seriously in order to underline the psychological decline that luxury brings in one's life.[324] Without doubt, Trimalchio will provide the same entertainment over and over again.

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[322] See Horsfall 1989, 198 and 207, note 29.

[323] See below, pages 200-201; page 201, note 33; page 234.

[324] See e.g. Zeitlin 1971(b), 662: "The real world finally destroys the artificial world staged at the banquet, but, on closer inspection, the two are found to be the same. Thus artifice and nature both support and reinforce each other, while each casts doubt on the reality of the other with an ironic ambiguity. The Cena shows life to be a theatrum mundi, a theme that runs through the *Satyricon* in the frequent references to the mime and the stage."

CHAPTER SIX.

ENCOLPIUS ET ASCYLTUS RIXANTUR DE GITONE: *SAT*. 79.1-82.6.

It is made obvious for both the ancient Roman auditor and the contemporary reader of our age that, whenever the main, or secondary, figures of this novel seek either to act in some way, or simply to make a statement which expresses their feelings, they adopt a persona, usually taken from a literary area.

We have seen that Encolpius begins by assuming the role of a learned scholasticus, and, for personal reasons, argues against Agamemnon's educational humbug (1-6); again Encolpius plays the lost Aeneas in the brothel (6.4-7.1), while the lascivious couple, Ascyltus and Giton, imitate Tarquinius and Lucretia, in order to justify their sexual desires within a ridiculously sophisticated context. One of the most remarkable examples, however, of this theatrical role-playing, in which one can note the rapid alternation of literary personae, is the section of the *Satyrica* which covers the events immediately after the feast of Trimalchio and before Encolpius' visit to the art-gallery. The textual links which connect these episodes are loose;[1] nevertheless, the plot is easy to follow.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Scaena Prima (79.1-7): Encolpius Ascyltus Giton Tabellarius Trimalchionis.

Scaena Secunda (79.8-80.9): Encolpius Ascyltus Giton.

Scaena Tertia (81.1-82.6): Encolpius Nocturnus grassator.

Although the outrageous trio managed to escape somehow from Trimalchio's labyrinthine house, it seems that there are still difficulties awaiting them. Their problems now are the silence of the midnight-hour (silentium noctis iam mediae 79.1), their drunkenness (ebrietas) and their ignorance of these quarters (imprudentia locorum 79.2). The situation presented is comically pathetic since Encolpius and his fratres are described dramatically as three drunkards who drag their bleeding feet for almost a whole hour over the flints and the pieces of broken pots (79.3), before Giton's cleverness puts an end to their sufferings.[2] The latter had already marked with chalk all the posts and the columns, playing the part of an Ariadne in a first century A.D. Roman low-life milieu.[3] They find their way to the lodgings but there is nothing in their appearance to remind us of

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[1] Van Thiel 1971, 37-38 discusses the gaps in detail. See, also, Colin 1950, 97-110 for a discussion of chapter 79.

[2] See *Sat*. 79.3 tandem expliciti acumine Gitonis sumus and cf. the same idea expressed by one of Publilius Syrus' sententiae (110 Friedrich): Consilio unius multi se docte explicant.

[3] On the recurrent motif of the labyrinthus in the novel see Fedeli 1981(a), 168 and 1981(b), 108.

heroic figures: an exhausted and perspiring (79.5) Theseus is clearly a laughable parody of the legendary hero.

Petronius' treatment of the Theseus-saga is more than an ironic version of the hackneyed theme that makes Juvenal suffer.[4] Bearing in mind that the theatre of the mime often takes its themes from drama proper and performs them in such a way that they become ridiculous,[5] one is inclined to think that the author has employed the same technique in this passage too. Faithful to the mimic spirit, Petronius presents the story of Ariadne and Theseus in a subversive way. The hint of the well-known legend through Giton's clever action does not exactly foreshadow or guarantee that what is going to happen in the novel will follow the legend. In fact, Giton, who plays the prudens Ariadne, not only is not going to be deserted by Encolpius, a new Theseus, but, according to this mythological travesty, *he* is going to be the one who will abandon Theseus for a Dionysus in the shape of Ascyltus! Petronius' preoccupation with the mime is not attested only here and his text provides many parallels to support such a derisive use of material from mythology, epic or drama.[6]

Yet there are more obstacles to come. This time the comic - tragic sufferings of the heroes are caused by an old woman who is portrayed in a comic, almost farcical, manner as having immersed herself in drink and pleasures together with the other lodgers for a long time (anus enim ipsa inter deversitores diutius ingurgitata 79.6).[7] This drunken hag is a mild version of other old ladies in the novel who are more prone to wine.

> Anus praecipue lippa, sordidissimo praecincta linteo, soleis ligneis imparibus imposita
>
> 'An old woman who was blear-eyed, girded with a very filthy linen cloth and stood on top of a pair of odd clogs' (95.8)

features at the brawl at the inn; the old servant in the story of the 'Widow of Ephesus'

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4 Juv. I.2-3: numquamne reponam / vexatus totiens rauci Theseide Cordi ? See Mayor (ed.)
41886, ad loc. Cf. Aristot. Περὶ Ποιητικῆς VIII.2: διὸ πάντες ἐοίκασιν ἁμαρτάνειν ὅσοι τῶν ποιητῶν Ἡρακληίδα Θησηίδα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιήματα πεποιήκασιν.

5 See Beare [3]1964, 150; Rieks 1978, 370.

6 See the similar subversion of Homeric roles at 98.5, 105.9-10.

7 The participle ingurgitata must not be taken only literally (i.e. filled with wine; cf. the figure of Leaena in Pl. *Curc.* 126-127) but also in its metaphorical (i.e. sexual) sense, as is the case in Eumolpus' ingurgitatio with the Pergamene boy (86.3)!

odore corrupta primum ipsa porrexit ad humanitatem invitantis victam manum, deinde refecta potione et cibo expugnare dominae pertinaciam coepit ...
'beguiled by the odour of the wine stretched out her defeated hand first towards the generosity of the inviting soldier, and then, refreshed with drink and food, she started to overcome her mistress' obstinacy.' (111.10);

the outstanding figure of Oenothea, the witch-priestess of wine (134.7 ff.) completes the list; Encolpius' landlady exhibits similar characteristics, as far as her preferences for wine and sex are concerned. Roman comedy, satire and elegy provide the model for these caricatures.[8]

It can only take a miracle for the three companions to enter their lodgings.[9] The tabellarius ('messenger') Trimalchionis as a deus ex machina comes to the rescue, brings an additional development to the theatrical plot of the incident by moving the action forward to a happy end, and, finally, takes the tragic device of the deus ex machina to its extreme: where peaceful means do not bring any effect, violence must give the solution, and since the door cannot be opened, it must be smashed (79.7).

The setting changes now from an exterior space, the dark streets outside the inn, to an interior one, the room inside the inn. We must imagine that there are two beds on stage. Encolpius and Giton are making love on one of them, while Ascyltus is waiting slily to take his share in lust. The sexual comedy has just begun, for, during the night and while Encolpius was languid because of the wine he had drunk (solutus mero 79.9), just as Troy was somno vinoque sepultam

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[8] For parallels in Roman Comedy see Plautus, Curculio, 96-109 (Leaena's monologue); Cistellaria, 120-148 (Syra's monologue); Pseudolus, 659 (the old Chrysis is described as anum illam doliarem, claudam, crassam). In Roman Satire see Richlin 1983, 109-116. In Elegy see Ovid, Amores I.8 (Dipsas); Hor. Epodes V.17 (Canidia). Rosenblüth 1909, 55 argues that the type of the old hag in Petronius was strongly influenced by the way the mimes represented that character in their performances. On the type of the mimic hag see Nicoll 1931, 93.

[9] Watt 1986, 178 had an ingenious suggestion for the cruces at 79.7 (intervenisset * †X vehiculis divest): "The sense would be admirably satisfied by ex vehiculo divus = θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς." Taking into account that traffic was allowed in the narrow streets of Rome only during the night, Carcopino 1940, 397 reads: ni tabellarius Trimalchionis intervenisset X vehiculis d(e)vi(i)s. The reading makes sense but misses the point of the 'divine intervention' of the tabellarius. I accept the reading suggested by Watt. Colin 1950, 101-105 reads invenisset X vehiculis diviis, where divius is a variant of devius.

'buried in sleep and wine' (*Aen.* II.265) before the invasion of the Greeks,[10] another kind of 'invasion' takes place:

> Ascyltus steals Giton from Encolpius' bed and takes him to his own. As Encolpius narrates this, the focus of his anger is on Ascyltus, but note the telling description of Giton' s attitude toward the exchange:
>
> > non sentiente iniuriam sive dissimulante ... (79.9).
>
> Neither Encolpius nor we can tell whether Giton is willingly promiscuous or simply sees that his safety lies in pretending a receptivity to Ascyltus' advances. For all that his emotional attachment to Giton seems real, Encolpius himself cannot see through Giton's masks to what the boy really feels (if anything), as the sequel amply demonstrates.[11]

In my opinion, Giton is a chameleon-like figure. He simply adapts himself to the circumstances. We are not to look for feelings in him. Whatever he says or does must not be taken as an expression of pure emotion but as a mixture of rhetorical and dramatic ingredients to form a theatrical gesture or speech.[12] To that extent he is no different from Encolpius who, at the sight of the two lovers, combines vengeance with tragic style:

> ego dubitavi an utrumque traicerem gladio somnumque morti iungerem.
>
> 'I hesitated whether I ought to pierce both of them with a sword and join their sleep with death'. (79.10)[13]

He wakes Giton up with blows (79.11), his face assumes a fierce look (truci intuens vultu 79.11) and in his brief speech to Ascyltus he employs expressions which attribute to his colleague an incorrigible loss of human morality (oblitus iuris humani 79.9; fidem scelere violasti 79.11; alium locum quem polluas quaere 79.11). All these small details in Encolpius' portrayal as the cuckold husband point out the theatrical colour of the incident, and allow us to imagine the dramatic tone in

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[10] See Austin (ed.) 1964, ad loc. for parallels before and after Vergil, which prove that Encolpius' present situation is a 'literary-coloured' drunkenness rather than a mere ebrietas.

[11] Slater 1990(b), 88.

[12] This mixture is happily analysed by George 1966, 338-342. According to him, "Giton not only talks like a declamation, he behaves like one. The spurious emotions and false drama demanded of the declaimer in the rhetorical schools have in him become indistinguishable from genuine emotions and real drama." (page 341)

[13] Cf. the reaction of the cuckold husband in the adultery-mimes: Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 55 ἄνθρωπε, οὐδὲ τὸν ἐπὶ σκηνῆς τὴν δοκοῦσαν μοιχεύοντά μου γυναῖκα περιορῶ, ἀγανακτῶ δὲ καὶ δεινά φημι πεπονθέναι καὶ κάει παῖδα καὶ μάχαιράν τις φερέτω.

which the recitator must have delivered an oral performance of this episode of the novel,[14] guided by the stage directions of the text itself.[15]

The infidelity of the wife, Giton, with the lover, Ascyltus, the unexpected arrival of the husband, Encolpius, his indecision whether to kill them or save them, his final resolution to trust things to the power of 'fidelity' and appoint the wife as the iudex litis (80.6), evoke the scene of an adultery-mime,[16] whose structure, though not its outcome, resembles strongly the Petronian episode.[17] Moreover, the employment of the same motif in a later incident of the novel (namely, the passages 97-99) demonstrates that it was a suitable narrative device for Petronius' theatrical intentions when he dealt with the intrigues, jealousies and comic patterns of relationships between the homosexual trios (Encolpius-Giton-Ascyltus and Encolpius-Giton-Eumolpus). The outcome of the episode, however, is rather unexpected, since Giton, who plays the wife, when asked to choose between his 'husband' and his 'lover', prefers to follow the latter in a bold and most amusing manner:

> qui ne deliberavit quidem, ut videretur cunctatus, verum statim ab extrema parte verbi consurrexit <et> fratrem Ascylton elegit.

'He did not even consider looking hesitant, but immediately after I

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[14] See Schmeling 1971, 51; Sullivan 1972(b), 81[161]; Vogt-Spira 1990, 184-188; Sullivan 1972(a), 167: "The suggestion that it was written to be recited by a trained voice -presumably to the court circle- is a useful one. Such serial presentation would not only explain the possible length of the work, and its dramatic shifts and changes of tone, but also its episodic nature; it would also give more point to what might strike us as rather topical criticism or parody of the authors, such as Lucan and Seneca, whom Petronius for some reason disliked."

[15] This is a clear example of what George 1966, 337-338 says generally about Latin literature: "Latin literature was designed to be read aloud: and as with a musical or dramatic performance, some part of the style must surely have resided in the execution. Moreover, the execution involved not only variations in tone, pitch, and tempo, which alone could sharpen the stylistic contours of a work considerably; it also involved an extensive use of gesture, and the reciter had a great variety of gestures at his disposal, each endowed with a tolerably precise function. A certain positioning of the fingers would point an epigram; the rhythm would be accentuated by bodily movement, and so on. What is left on the printed page is scarcely more than a skeleton, a sort of stage direction to the performer."

[16] See below, pages 207-209, 210-211.

[17] Choricius, Apol. Mimorum 30: ἀλλ' ἡνίκα μοιχείαν, ὦ βέλτιστε, θεωρεῖς, τότε καὶ δικαστήριον ὁρᾷς ἀρχικόν, καὶ κατηγορεῖ μὲν ὁ τῆς ἑαλωκυίας ἀνήρ, κρίνεται δὲ μετὰ τῆς ἐρωμένης ὁ τὴν μοιχείαν τολμήσας, ἀπειλεῖ δὲ τιμωρίαν ἀμφοτέροις ὁ δικαστής. Ibid. 55 εἶτα βουλήν τινα δοὺς ἐμαυτῷ καὶ δεινὸν ἡγησάμενος αὐτοχειρίᾳ τὴν τιμωρίαν λαβεῖν ἀμφοτέρους εἰς δικαστήριον ἄγω.

finished speaking he got up and chose Ascyltus for his lover and companion'. (80.6)

Before this shameless competition takes place, Ascyltus' suggestion that they divide Giton in two (79.12), as they had divided everything else they shared in the past, allows the audience of the novel to watch a unique spectacle, a masterpiece of Petronian staging. Even the smallest detail of speech and gesture has a significant function in the scene.[18] Ascyltus is no more than a parricide (parricidali manu 80.1) who demands a fair distribution of his share. Encolpius imitates his gestures and takes an impressive posture for fighting:

intorto circa bracchium pallio composui ad proeliandum gradum.

'I wound the cloak round my arm and prepared my footing for a fight.' (80.2)

Giton rushes between them and with tears and supplications (cum fletu ... suppliciter 80.3) begs them not to play Eteocles and Polyneikes,[19] offering himself as a sacrifice to expiate the wrathful spirits of his fratres. Without doubt, Giton is giving one of the most successful performances of his life.

Collignon parallels this passage with *Aen.* IX.426-427 where Nisus offers himself to save Euryalus.[20] The pattern, however, of two individuals or nations fighting for the possession of a third is clearly recognisable, and parallels from

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[18] See Wooten 1976, 68-70.

[19] The same motif is used in the reconciliation of the two brothers, the pastry-cook and the chef, in Apul. *Met.* X.14: Sed bene quod utrimquesecus sermone prolato iacturae remedium quaeritur, ne silentio procedens simultas Eteocleas nobis contentiones pariat. Cf. Rankin 1969, 115, note 2 where "apart from a reference to tragedy and a mockery of a tragic idea" he thinks that "the expression itself suggests gladiatorial combat especially in the word par." He prefers, however, a moralistic interpretation: "The element of theatricality in these incidents, indeed this apparent reference to drama (or epos) by Giton may suggest to us that we are not to take them at face value, but rather to regard the literary and rhetorical 'bookishness' of the cultural tradition in which the characters are immersed as standing between them and the capacity for decisive action." (page 115). See, also, Sullivan 1968(a), 216; Sandy 1969, 297; Walsh 1970, 92; Slater 1990(b), 88-89.

[20] See Collignon 1892, 120.

legend or literature can easily be drawn.[21] Giton also represents also the heroine of the Greek romance, who, besides her beloved, has so many admirers that intrigues and attempts to steal her are the common consequences of her beauty. These literary personae suggest the vast framework and the hackneyed roles of Giton's acting.

It would be easy to adapt this scene (79.11-80.6) for the stage.[22]

Encolpius (to Ascyltus, angrily): Quoniam fidem scelere violasti et communem amicitiam, res tuas ocius tolle[23] et alium locum quem polluas quaere.

(Encolpius and Ascyltus divide their spoils).

Ascyltus (to Encolpius): Age nunc et puerum dividamus.

(Pause. Encolpius thinks that Ascyltus is joking).

Ascyltus (drawing his sword murderously): Non frueris hac praeda, super quam solus incumbis. partem meam necesse est vel hoc gladio contemptus abscidam.

(Encolpius also draws his sword, wraps his cloak round his arm and stands in a fighting-position).

Giton (touching their knees as a supplicant with tears): Ne Thebanum par humilis taberna spectet neve sanguine mutuo polluatis familiaritatis clarissimae sacra. (In a louder voice)[24] Quod si utique facinore opus est, nudo

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[21] See, e.g., the Sabine women in Livy, I.13.1-3: Tum Sabinae mulieres, quarum ex iniuria bellum ortum erat, crinibus passis scissaque veste, victo malis muliebri pavore, ausae se inter tela volantia inferre, ex transverso impetu facto dirimere infestas acies, dirimere iras, hinc patres, hinc viros orantes 'ne se sanguine nefando soceri generique respergerent, ne parricidio macularent partus suos, nepotum illi, hi liberum progeniem': "Si adfinitatis inter vos, si conubii piget, in vos vertite iras: nos causa belli, nos volnerum ac caedium viris ac parentibus sumus; melius peribimus quam sine alteris vestrum viduae aut orbae vivemus"."

[22] Cf. George 1966, 337-338. Walsh 1970, 102 treats in the same way the melodramatic scene in the tempest (114.8-11) where Encolpius and Giton "bitterly contemplate the malignity of fortune." Cf. Gill 1973, 178: "When characters like Giton speak in a pastiche of rhetorical prose, the effect is not to increase the stature of the figures, but to make the scenes in which the speeches occur commensurately more theatrical."

[23] The phrase res tuas tolle reminds one of the formulaic expression res tuas tibi habe which is used in the language of divorce. In that case, Giton is the child of the marriage!

[24] Note also the intensely theatrical gesticulations which the adverb ecce (80.4) suggests that Giton performed in order to make his offer more dramatic. Ecce occurs thirty two times more in the surviving novel (see Korn and Reitzer 1986, s.v.), usually intensifying the staged atmosphere of each episode (see 7.4; 16.4; 40.2; 60.3; 68.4; 83.7; 97.9; 99.4; 107.6; 109.7; 114.9; 136.4.) Cf. page 60, note 24.

ecce iugulum, convertite huc manus, imprimite mucrones. ego mori debeo, qui amicitiae sacramentum delevi.

(Encolpius and Ascyltus put up their swords.)

Ascyltus: Ego finem discordiae imponam. puer ipse quem vult sequatur, ut sit illi saltem in eligendo fratre [salva] libertas.

(Encolpius agrees eagerly. Giton without hesitation chooses Ascyltus).

(Giton and Ascyltus exit).

This scene, then, is neither a parody of Vergil, nor a ridiculous Aeschylean tragedy but rather an enjoyable 'insanity of wretched people' (miserorum dementiam 80.3), a hotch-potch constructed in the Petronian spirit of sophisticated farce.

Two short poems in elegiac verse follow (80.9). The first is a cynical generalization on Giton's behaviour towards Encolpius. Life is depicted as a game where profit and personal interests are the principal rules (80.9.1-4). Are these lines to be taken at face-value? Viewing the poem in the context of the opportunistic relationship between Encolpius and his lovers, every hint of possible moral intention fades away.[25] On the other hand, the opportunism that the poem conveys echoes the instability of fortune during Nero's reign. Thus

it is tempting to see in those verses a Petronian reflexion on the hazards of political prominence in the later years of Nero.[26]

What is interesting, however, in the poem is that it suggests a pattern of well-calculated and far from spontaneous actions; if we confine this role-playing to the action of the novel, then the elegiac couplets function as an invitation or a reminiscence for the audience to interpret what happens in the novel as a changeable game (mobile opus, line 2), and to conceive the characters of the novel as personae who change roles according to their interests:

cum fortuna manet, vultum servatis, amici;   3
    cum cedidit, turpi vertitis ora fuga.

'As long as good luck holds, you keep on having a smiling face, my friends; when it leaves me, you turn your faces away in a shameless

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[25] See Coffey 1976, 189: "Two of the most threadbare clichés of rhetorical moralising, life as a series of dramatic roles (80.9), and the punishment of Tantalus (82.5), are incongruous comments on the comic reversal of Encolpius' fortune in love and his baulked attempt at revenge." Cf. Sen. Ep. LXXX.7-8.

[26] Walsh 1970, 93; cf. Vogt-Spira 1990, 186.

flight.'.[27]

This idea of life as a theatrical game is reinforced by the second short poem (80.9.5-8) which is always mentioned as a major piece of evidence to demonstrate the mime's influence on Petronius.[28]

> grex agit in scaena mimum: pater ille vocatur,   5
>   filius hic, nomen divitis ille tenet.
> mox ubi ridendas inclusit pagina partes,
>   vera redit facies, assimulata perit.

'The troupe performs a mime on stage: one is called the father, another the son, another holds the title of the millionaire. Then, when the page shuts up the laughable roles, the true face reappears, the pretended one is gone.'

The weakness of narrative coherence between both i) the first and the second poem (80.9, lines 1-4 and 5-8) and ii) the second poem (80.9, lines 5-8) and 81.1-2, has led to the assumption that lines 5-8 of 80.9 originally belonged somewhere else.[29] But its content is such that it can belong anywhere in the novel. Life is a stage. People are actors. What they perform is a mime, not even a comedy. The father, the son, the millionaire are some of the roles of the repertoire, and there is always a contrast between the pretended (assimulata) and

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[27] Slater 1990(a), 159 thinks that the last three words of the third line, vultum servatis amici, are an echo of the last three words of the opening sentence of Horace's *Ars Poetica* 5, risum teneatis amici. "The choice of vultum to replace Horace's risum is significant: all the facial expressions of such friends are unreadable, not just their smiles. The contrast between a world where self and expression (i.e. amusement and its expression in laughter) cannot be separated, even when one might wish, and a world of unknowable selves behind masks could not be clearer. Whatever hand placed the four lines of elegiacs treating a mime performance following these lines was impelled by a recognition of the theatricality of friendship in Petronius' world." (page 160).

[28] See Collignon 1892, 276; Rosenblüth 1909, 36, note 2; Walsh 1970, 25; Slater 1990(b), 89 ff.

[29] See Van Thiel 1971, 13. Brozek 1965, 430 defends the relevance of the lines to this scene with far-fetched arguments: Quae dubitatio diffugit tibi, si omnes versus Encolpii exacerbati intelligis esse et priores quattuor ad Ascyltum, posteriores ad Gitonem refers: Encolpius enim tamquam pater fuit dives, Giton tamquam filius, cuius assimulata periit facies, vera rediit. Minime igitur inepti aut alieni hi versus hoc loco leguntur.

the real face (vera facies, line 8).[30]

It must not pass unnoticed that, even if we visualise the facies as a mask of an actor[31] or as a theatrical role, what is underlined in the poem is the image of a smile, which brings us again to the laughter-motif, its recurrence among the characteristics of the various personae of the novel and its significant function. Slater interprets the phrase ridendas ... partes (80.9.7) in a different way:

> The phrase ridendas ... partes might seem rather to point to the collections of masks in an aedicula, such as we see in the illustrated manuscripts of Terence, but whether the cabinet of masks goes back as far as the scene illustrations which also appear in these illustrations of Terence is still problematic.

Slater prefers to believe that

> Petronius has in mind masks in an aedicula, but his metaphors would suit illustrations of scenes, as well. In sum, Petronius' poem here depicts the living stage performance transformed into the painted figures of book illustration. In much the same way Petronius has transformed features of the mime into elements of his prose narrative. This quatrain might well stand as the epigraph for the whole of the Satyricon."[32]

My objection to this interpretation is that it connects mime and masks, whereas it is very unlikely that mime-actors wore masks.[33] For this reason, I believe, the interpretation of the poem as role-playing would suit better the Petronian staging-technique. Moreover, one should not assume that there had been an actual stage-performance of the novel. The poem must be referring to the spirit of literary-theatrical hypocrisy of the novel's characters, not to its actual theatrical delivery to the small circle of Nero's court.

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[30] Possible literary parallels for the idea expressed are: Sen. Ep. LXXVI.31; cf. Ep. XXIV.13; Lucr. DRN III.55 ff. The purpose of Petronius' poem, however, is not at all moralising or philosophical, but belongs to the tradition of comments on the notion of pretence, made by comedy at its own expense: in Plautus' Rudens (1249-1253), Gripus says that, when actors, who preach moral lessons in comedies, take their masks off after the performance, they become completely different characters.

[31] So Kehoe 1984, 100: "Although this citation comes from a work of fiction, it is likely meant to reflect contemporary mimic productions."

[32] See Slater 1987(a), 217.

[33] Duckworth 1952, 14; Beare [3]1964, 150; Horsfall 1982, 293. But see Nicoll 1931, 91.

The facts that in the poem the word pagina is mentioned,[34] and that these elegiacs seem to be a comment on the action made by an unidentified voice, induced Slater to assume that the Satyrica was written in order to be read and not to be heard from a recitator.[35] I fail to understand why the person, who would recite the novel to the small Neronian group, would not be able to read these four lines as a comment on the surrounding action not necessarily made by a character but surely written by the author of the novel.

A final point must be made on the morality of the poem. Slater eliminates possible moral interpretations by referring to the transformation of the living stage-actors into painted figures of book illustrations:

> The reader is thus distanced from Encolpius and his problems, if only momentarily, by being reminded of Encolpius' status as literary creation. If there is any pathos to Giton's betrayal, the double framing of events as first stage performance and then book illustration effectively neutralises it.[36]

It is sufficient to remember for the correct evaluation of the message of the poem

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[34] Watt 1986, 179 thinks that pagina should be obelized, because "Petronius is talking about actors on the stage, not characters in a book. Following Nisbet 1962, 230-232, he suggests plaudite, in the sense of 'curtain', and refers to Quint. VI.1.52 cum ventum est ad ipsum illud quo veteres tragoediae comoediaeque cluduntur 'plodite' and Cic. De Sen. 70 usque ad 'plaudite' veniendum est.

[35] See above, page 5, note 3. Slater 1990(b), 13-14: "The justification for a reading-based aesthetics is in part the utility of such an interpretation, but also rests on textual awareness of the reading process. Petronius's use of verse not recited by a character but simply as a comment on the surrounding action implies reading rather than oral performance, and one poem ... seems to me to imply Petronius's keen awareness that he was creating a work to be read." He, then, cites 80.9.5-8 and concludes: "This poem, with its image of mime-characters being shut up in a book, implies Petronius's understanding of the dichotomies both between fiction and reality and between literature as performance and literature as reading." Vogt-Spira 1990, 184-192 supports reading aloud as the way in which this novel was delivered to its audience. His arguments are two-fold: "Zum einen (i.e. Weg) gilt es zu prüfen, ob kompositionelle Elemente im Text darauf hinweisen, daß er auf lautes Lesen oder Vorlesen hin berechnet ist, insofern nämlich die Wirkung der Stimme vorausgesetzt ist. Zum zweiten ist zu fragen, inwieweit darüberhinaus Anzeichen auf eine Rezitation an bestimmten Ort und vor bestimmtem Publikum deuten." (page 184)

[36] Slater 1990(b), 89. Courtney 1991, 24 makes it less, but still unnecessarily, complicated: "I do not see why a reference to illustrated manuscripts should be involved. What would suit better would be a reference to a script rolled up at the end of the performance, and the script to which this would naturally happen would be that of the prompter."

that "mere amusement, the mimicus risus" was the aim of the mime.[37] By stressing the image of laughter in these elegiacs, Petronius points subtly to the ridicule of the situations his characters are involved in.[38]

The next scene (81.1 ff.) finds Encolpius changing roles one after the other in order to express his present situation. Amazingly enough, there is nothing in this description which does *not* refer to a literary model.

As a comic reincarnation of the classic exemplar of solitary resentment, Achilles robbed of Briseis by Agamemnon,[39] so Encolpius, alone and deserted by Giton, retires to the shore and takes care to make his situation much more dramatic than that of his original, the Homeric hero, by exaggerating the savage conditions in which he lives and the pitiless treatment he gives to himself:

> triduo inclusus ... verberabam aegrum planctibus pectus ...
> 'being shut in for three days ... I battered my breast which was weary from the blows'. (81.2)

The impressively lengthy monologue that follows (81.3-6) is a pastiche of Homeric-Vergilian images.[40] Encolpius becomes an Achilles telling his misfortunes to his mother, Thetis, or an Aeneas in the middle of burning Troy,[41] or a Venus complaining to her father about her son's sufferings, or even a furious Juno convincing herself to take the matter into her own hands.

The significance, however, of this monologue lies not only in its literary ingredients as role-playing, but also in the way it works.

Here soliloquy operates much as it does in Roman Comedy: Encolpius talks himself into the role of murderous scorned lover much as the

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[37] Beare [3]1964, 150; Walsh 1970, 25-26.

[38] Walsh 1970, 24-28 gathers instances, in which mime influenced Petronius' novel, and concludes: "This striking series of similarities to the action of the mime clearly indicates Petronius' attitude to his creation. He wishes to present the whole of life as a series of risible, unexpected happenings, in which nothing is taken seriously and no man's motives are what they seem. Every gesture is rehearsed, every attitude a studied pose." (page 27)

[39] Walsh 1970, 36.

[40] Collignon 1892, 121; Walsh 1970, 37; Slater 1990(b), 90.

[41] Zeitlin 1971(a), 59, note 1 observes that the scene in its general structure and without any specific verbal parallels resembles the incident in *Aen.* II.567-595 where Aeneas sees Helen hiding and decides to kill her "as the cause of the city's destruction".

eponymous Epidicus talks himself into his role.[42]

Epidicus summarizes the difficult situation he has got himself into (Pl. *Epid.* 81-99), and becomes convinced that 'something must be somehow devised'.[43] In a similar way, Pinacium, the slave boy of Panegyris in Plautus' *Stichus*, talks himself into the running-slave role, elaborately preparing himself for action.[44] But the most amusing parallel is that of Phronesium in Plautus' *Truculentus*; in order to deceive Stratophanes, she changes from the role of the charming meretrix to that of the caring mother.[45] Likewise, at the end of his monologue (81.6) Encolpius is a Medea ready to kill, or an Aeneas furibundus, but the anti-climactic outcome of the murderous attempt argues for a farcical treatment of these models (82.4).

The symmetrical structure and the rhetorical disposition of the parts of Encolpius' soliloquy are remarkable:

i) (Possible) Pieces of information about Encolpius' past (81.3).

Rhetorical question: et quis hanc mihi solitudinem imposuit? (81.3).

ii) (Possible).Pieces of information about Ascyltus' past life (81.4).

Rhetorical question: quid ille alter? (81.5).

iii) (Possible) Pieces of information about Giton's past life (81.5).

Image of his two fratres at the time (81.6).

Decision for immediate action in future (81.6).[46]

The most interesting parts are those which speak about the three heroes' past

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[42] Slater 1990(b), 90, note 5. Preston 1915, 269 notes that Encolpius' mournful soliloquy "in tone and purpose ... belongs clearly with the so-called morologia of the comic lovers." Cf. *Merc.* 4-5; *Persa* 49. Zeitlin 1971(b), 670 interprets wrongly Encolpius' loneliness after Giton left him as "in one sense, ... another reflection of a romantic reaction to the separation from his beloved, but, on the other hand, ... an externally valid expression of the true loneliness that falls to the lot of the picaro."

[43] Pl. *Epid.* 100 aliquid aliqua reperiundumst. Slater 1985, 21-24 discusses this procedure thoroughly. Cf. also, Duckworth (ed.) 1940, ad loc.

[44] Pl. *Stichus*, 274-287. See Slater 1985, 24, note 8.

[45] Pl. *Trucul.* 449-464. Phronesium pretends that she has just borne a child, so she is dressed and she is walking accordingly; cf. 478-481, the preparations for the proper image of a woman recovering from birth; line 576 shows that she must appear to have a pale complexion. See Slater 1985, 24, note 8 and 162.

[46] Rosenblüth 1909, 41 compares *Sat.* 81.6 nam aut vir ego liberque non sum, aut noxio sanguine parentabo iniuriae meae (cf. 113.11 si vir fueris, non ibis ad spintriam) with Herodas V.12-13 ἢν μὴ κατακίσασα τῆι σ' ὅληι χώρηι / παράδειγμα θῶ, μᾶ, μή με θῆις γυναῖκ' εἶναι.

lives, because they provide us with pieces of information which are not included in the surviving text; thus they are used as arguments for a reconstruction of the lost novel. As far as Encolpius' confessions are concerned,

> non è forse il caso di considerare *stricto sensu* queste colpe confessate da Encolpio,[47]

who may have used rhetorical hyperbole in order to make his present condition more lamentable.[48] Since the novel is not complete, no definite solution can be given to the problem of the degree of veracity or mendacity in these facts.

When the hero rushes out into the street, he is wholly identifiable with his model, Aeneas. His feelings and his appearance are described in every detail so that there is no doubt about what is going to happen:

> furentisque more omnes circumeo porticus. (82.1)
>
> 'In the manner of a frenzied person I went round all the colonnades.'
>
> attonito vultu efferatoque nihil aliud quam caedem et sanguinem cogito frequentiusque manum ad capulum, quem devoveram, refero, ... (82.2)
>
> 'With a stupefied and fierce expression on my face I was thinking of nothing else than slaughter and blood, and kept putting my hand on the hilt I had vowed as sacrifice.'

The ironical point in this description is that Encolpius wears phaecasia, a kind of unmanly Greek shoes, worn by Fortunata at 67.4.[49] The audience, however, does not see them until later when a highway robber of the night (nocturnus grassator 82.2) notices them and manages to take away Encolpius' arma -and his soldier's role-playing at the same time.[50] Encolpius furibundus ends up despoliatus

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[47] Pellegrino (ed.) 1975, 368. Bagnani 1956, 23-27 and Pack 1960, 31-32 accept that Encolpius has probably committed murder, although they regard the pieces of information provided in the above passages as abusive. Mulroy 1970, 254-256 is probably right "that there is no certain indication that the missing portions of the Satyricon portrayed Encolpius committing murder." See also Raith 1971, 119-120.

[48] In Giton's case and "secondo il Paratore, il quale ricostruisce la trama del romanzo molto fondandosi sui passi sopra citati (8 effugi iudicium ecc.), qui vi sarebbe il ricordo del periodo in cui Gitone aveva servito nella schola gladiatoria dov' era capitato con Encolpio - allorché erano fuggiti da Marsiglia - e dove aveva incontrato la girovaga Trifena che si era innamorata del giovanetto e aveva deciso pertanto di unirsi ai due amici quale compagna di avventura." [Pellegrino (ed.) 1975, 369]. Finally, only speculations can be made on Ascyltus' past life.

[49] See Smith (ed.) 1975, ad loc.; cf. Juv. III.218 and Mayor (ed.) [4]1886, ad loc. See above, page 151, note 260.

[50] For soldiers in a mime-cast see Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 109 ἔνι καὶ στρατιώτας ἰδεῖν.

and grateful for the thief's intervention (82.4). He even philosophizes on this misfortune and believes that it was due to the divine power of Fortuna who has other plans for him.

The recurrent motif of fortune's power upon human beings is taken from literary tradition[51] - among other genres, comedy and mime are possible sources of inspiration - but the comic point here lies in the fact that we do not have a serious juxtaposition of the plans of the heroes in a Greek novel and the consilium of the goddess Τύχη. Nor should we take seriously Encolpius' philosophical generalizations on the subject of Tantalus and its comparison to the anxieties of the rich great man (82.5.1-4). The context forbids any moral assumptions. What could be more ridiculous than the transformation of Fortuna into a night-thief who stops Encolpius' plans to kill his boy-friend who had escaped with his ex-lover? This amusing anecdote resembles the subversive version of the Theseus - Ariadne story mentioned above (79.4-5).

It is difficult not to discern in Encolpius' epic appearance elements of the mime-spirit. Vergil's famous description of Aeneas in the siege of Troy must have been recognisable even to a less educated audience than that of the Neronian circle. Petronius' humiliating version presents an effeminate Aeneas deprived of his grandeur and "of his chief prop, his sword",[52] beaten by a thief to whom he feels grateful. But such distorted depictions of Vergilian scenes did not exist only in the imagination of an eccentric courtier. There is a Pompeian painting, dated A.D. circa 62-63, which shows a caricature of Aeneas' departure from Troy with Anchises on his shoulder and Ascanius following him holding his right hand. The three figures have long tails, canine heads and two of them a very long phallus. Maiuri thinks that the picture is more than a grotesque representation of Vergil's epic parodied by an artist. He suggests that we have here a farcical scene from an actual stage-performance of a caricature of the Aeneas' legend; for the demands of the plot the actors would have dressed up as animals and delivered a strong anti-imperialistic message to their audience.[53] This sort of parody clearly belongs in the tradition of Atellan or mimic plays,[54] and the Neronian date of the

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[51] Lists of parallels are provided by Rosenblüth 1909, 46-47; Moering 1915, 29-30. See above, page 45, note 15.

[52] Slater 1990(b), 90.

[53] Maiuri 1950, 108-112.

[54] See above, page 33, note 14; page 36, note 27.

picture makes it more likely that Petronius was following the techniques of this tradition of farcical caricature when he presented his Encolpius as an effeminate and cowardly Aeneas.

The narrative device of role-playing in its Petronian form suggests clearly that we are not meant to sympathize with Encolpius.[55] The role-playing is for the audience's sophisticated entertainment and not for Encolpius'

> search for a role which will allow him to fashion a meaningful self (i.e., be
> able to contain and integrate his inner experiences).[56]

These moralistic misinterpretations reflect modern psychological anxieties rather than what was in the mind of an eccentric Elegantiae Arbiter two thousand years ago.[57]

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[55] Sullivan 1972(b), 83 [163] remarks that Petronius' "humorous and ironical detachment insures that we do not see the low-life adventures and cynical immorality of the characters through pessimistic eyes, but with amusement ..."

[56] Slater 1990(b), 248. Similarly, Sandy 1969, 294 sees this "artificiality and self-delusion which intervene between individuals and reality" as a "principal object of Petronius' satire"; thus he suggests indirectly that naturalness is the recommended way of life. Beck 1973, 60, working on the relationship between narrator and protagonist in the novel, observes that the latter "constantly - perhaps even compulsively- indulges in flights of fancy, mainly into a world of literary stereotypes, in contexts which render his fantasies both ludicrous and perversely inappropriate to the prose realities of his life, character, milieu, and adventures." The reason for this incongruity is, according to Beck, that there are two different Encolpii: "The cool and rational sophisticate is the Encolpius who delicately and amusingly shapes his narrative in such a manner as to point up, without any specific comment, the fantasies of his subject; the deluded simpleton is the earlier Encolpius who himself dreamt up and experienced the fantasies." See, however, Jones 1987, 810-819 for instances in the novel in which the narrator is not clearly distanced from his former self; consequently, the case for irony that Beck puts forth cannot be valid for the whole novel.

[57] Rankin's [1969(a), 118] comments on the general subject of concealment and pretence in the Sat. are an example of such misunderstandings: "This 'subjective' failure of the characters to connect effectively with the facts of their environment is the basis of an 'objective' sense of unreality which the author wishes evidently to convey to the reader by showing him such an array of pretences, concealments, surprises. This atmosphere of apprehensive expectation differs from the absurdities of Old Comedy (for example), or indeed of mime and farce." Rankin goes on to attribute the creation of this atmosphere to the movements of Epicureanism and Cynicism, and concludes: "However, it creates a world in which nothing can be relied on, and nobody can be trusted. It holds a mirror up to the madness and anguish which are the characteristics that its author saw in nature and in society." (page 119)

CHAPTER SEVEN.

IN PINACOTHECA: *SAT.* 83.1-90.7.

The employment of an art-gallery in the *Satyrica* as a place where Encolpius tries to find temporary solace, after Giton left him for Ascyltus, introduces in the novel the narrative device of the ἔκφρασις, which is so widely used in Greek romances.[1] The hero does not find the comfort he was looking for, since the wonderful collection of pictures with various subjects (83.1) turns out to be, for the most part, a series of mythological love-affairs which constantly remind Encolpius of Giton's infidelity and subtly underline the menacing figure of the rival who causes harm to the happy couple. Thus the replacement of Ascyltus by Eumolpus in the homosexual triangle is effectively foreshadowed. The purpose of this chapter is to delineate briefly the theatrical characteristics in the personality of this new rival, Eumolpus, whose cunning hypocrisy will lead the heroes of the novel into more extraordinary adventures.

In Encolpius' eyes Giton becomes the kidnapped Ganymede (Idaeum 83.3; cf. 83.4), the abducted Hylas (candidus Hylas 83.3; cf. 83.5), and the unfortunate Hyacinthus (83.3; 83.5), but what makes the comparison ridiculous is the fact that Giton deserted Encolpius of his own free will and not through the violent intrusion of a third person. Giton himself will deny this when he returns to Encolpius (91.2; 91.8), but his hypocritical play-acting there is obvious, since he will not hesitate to betray his lover for a second time in the near future with another rival, Eumolpus (94.4). In addition, we are amused to hear Encolpius subconsciously comparing himself with the vengeful Hercules who would chase the improba Naida (83.3; cf. 83.5), because we remember how Encolpius was humiliated in his attempt to take revenge upon both his unfaithful companion and his impudent fellow-hustler (82.1-4).

Since the use of the ἔκφρασις is such a conventional feature of Greek and Latin literature,[2] and granted that Petronius makes ample use of different literary genres, it seems impossible to say with certainty what the particular source of inspiration is for the composition of this scene. It is more likely that Petronius was working within the general tradition of an ἔκφρασις, which portrays and reflects the events of the main action, rather than to argue for a conscious similarity between this incident and episodes such as the introductory scene of Achilles

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[1] See the detailed discussion of the topic in Bartsch 1989, 8-79.

[2] See Rosenblüth 1909, 45, note 2; Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro., xliii; Gow (ed.) 1952, on Theocr. *Id.* XV., ll. 265-266; Cunningham (ed.) 1971, 128.

Tatius' romance[3] or of Aeneas contemplating the picture of the Trojan war in Dido's temple (*Aen.* I.453-494).

Attention must also be drawn to the use of the ἔκφρασις as a narrative device in comedy. In Terence's *Eunuchus* 583-591, Chaereas, disguised as a eunuch, manages to find his way into the private quarters of the girl whom he loves; all his fears concerning the desire to fulfil his lust disappear when he sees a picture of how Juppiter, in the shape of golden rain, had managed to force his way into Danae's room.[4] The scenery of Terence's play is not an art-gallery, nor is there a detailed description of the picture, but the message for both love-stricken Chaereas and Encolpius remains the same.

One of Sophron's mimes (Θάμεναι τὰ Ἴσθμια, 10), of which only one fragment survives,[5] suggests that the farcical theatre had employed the device of a visit to a place, either festival or temple;[6] it seems likely that an ἔκφρασις may have been included in the plot, although we do not know in what way. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that Herodas has used the motif of the description of paintings in his Fourth Mime (Ἀσκληπιῶι ἀνατιθεῖσαι καὶ θυσιάζουσαι, 39-56a): he portrays two women, Κυννὼ and Κοκκάλη, who go to the temple of Asclepius in Kos in order to offer their sacrifices, and make amusing comments on the works of art presented to the temple by other believers.[7]

The fundamental difference between the art-gallery scene in the *Satyrica* and the ἐκφράσεις in other literary texts lies in the ironical way in which Petronius

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3 See, e.g., Anderson 1982, 67: "Encolpius finds himself in a picture-gallery, reflecting on the loves of the gods and the infidelities of Giton: can we accept that the episode is wholly accountable in the scene of Achilles and the scenes in Dido's temple? Even if we discount the closeness of Encolpius' meditation to the opening of Achilles Tatius, it is hard to ignore the fact that Eumolpus' unwelcome competition is prefigured in the picture of the rape of Ganymede. If the gallery in itself does not point specifically to the novel, the conjunction of picture-gallery and erotic experience certainly does."

4 See Fabia (ed.) 1895, ad 584; Τρομάρας (ed.) 1991, ad 585.

5 See Olivieri (ed.) 1930, 181-182.

6 The titles of Laberius' mimes *Compitalia* and *Saturnalia*, which signify festivals, may have presented a similar episode to that in Sophron's mime.

7 Compare, e.g., Herodas IV.32-34 πρὸ τῶν ποδῶν γοῦν εἴ τι μὴ λίθος, τοὔργον, / ἐρεῖς, λαλήσει. μᾶ, χρόνωι κοτ' ὤνθρωποι / κῆς τοὺς λίθους ἔξουσι τὴν ζοὴν θεῖναι, and Theocr. XV.82 ὡς ἔτυμ' ἑστάκαντι καὶ ὡς ἔτυμ' ἐνδινεῦντι, ἔμψυχ', οὐκ ἐνυφαντά, with Petr. 88.5 et Myron, qui paene animas hominum ferarumque aere comprehendit.

uses his ἔκφρασις. I have already discussed the risible contrast between how Encolpius interprets the situations expressed in the paintings and what really happened in his relationship with Giton. Encolpius is, as usual, melodramatic and over-acting, making hackneyed comments about the power and the influence of the particular works of art on his own feelings (pinacothecam ... mirabilem 83.1; non sine quodam horrore tractavi 83.1; etiam adoravi 83.2; crederes etiam animorum esse picturam 83.2). Under no circumstances should he be regarded as an expert art-critic any more than as an intellectual scholasticus in the opening scene of the surviving novel. The description is not the detailed account of Homer, Vergil or Achilles Tatius, nor is intended to be so. Everything points to Encolpius' amusing distress, as he is painfully reminded of what he tries to forget and rhetorically (ego dum cum ventis litigo 83.7) embarks upon an imaginary comparison of his misfortunes with those in the pictures. Thus Petronius' narrative resembles ⌐ ⌐   ⌐ ⌐   ⌐ ⌐⌐, a theatrical after-piece in the manner in which it elaborates on the conventional topic of art-descriptions. It is within this farcical frame that the meeting between Encolpius and Eumolpus takes place.

The humorous context of the scene is reinforced by the sudden (ecce autem 83.7) entrance 'on stage' of Eumolpus, precisely at the moment when Encolpius muses on his former rival, Ascyltus. Thus the implications of the old man's future influence on the lives of Encolpius and Giton are quite clear. The style of Encolpius' narration indicates the impact Eumolpus made on him with his shabby appearance, a sign of a man of letters (cultu non proinde speciosus, ... eum <ex> hac nota litteratorum esse 83.7), and a troubled facial expression classifies him, according to Encolpius, among those who seem to promise something important (exercitati vultus et qui videretur nescio quid magnum promittere 83.7). From then on this white-haired poetaster will be the permanent companion of Encolpius and Giton, at least until the end of the surviving fragments. As will become apparent in his involvement in the episodes inside the inn (91-99), on board Lichas' ship (100-115) and in the legacy-hunting scheme at Croton (116 ff.), Eumolpus is a first-class trickster with a theatrical imagination, for he is often inspired by farcical motifs to take advantage of whatever situation presents itself. Perhaps his association with theatre is not an amateurish one, but is derived from the knowledge of an expert who participated in events at the theatre as a reciter and even won crowns of honour (83.8; 90.5). Nevertheless, his personality will mark dramatically the future of the two young lovers, since their ensuing adventures

will be unquestionably coloured by the characteristics of the stage, and the orientation of their theatrical style will be almost totally mimic. For the time being, none of these exciting adventures is apparent to Encolpius who notes, however, that Eumolpus seems to promise something great (83.7).

A brief self-introduction (83.8) gives all the aspects of Eumolpus' character, which for the moment are essential to understand his incomparable eloquence (ingenti volubilitate verborum 124.2). Answering questions he himself asks, he occupies Encolpius' ears continuously from 83.9 to 87.10 and, after a brief interval (88.1) where Encolpius adopts again the role of the person who is interested in the decadence of various forms of human civilization (with Agamemnon it was rhetoric; with Eumolpus it is the decline of fine arts and especially painting), he proceeds again in narrating non-stop from 88.2 to 89.1.1-65: see Encolpius' indignant reaction and serious threats at 90.3-4.

All this time Eumolpus improvises on the disgraceful financial condition of an honest educated person (83.10), philosophizes on possible reasons to explain this phenomenon (84.1-5), recounts his lusty experiences with a Pergamene boy (85.1-87.10),[8] offers a pompous, imprecise and banal opinion on the cause of the decline of fine arts (88.2-88.10), and, finally, recites sixty five iambics on 'The Siege of Troy' (89.1). His extraordinary monologue would probably have continued if some passers-by had not started throwing stones at him (90.1). It is obvious that the pomposity of his style and the ease with which he touched upon trite subjects so different from one another encourage the audience of the novel not to mistake Eumolpus'

> rambling rhetorical rag-bag for serious objective criticism of art or intellectual values.[9]

Parody of poets who recited such commonplace themes,[10] or even ridicule

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[8] According to Soverini 1985, 1743 the contrast between the posture of Eumolpus as a morally upright art-critic and the reality of his lustful experiences with a Pergamene boy is due to the mimic theatre which employs such juxtapositions for comic effects. The best theatrical interpretation of this Milesian tale through the role-playing of the two main characters should be consulted in Slater 1990(b), 92-94.

[9] Coffey 1976, 191. An extant discussion on the subject of the validity of Eumolpus' views is in Soverini 1985, 1742-1745.

[10] See Walsh 1968, 209.

of Nero's similar poetic attempts,[11] may have been Petronius' chief aims through Eumolpus' narration of the Troiae Halosis. On the other hand, however, this breathless combination of widely diverse topics is comic in itself and is reminiscent of the verbose bombast of a miles gloriosus of the farcical stage.[12] I am not suggesting that Eumolpus' character is an imitation of a theatrical stock-figure. Specific elements, however, in his behaviour and the long series of scenic references connected with his name in the rest of the novel (94.15; 101.7; 103.2-4; 117.4 ff.; 140.5 ff.), emphasize the theatricality of his character.

As Encolpius' loquacious pretensions had earned him an invitation to dinner at Trimalchio's, so Eumolpus' extravagant personality presents him with a free meal offered by Encolpius, although under certain conditions (90.6). When Encolpius accepted the invitation to dinner at the millionaire's house (26.10), he surely did not expect to have such a unique theatrical experience. What he also does not suspect now is that, by taking Eumolpus to his room, the spectacular surprises will start all over again.

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[11] See Suet. Nero XXXVIII.2 and Bradley (ed.) 1978, ad loc. The uncertainty concerning whether Nero knew of the Satyrica or not, and if he did, whether he tolerated or not details which could have been interpreted as personal attacks on his way of life, makes this possibility very unlikely.

[12] See Rankin 1969(a), 116-117: "The absurdities of the hypocritical old-poet Eumolpus are of the slapstick kind whose proximate comparison must be mime, though the energy is more reminiscent of the Old Athenian Comedy."

CHAPTER EIGHT.
FABULA INTER AMANTES: *SAT.* 91.1- 96.7.

Encolpius' meeting with the eccentric old poet Eumolpus in the art-gallery must have helped him slightly to forget for a while the painful and indignant memory of Giton leaving him for Ascyltus. Thus, when the two lovers meet again, quite unexpectedly, first in the baths (91.1; 91.3), probably before Eumolpus and Encolpius go to dine, and later on inside Encolpius' rented room (91.4), all angry feelings and resentments yield to a melodramatic reconciliation.[1] Giton reveals his true (?) emotions and train of thoughts at the time of his unfaithful departure with Ascyltus (91.2; 91.8), while Encolpius faces the past events with a forgiving bitterness and a desire to forget (91.3; 91.6; 91.7).

For the next nine sections the action is set inside an insula(95.3),[2] where the anti-hero of the novel, his lover Giton and their new acquaintance, Eumolpus, have rented a cella 'room' (91.3; 94.4; 95.5). The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the events which succeed one another at an incredibly fast pace are of a purely farcical nature,[3] and suggest a direct influence of comedy and mime on these passages, in the sense that they could constitute a complete episode of a theatrical performance.[4]

DRAMATIS PERSONAE
Encolpius   Giton   Eumolpus   Deversitor   Bargates

Time and place are clearly stated and the scene is set for action: the darkness is deep (92.1), when Eumolpus, left by Encolpius at the baths (91.3) but still keeping in mind the invitation to dinner (90.6), knocks at the door, interrupting perhaps the reviving intimacy of the young lovers. Encolpius, taking strict precautions against unwanted visitors, peers through a crack in the door

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[1] See Gagliardi 1980, 100, note 24: "Il testo è percorso da una venatura di teatralità, evidente massimamente nella chiusa: satis magnum erit misero solacium, tua voluntate cecidisse (91.2)."

[2] On the meaning of the terms insula (95.3), synoecium (93.3), cella (94.4; 95.3,5,7) see Rowell 1957, 217 ff. where there is a whole description of Encolpius' room within the inn! For the time being, we need only point out that the action takes place in an interior space.

[3] Walsh 1970, 98: "the whole episode is enacted as mimic entertainment with literary overtones."

[4] See Collignon 1892, 278; Sullivan 1968(a), 222; Rankin 1969(a), 116; Walsh 1970, 77 ff.; Slater 1990(b), 105.

(per rimam foris),[5] worried in case Ascyltus had arrived with Eumolpus (num Ascyltos una venisset 92.2). Eumolpus' entrance should be visualised as the first in a series of hasty entrances and exits, which add to the slapstick tone of the scene: enter Eumolpus (92.3), exit Giton (94.4), exit Eumolpus (94.7), enter Giton and Eumolpus (94.8), enter deversitor cum parte cenulae (95.1), exit Eumolpus with the deversitor and some of the lodgers (95.7). One is reminded of similar farcical situations in Aristophanic comedy: the continuous attempts of Philokleon to escape from his house through the back door, the front door, the chimney, the window, the roof-tiles, and under a donkey's belly;[6] or the endless entrances and exits of the comic characters who intrude into Cloudcuckooland - sometimes arriving simultaneously from both parodoi - and interrupt Peisetairos during his sacrifices to the gods (*Birds*, 851-1057).

Soon the farcical atmosphere starts to develop, because, when Encolpius hears Eumolpus praising Giton's graces, he is not at all pleased, but realises that another rival is making advances to his beloved:

> non delectavit me tam curiosum principium timuique ne in contubernium recepissem Ascylti parem. (92.4)

> 'I was not pleased by such an interfering introduction and I was afraid that I had admitted to my lodging someone just like Ascyltus.'

We have already seen that Encolpius' behaviour towards Giton and the latter's possible future relationship with other men (Ascyltus and Eumolpus), resembles strongly the mime-character of the ζηλότυπος, the jealous woman.[7] Although Giton has not actually slept with Eumolpus, as Γάστρων, the slave, did with Ἀμφυταίη, Encolpius and Βίτιννα, the mistress, share common elements in their portrayal: envy which is transformed to anger, when facing the facts (*Sat.* 94.3; Herod. V.10 ff.), and pleasure from their rival's tortures (*Sat.* 96.4; Herod. V.40-53). The mistress in the Oxyrhynchus-mime of the Μοιχεύτρια,[8] being in the same tradition of the theatrical type of the furens femina, exhibits violent instincts towards her slave in a situation similar to that of the Herodas-mime. Petronius is subtly providing the hints of Encolpius' forthcoming fury (94.5), when none of the

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[5] The motif of peeping-through-a-hole occurs again, not without a theatrical significance, since a similar foramen valvae (96.1) will be the point of focus through which Encolpius watches another show, the fracas between Eumolpus and the insularii.

[6] Arist. *Wasps* 138 ff.; see MacDowell 1988, 5-7.

[7] See above, page 31, notes 6 and 7; page 159, notes 283 and 284.

[8] See below, page 252, note 33; page 253, note 34.

members of this erotic triangle will be able to restrain themselves (94.1-7) and everything will lead to the spectacle of the mimica mors (94.15).

A drink offered to Eumolpus by Giton is the cause of an interpolated narration, the funny episode at the baths (92.6-11), which proves to be

> an excellent example of those qualities of style which make him [i.e. Eumolpus] Petronius' first choice as a raconteur.[9]

From this narration we find out what happened after Encolpius and Giton left the baths, but, at the same time, Eumolpus is characterized as a person who recounts his experiences through a theatrical pattern with a strong element of farce and sex in it; the narration delineates also Encolpius' personality, since his comments at the end of the story (92.12-13) accord with his envious and hypocritical behaviour:

> mutabam ego frequentissime vultum, iniuriis scilicet inimici mei hilaris, commodis tristis. utcumque tamen, tamquam non agnoscerem fabulam, tacui ...
>
> 'I was changing my facial expressions very often, certainly amused at my opponent's misfortunes, and sad at his luck. At any rate, however, I kept silent, as if I did not recognise anything in the story ...'

Baths as a setting are not unknown to theatrical genres. *Aquae Caldae* is a title recurrent in a fabula togata by Atta and in a mime by Laberius.[10] Although the element of indecency is clear even from the fragments, only speculations can be made on their plots. A careful reading of the Petronian text makes clear that Eumolpus passes quickly from the 'why' and the 'how'[11] he was thrown out of the baths, and focuses his audience's attention on one sight, in particular: the size of Ascyltus' testicles (inguinum pondus). The scene is described as a spectacle, or, rather, two spectacles, parallel and opposite to each other, and the comic effect is derived precisely from this juxtaposition. At one side of the scene an old man,

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[9] George 1966, 387. On Eumolpus' success as a story-teller see, also, Beck 1979, 249-251. Especially in the description of the incident at the baths, Beck sees Eumolpus' talent "in the neatness and clarity with which Eumolpus sets the contrasting images of his poetic self as the butt of ridicule and the phallic Ascyltus as the object of admiration."

[10] For the Laberius-mime see Ribbeck (ed.) [3]1898, 340. For the Atta-fragment see Daviault (ed.) 1981, 254, and his notes, 255-256.

[11] Müller's bracketing of the phrase tamquam de theatro at 92.6 as an intrusive gloss is a bold exclusion. Sandy 1974, 345 cites this phrase, together with 90.5, to prove Eumolpus' professional theatrical past: "coupled with the reference to Eumolpus' coronae (83.8), they point incontrovertibly to recitation of original compositions at agonistic festivals."

half-naked, seeks desperately for Encolpius (92.6), while

> pueri tamquam insanum imitatione petulantissima deriserunt, ... (92.8)
>
> 'some boys laughed at him making insolent mimicries, as if he were insane'.

At the other side, a tireless young man (iuvenem laboriosum 92.9), stark-naked, wandering up and down and looking angrily for Giton, is greeted with applause and the most timid admiration (cum plausu et admiratione timidissima) by a vast crowd (frequentia ingens 92.8). Even the parallel gestures (imitatione petulantissima 92.8 - cum plausu 92.9) signify that in this passage we have to deal with another scene structured as a show in front of a theatrical audience.[12] It is wrong to consider the scene as an example of exhibitionism by the author.[13] Furthermore, it is Eumolpus who tells the story, a man whose participation in shows in the theatres defines his conception of the world.[14] The point of the narration is not sensual but farcical, and the apophthegm at the end (tanto magis expedit inguina quam ingenia fricare 92.11),[15] clearly a crude imitation of Publilius Syrus' sententiae, gives the final comic, non-moralistic tone to the short story: if you have a big penis, like Ascyltus, you can always find new clothes and wealth (92.10), whereas, if you have only a sharp mind, as Eumolpus likes to think of himself, you have to bribe in order to get even your own clothes back (92.11).

Eumolpus insists on replacing Ascyltus in the homosexual triangle despite Encolpius' dissent. In the poem that he composes so easily at 93.2, Eumolpus mentions all sorts of exotic birds as implicit objects of desire, that is Giton, and

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[12] Cf. 26.4-5; 140.11 and see Gill 1973, 180: "What is crucial in these scenes, when they are considered in their literary entirety, is not the disclosure of private parts or genital encounters, or the pleasure taken by characters in this disclosure, but the theatrical *spectaculum* which the figures - as actors, directors or audience - compose, in which the sexual plays its own bizarre part."

[13] Sullivan 1968(a), 243. Preston 1915, 264 explains the strong phallic element of this and other scenes in the novel (cf. 108.10; 129.1; 132; 140) as a "more drastic form of buffoonery", derived from the mimic tradition of Southern Italy and Rome (see 264-265, note 3).

[14] Eumolpus conceives his sexual intercourse with Philomela's daughter as a theatrical show at 140.6 ff. For a professional preoccupation of Eumolpus with the theatre see Sandy 1974, Appendix: Eumolpus Scaenicus, 344 ff.

[15] For a psycho-analytical interpretation of this obscene humour see Sullivan 1963, 80. Gagliardi 1979, 200-202 regards this saying as "una grottesca variazione del famoso dictum di Cicerone sul genero exiguae staturae": Macrob. *Sat.* II.3.3 quis, inquit, generum meum ad gladium adligavit? A similar idea to that of the *Satyrica* is expressed in Juv. *S.* I.40-41 unciolam Proculeius habet, sed Gillo deuncem, / partes quisque suas ad mensuram inguinis heres.

goes as far as the explicit statement or sexual invitation that a mistress surpasses a wife (amica vincit / uxorem, lines 8-9), implying, of course, himself and Encolpius respectively. The tension is building up nicely in a farcical manner[16] when Giton scolds Encolpius (93.4) for scolding Eumolpus because of his new poetical composition (93.3). Giton's reprimanding remarks on Encolpius' inhospitable behaviour encourage a closer amiability between himself and Eumolpus (moderationis verecundiaeque verba, quae formam eius egregie decebant 93.4), and prepare the audience for Giton's adopting the role of the cultus adulter or 'refined adulterer' later on, at chapters 97-99; Eumolpus volunteers to undertake the simultaneous roles of amator, poeta, paedagogus, custos (94.1-2) for his new love. All these hilarious promises sound extremely pretentious and staged, but have the effect of constantly increasing Encolpius' iracundia 'wrath': he characterizes himself as furiosus 'frenzied' and as governed by insania 'madness' (94.6). Thus he is amusingly portrayed as the cuckold husband of a mime-piece who is being deceived in front of his very eyes and muses on the kind of revenge he would take, if he possessed the adequate means of punishment (94.3).

The situation becomes more complicated, and slapstick builds up to a climax when the very indulgent Giton (mitissimus Giton) exits quietly as if to fetch water (tamquam aquam peteret 94.4) and leaves Encolpius in a state of frenzy (94.6). Giton's sudden departure, so erroneously conceived by Encolpius' hopeless sentimentality (see prudenti absentia at 94.4), was, almost certainly, nothing else but a signal for Eumolpus to take the key, lock Encolpius inside the room and run outside to find him. Schmeling regards this as one of the finest examples of "Petronius' use of the exclusus-amator motif." He clearly points out the similarities with elegiac poetry, observes that "Petronius has executed one of the cleverest parodies of any motif" by turning the exclusus into an inclusus amator, defines the role of the door and the rima as the means through which the lover sees his separated lover, and even gives parallels to actual suicides in the exclusus-amator poems.[17] But Schmeling has not taken into consideration the mimic setting of the whole scene.[18] Each of his arguments can -and should- be explained by referring to the theatrical tradition which characterizes the general tone of the

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[16] See the general discussion of these passages in Gagliardi 1980, 101 ff.

[17] See Schmeling 1971, 335 ff.

[18] I am referring to the theatrical context of what happened before, what will happen next, the author's interpretation of the scene as mimicam mortem (94.15) and his explicitly histrionic comment fabula inter amantes luditur (95.1).

episode. Sandy points out the existence of a mimic παρακλαυσίθυρον which would make better sense as a source of inspiration for Petronius' conduct of this scene than an actual παρακλαυσίθυρον of elegiac poetry.[19] Encolpius' situation (enclosed in a space where the only access to his beloved is a locked door) is similar to that of many amatores of Roman Comedy: Phaedromus, a young gentleman of Epidaurus, is separated from his beloved Planesium, a girl belonging to Cappadox, the pimp, by a door.[20] His relationship with this door is extremely peculiar. He identifies it with his girlfriend, addresses it in human terms, even serenades it (147-154).[21]

The desperate, inclusus Encolpius, like a proper hero of the ideal romance, who is separated from his partner, decides to commit suicide. His intention to hang himself is not made by chance. He chooses a way of dying similar to those in Greek tragedies where the heroine (Jocasta, Leda, Phaedra, Antigone) relieves herself of her burden by one of the most disgraceful and despised forms of death.[22] Aristomenes, in Apul. *Met.* I.16, is looking for the 'quickest method of death' (de genere tumultuario mortis)[23] and hangs himself after saying a most touching farewell to his grabatulus. It has been correctly assumed that there may be a common source for these two incidents in Petronius and Apuleius in the Milesian tale and the mime.[24] The context of the passages in Petronius argues strongly for such an interpretation while other explanations are probably due only to accidental similarities.[25]

Slater remarks astutely on what may have been happening outside the

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[19] See Sandy 1974, 342, Wüst 1932, 1752 col. 65-67 and cf. McKeown 1979, 77-78 and 82, note 27. On the influence of adultery-mime in Roman elegy see McKeown 1979, 72-76.

[20] Plautus, *Curculio* 15 ff. Cf. the dialogue between Toxilus, the slave, and Dordalus, the pimp, in Plautus' *Persa* 564-572.

[21] On the personification of inanimate objects for comic effects in Plautus see Fraenkel 1960, 97-100. A list of κῶμοι as subjects for Greek mimes is in McKeown 1979, 77.

[22] See George 1966, 339 and Loraux 1987, 7-17 ("The Rope and the Sword"); 71, note 8, for references to the texts. Loraux argues that "hanging was a woman's death" (page 10), a fact which could underline Encolpius' effeminacy without, however, stressing it too much.

[23] See Scobie (ed.) 1975, ad loc.

[24] Walsh 1970, 31 and note 1; 150, note 2; cf. Wooten 1976, 70.

[25] Eggermont 1941, 158-160 connects Thucyd. IV.48.3 and *Sat.* 94.8 (the same way of hanging), explaining Petronius' intentions thus: "Und es ist möglich, dass Petronius' zynischer Humor den decadenten Römer Encolpius absichtlich einen un-römischen Tod suchen lässt." (page 160).

door during Encolpius' suicidal attempt, which is described in a highly dramatic style as if Encolpius were consciously performing the part of a moribund tragic hero:

> The whole scene has been staged for Encolpius' benefit by Eumolpus and Giton. Perhaps they have been observing him through the door (as Encolpius will watch Eumolpus through the same door in the next scene). Probably the idea is Eumolpus', as the farce turns on the stage-prop of the blunted razor, which only he is likely to know that his servant has. At any rate Giton bursts in at precisely the right moment to seize control of the theatrical frame and make Encolpius a spectator...[26]

Using different facial expressions from his repertoire to show grief, anger and raving madness (94.9), Giton manages to throw Encolpius violently on the bed (94.9), and to engage in a brief emotional account of his past unsuccessful attempts to commit suicide (again with weapons of a tragic play), when he was in Ascyltus' lodgings (94.11). Finally, adopting the role of the faithful companion, he voluntarily cuts his throat - at least, that is what we all understand before Encolpius takes the novacula to follow the example of his lover - in order to show his devotion to his companion in life and death,[27] and collapses (94.12).

This is not the first time that Giton dares to face death, sure, of course, that he is not going to die! In the surviving passages of the novel, Giton 'died' for the

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[26] Slater 1990(b), 103.

[27] In a similar tone the lovers Philaenium and Argyrippus exchange promises of dying together (Pl. *Asin.* 605-615). Richardson 1984, 117 sees in Giton's suicidal attempt "the readiness of erastes and eromenos to endure pain and death to prove their devotion." If there is something that characterizes constantly Giton as an eromenos, that is surely his infidelity!

first time at 80.4. He will 'die' again at 108.10.[28] Faked deaths were a stock-motif in the ancient romance.[29] A harmless knife is described in detail as a stage prop in Achil. Tatius III.21.3-5, used for Leucippe's false death.

δοκοῦσι βαπτίζεσθαι τὸν σίδηρον κατὰ τοῦ σώματος, ὁ δὲ εἰς τὸν
χηραμὸν τῆς κώπης ἀνέθορεν, μόνην δὲ καταλείπει τὴν αἰχμήν, ὅσον
δοκοῦσι βαπτίζεσθαι τὸν σίδηρον κατὰ τοῦ σώματος, ὁ δὲ εἰς τὸν
χηραμὸν τῆς κώπης ἀνέθορεν, μόνην δὲ καταλείπει τὴν αἰχμήν, ὅσον
τὴν πλαστὴν γαστέρα τεμεῖν καὶ τὴν κώπην ἐν χρῷ τοῦ σφαζομένου
τυχεῖν· κἂν ἀποσπάσῃ τις τὸν σίδηρον ἐκ τοῦ τραύματος, καταρρεῖ
πάλιν ἐκ τοῦ χηραμοῦ τὸ ξίφος ὅσον τῆς κώπης ἀνακουφίζεται τὸ
μετέωρον καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον τοὺς ὁρῶντας ἀπατᾷ. Δοκεῖ γὰρ
τοσοῦτον ἀναβαίνειν ἐκ τῆς σφαγῆς, ὅσον κάτεισιν ἐκ τῆς μηχανῆς.[30]

'Now, you see this trick sword? If you press it against a body, it retreats into the hilt as into a sheath. The audience believes the blade is penetrating the body, but actually it retires into the recessed hilt, leaving just enough point to cut the deceptive diaphragm and let the hilt itself rest flush against the victim. And when you draw the blade from the wound, the sword emerges from its recess exactly as the hilt is drawn upwards, and again misleads the spectators, for the blade appears to plunge down into the wound as far as it protrudes from the gadget.'[31]

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[28] See Collignon 1892, 278 on the function of the "rasoir inoffensif" in the theatre and the *Satyrica*. Bacon 1958, 268 claims wrongly that these simulated suicides display the emptiness of Encolpius' and Giton's feelings and are used as a kind of torture for themselves. Rankin 1969(a), 116 is more misleading: "These attempts at self-mutilation and suicide have special reference to the characters of Encolpius and, to a lesser degree, of Giton. The literary and theatrical atmosphere in which these attempts are mooted is, as it were, an implication of parody, and points out that the characters have difficulty in taking even their own emotional extremities seriously as real problems to be squarely faced. A filter of literature and literary precedent keeps them both from actual self-damage and from valid solution of their problems. In another way, they might be said to be the victims of a literary culture which has long since lost touch with reality but which still maintained its prestige and its psychological dominance amongst the educated, though many people were impatient with it." Equally wrong is Arrowsmith 1972, 317, who connects this obviously mimic play-acting with the recurrent motif of luxury-and-death in the novel.

[29] Cf. Xen.Ephes. III.5; Achil.Tat. III.20, V.7; Iambl. IV. On the topic of "Scheintod" in the ancient novel see Heinze 1899, 496-497; Wehrli 1965, 142-148.

[30] The text is from the Budé edition by J.-P. Garnaud (Paris, 1991).

[31] The translation is by John J. Winkler in Reardon (ed.) 1989, 219.

It is an instrument for theatrical performances by the Ὁμηρισταί, a group of actors whose performance Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus witnessed in Trimalchio's dinner-party (59.3-5).[32] The point here is not that Petronius is following a technique found in the Greek romances, which after all is traced back to the mimic theatre, but that he visualises the scene clearly as mimicam mortem (94.15), a farcical incident containing the motifs which were employed especially by the popular mimic stage;[33] similarly, the phrase dum haec fabula inter amantes luditur (95.1)[34] forms a direct suggestion to Petronius' audience to watch the scene in the same way as he conceived it: a mime - play.

The instant arrival of the deversitor cum parte cenulae[35] (95.1) signifies that a new stage in the development of events is going to begin. It is important to note that the deversitor for some reason understands that his tenants are playing the role of ebrii or fugitivi[36] who are lying down on the floor in a most undignified way (95.1).[37] His assumptions that they were planning to go away during the night to avoid paying the rent and his threats that he is not an unprotected vidua but M. Mannicius himself (95.3) have the pompous air of a domineering Plautine senex towards his cunning slave, and insult Eumolpus who, furious, starts beating him.

The ensuing fracas takes place outside the cella (95.5). The audience of the novel watches it through Encolpius' eyes who watches it through a hole in the door (per foramen valvae 96.1)! Thus the author structures his narrative according to the structure of a show staged before an audience: not only does the content

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[32] See Artemid. Oneir. IV.2; Athen. XIV.620b; cf. pages 136-137; page 137, note 202.

[33] See Davies 1971, 152 on mimic dances which endedwithsimilar mimic deaths; cf. Plut. Mor. 973E-974A, and the pretended death of the old husband in the Μοιχεύτρια - mime (66-68 Page).

[34] For fabula as a 'theatrical piece, a play' cf. Sat. 20.5; 59.3; Varro VI.55. For ludere as to 'represent a play' see Th.L.L., sub v., II.B.b.a.

[35] On the meaning of deversitor (95.1), insularii (95.8), procurator (96.7) see Rowell 1957, 222-224.

[36] We find the homo ebriatus in Laberius' Aulularia 23 (Bonaria) and Hetaera 66 (Bonaria). Also in Caecilius Statius, Imbrii 101/2 (Ribbeck). See above, page 71, note 68. The role of the fugitive person will be exploited later on in the mime of the "Fugitive Millionaire" Eumolpus sets up at Croton. The expression fugitivus servus occurs frquently as a term of abuse in Plautine comedy. Corbett 1970, 82 regards this incident as "pure knockabout farce in the Atellan tradition."

[37] foedissimam iacentium volutationem. Cf. Herod. V.30 μετ' ἧς ἀλινδῆι and see Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, ad loc.

of the scene develop as simple slapstick,[38] but also the actual setting becomes a theatrical stage, where Encolpius is simultaneously the audience of the brawl-show and part of a second show for the audience of the Satyrica, since he provides another amusing spectacle of a parallel fight between himself and Giton (96.2-4):

> Giton autem non oblitus misericordiae suae reserandum esse ostium succurrendumque periclitanti censebat. ego durante adhuc iracundia non continui manum, sed caput miserantis stricto acutoque articulo percussi. et ille quidem flens consedit in lecto.

'Giton, however, not forgetting his compassion, was thinking that we should open the door and run to the rescue of him who was in danger. As my anger still lasted, I did not restrain my hand, but with a tight and sharp knuckle I struck forcibly the head of one so compassionate. And, indeed, he sat on the bed crying.

The main scene with Eumolpus is a mimic battle, a caricature of a fight, as it is so popularly presented on the mimic stage;[39] the weapons are not reminiscent of an epic conflict but are appropriate to the burlesque of the situation: a small jug made of earthenware (urceolus fictilis 95.5), a candelabrum (95.6), a spit full of hissing intestines (veru extis stridentibus plenum 95.8) and a fork taken from the meat-rack (furca de carnario rapta 95.8).[40] A dog of enormous size (ingentis

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[38] Cf. Preston 1915, 262; Walsh 1970, 98.

[39] The physical violence reminds one of Μαχευτρια's ruthless orders in the Oxyrhynchus mime or of Βίτιννα's cruel desires in Herodas' Fifth mime or of similar Plautine staged quarrels. On mimic battles see Choricius, Apol. Mimorum 78 παίζουσι πόλεμον ἐνίοτε μῖμοι. On hitting as a basic type of clowning in Aristophanes see MacDowell 1988, 7. On pretended violence as source of amusement in Plautine comedies see Castellani 1988, 65-66. Preston 1915, 267 compares this rixa with the fight in Terence's Eunuchus, 771 ff. "though, with the reserve that is characteristic of comedy, in the Eunuchus the soldier and his followers stop short of blows." In fact, there is no real violence in the Sat.-passage as well. Eumolpus, in spite of the dreadful description of the fight through Encolpius' imaginative mind, has only a slight wound in his eyebrow (98.7)! Cf. the brawl in the opening scenes of the Amphitruo. Moering 1915, 15 draws attention to non-mimic texts in which a brawl takes place: Arist. Wasps, 254 ff; Knights, 411 ff., 1236; Axionicus in CAF II, page 414 Kock; Pl. Mil. 445, Amph. 408; Ter. Ad. 215, Cic. Ad Att. I.18.

[40] For this kind of weapons used in similarly comic brawls see below, page 232 and note 70.

magnitudinis 95.8) completes the list.[41] The people involved in the battle, the pars cenulae, namely coctores,[42] insularii, anus lippa[43] evoke Choricius' description of mime-characters.[44]

Attention should be drawn to another point which confirms a theatrical interpretation of the earlier rixa. Encolpius watches everything per foramen valvae and his reaction to the sight is favebamque ego vapulanti (96.1). Rowell has a rather amusing theory on the meaning of faveo in this passage:

> Encolpius is quite naturally using the word favere as it was used in connection with games or contests: to encourage a certain side or performer with shouting and applause. He is ironically playing the part of a fautor or 'fan' of Eumolpus who has descended into the arena and armed only with a wooden candlestick is pitting himself against the slaves, its drunken customers, and the tenants of the house ... We can almost hear his jeering words: euge, Eumolpe; caede, occide, iugla, iugla.[45]

The finale of the fracas-scene is signalled by another arrival, like the one which started the fight. Bargates, the manager (procurator), a pedibus aeger (96.4),[46] is carried in right into the brawl, perhaps angry at having being disturbed at his dinner (96.4). He recognises Eumolpus among the fighters (96.6) and addresses the rest of the crowd in the same theatrical terms that the deversitor used for Encolpius and Giton:

> rabiosa barbaraque voce in ebrios fugitivosque diu peroravit, ...

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[41] On dog-acts see Plut. De Sollert. Animal. 973E-974A, Laberius' Scylax (102) and Catularius (32-35) (Bonaria). Cf. Sandy 1974, 335, note 13; Balsdon 1969, 305; Bieber 1961, 137 and figure 497; Beare 1964, 155 and 319. Trimalchio's dog (64.7 ingentis formae) is surely in the same tradition.

[42] On the cook as a professional type in the Roman Comedy see above, page 119, note 143. He occurs also in Naevius 121 (Ribbeck); Laberius 145 (Ribbeck).

[43] Her extremely detailed description cannot be explained in any way other than that the author wants to point out precisely her figure as a stock-character in comedy. See Duckworth 1952, 254.

[44] See Choricius, Apol. Mimorum 110 (cited on page 14).

[45] Rowell 1957, 225. Cf. Hor. Epist. Lxviii.66; Tac. Annal. XIII.28; Suet. Tit. VIII.2. The OLD classifies this Petronian passage in the category of faveo, meaning 'approve of'. So does the Th.L.L. which gives, though, a list of passages speciatim de studio speculatorum. On Encolpius' speculative and amusing exhortations to Eumolpus see ILS (ed. H. Dessau) II.1, 5134 and Campanile 1964, 117. For an opposite view see Bornmann 1963, 4-5, who suspects a lacuna between favebamque ego and vapulanti.

[46] Bargates suffers from Eumolpus' theatrical illness (cf. 140.6).

'in a frenzied and uncivilised voice he pleaded against drunkards and runaway slaves for a long time'. (96.5)

Bargates' sudden appearance reinforces the slapstick tone of the incident by increasing the number of people on stage. This is not, however, the end of the hero's sentimental problems, for, when, in the next scene of this mimic interlude, both his rivals will demand to take Giton away from him, Encolpius will have to stage an adultery-mime in order to deceive them.

CHAPTER NINE.
MIMICUM MOECHIMONIUM: *SAT*. 97.1-99.4.

Both Roman novelists have employed the subject of adultery in ‑ ... the Milesian tales included in their novels,[1] in order to show that

no man's honesty and no woman's virtue are unassailable.[2]

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that this motif occurs as the theme of a mime-episode in the passages 97-99 of the novel which do not constitute a Milesian tale.

Encolpius' pleasure in Eumolpus' sufferings did not last long. In fact, the situation turns against him now that an announcer with a municipal slave and quite a large number of people (praeco cum servo publico aliaque sane <non> modica frequentia), among whom Ascyltus makes a threatening re-appearance, enters the stabulum to look for Giton (97.1). The point of focus through which Encolpius watches all these events is still the hole on the door (foramen valvae) of 96.1; the theatrical structure, therefore, of the scene is still valid and continues up to 97.7, where the action is transferred again inside the cella.

Ascyltus' arrival is described by Encolpius in quite an unusual way: the frequentia is <non> modica, the fax produces smoke rather than light, the praeco[3] does not simply announce but shouts his message (proclamavit 97.1); Ascyltus comes in last, dressed in a multicoloured garment (amictus discoloria veste 97.3), which probably gets dirty from the smoky air, and offers the mille nummos of the reward for Giton's detection on a lanx argentea (97.3). The change in his financial condition is, perhaps, due to his recent aquaintance with the infamis eques Romanus (92.10), but all the details create the impression of a smoky, dirty, noisy, disreputable, though spectacular sight, rather than the vengeful return of the rival - 'husband'.

The situation calls for immediate action on the part of Encolpius, who takes the initiative to stage-direct and play the leading role in a farce. While Ascyltus wanders through all the rooms along with an official agent (pererravit omnes cum viatore cellas 97.7), Encolpius orders Giton

> ut raptim grabatum subiret annecteretque pedes et manus institis, ... extentus infra grabatum scrutantium eluderet manus.

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[1] Petr. Sat 111-112; Apul. Met. 9.5 ff., 9.14 ff., 9.17 ff., 9.26 ff. See Walsh 1970, 13 ff., 167.

[2] See Walsh 1970, 11 who refers to Abbott 1911, 265.

[3] Rosenblüth 1909, 50 notes that the role of an announcer was a favourite imitation of the farcical theatre and quotes Pl. *Stichus*, 218 ff.

> to get under the bed quickly and attach his feet and hands to the
> bands ..., so that, stretched out under the bed, he could escape from
> the hands of those who were searching. (97.4)

The bed functions as a stage-prop in this outrageous farce.[4] It was used earlier for Encolpius' attempt to hang himself (94.8). It will be used at 140.7 as a place of control under which the slave Corax will place himself and conduct the farcical intercourse between his master Eumolpus and Philomela's daughter. It is used now as a hiding-place in a most peculiar way: people can hide themselves under the bed, but not in the way Encolpius asked Giton to do! Although this extraordinary trick is meant to create an Homeric atmosphere, we shall see that the overall frame of events ridicules any intellectual pretensions and shows Petronius' theatrical parody of acclaimed literary texts at its best.

Despite the textual problems,[5] the similarities with the well-known Odyssean context (ι 425 ff.) are obvious and have already been pointed out by scholars.[6] The setting, however, of the scene is not to be sought in the mythological world of the *Odyssey*, but in the mimic presentation of ordinary everyday life: the husband returns home unexpectedly. His wife is in bed with another man. The lover must hide himself in a safe place and the wife must deceive the husband, as best she can, in order to avoid arousing suspicions. The analogies of this situation with the behaviour of the homosexual trio are apparent. I shall return to the distribution of roles later on. Although the adultery-

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[4] Cf. Chrysost. 6.558 = Migne *P.G.* lvi. 543: οὐ δέδοικας, ἄνθρωπε, τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τὴν κλίνην· τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς ὀρχήστρας βλέπων, ἔνθα τὰ μυσαρὰ τελεῖται τῆς μοιχείας δράματα, καὶ τὴν τράπεζαν ταύτην τὴν ἱεράν, ἔνθα τὰ φρικτὰ τελεῖται μυστήρια;

[5] The crux in 97.4 (ac sic ut olim Ulixes †pro† arieti adhaesisset,) remains, I think, still unsolved. For a summary of the suggestions and a new possible reading see La Penna 1983, 123-124, who suggests prono arieti. Warmington (ed.) 1975, 228, note 2 defends the transmitted text without any interpolations, but argues for a misplacement of certain words. His final reading: ac sic ut olim Ulixes adhaesisset extentus infra grabatum pro ariete ("under the bed in place of a ram") scrutantium eluderet manus.

[6] Collignon 1892, 317 is, as usual, the first. On the systematic parody of *Odyssey* 9-12 in *Sat.* 97 ff. see Courtney 1991, 45. Cf. Rankin 1969(a), 115-116: "This is a piece of bluff, since Giton is hiding in the mattress all the time, but the theatrical manner of the offer recalls the fantasy (if that is what it is) that is involved in the earlier attempts at self-destruction, and the allusions to the Cyclops cave episode in the *Odyssey* give colour to the fantastic element (97.5-6)." Gagliardi 1980, 104, note 38 speculates that there may have been a mime which dealt with this Odyssean scene, and that from this mime Petronius derived the idea for Giton's hiding-place.

setting of the episode is clearly underlined by the author, the epic reference of the text should not be by any means underestimated. This episode presents a good example of Petronius' usual methods: he dresses the low-life adventures of his novel with eminent literary garments in order to make the contrast between reality and illusion a comic device, derived from the popular sub-literary mime.[7] The scene in question is clearly a mimic travesty of the Homeric text, for the brave and cunning Ulysses is personified by the effeminate Giton who is eventually tracked down in a miserable, rather than heroic, condition:

> remota etiam culcita videt Ulixem, cui vel esuriens Cyclops potuisset parcere.[8]
> 'when the stuffed mattress was moved back too, he sees a Ulysses whom even a starving Cyclops would have been able to spare. (98.5)

As long as the theatre of the mime existed, adultery was one of its most popular subjects, although it was stigmatised as a cause of moral degeneracy even from Cicero's time.[9] We do not know anything specific about the structure or plot of these mimes. Speculations have been made that an adultery-mime

> regarded in its barest form ... may have consisted of a single scene ... which was placed indoors, perhaps in the woman's bedroom; ... It began with the two lovers on the stage. On the entry of her husband, the woman concealed her paramour in the chest, where he stayed until he was almost smothered ... At last he was discovered, and the three characters appeared on the stage together for the denouement.[10]

Variations on the development of the plot were surely made according to the initiatives of the principal actors. Neologisms, such as moechimonium, adulterio, adulteritas, referring to adultery in a Laberius - fragment (*ex inc. fab.* XVII Ribbeck),

[7] For this contradiction see Sandy 1969, 293-303.

[8] See Rosenblüth 1909, 44.

[9] Testimonia on the adultery-mime are conveniently provided by Reynolds 1946 and Kehoe 1984. They range from the first century B.C. to the sixth century of the Christian era: Laberius, *Compitalia* 33-35; Hor., *S.* II.vii.53 ff.; Ovid, *Tristia* II.497-514; Sen. *Contr.* II.4; Juv. *S.* VI.41-44 and VIII.196-197; Tertul. *Apol.* 15; Minuc. Felix, *Octav.* XXXVII.12; Lampridius, *Heliog.* XXV.4; Salvianus, *De Gub. Dei* VI.(3).19; John Chrysost. *P.G.* lvi.543 and lvii.72; Choric. *Apol. Mim.* 30-35. Cf. Beare [3]1964, 156; Duckworth 1952, 15; McKeown 1979, 72 and 80, note 8 and 10. Adultery was also a subject in the phlyax-vases: see Olivieri (ed.) 1930, 160.

[10] Reynolds 1946, 81; Kehoe 1984, 106 speaks of a still more elaborate presentation of the subject, in which more persons (e.g., slaves) and additional scenes (e.g., the agreement between the lover and the mistress' maid) were included.

show that fun was made of the subject both in plot and in language through puns.

The most detailed description of an adultery mime, given by an ancient non-theatrical text, is in Ovid, *Tristia* II.497-514. He bitterly complains about his unfair banishment, and puts forth as an argument for the righteousness of his works the fact that adultery-mimes are incredibly obscene and yet so popular:

> quid, si scripsissem mimos obscena iocantes,
> > qui semper vetiti crimen amoris habent
> in quibus assidue cultus procedit adulter,
> > verbaque dat stulto callida nupta viro?   500
> nubilis hos virgo matronaque virque puerque
> > spectat, et ex magna parte senatus adest.
> nec satis incestis temerari vocibus aures;
> > adsuescunt oculi multa pudenda pati:
> cumque fefellit amans aliqua novitate maritum   505
> > plauditur et magno palma favore datur;
> quoque minus prodest, scaena est lucrosa poetae,
> > tantaque non parvo crimina praetor emit.
> inspice ludorum sumptus, Auguste, tuorum:
> > empta tibi magno talia multa leges.   510
> haec tu spectasti spectandaque saepe dedisti
> > (maiestas adeo comis ubique tua est)
> luminibusque tuis, totus quibus utitur orbis,
> > scaenica vidisti lentus adulteria.[11]

'Suppose I' d written mimes whose wit is bawdy,
> where guilty love illicit always thrives -
The spruce adulteress for ever strutting,
> and silly husbands fooled by cunning wives.   500
Girls growing up and mothers, husbands, children
> watch, and a large part of the Senate's there.
It's not enough to outrage *ears* with filthy
> talk, many shocking sights eyes too must bear.
A lover whose new trick deceives a husband   505
> is clapped and with great cheers is given the prize;
The worse the act the more the poet's profit;
> such guilt at no small cost the Praetor buys.
Examine, Caesar, your own game's expenses:

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[11] For brief comments and parallels to this passage see Luck (ed.) 1977, ad loc.

such things at high cost bought will meet your eyes.   510
You have watched these things yourself and often staged them
- so gracious is your majesty -
And your own eyes, from which the whole world profits,
have calmly gazed at staged adultery.'[12]

A careful comparison of Ovid's description of adultery-mimes and Encolpius' narration of his experiences in this section of the novel shows that the Petronian scene is a scaenicum adulterium. There are three main characters in the scene, and three in the adultery-mime: the cultus adulter, the callida nupta and the stultus / stupidus vir (lines 499-500).[13] Giton becomes the cultus adulter. His intellectual as well as physical graces were praised by both Eumolpus and Encolpius in the past (92.3; 93.4). He is the one who hides himself under the bed in such a way that 'he beat Ulysses with equal cunning' (Ulixem astu simillimo vicit 97.5).[14] Whereas a usual adulter has to face possible death by suffocation by hiding in a chest,[15] if he does not want to be caught by the husband, Giton has to hold his breath in an open-air hiding-place (98.4) and to endure the bugs (sciniphes 98.1). Encolpius is the callida nupta who not only finds a perfect hiding-place for her lover but deceives her husband in a clearly theatrical way:

> ego ne suspicioni relinquerem locum, lectulum vestimentis implevi uniusque hominis vestigium ad corporis mei mensuram figuravi.

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[12] The translation is by Melville 1992, 39-40.

[13] I owe this classification to Reynolds 1946, 82. It is based on the characters taken from the actual Latin texts.

[14] Cf. the aliqua novitate in Ovid, Trist. II.505. Walsh 1970, 99 rightly comments: "These literary references are of the banal kind appropriate to the narrative equivalent of the low stage." Bieber 1961, 10, figure 30 shows a vase of a satyr-drama performance: Odysseus and companions are about to blind the Cyclops. Perhaps there followed a scene in which they escaped from his cave. On the comic manner in which Odysseus' escape from the Cyclops' cave may have been portrayed by Greek comedy writers see Garassino 1930, 243-247. Epicharmus wrote a Cyclops and Kratinos an Odysseis but the most farcical treatment of Odysseus' escape is in Arist. Wasps, 180 ff. On the comic Odysseus vs. Cyclops see, also, Phillips 1959, 61 and 64. Preston 1915, 267 notes that the comic use of hiding-places was a familiar τόπος in Attic comedy as well, and refers to Xenarchus 4K: 9-11 μὴ κλίμακα στησάμενον εἰσβῆναι λάθρᾳ / μηδὲ δι' αὐτῆς κάτωθεν εἰσδῦναι στέγης / μηδ' ἐν ἀχύροισιν εἰσενεχθῆναι τέχνῃ.

[15] See Juv. VI. 44 quem totiens texit perituri cista Latini? and cf. Duff (ed.) 1970, ad loc. Also, Hor. S. II.vii.59-61: an turpi clausus in arca, / quo te demisit peccati conscia erilis, / contractum genibus tangas caput?; Apul. Met. IX.24. For more parallels on the topic de homine sub cista celato see Bonaria (ed.) 1965, 223.

'In order not to leave any space for suspicions, I filled the small bed with clothes, and formed the shape of a single person according to the measure of my body.' (97.6)

... ut fidem haberent fictae preces, ...

'... to give credence to my hypocritical appeals, ...' (97.9)

In a moving monologue he pretends to long for Giton's return and even agrees to offer himself a victim to Ascyltus' iracundia (97.9), if only he showed him his companion (ostenderet fratrem 97.9). Encolpius' offer of his neck for slaughter in a Euripidean manner[16] is an exact copy of Giton's convincing play-acting earlier on (80.3-4; cf. 94.9-11; 108.10), and for this reason it fools Ascyltus, the stupidus vir, who, sometime later in the text, leaves the room without suspecting anything. The comic tone of this tragicomoedia is given by the municipal slave (servus publicus), who searches even the holes on the walls (omniaque etiam foramina parietum scrutatur 98.1), in case he finds Giton there.[17] Encolpius continues to play a tragic role even when Eumolpus, the second rival and, therefore, another stultus vir, appears intending to give Giton away to the praeco (98.2). Encolpius pretends again to be once more the deserted lover and challenges Eumolpus to find Giton and give him back to Ascyltus (98.3). The highly sentimental tone of his words together with his position as a suppliant (98.3), another theatrical posture, would definitely deceive Eumolpus as well, if only Giton, unable to hold his breath any longer (collectione spiritus plenus 98.4), had not sneezed three times continuously, shaken the bed (ter continuo ita sternutavit ut grabatum concuteret 98.4) and revealed his hiding-place.

What happens if the husband finds out where the lover is hiding?[18] Horace, S. II.vii.59-60 and 68-69, supposes that the lover escapes unnoticed and that he even returns to the faithless wife. On the other hand, he asks (61-63):

estne marito / matronae peccantis in ambo iusta potestas? / in corruptorem vel iustior.

'Has not the husband of the erring wife a just power over both of them? And over the seducer even a more just one?'

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[16] See Eurip. *Iphig. at Aulis*, 1560 ff. On Encolpius' imitations of the style of the person to whom he is referring at the time see George 1966, 350 ff.

[17] This is humour of the absurd type in the Plautine tradition: in *Amph.* 432 Sosia believes that Mercury was hidden inside the jug of wine he was drinking from, when he was in the tavern. In *Epid.* 22-23 Epidicus assumes that his master had been carried inside a bag or a purse.

[18] See Kehoe 1984, 105-106.

Ovid, *Tristia* II.505-506, seems to imply that the play reached its end before this meeting between husband and lover took place or that it did not happen at all. Juvenal, *S.* I.35-36 makes the husband turn a blind eye to the whole affair, because he is bribed by the wife and the lover. Apuleius, *Met.* IX.28 describes the revenge of the husband on his wife by enjoying the lover himself as well. Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 54 takes the couple to court but there is a happy ending despite the threats of the judge (30). Petronius follows a way similar to that of Apuleius: the lover-Giton takes care of the 'husband'-Eumolpus. His kind treatment is subtle and sensational (98.7). Exaggerated statements and heart-breaking confessions take place (98.8-9), tears run in abundance, repentance and forgiveness succeed one another (99.2).[19] Among these confessions Giton defines their next role, which will be exploited further by the author in the scene on board Lichas' ship:

> Pater carissime, in tua sumus custodia.
>
> Dearest father, we are in your custody. (98.8)

Ascyltus will not appear again in the surviving parts of the novel. The three main personae will continue their adventures from now on as a patron and his two wards. Encolpius does not forget to add the appropriate sententia to the whole episode, similar to those of Publilius Syrus,[20] and the scene ends with a happy kiss![21]

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[19] Cf. Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 110 (on mime-actors): Τίς δὲ οὐκ ἂν ἀπείποι καταλέγειν ἐπιχειρῶν ὅσα μιμοῦνται; ... νεανίσκον ἐρῶντα, θυμούμενον ἕτερον, ἄλλον τῷ θυμουμένῳ πραΰνοντα τὴν ὀργήν.

[20] similiter in pectoribus ira considit: feras quidem mentes obsidet, eruditas praelabitur (99.3). Cf. P. Syri *Sent.* (75) (ed. Friedrich): Bonum ad virum cita mors est iracundiae. Walsh 1970, 99, note 1 mentions Seneca as the target of this sententia. Cf. also Eumolpus' sententia: tanto magis expedit inguina quam ingenia fricare (92.11).

[21] *Sat.* 99.4 ecce etiam osculo iram finio. Cf. also Choric. *Apol. Mimorum*, 30 ἐπεὶ δὲ ὅλον παιδιά τίς ἐστι τὸ χρῆμα, τὸ πέρας αὐτοῖς εἰς ᾠδήν τινα καὶ γέλωτα λήγει. Πάντα γὰρ εἰς ἀναψυχὴν μεμηχάνηται καὶ ῥᾳστώνην.

CHAPTER TEN.
MIMICUM NAUFRAGIUM: *SAT*. 99.5-115.20.
I.

The sea-trip, which usually ends up with a shipwreck or with an attack by pirates, occurs in almost all of the surviving Greek romances, causing misfortunes for the heroes and enjoyment for the readers of the novels.[1] The reason for these trips is not always justified by the author or the narrator, and in such cases the audience of the novel simply accepts -or, rather, expects- its introduction in the plot as a narrative device for more adventures and entertainment to come. This is the case in Petronius' novel. The reason for the voyage is not apparent from the text. After the mimic interlude at the inn (92.1-99.4), where Encolpius, the anti-hero of the novel, and his lover, Giton, had rented a room, the two hustlers entrust themselves to the custody (*custodia* 98.8) of Eumolpus, the manic poetaster, who will accompany them until the end of the novel's surviving fragments. The latter, having previously decided to take a sea-journey at some time, suggests in a rather casual manner (99.4):

> itaque, quod bene eveniat, expedite sarcinulas et vel sequimini me vel, si mavultis, ducite.

> 'well then, may everything turn out well; prepare your belongings and either follow me or, if you prefer, lead the way'.

Eumolpus' instruction suggests that Encolpius and Giton have already agreed to embark with him. A knock at the door signals the beginning of the episode on board Lichas' ship: it is a fierce sailor bidding them to hurry, but the wording of the text *crepuit ostium impulsum* 'the door was pushed and creaked open' (99.5) reminds one of the typical formula *sed crepuit foris* which is used in comedy to announce the entrance of a new person on stage, who will advance the development of the plot.[2] The purpose of this chapter is to examine whether there are any theatrical elements in the events that take place during this trip, which can prove that the conventional voyage becomes in Petronius' hands an

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[1] See Fröhlke 1977, 50-54.

[2] Pl. *Amph.* 496; *Aul.* 665; *Bacch.* 234, 610, 1057; *Cas.* 163, 813, 874, 936; *Curc.* 486; *Men.* 348, 523; *Mil.* 154, 270, 328; *Most.* 1063; *Per.* 404; *Poen.* 741. Note that a similar knock opened other staged episodes in the novel: the Quartilla-scene (16.1) and the mimic interlude at the inn (92.1). Petronius seems to use conventional theatrical techniques to pass from one episode to another.

entertaining spectacle with the spirit of a low theatrical piece.[3]

II.

The nature of a sea-trip itself, inserted as one event in a series of adventures in a novel, inclines one to think that it can take place only in non-theatrical texts, where its description can be achieved through narration and not through actual representation on stage. Thus, it seems almost certain, at first sight, that Petronius' inspiration for this episode is either the Greek romance or other literary narrative, such as epic or folk-tales.[4] Attention should be drawn, however, to the connection of the motif of sea-adventures with the stage.

One of the earliest and most notable examples of a sea-trip on stage is in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where the spectator witnesses the introduction of a ferry,[5] which belongs to Charon, and the brief journey of Dionysus in this boat, while the two characters are sailing on the waters of Styx *en route* to the Underworld. Although it is made clear that Dionysus embarks at line 190, and that both he and Charon disembark at 270, the questions of how the boat was brought into the orchestra and by what means the journey was made possible, remain open to the fertile imagination of each reader or stage-director. Whether the representation of the ferry (if, indeed, there was a vehicle at all) was a boat wheeled out on the *ekkyklema*, or brought on stage by the *mechane*, or was pushed by someone, or had wheels itself,[6] the fact remains that the theatrical soil could be easily transformed into water in the imagination of the audience,[7] and this abstract perception of the orchestral space enabled the poet (Aristophanes

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[3] Although Collignon 1892, 276-279 noticed some of the theatrical elements of this episode, it was Rosenblüth 1909, 48-49, who argued first, though briefly, for the interpretation of the scene as 'Der Mimus auf dem Schiffe'. Since then there has been no extant treatment of the whole episode from a theatrical point of view, but only occasional remarks, whose contribution to the staged character of the Petronian passages will be acknowledged during this chapter.

[4] See Heinze 1899, 508-512; cf. Rohde 1900, 178-209.

[5] For more (possible) representations of ships on stage see Epicharmus' Σειρῆνες Kaibel, and Phillips 1959, 62; Epicharmus' Ὀδυσσεὺς Ναυαγός, 105-106 Kaibel; Kratinos' Ὀδυσσῆς, 135-150 Kock, and Whittaker 1935, 182 ff.

[6] These tentative suggestions can be found in Bieber 1954, 280-281; Arnott 1962, 102-103; Dover 1972, 179-180; Dearden 1976, 172.

[7] It is sufficient that Dionysus himself says so in his answer to the wondering Xanthias (lines 181-182): Ξα. τουτὶ τί ἐστι; (pointing, perhaps, at the circular orchestra) Δι. τοῦτο; λίμνη νὴ Δία / αὕτη 'στὶν ἣν ἔφραζε, καὶ πλοῖόν γ' ὁρῶ.

was probably not the first to make use of such a stage-setting)[8] to exploit any kind of scenery that would be essential for his play's action.

Rudens is the only surviving Plautine comedy that has as its setting not house-fronts but a coast. The stage represents in the background a temple and a cottage, situated on the coast near Cyrene. The Plautine originality in the use of this scenery is that the sea is supposed to be visible to the actors: Daemones catches sight of Labrax and Charmides floating in the sea, and points to the right (148-149, 152, 154-157). With that device the audience visualises clearly what is *not* happening on the stage together with the characters of the play and at the actual time of the events -not afterwards through the narrative means of a monologue or a messenger speech. A clear example of this is contained in the lines 148-155, where Sceparnio, the slave, spots two girls in a boat, Palaestra and Ampelisca, and gives a vivid description of their struggle, interspersed with lively exclamations (164, 170, 177); one of them is cast out of the boat by the waves but manages to reach the shore and takes the road towards the cottage. The other leaps out of the boat, and makes her way out of the surf, but turns in the wrong direction. All this is seen by Sceparnio and dramatically narrated by him. Plautus does not mention the precise name of the Greek original on which his *Rudens* is based. A reference to Diphilus' name in relation to the setting of the scene (huic esse nomen urbi Diphilus Cyrenas voluit 'Diphilus wanted the name of this town to be Cyrene' 32) makes a strong case for assuming that he was the author of the Greek play, which presented, probably, similar scenery. Moreover, Plautus' *Vidularia*, of which only fragments are preserved, seems to suggest that the action here too takes place on the sea-coast and, perhaps, the same thing happened in its New Comedy Greek original.[9]

By Petronius' time the stage is occupied mainly by the popular theatre of the mimes, which was a dramatic representation of (usually) low life with a loose plot. Its repertory included realistic subjects from everyday-life handled in a grotesque manner.[10] When Seneca (*De Ira*, II.ii.4-5) speaks of the false grief of an audience when it watches the staged shipwrecks in the mimes, one assumes that both the trip and the shipwreck were also stock-motifs in these performances:

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[8] See Wilson 1974, 250-252.

[9] See Sonnenschein (ed.) 1891, Intro., xiii-xiv.

[10] See above, page 14.

movet mentes et atrox pictura et iustissimorum suppliciorum tristis aspectus; inde est quod adridemus ridentibus et contristat nos turba maerentium et effervescimus ad aliena certamina. Quae non sunt irae, non magis quam tristitia est quae ad conspectum mimici naufragii contrahit frontem, non magis quam timor, qui Hannibale post Cannas moenia circumsidente lectorum percurrit animos, ...

'A frightful picture and the grim sight of even the most fair punishments upset our minds: it is from this that we smile in response to those who smile at us, while a crowd of mournful people makes us depressed, and again we boil up with other people's quarrels. However, these feelings are no more anger, than that is gloom, which makes us frown when we watch the staged shipwrecks in the mimes, no more anger than that is fear, which passes through our minds when we read how Hannibal after Cannae surrounded the walls (of Rome) ...'

The philosophical view that Seneca expounds here is richly adorned with references to visual entertainment connected with the stage, and ought to be considered in conjunction with the evidence, put forth by Dio Cassius (LXI.12.2) and Tacitus (*Ann.* XIV.6), on the mechanical devices which produce such shipwrecks. Dio reports that Nero's scheme to kill his mother, Agrippina, by drowning was conceived when her plotters watched a performance in the theatre, in which a ship automatically split into two pieces, let out some wild animals, and then came together again so as to be able to float on water.[11] Dio characterizes this plot a 'tragedy' (τραγῳδίαν LXI.13.3) and Tacitus adds that Agrippina became suspicious of her alleged accident, because she compared the way her boat sank to similar automatic contrivances of the theatre (terrestre machinamentum).[12] In general, extravagant sea-spectacles were popular in artificial water constructions, and Martial affords remarkable accounts of such events which may have presented a ship sailing:

Lusit Nereidum docilis chorus aequore toto, / et vario faciles ordine pinxit aquas. / fuscina dente minax recto fuit, ancora curvo: / credidimus remum credidimusque ratem, / et gratum nautis sidus fulgere Laconum, / lataque perspicuo vela tumere sinu. / quis tantas liquidis artes invenit in undis? / aut docuit lusus hos Thetis aut didicit.

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[11] ναῦν ἰδόντες ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ διαλυομένην τε αὐτὴν ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς καί τινα θηρία ἀφεῖσαν, καὶ συνισταμένην αὖ πάλιν ὥστε καὶ ἐρρῶσθαι, τοιαύτην ἑτέραν ταχέως ἐναυπηγήσαντο.

[12] Roman technology had advanced considerably in order to stand up to popular demand for stunning visual effects during shows: see above, pages 124-125.

'A skilful band of Nereids played all over the sea, and with their
variable train embellished the yielding waters. There was a
threatening trident with a straight tooth, an anchor with a curved one:
we assumed the existence of an oar, and believed in a ship, and that
the Laconian star shone grateful to the seamen, and broad sails
became swollen in a manner visible to all. Who devised such great
skills in liquid waves? It was Thetis who either instructed or learned
herself those shows.[13]

One of the two extant fragments of the mimes that have come down to us
through the Oxyrhynchus papyri, namely the Χαρίτιον-mime, dated in the
second century A.D., offers one more interesting theatrical parallel.[14] The setting
represents the coast of a barbarian country, in which Χαρίτιον, the heroine of the
mime, was somehow carried off. The surviving fragment describes the way in
which she evaded the barbarians and their king with the help of her brother, his
friend, a buffoon slave and the rest of the crew which had come to her rescue.
Judging from the Plautine *Rudens*, we may argue that the employment of a
shore, instead of a house, as a stage-scene does not necessarily add anything
radically original in the staging-technique.[15] This mime, however, like its
Aristophanic predecessor introduces the impressive device of the actual
representation of a ship, which all the *personae* had boarded as they approached

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[13] Mart. *Spect.* XXVI. Gehman 1922, 100 comments, however, on this passage: "Probably no ship
was on the water, but it was left to the imagination of the spectators, the maidens being arranged in
such groups as readily to suggest a ship with its accessories. Some appear to have formed the
outline of the ship and swelling sails, while others were arranged in ranks like the oars and the
rowers. One band formed a trident, another a curved anchor, while two bore torches in their role of
the Dioscuri." Nevertheless, see Ippolito 1962, 1-14, and Traversari 1960, 57-61 and 107-117 on
mythological scenes presented spectacularly in orchestras full of water (lacunae) inside Roman
amphitheatres of late antiquity.

[14] See Grenfell and Hunt (edd.) 1903, 44-47, 50-55; Page (ed.) 1942, 336-349. For a line-by-line
interpretation of the Χαρίτιον see Knoke 1908, 15-30. A good musical and theatrical analysis of this
mime is in Rostrup 1915, 76-78. On possible influences upon it by certain situations in *Iphig. Taur.*,
Helen and *Cyclops* see Knoke 1908, 12-15. Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, which had similar
scenery, was exploited also by the phlyax-comedy: see Rhinthon, Ἰφιγένεια ἁ ἐν Ταύροις in Olivieri
(ed.) 1930, 129-130..

[15] Warnecke 1924, 499-501 was the first to detect similarities of plot and characters between
Plautus' *Rudens* and the Χαρίτιον-mime. Common elements with Petronius' novel are the
existence of a ship (*Rud.* 1013-1014; *P.Oxy.* 100) and the shipwreck (*Rud.* 69; 640 / *P.Oxy.* 18-
20).

the shore, that is the stage. Χαρίτιον bids her brother to hurry (lines 105-107 Page):

A. δεῦ[ρ', ἀδελφέ, θᾶσσον. (ἄρ') ἅπανθ' ἕτοιμα τυγχάν[ει;
Γ. πάντα γ[ά]ρ. τὸ πλοῖον ὁρμεῖ πλησίον. τί μέλλετε;
  σοὶ [λέ]γω, πρωρεῦ, παράβαλε δεῦρ' ἄγων τὴ[ν ναῦν ταχύ.

'Come, brother, quickly; is everything ready?'

'Yes, everything. The boat is approaching quickly. What are you waiting for? Hey you, helmsman, I am talking to you, bring the ship alongside here at once'.

And later on he asks: 'Are you all aboard?' And everybody cries: 'Aboard'.[16]

These pieces of evidence demonstrate that the stage was a possible source of inspiration for the learned Petronius along with other literary genres, since theatre not only employed aspects of a sea-trip (departure, shipwreck) but exploited them in a new manner.

III.

In order to underscore the aspects of role-playing and farcical comedy which take place in this part of his novel, Petronius transforms the main characters (Encolpius, Giton, Eumolpus, Lichas, and Tryphaena) into type-cast figures taken from the stage, so as to enable his audience to visualise the persons involved in terms of a list of Dramatis Personae in a theatrical piece. Anticipating the final intrigue which Encolpius and Giton, following Eumolpus' orders, performed in order to pass unnoticed by the wrathful Lichas and Tryphaena, we notice that they choose to appear disguised as bald, branded, fugitive slaves (103.1-4; cf. 106.1 nunc mimicis artibus petiti sumus 'now we have been attacked by means of farcical tricks'). The image they project resembles strikingly the comic figure of the fugitive slave (Pl. Cas. 952-953) and the actual mimic type of the bald-headed fool, mimus calvus or μωρὸς φαλακρός.[17]

The odd couple, Lichas and Tryphaena, are represented as Encolpius' and Giton's mortal enemies for some reasons probably described in a part of the lost text.[18] Their re-appearance in the plot is due to the recurrent motif of Fortune's power over the weak hero of the novel (100.3; 101.1), a topic favoured by the comic theatre, where the superiority of mere chance over the human mind and

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[16] Γ. ἔνδον ἐστὲ πάντες; Κοι(νῇ). ἔνδον. (110 Page).

[17] See above , page 51, note 38.

[18] See Sat.106.2; 113.2-3. Collignon 1892, 277, note 3 regards the possible adulterous relationship between Encolpius and Lichas's wife, Hedyle, as taken from the adultery-mimes.

the reversal of fortune provide dramatic plots with unexpected twists.[19] Lichas is a merchant captain by profession (101.4). This figure has a long history in the theatrical tradition. He occurs in the Χαρίτιον-mime, being ridiculed by the buffoon slave (lines 106-109 Page).[20] Battaros, the pander, in the second mime of Herodas, accuses Thales, the merchant captain (lines 1-6; 16-17), in a monologue before the court. The latter is supposed to have wronged the former by taking away one of his girls by force and without his consent (lines 24-25). The points that are emphasized in Battaros' speech about Thales' character are the latter's rudeness and aggressiveness. Although one suspects that the pimp exaggerates the facts to his own benefit, in ancient literary tradition the sailor-type is always presented as rowdy and disreputable, from Homer to Choricius of Gaza.[21] Eumolpus' statements about Lichas suggest, however, quite the contrary (101.4), and Lichas himself asserts: 'I am not cruel' (non sum crudelis 106.3), but there are many instances in which his behaviour is similar to that of his antecedent and posterior literary fellows (100.4; 105.9; 106.1; 108.6-7). Only three lines have survived from Caecilius Statius' comoedia palliata Nauclerus ('The Ship-owner') (cf. Menander's Ναύκληρος); it is hazardous, therefore, to risk any conclusions apart from the fact that its title probably shows the existence of a ship-owner-character. No further assumptions can be established with certainty.

But the most interesting testimony which proves that the gubernator was an actual comedy-character comes from Plautus. Blepharo, the ship-owner, makes a brief appearance in Amphitruo, 1035. In Miles Gloriosus 1176-1181, Pleusicles, the adulescens, is instructed by Palaestrio, the slave, to disguise himself as a ship-master in order to deceive Pyrgopolynices, the miles, and take Philocomasium, the soldier's concubine, away from him. The costume is

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[19] See above, page 45 and note 15.

[20] Γ. σοὶ [λέ]γω, πρωρεῦ, παράβαλε δεῦρ' ἄγων τὴ[ν ναῦν ταχύ.

A. ἐὰν ἐγὼ π[ρ]ώτως [ὁ κυβερνήτης Π] κελεύσω.

B. πάλι λαλεῖς, καταστροφεῦ;

ἀπο[λ]ίπωμεν αὐτὸν ἔξω καταφιλεῖν (τὸν) πύνδ[ακα.

[21] See Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro., xxxix-lx; Cunningham (ed.) 1971, 81. The first impression that the heroes and the audience of the novel get of Lichas' ship is created by the sailor with the bristling beard (99.5 barbis horrentibus nauta), perhaps one of those rogues (108.8) who are going to be involved in the fight on board later on (108.8-9). The detail of the straggly beard in the sailor's description foretells, I believe, the ensuing violence and the kind of people Encolpius and his friends are going to confront on board ship (cf. 104.5 furentes nautae): see Th.L.L., s.v. barba, I.1, page 1727 (nota plur. de uno homine valde barbato).

described in detail:

> quom extemplo hoc erit factum, ubi intro haec abierit, ibi tu ilico
> facito uti venias ornatu huc ad nos nauclerico;
> causeam habeas ferrugineam, [et] scutulam ob oculos laneam,
> palliolum habeas ferrugineum (nam is colos thalassicust),
> id conexum in umero laevo, exfafillato bracchio,
> praecinctus aliqui: adsimulato quasi gubernator sies;
> 'When this is done and after she has gone inside, then take care to
> come here in a ship-owner's costume; you should wear a rust-coloured hat
> and a woollen patch in front of your eye; you should also have a small
> rust-coloured cloak (for this colour is suitable to a seaman), fastened on your
> left shoulder and fitted with a girdle in some way, leaving the arm
> uncovered: pretend to be a ship's master'.

The point is not that Lichas is dressed exactly like that, but that the sailor is a stock-figure in the cast of the Roman plays.

Scholars have been trying to find the model which inspired Petronius to create his enigmatic Tryphaena. Several identifications with historical or fictitious persons have been made, depending upon the character's name or her beauty (101.5) or her connection in the novel with some kind of juridical case (100.7; 106.4).[22] On the other hand, she exhibits characteristics attributed to female roles in the theatre. She is as beautiful and luxurious (101.5) as any meretrix in a Roman Comedy; as ruthless and cruel (100.4) as the Jealous Woman in Herodas' Fifth Mime (lines 13-18); as decisive (108.10) and active (108.7) as Bacchis in Plautus' *Bacchides*, 35-39;[23] as tender (106.2; 109.8; 110.3; 113.1) and naive (105.11; 106.1) as Philaenium in *Asinaria*, 537; 542, and Philematium in *Mostell.* 214 ff.; as opportunist and materialistic (114.7) as Erotium in *Menaechmi*, 192. She is the one chosen to play the role of a herald (caduceator) (108.12-14) who will make a truce and bring to an end the fight on board, as if she performed a part in a tragedy (108.13-109.1): waving an olive-branch, shouting in a loud and excited voice, improvising on material taken from tragedy in mock-epic verses. Nevertheless, these similarities between Tryphaena's persona and some female theatrical figures should not shade or restrict other possible inspirations (historical or literary) which may have influenced Petronius'

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[22] See Baldwin 1976(a), 53-57; Verdière 1961, 551-558.

[23] See, in general, the whole dialogue between Bacchis and Pistoclerus (lines 35-108), where the meretrix uses all means to convince the hesitant adulescens to conspire with her against Cleomachus, the miles.

conception of her character (cf. e.g. the portraits of women in Horace, *S.* I.2). As is the case with most of the characters of this novel, Tryphaena's personality is a mixture of the literary and the real, a combination of life and literature, filtered through Petronius' exuberant imagination.

IV.

Looking at the development of the plot, we find Encolpius having boarded a ship with his lover and their new acquaintance. He meditates on the possible problems that Eumolpus' rivalry for Giton may cause, and tries (without success) to calm himself with philosophical generalisations of a Senecan kind (100.1-2).[24] His musings are interrupted by two familiar voices which sound off-stage and create panic in the hero (100.3-4): Encolpius is presented like a character in a play who hears or sees something outside the audience's visual area, and expresses his or her distress at the disastrous consequences which may emerge from that unexpected twist in the plot.[25] When they realise that they have boarded the ship of their worst enemy, the Tarentine Lichas, who happens (!) to be conveying Tryphaena, another enemy of theirs, to Tarentum, as under a sentence of banishment (100.7), both Encolpius and Giton react in an exaggerated way, appropriate to cheap melodrama: Encolpius is thunderstruck and exclaims against Fortune (101.1), Giton faints (101.1), and, when they recover slightly, they become formally Eumolpus' suppliants (101.2). Necessary explanations, which are not at all helpful in reconstructing the lost parts of the novel and the precise past relationship between the main characters and Lichas with Tryphaena, are given to the surprised Eumolpus (101.6), who,

> confusus ... et consilii egens iubet quemque suam sententiam promere (101.7) 'confused ... and at his wit's end, asks each one of them to bring forward their suggestions'.

After this exhortation, a long series of ridiculous scenarios and desperate schemes is introduced (and is overruled) by each of the three characters in order to get themselves out of this difficult situation. All of them could well be scenarios for mime-performances, since they exhibit the irrationally conceived, ridiculous trickery which can have no other effect than the amusement of the audience. It is significant to note that every suggestion has its own rejection, and that both of

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24 Cf. Sen. *Ep. Mor.* LXXIII.6-8. So Sullivan 1968(a), 194 ff.

25 See, for example, Ampelisca's monologue in Pl. *Rud.* 442-457, where she sees Labrax and Charmides, whom she thought dead, approaching towards her, and comments on the inconvenience that their arrival will bring to her companion, Palaestra, and herself.

them, that is, the suggestion and the rejection, constitute a beginning and an end of an imaginary mime-performance. This thesis is reinforced if one notices that the verbs finge and puta occur four times at the beginning of these suggestions (101.7; 101.11; 102.11; 102.15), and induce the audience of the novel to conceive them in terms of play-acting and the stage.[26] One can easily visualise that the setting represents a quiet corner in the deck of a ship (100.6). The main characters are two runaway slaves (fugitivi 101.6), Encolpius and Giton, and their protector (custos 98.8), Eumolpus.

The disposition of these scenarios in the surviving text is as follows:

1. 101.7 (suggested by Eumolpus) / 101.8 (rejected by Giton).

2. 101.8 (suggested by Giton) / 101.9-11 (rejected by Eumolpus).

3. 102.1-2 (suggested by Encolpius) / 102.3-7 (rejected by Eumolpus).

4. 102.8-9 (suggested by Eumolpus) / 102.10-12 (rejected by Encolpius).

5. 102.13 (suggested by Encolpius) / 102.14-15 (rejected by Giton).

6. 102.16 (suggested by Giton) / 103.1 (rejected by Eumolpus).

7. 103.1-2 (suggested by Eumolpus) / 103.3-4 (accepted and performed).

Eumolpus' assimilation of their situation with that of Ulysses in the cave of the Cyclops ('fingite' inquit 'nos antrum Cyclopis intrasse' ' "imagine" he said "that we have entered the Cyclops' cave".' 101.7),[27] apart from being one more reference to the Homeric element in the novel, is the usual sophisticated Petronian device of role-playing.[28] This image, however, of themselves being shut inside the

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[26] See Sandy 1974, 345; and the discussion of these passages in Collignon 1892, 278-279 who concludes thus: "Cè morceau, écrit avec beaucoup de verve, pourrait bien être une pointe contre l' invraisemblance de certains déguisements de ce genre dans la comédie ou le mime."

[27] Sandy 1974, 344 notes that "the Odyssey seems to have provided material for many a piece of low comedy" and refers to Aristoxenus, apud Ath. 1.19F (= frg. 135 ed. F. Wehrli) who "includes Κύκλωψ τερετίζων and Ὀδυσσεὺς σολοικίζων as themes in the repertoire of the γελωτοποιοί." See also Sandy 1974, 345 and note 3 for more Homeric play-acting in the novel.

[28] See Walsh 1970, 95. Rosenblüth 1909, 44, considers the passage as "literarische parodie des Mimus" of Ulysses' saga. Fedeli 1981(a), 161-174, and, especially, 1981(b), 91-117, rightly connects this phrase with the Homeric element and the Labyrinth-motif in the novel; his conclusions, however, are highly unlikely since he seeks to find in this sea-trip "il motivo della purificazione e dell' iniziazione dell' eroe attraverso la prova: il continuo vagare di Encolpio in luoghi labirintici rappresenta la condizione necessaria perché, superata la serie di prove, egli sia mondato dalle sue colpe e plachi l' ira divina." (page 116). Interestingly enough, Ferri 1988, 311-315 regards this scene as influenced more by the later Euripidean theatre (Iphigen. Taur., Helen and, especially, the farcical Cyclops) than by the Homeric epic.

Cyclops' cave foretells only partly what is going to happen at the end, because, although the Cyclops-Lichas is going to be defeated eventually, as is the case in the Homeric text, he is not going to be deceived by their clever stratagems but by what he always revered: Fate and the Gods! In order to save themselves, Eumolpus and his young protégés must become the cunning king of Ithaca and his comrades, but the general impression is more of a ridiculous caricature of Odysseus' crafty mind. Nevertheless, under the guise of a πολύτροπος ἀνήρ they are eachgoing to propose means of escape (effugia 101.7).

It is a comic reversal of the characters' and the audience's expectations that it is the first hypothetical situation (101.7), suggested by Eumolpus[29] in a most desperate and improbable manner, that will be the actual iter salutis 'way to salvation' (102.13)[30] for the three friends at the end, that is, in the shipwreck. There is no need to obelize ponimus at 101.7, for if it is taken in the sense of 'staging a play', it reinforces the argument for a theatrical interpretation of the scene.[31] Thus it becomes apparent that it is Eumolpus' intention to *stage* a shipwreck, in other words to create a mimicum naufragium. This instruction, introduced in the manner of a stage-direction, becomes a hint for the audience of the novel to perceive the forthcoming events as theatrical δρώμενα.

The second plot is a more elaborate one (101.8). The custos, in order to save the fugitivi, should persuade the gubernator to run the boat into some harbour. He would pay the helmsman well and use as an excuse that his brother is seasick and about to die. Giton provides even the necessary directions for the actor's expression (without any doubt, taken from his own repertoire):[32] the custos should look confused, shedding plenty of tears (101.8) so that the helmsman will be moved and indulge his demands. The funny turn in the plot, if it was ever performed on stage, would be either that the captain would demand to see the sick person and so, actually, recognise him, or that everyone would want to give

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[29] Sandy 1974, 344 underlines Eumolpus' prominence in this series of amusing theatrical ruses and connects it with his professional association with the stage in the past. The reader must also note that Eumolpus will be responsible for the mimic scheme at Croton (117.4 ff.).

[30] One would think that Petronius was echoing deliberately by his expressions iter salutis (102.13) and hoc ergo remedio (102.13), the Publilian apophthegm Nil turpe ducas pro salutis remedio [Sent 423 (Friedrich)].

[31] See Watt 1986, 181. This rare sense of ponere occurs in a letter of Pollio in Cic. Fam. X.32.3 (ludis praetextam...posuit) and in Persius, S. V.3 (fabula seu maesto ponatur hianda tragoedo). See also page 122, note 151.

[32] See above, pages 35-36 and note 25; page 199; and below, page 233, note 74.

a helping hand to the poor sick man, even if he had his head covered, and, thus, would realise the fake.

Encolpius in a moment of despair decides to risk everything. He and Giton will slip down a rope into a boat and leave the rest to luck (102.1-2). According to a 'moralising' Petronian sententia, composed in the manner of those by Publilius Syrus, the mimographer,[33] Eumolpus is left out of this risky plan (102.2). The plan would fail because they would be discovered by the sailor guarding the small boat (102.5). A farcical fight[34] would then follow during which the sailor would have to be killed or thrown out by force (102.5). Eumolpus retreats before such a perspective, preferring dangers which offer a chance of safety (102.6-7) to those wholly dependent upon chance (102.3). The irony, of course, is that it is chance which will save them at the end.

The next plot comes from history. Plutarch gives a clear description of Cleopatra's device to meet Julius Caesar secretly by wrapping herself inside a mattress.[35] Eumolpus has the similar idea of rolling Encolpius and Giton inside two leather covers, tying them up and hiding them among his clothes as luggage (102.8).[36] The next stage of the trick would be to start crying that his slaves have escaped by throwing themselves in the sea. Finally, at the first harbour he would carry off the two wrapped-up bodies as baggage (102.9). This trick is an excellent example of how the theatre of the mimes may have employed and exploited to the point of ridicule material from history or mythology.[37] A male Cleopatra in a Petronian mime-performance, once being wrapped up, would start having stomach-problems (102.10), would sneeze or snore (102.10), would complain about the inconvenient situation he got himself into (102.12)! The mimic spirit is clear in this comic distortion of actual facts, as well as in the distribution of roles and the reversal of the role-playing: Eumolpus, who plays

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[33] Cf. Publ. Syrus 84 (Boni est viri etiam in morte nulli imponere; cf. imponi at 104.2) in Friedrich (ed.) 1964.

[34] See below, page 233, notes 70 and 71.

[35] Plutarch, Caesar, XLIX. 1-2: Κἀκείνη παραλαβοῦσα τῶν φίλων Ἀπολλόδωρον τὸν Σικελιώτην μόνον, εἰς ἀκάτιον μικρὸν ἐμβᾶσα τοῖς μὲν βασιλείοις προσέσχεν ἤδη συσκοτάζοντος· ἀπόρου δὲ τοῦ λαθεῖν ὄντος ἄλλως, ἡ μὲν εἰς στρωματόδεσμον ἐνδῦσα προτείνει μακρὰν ἑαυτήν, ὁ δὲ Ἀπολλόδωρος ἱμάντι συνδήσας τὸν στρωματόδεσμον εἰσκομίζει διὰ θυρῶν πρὸς τὸν Καίσαρα.

[36] Fuchs 1959, 75, note 23 parallels this passage with Arist. Ach. 926-928 where Dicaeopolis attempts to pack an informer in a litter so as not to be seen.

[37] See above, page 10, note 6.

Apollodorus, will hide Encolpius and Giton, who together play Cleopatra, in order, not to *meet* Lichas, who plays Caesar, but to *avoid* him!

Encolpius' next suggestion, apart from mentioning the basic ingredient for the final trick (that is, the atramentum, 'ink',102.13), introduces a major element in the theatrical tradition of comic devices: the disguise. It can be traced back to Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousai*, but the Roman stage does not lack references either. The motif occurs in the native Italian drama and in both the fabula togata and fabula palliata. Two fragments (*Kalendae Martiae*, 53-55 Frassinetti; *Macci Gemini*, 61-64 Frassinetti) and one title (*Maccus Virgo*) from the surviving fabulae Atellanae written by L. Pomponius, and one more line (*Epistula*, 120 Daviault) from a fabula togata written by Afranius,[38] give hints for the existence of the motif, which was exploited in a more elaborate way in Plautus' *Casina*, 875-936. In all of these passages, a man is dressed, for some reason, as a woman (sometimes a bride) and even tries to soften his voice in an effeminate manner. The trick is meant to fail so that funnier situations will amuse the audience (*Macci Gemini*, *Casina*).[39] In the *Sat.* the proposed role is that of Aethiopian slaves (102.13) and will be achieved by dyeing themselves with ink.[40] To this extraordinary solution, which nevertheless may well be used in an actual stage-performance, Giton sarcastically adds the possibilities of circumcision, piercing the ears and painting the face with chalk; thus they will appear as Jews, Arabs and Gauls (102.14), respectively.[41] What follows is an exaggerated distortion of the disguise-motif: in a long series of three hypothetical conditions (102.15) and six rhetorical questions (102.15), Giton uses the theatrical motif to the point of ridiculing its function and actual essence. His train of thought is supported by a mock-philosophical axiom (tamquam ... non multa una

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[38] See Daviault's note, 1981, 173.

[39] Other examples of disguise in Plautus are: Pleusicles in a captain's costume (*Mil.* 1281-1330); a swindler in a large hat and appropriate costume for his purpose (*Trinum.* 843-860); Simia in a military costume (*Pseud.* 911 ff.); Sagaristio and his daughter have been dressed suitably in order to pass off as Persian messenger and Persian girl, respectively: he wears a tiara (*Persa*, 463) and she small boots (ibid., 464); Collybiscus pretends to be a foreigner, so he appears dressed like one (*Poen.* 577, 620). See Preston's remarks, 1915, 267.

[40] In Plautus' *Poenulus*, Hanno is a Carthaginian foreigner and the playwright takes care to make him appear as such (975, 981).

[41] According to Thompson 1989, 62-72, Giton represents here "a perceptual context in which a black skin alone did not qualify a person for membership of the category *Aethiops*." (page 62).

oporteat consentiant, ut omni ratione mendacium constet 102.14). The comic irony is very subtle: Giton disputes the exaggerated role-playing with which he is so well acquainted. On the other hand, there may be hidden in this accusation a sarcastic Petronian criticism of actual mimic performances where similar devices were employed.

Melodrama comes next. In a crazy mood, Giton suggests enveloping their heads in their clothes and plunging into the deep (102.16). Apart from being sentimental and inappropriate in the mind of a Roman (ut vos tam turpi exitu vitam finiatis 'so that you may end your lives in such a disgraceful manner' 103.1), this ending reminds one of the sudden and unfinished endings of a mime-performance when the plot has come to a deadlock (cf. the violent exit of the actors mentioned in Cic. *Pro Caelio*, 65).

In the final scheme, which they will eventually follow, two elements, in particular, are highly likely to have been adapted by Petronius from the theatre of the mime: the shaving of the head and the branding of the forehead. I have already mentioned that baldness was a usual characteristic of a mime, adding more of the ridiculous to the expressions of the face and the body.[42] Petronius brings this feature to an extreme, since Eumolpus' mercennarius, who happens (!) to be a barber, shaves not only the head but also the eyebrows of both of them (radat utriusque non solum capita sed etiam supercilia 103.1). It is important for the audience of the novel to remember this, since for almost the rest of the Lichas-scene, Encolpius and Giton will look like bald-headed and branded mime-actors. Branding as a punishment on stage is found in a Greek Petronius.[43] In Herodas' Fifth Mime, Γάστρων, the slave, has made love to Ἀμφυταίη, ignoring his mistress Βίτιννα. When she finds it out, he defends himself innocently. Βίτιννα, however, threatens to punish by means of brandishing her slave's forehead:

> Γάστρων: 'I am human, I went wrong; but whenever again you catch me doing anything you don't wish, tattoo me.' ...
> Βίτιννα: 'No, by the Queen. But since, though human, he does not know himself, he will soon know when he has this inscription on his

[42] See above, page 13; page 51, note 38.

[43] A comparison of the similar manner in which this motif is used by Herodas and Petronius can be found in Jones 1987, 139-140. See, also, Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, ad Herod. V.67.

forehead.'[44]

Eumolpus will do precisely the same thing in an exaggerated manner: he will cover both their foreheads with enormous letters (ingentibus litteris 103.4) and will use ink so freely (liberali manu 103.4), that the final image of the fugitivi (103.4) will end up to be a caricature, rather than a convincing imitation of a real slave-punishment. When later on they will be betrayed (104.5) by Hesus, one of the passengers who chanced to see them performing their scheme (103.5),[45] Lichas will order the culprits to be flogged forty times (placuit quadragenas utrique plagas imponi 105.4). In a more cruel manner, Βίτιννα decides that the proper punishment for her unfaithful slave is a thousand blows on his back and a thousand on his belly (lines 32-34). Two more directions are provided by the text of Petronius, which help us to perceive this trick not as an attempt by the author to represent in his novel an incident of real life, but as his conscious desire to produce a spectacle derived from a theatrical source. The trick is characterized as fallacia (103.3), a word coming straight from the schemes of the cunning slave in the Roman comedies and in the mimes.[46] Later on, Lichas himself refers to it as mimicae artes (106.1), thus defining its origin more specifically. That must have been the way Petronius conceived it (a mixture of mime and comedy themes) and as such it must have been regarded by the contemporary audience of the novel.

V.

Dreams as a narrative device to warn characters and readers of future events were frequent in ancient literature. The Greek romances abound in them.[47]

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44 Herod. V.27-28: ἄνθρωπός εἰμ', ἥμαρτον; ἀλλ' ἐπὴν αὖτις

ἕλῃς τι δρῶντα τῶν σὺ μὴ θέλῃς, στίξον.

Herod. V.77-79: οὔ, τὴν Τύραννον, ἀλλ' ἐπείπερ οὐκ οἶδεν,

ἄνθρωπος ὤν, ἑωυτόν, αὐτίκ' εἰδήσει

ἐν τῷ μετώπῳ τὸ ἐπίγραμμ' ἔχων τοῦτο.

Cf. Sat. 103.2 sequar ego frontes notans inscriptione sollerti and 103.4 et notum fugitivorum epigramma per totam faciem liberali manu duxit.

Text and translation of Herodas' text come from the edition by Cunningham 1993, ad loc.

45 Gricourt 1958, 102-109 suggests that the name of the proditor Hesus is a parody of the horrens Esus in Lucan's Phars. I.444-446.

46 For the comedies see Lodge 1924, s.v. fallacia; Ter. Andr. 197; Haut. 513. For the mimes see above, page 49 and note 30.

47 Ach. Tat. I.3.4-5; II.23.5; Heliod. II.16.1; IV.14.2; V.22.1-3; VIII.11.2; X.3.1. See Bartsch 1989, 80-108.

Comic theatre has comparatively fewer instances to offer. In the surviving twenty
and a half Plautine comedies, Demipho's dream in *Mercator* 225-270 and
Daemones' dream in *Rudens* 593-612 are the only examples of the motif.[48]
Herodas' Eighth Mime (Ἐνύπνιον) is an interesting addition to the list of literary
genres that employed this motif, because it proves that the dream can be used by
the author as a means to defend himself against hostile literary criticism.[49] In the
surviving *Satyrica* this motif occurs four times (17.7; 104.1-2; 128.6; fr. 30),[50] but
the dream which marks Lichas' and Tryphaena's re-appearance in the novel
(104.1 and 104.2) is special from many points of view.

> [*Lichas*] 'videbatur mihi secundum quietem Priapus dicere: "Encolpion quod
> quaeris, scito a me in navem tuam esse perductum".' exhorruit Tryphaena et
> 'putes' inquit 'una nos dormiisse; nam et mihi simulacrum Neptuni, quod Bais
> <in> tetrastylo notaveram, videbatur dicere: "in nave Lichae Gitona invenies".'
> [Lichas says]: 'Priapus seemed to say to me in my dream: "Know that
> Encolpius whom you seek has been brought aboard your ship by
> me".' Tryphaena shivered and said: 'You would think we had slept in
> the same bed, for a statue of Neptune which I had seen in a shrine at
> Baiae seemed to tell me, as well: "You will find Giton on Lichas' ship".'

It is a 'double dream', in the sense that two persons dreamt separately the
same dream. It does not use any allegorical images and does not need
interpretation. The message is clear and is delivered in direct speech which
makes it more dramatic and livelier. Petronius, the alleged Epicurean, treats it in
a non-Epicurean way,[51] since what the dream conveys is not at all nonsense
(ludibrium 104.3), but an actual fact which will be revealed in the end. It is directly
connected with another recurrent theme in the *Satyrica* (especially, in the Cena
Trimalchionis): superstition.[52]

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[48] See Preston 1915, 267; Enk (ed.) 1932, I, 7-21; Fraenkel 1960, 187-193; 425-426.

[49] See Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro., lii-liii; Cunningham (ed.) 1971, 193-195.

[50] On these passages see Musurillo 1958, 108-110 and Kragelund 1989, 436-450.

[51] See Kragelund 1989, 450: "Petronius' parody of 'prophetic' dreams reveals an equal disinterest
in serious proselytizing. Again it is the presence of Priapus that sets the tone. And neither Quartilla
nor the blatantly hedonistic Tryphaena comes to mind as being intended to illustrate the misery
which superstition has brought into the world. Inspired by enlightened and altruistic zeal Epicurus'
true pupils would strive, like doctors curing the sick, to liberate their fellow men from the
superstitious fear to which dreams could give rise ... In Petronius one searches in vain for such
altruistic concern. Elusive, shifting and ironic, his art inspires riotous laughter, not peace of mind."

[52] See Grondona 1980, passim; Horsfall 1989, 202; 208, note 59.

This latter feature is expected to appear in mime which tended to represent faithfully the ordinary way people lived and expressed themselves.[53] Cicero (*De Orat.* II.251) testifies to the existence of the superstitious person as a stock mimic target:

> Qua re primum genus hoc, quod risum vel maxime movet, non est nostrum: morosum, superstitiosum, suspiciosum, gloriosum, stultum: naturae ridentur ipsae, quas personas agitare solemus, non sustinere.

'Therefore, this kind of wit [that is, the mimic wit], although it evokes laughter more than anything else, does not become us: it caricatures the fretful type, the superstitious, the suspicious, the pompous, the stupid; human characters which are laughed at on their own: we usually attack these roles, not assume them.'

In Lichas' case, however, the particular superstition of not allowing the cutting of hair or finger-nails during a sea-trip (104.5-105.1)[54] is in a clever way connected with the farcical theatre through the motif of mimic-baldness. Thus what was reported by Ovid (*Fasti,* III. 327 ff.) and Artemidorus as an actual superstition becomes a narrative device employed by Petronius in order to advance the plot of his mimic episode.[55] When the storm takes place later on,

> Lichas, trepidans ad me supinas porrigit manus et 'tu' inquit 'Encolpi, succurre periclitantibus, id est vestem illam divinam sistrumque redde navigio.' (114.4-5)

'Lichas, trembling, stretched out his hands in supplication and said

[53] See Rosenblüth 1909, 42-43, who draws attention to the use of such material in Sophron 120 Kaibel, Herodas I.35, VI.35, VIII.

[54] Bonner 1906, 237 compares this superstition with Artemid. *Oneir.* i.22 πλέουσι δὲ διαρρήδην ναυάγιον σημαίνει (sc. τὸ ξυρεῖσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν) and refers to J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough,* vol. I (London 1900²), 378 for more parallels. Scarola 1986, 39-56 discusses the narrative significance that the shaving of the hair and the eyebrows has for the superstitious Lichas. She also refers (52, note 34) to J.B. Hoffmann, *La lingua d' uso latina* (Bologna 1980), 190 who compares Lichas' exclamatory question at 105.1 with Ter. *Andr.* 803. Donatus comments ad hunc loc.: non nunc interrogat, sed commiseratur.

[55] Fröhlke 1980, 358 rightly concludes that "religiöse Vorstellungen aus künstlerisch gestalteten Texten zu eruieren, gilt es, nicht nur den Kontext im engeren Sinne zu beachten, sondern auch seine Funktion als fiktionales Element in Rechnung zu stellen. Das 'hapax legomenon' eines Brauches in Zusammenhang mit seiner tragenden Funktion in der Knüpfung des Geschehens sollte den Interpreten immer die Möglichkeit in Erwägung ziehen lassen, daß der Autor im Dienste seiner Fiktion den Volksglauben um eine Erfindung bereichert hat."

"Encolpius, help us in our peril; I mean, return the holy robe and the rattle to the ship".'

Presumably Encolpius has purloined the robe and rattle of Isis from the ship's prow. This particular superstition has a direct parallel in the Χαρίτιον-mime: the buffoon slave suggests stealing an offering of the goddess when they were about to depart, but Χαρίτιον strongly disagrees with him (lines 48-55 Page).

The problem that the introduction of dreams and superstitions creates in the episode of Lichas is a difficult one. We have seen that the author himself characterized as mimicis artibus (106.1) the schemes suggested and undertaken by the three friends, thus making explicit the formative genre from which he derived material for his novel. Dreams and superstitions, however, occur also in many non-theatrical texts.[56] Moreover, even if such alternative sources of inspiration did not exist, one could argue that Petronius is describing everyday life with its superstitions, and not farcical events with a mimic spirit. The context can be a valuable guide. In this part of the novel, which actually started earlier on (92) with the mimic interlude inside the inn, Petronius is constantly drawing material from the theatre and, especially, from the mime. It is important to bear in mind this continuity of narrative spirit, because it clarifies the way events should be interpreted by the audience. Therefore, one is inclined to conceive almost everything that is said and done as theatrical speech and gestures, and assume that, even if Petronius drew his material from, for example, satire (which is a non-theatrical genre), he none the less incorporates it in a long series of theatrical events and exploits it in a way appropriate to the theatre. Thus the literary ingredient is reformed according to the context. More specifically, both Lichas' and Tryphaena's parallel dreams, and Lichas' superstitions, although they may not necessarily have a theatrical source, are, nevertheless, used as elements in a theatrical plot, and, as a consequence of that, they present a predominantly theatrical appearance.

VI.

The sacrilege demands expurgation and Lichas decides that forty stripes should be inflicted on both the stigmatised slaves (105.4). Encolpius endures three blows with Spartan heroism (Spartana nobilitate 105.5), but just one is enough for Giton to start shouting and imploring for forgiveness. Consequently the ruse fails completely, since both of them are recognised eventually: Giton by Tryphaena

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56 See Moering's list, 1915, 34-36.

and her maids because of his familiar voice (105.6),[57] and Encolpius by Lichas because of the size of his genitals (105.9):

> Lichas, qui me optime noverat, tamquam et ipse vocem audisset, accurrit et nec manus nec faciem meam consideravit, sed continuo ad inguina mea luminibus deflexis movit officiosam manum et 'salve' inquit 'Encolpi'.

> 'Lichas, who knew me intimately, hurried up to us, as if he also had heard my voice; he did not take any notice of either my hands or my face, but immediately turned his eyes downwards at my testicles, moved his importunate hand and said "Hello, Encolpius".'

This is a good example of how epic parody reaches the extreme crudeness of what could easily have been the material for a mimic performance. Odysseus' old nurse Eurycleia recognised him, despite his age and disguise, by a scar on his leg (Hom. *Od.* τ 467 ff.). This incident is presented in the way a mimic text would have parodied an instant of the Homeric saga.[58] In this farcical scene staged by Petronius, Lichas, the equivalent of the nurse, recognises Encolpius, the new Odysseus, not by a similar scar or wound but by his membrum virile! The narrator's subtle, but ironical, comment reinforces effectively this vulgarity, and sounds like an amusing aside to an audience who watches a Homeric travesty:

> miretur nunc aliquis Ulixis nutricem post vicesimum annum cicatricem invenisse originis indicem, cum homo prudentissimus confusis omnibus corporis indiciorumque lineamentis ad unicum fugitivi argumentum tam docte pervenerit. (105.10)

> 'It should not be surprising, after that, how Ulysses' nurse had found, after twenty years, the scar which indicated his identity, when this wisest of men so cleverly established the only proof of a runaway slave, although all the features of the body and the evidence were made unrecognizable."

Mime allowed obscenity[59] and Petronius' eccentric literary intentions would certainly find a suitable vehicle in this genre in order to shock and amuse his audience.

The consequence of the attempt to deceive Lichas is the trial-scene which

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[57] Gagliardi 1980, 107, note 46, remarks that the repetition of Giton's name by the maids, and their constant exhortations to stop the boy's punishment function as a kind of theatrical chorus of the scene.

[58] See Rosenblüth 1909, 44; Gagliardi 1980, 107, who refers to Knoke 1908, 12 ff.

[59] See Nicoll 1931, 123-124; Kehoe 1967, 120-131.

immediately follows (106-107). An impromptu mock-court seems to be set up, consisting of Encolpius and Giton as the accused, Eumolpus as their defence-counsel, and Lichas as both the accuser and the judge.[60] The whole scene is perfectly structured with pairs of arguments for and against the homosexual couple:

i. accusation (superstitiosa oratio) (106.3).

ii. defence (deprecatio <supplicii>) (107.1-6).

iii. accusation (iniqua declamatio) (107.7-11).

iv. defence (107.12-14).

v. accusation (107.15).

The rhetorical or juridical aspect of these speeches is not directly relevant to the purpose of this chapter.[61] What is interesting, however, is the actual trial-scene itself as a popular mime-motif.[62] Battaros' speech in the second mime of Herodas is the monologue of a pimp defending himself in a court. The monologue is a formal juridical speech with all the typical expressions and rhetorical figures; even a secondary character, a clerk (Γραμματεύς), is introduced reading aloud the Law of assault (lines 46-48); further, the men of the jury (lines 1; 49) and the person who timed the speech (lines 42-43) are also addressed. Apuleius (*Met.* X.2-12) describes a highly dramatic court-scene which could originate from a mimic plot.[63] Similarly, Choricius of Gaza (*Apol. Mimorum* 30) speaks of a court-scene in the adultery mime, where the husband takes the two adulterers to court and the judge threatens them with punishment.[64] One is tempted to assume that there was a court-scene before the

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[60] Kehoe 1984, 104-105 rightly claims that ʻLichas is explicitly described as a wronged husband (106.2). The rage of Lichas, here said to be apparent from his facial expression (turbato...vultu), remind us of the similar rage of the wronged husband described by Choricius (*Ap. m.* 55)."

[61] See Walsh 1970, 28; Rougé 1971, 173-181 (especially, 178-179); Gagliardi 1980, 108.

[62] See Rosenblüth 1909, 49; Kehoe 1984, 104-105.

[63] See Wiemken 1972, 139-146; Steinmetz 1982, 367-372.

[64] Cf. Livy, III.44.9 Notam iudici fabulam petitor, quippe apud ipsum auctorem argumenti, peragit; Philo, *De Legat.* 359: εἶτα ἡμεῖς ἐλαυνόμενοι παρηκολουθοῦμεν ἄνω κάτω, χλευαζόμενοι καὶ κατακερτομούμενοι πρὸς τῶν ἀντιπάλων ὡς ἐν θεατρικοῖς μίμοις. καὶ γὰρ τὸ πρᾶγμα μιμεία τις ἦν. ὁ μὲν δικαστὴς ἀνειλήφει σχῆμα κατηγόρου, οἱ δὲ κατήγοροι φαύλου δικαστοῦ πρὸς ἔχθραν ἀποβλέποντος, ἀλλ' οὐ τὴν φύσιν τῆς ἀληθείας.

crucifixion-scene in the well-known *Laureolus*-mime.[65] In Petronius the ridiculous and pathetic situation itself argues for the mimic source of the author's inspiration.[66] There is nothing to remind the audience of the seriousness with which the authors of the Greek romances treated similar instances in their novels. It is remarkable, however, that even in the Greek romances, where the situations are supposed to be regarded as tragic and full of real pathos, the trial scene is conceived as a theatrical spectacle. The speech of the priest who was defending Clitophon in court against Thersander, is full of verbal and gesticulatory expressions, equivalent to those of Aristophanes' comedy.[67] Similarly, Chariton identifies the court where Chaereas is being judged for Callirhoe's hypothetical murder as a theatre where all different feelings were present simultaneously.[68]

VII.

The outcome of the trial follows upon Encolpius' dishevelled appearance when a wet sponge wiped away his inky 'mask' and revealed everything. The forthcoming fracas is a slightly different version of the mimic fight that took place in the inn (95.4-9) between Eumolpus and some of the lodgers (pars cenulae 95.1), and aims only at the pleasure of the audience derived from slapstick and pseudo-violent scenes.[69] The two opposite troops are:

Eumolpus		Lichas
mercennarius comes	vs.	Tryphaena
unus alterque infirmissimus vector		familia Tryphaenae
Encolpius		clamor ancillarum

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[65] Testimonia on this mime are: Josephus, XIX.1.13; Suet. *Calig.* LVII; Juv. VIII.187; Tertul. *Adv. Valent.* 14; Mart. *De Spect.* VII; see Gehman 1922, 99-100; Herrmann 1985, 225-234.

[66] See also fragments VIII and XIIII, which might refer to a trial-scene, now lost.

[67] Achil. Tatius, VIII.9.1: Παρελθὼν δὲ ὁ ἱερεὺς – ἦν δὲ εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἀδύνατος, μάλιστα δὲ τὴν Ἀριστοφάνους ἐζηλώκει κωμῳδίαν – ἤρξατο αὐτὸς λέγειν πάνυ ἀστείως καὶ κωμῳδικῶς εἰς πορνείαν αὐτοῦ καθαπτόμενος ...

[68] Charit. E. 8.1-2: Ἔτι δὲ λέγοντος (οὕτω γὰρ ἦν διατεταγμένον) προῆλθε Χαιρέας αὐτός. Ἰδοῦσα δὲ ἡ Καλλιρρόη ἀνέκραγε 'Χαιρέα, ζῇς;' καὶ ὥρμησεν αὐτῷ προσδραμεῖν. κατέσχε δὲ Διονύσιος καὶ μέσος γενόμενος οὐκ εἴασεν ἀλλήλοις περιπλακῆναι. τίς ἂν φράσαι κατ' ἀξίαν ἐκεῖνο τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ δικαστηρίου; ποῖος ποιητὴς ἐπὶ σκηνῆς παράδοξον μῦθον οὕτως εἰσήγαγεν; ἔδοξας ἂν ἐν θεάτρῳ παρεῖναι μυρίων παθῶν πλήρει. πάντα ἦν ὁμοῦ, δάκρυα, χαρά, θάμβος, ἔλεος, ἀπιστία, εὐχαί.

[69] Gagliardi 1978, 116 comments on those 'violent' scenes in the novels: "quando tutto ciò non è funzionale alla caratterizzazione d' un personnagio, rappresenta soltanto il retaggio della comicità plautina, un pò grezza ed elementare, da opera buffa."

The weapons to be used are the iron tools (ferramenta) of Eumolpus' hired servant (mercennarius 108.8) and the bare fists of Tryphaena's slaves (108.8); yet the vocabulary is reminiscent of a battle-scene (108.8-9).[70] Similar instances of pretended cruelty occur both in comedy[71] and mime (Herod. V.25; 30; 33-34; Choricius, *Apol. Mimorum* 78 παίζουσι πόλεμον ἐνίοτε μῖμοι). The theatrical structure of this fight is apparent even from the fact that the disposition of the enemies is symmetrically organised by Tryphaena (108.7-8), so that the whole thing resembles a spectacle in the amphitheatre, where the two factions came from opposite directions.

Giton's threat to castrate himself (108.10) is the action which will bring an end to the fight. This initiative is a brilliant distortion of a melodramatic sacrifice with no moral intention whatsoever: Giton does not say "Stop or I will cut my throat" but "Stop or I will cut off my genitals!", something that would please neither Tryphaena (108.10) nor the sailors (105.7).[72] The castration-motif in the novel should not be seen under the light of any psychoanalytical theory[73] but, as the text itself suggests, as a mock-tragedy (audacius tamen ille tragoediam implebat 'but he played his tragic role more boldly' 108.11; cf. *Sat.* 140.6; Cic. *De Orat.* I.219, II.205; Quint. VI.1.36), performed excellently by Giton who, after all, is used to this kind of behaviour (80.4; 94.12; 94.15).[74] Encolpius' comic attempt to hang

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[70] Note, also, that Eumolpus' only wound, during his fierce fight with the lodgers at the inn (95.4-9) was a scratch in his eyebrow (98.7); the result of Encolpius' comic battle (proelium 136.12) with Oenothea's geese (136.4-5) is a slight wound on the knee (136.7); cf. Preston 1915, 262. Amusing incongruities of a similar kind can be observed in the comedies: in Plautus' *Aulularia*, Euclio kills Staphyla's cock with a stick because it was scratching about at the place where the pot of gold was buried (465-472). The event is described in an epic manner: optrunco (469), facta est pugna (472).

[71] See the brawl between Sosias and Mercury (Pl. *Amph.* 292-396); between Libanus, Leonidas and a merchant (*Asin.* 407-490); between Olympio and Chalinus (*Cas.* 404-409); between Menaechmus I, Messenio and the slaves (*Men.* 997-1018); between Cyamus and Stratophanes (*Truc.* 627-629); between Gnatho, Thraso, Simalio, Donax, Syriscus, Chremes, and Thais (Ter. *Eun.* 771-816). On pretended violence as source of amusement in Plautus see Castellani 1988, 65-66; on hitting as basic type of clowning in Aristophanes see MacDowell 1988, 7.

[72] Cèbe 1966, 214 notes that "c' est ... par l' invraisemblable licence de leurs mœurs érotiques" that "Lichas et Tryphène se rendent bouffons."

[73] See Sullivan 1963, 81 ("Castration anxiety may be understood as the fear of punishment for forbidden looking." This does not make sense here.); Sullivan 1968(a), 248.

[74] See George 1966, 338-342; Wooten 1976, 70.

himself (94.8) as well as the false death (mimica mors) which so frequently occurs in the Greek romances,[75] must be seen in the same light of theatrical attempts at suicide, or deaths: in Plautus' *Cistellaria* (639-645), Alcesimarchus is holding a knife and intends to kill himself, but wonders which side to strike first. His beloved Selenium intervenes and stops him. With the help of either a drug (the false death of a trained dog in Plut. *De Soll. Anim.* 973E-974A; the pretended death of the old husband in the Oxyrhynchus mime - The Μοιχεύτρια, lines 42-43 Page) or of a specially retractable dagger (Achil. Tat. III.20.7) (an equivalent of Giton's blunt razor), important for the plot,[76] characters could be killed and resurrected, thus raising the audience's expectation and agony.

VIII.

As in the mimes, to which Choricius refers (*Apol. Mimorum* 30), after the trial of the adulterous couple everything ends up in laughter and songs (τὸ πέρας αὐτοῖς εἰς ᾠδήν τινα καὶ γέλωτα λήγει), so in the *Satyrica,* after Lichas and Tryphaena had taken a formal oath not to pursue Encolpius and Giton any longer (109.2-3),[77] the fight ends with kisses, songs and joy (109.4-6). What precedes the storm-scene is a peaceful description of a spectacular Roman venatio,[78] transferred to the sea (109.5-7); the deck of the ship becomes an amphitheatre now: fish (109.6) and sea-birds (109.7) are caught in an idyllic atmosphere (109.7), Eumolpus recites a capillorum elegidarion (109.9)[79] and the story of the

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[75] See above, pages 200-201; page 201, note 33.

[76] Sandy 1974, 343, note 31 refers to P. Berol. 13927, "which is a list of mime titles and props", as evidence for mimic quality in the Lichas-scene, because "it includes among the stage-properties a representation of a river, ship's tackle, and barber's equipment." The text of (and comments on) the papyrus can be found in Wiemken 1972, 191-197. See, also, above, page 200, notes 28 and 29.

[77] Cf. the comic contract of the parasite between Diabolus, and Cleareta & Philaenium (Pl. *Asin.* 751-807). On the parody of the juridical terms which Eumolpus uses for the reconciliation see Cèbe 1966, 214.

[78] See Balsdon 1969, 302 ff.; Ville 1981, passim.

[79] Corbett 1970, 92 views Eumolpus' improvisations against the shaven and stigmatised young men within the mimic tradition of the baldness-motif.

'Widow of Ephesus' (111-112),[80] while Tryphaena takes care to restore Giton's and Encolpius' beauty with a blond wig and false eyebrows (110.1-2), a second theatrical mask. All these small details create purposefully the contrast with the horrible Vergilian storm[81] that will cause Lichas' -and nearly Tryphaena's (114.7)- death (114.6).[82] On the other hand, this same storm gives the opportunity to the two lovers to express their love-feelings in a superbly melodramatic and sentimental dialogue (114.8-11),[83] as if it were the script of a mimicum naufragium performed on stage. Notice that the direct speech of the text contains the necessary rhetorical passion and tragic gesticulations of a dramatic performance, while the indirect speech serves as the stage-directions for this performance:

> applicitus cum clamore flevi et 'hoc' inquam 'a diis meruimus, ut nos sola morte coniungerent. sed non crudelis fortuna concedit. ecce iam ratem fluctus evertet, ecce iam amplexus amantium iratum dividet mare. igitur, si vere Encolpion dilexisti, da oscula, dum licet, ultimum hoc gaudium fatis properantibus rape'. haec ut ego dixi, Giton vestem deposuit, meaque tunica contectus exeruit ad osculum caput. et ne sic cohaerentes malignior fluctus distraheret, utrumque zona circumvenienti praecinxit et 'si nihil aliud, certe diutius' inquit 'iuncta nos mors feret, vel si voluerit <mare> misericors ad idem litus expellere, aut praeteriens aliquis tralaticia humanitate lapidabit, aut quod ultimum est iratis etiam fluctibus, imprudens harena componet.'

'Encolpius (embracing Giton and crying aloud): "Did we deserve this from the gods, that they should unite us only in death? But ruthless Fate does not allow even that. Behold, the waves will turn the boat

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[80] The bibliography on the Milesian tale of the Widow of Ephesus is enormous: see Huber 1990. A theatrical interpretation of the scene has been first attempted by Rosenblüth 1909, 46 who compared the portrait of the Ephesian matron with the passionate women in the mimes (κυρία in the Μοιχεύτρια-mime, Μητρίχη in Herodas I). Gagliardi 1980, 111 notes the following mimic characteristics: "il soggetto piccante, ... la parodia virgiliana, ... gli stessi personaggi riuniti in un terzetto caratteristico (vedova - mezzana - amante)." A valuable reading of the anecdote through the language of theatre and role-playing should be consulted in Slater 1990, 108-111.

[81] See Collignon 1892, 126-127; Walsh 1970, 37, note 3.

[82] As Barchiesi 1984, 173-175 notes, Lichas' name foreshadows the way of his death, since there are thematic and verbal parallels between Petronius' Lichas and Ovid's Lichas (Met. IX.211-229) who suffered a similar death to the one in the novel.

[83] See Walsh 1970, 102; Gill 1973, 179: "the rhetorical heightening of the speeches made by the lovers at moments of stress renders the moments themselves more theatrical, and burlesques en passant the lamentations of the heroes of romance."

upside down even now; behold, the wrathful sea will now sunder the lovers' embrace". (To Giton) "Well, if you ever really loved Encolpius, kiss him while you may, and seize this last joy from the fate that hastens upon us".'

(Giton takes his clothes off, covers himself with Encolpius' shirt, puts on his belt and ties it tightly round himself and his lover.)

'Giton: "Whatever happens, at least for quite a time a death in harness will carry us along, or if the pitiful sea wishes to cast us upon the same shore, either someone may pass by and put stones over us out of ordinary human kindness, or the final work of even the angry waves will be that the sand, without knowing it, will cover us".'

Folk-tales, Comedy or the Greek romances αςε possible sources of inspiration for the figure of the piscatores (114.14),[84] who come to the rescue. The irony in Petronius' characterization of these people lies in the fact that, although they provide food and a place to sleep for the survivors of the shipwreck (115.6), their intentions were not so hospitable from the beginning (114.14 ad praedam rapiendam ... mutaverunt crudelitatem in auxilium). It is at this point that Encolpius sees Lichas' body floating on the surface of the sea and, as does Daemones more briefly while watching Palaestra's and Ampelisca's struggles with the waves,[85] philosophises on the weak nature of human beings in an extremely long monologue (115.9-19), whose moral aspects are often misunderstood and overstressed by Petronian scholars.[86] The pretentiousness of the rhetorical

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[84] In Roman Comedy, *Rudens* 290-330; Pomponius, *Piscatores* 118-120; in the mimes, Laberius, *Piscator* 71; in the Greek romances, Xenophon, V.1; Heliod. V.18; *Hist. Apoll.* 12; in popular story-telling see *Dictys* in Roscher, vol. I, page1020.

[85] Pl. *Rudens*, 154-155 Hui, / homunculi quanti estis! eiecti ut natant!

[86] Slater 1990(b), 112-113 distinguishes Encolpius' monologue in two shorter soliloquies, before (115.9-10) and after (115.12-19) recognising Lichas' face. He regards the first one as a sincere expression of Encolpius' feelings, thus disregarding the audience of the Neronian circle: "His [i.e. Encolpius] first short lament for the man is quite moving, the more so because it seems quite sincere ... He has nothing in particular to gain by offering these reflections; it is not even clear that there is an audience present to hear his lament". In the same line are Perry 1967, 200 and Arrowsmith 1972, 327: "Encolpius is given to melodramatic outbursts, but the language here is not that of melodrama; it is that of mourning. Petronius crowns the death of the despicable Lichas with a funeral oration, and what gives this oration force and power is precisely the sense that Lichas, for all his crippled life, carries in his death the whole tragedy of human existence, helplessness and futility."

expressions in the soliloquy, as well as the exaggerated gestures (115.12) in Encolpius' behaviour, argue for an ironical interpretation of the message that this monologue conveys to the audience of the novel.[87]

The above analysis of the chapters 100-115 of the *Satyrica* made clear that the events which took place during the sea-trip on board Lichas' ship were conceived by the author of the novel as a whole sequence of theatre-themes. The literary patterning of the scene and the sophisticated evocations of epic and ideal romance should not be undervalued, but the most important element which pervades this episode is the mimic spirit of ridicule and amusement.

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[87] See Cèbe 1966, 265 ("L' emphase déclamatoire dont le jeune homme croit bon d' user - elle contraste avec la banalité des lieux communs qu' il développe - et l' affreux calembour qui couronne son premier paragraphe avertissent que le morceau n' est, de bout en bout, qu' un travestissement comique."); Anderson 1982, 71-72.

CHAPTER ELEVEN.
DIVES FUGITIVUS: *SAT.* 116.1-125.4.

The episode at Croton is the last series of events we possess from the surviving *Satyrica*, though not necessarily the last part of the novel in its original form. The action takes place in a town which no longer existed at the suggested time of the novel's composition.[1] The plot is focused, mainly, on two themes: legacy-hunting and Encolpius' impotence. His unsuccessful relationship with the nymphomaniac Circe (126.1-130.8) and his painful experience with the witch-like priestesses Proselenos and Oenothea (131.1-139.5) are manifestations of the latter theme. Philomela's amusing anecdote (140.1-11) is a brief example of the former theme. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the theatrical backcloth of the story, in front of which the ensuing action is going to take place.

The Petronian evocation of the Vergilian image of the storm on sea, as it was mirrored in the tempest and the shipwreck of Lichas' ship (114.1-13), continues now with the arrival of the hustlers at Croton (116.1-2), a description which reflects Aeneas' arrival at Carthage (Verg. *Aen.* I.418 ff.).[2] The introductory monologue (116.4-9) of a farm-bailiff, the Petronian equivalent of the Vergilian Venus in *Aen.* I.335 ff., delivered in a surprisingly rhetorical style,[3] provides his audience, namely Encolpius, Giton, Eumolpus, Corax, and the auditor or reader of the novel, with the necessary information about the status of legacy-hunting that has been established at Croton.[4] The audience of the farm-bailiff (vilicus) is informed that celibacy and childlessness (116.8), dinners and shows (116.7)[5] are the only interest of the populace, that the traditional Roman values of literary study, eloquence, frugality and pure life are not worth anything (116.6), and that

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[1] See Schmid 1951, 26-27; Walsh 1970, 104 and note 1.

[2] See Walsh 1970, 37-38; cf. Zeitlin 1971(a), 68-69.

[3] On the rhetorically constructed speech of the vilicus see Schmid 1951, 30-31; Fedeli 1987, 10-11. Cf. Beck 1973, 46: "... such a speech with its neat summary of the state of affairs, its brisk style and clever antitheses is utterly implausible in the mouth of a farm bailiff encountered by chance by a party that has lost its way on a country road."

[4] On this strange description of Croton see Schmid 1951, 27-29; Fedeli 1987, 8 ff. and note 8. Fedeli 1988, 12, notes that the farm-bailiff functions in the narrative not only as a person who provides pieces of information but also as the 'Prologue' in the farce that Eumolpus and his troupe are going to perform at Croton.

[5] Müller [3]1983 rightly accepts the emendation of the manuscripts' reading ad scenas to ad cenas (116.7).

in order not to be covered with ignominy (inter ignominiosos 116.7), one must be a good liar (116.5). The image of crows and of corpses devoured by them, as Eumolpus' body will be offered to be eaten by his heirs (141.2), seems to give a moralistic ending to this soliloquy (116.9);[6] what, however, strikes Eumolpus is not the moral decline of Croton, but the prominence the Crotonians give to wealth and social life; this is the significant detail which will lead him to his theatrical solution of the Dives Fugitivus, or the 'Fugitive Millionaire'-mime.

Collignon is the first scholar who regards this incident as

le scenario d' un véritable mime que l' on peut intituler le Faux Riche ou le Captateur de Testaments.[7]

Following him, Rosenblüth discusses the legacy-hunting mime and its connection with the Crotonian episode as a whole.[8] Cicero's[9] and Seneca's[10] respective remarks on the instability of fortune and the manner in which an actor, starring in the mime of the 'Fugitive Millionaire', appeared on stage, are cited by both scholars as pieces of evidence for the popularity of the subject in the theatre of the mimes. A treatment of the same theme seems to be implied in the title of the fabula Atellana by Lucius Pomponius, Heres Petitor 49-50, though the surviving fragments are not helpful in a further identification of the motif.[11]

The subject of the legacy-hunter is also a standard motif in satire.[12] Finally,

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6 The first to interpret this scene in a moralistic way was Highet 1941, 181. See, however, Anderson 1982, 68-73, who discusses these moralistic interpretations of various scenes in the novel and concludes, rightly, that every instance of moral satire is being "undermined by its delivery, so diluted by its literary presentation, or so ludicrously exaggerated" that it can scarcely be taken as sincerely intended by the author.

7 Collignon 1892, 279.

8 See Rosenblüth 1909, 47-48.

9 Cic. Phil. II.65: in eius igitur viri copias cum se subito ingurgitasset, exsultabat gaudio, persona de mimo, modo egens, repente dives. Skutsch 1960, 197-198 speculates that the expression modo egens, repente dives must have been not only part of a senarius of a mimic script but also the actual title of the mime. Otherwise its proverbial character when used by Cicero (ibid.) or Tacitus (Hist. I.66: is diu sordidus, repente dives) cannot be easily explained.

10 Sen. Ep. CXIV.6: qui (i.e. Maecenas) ... in omni publico coetu sic apparuerit ut pallio velaretur caput exclusis utrimque auribus, non aliter quam in mimo fugitivi divitis solent.

11 Frassinetti (ed.) 1967, 103 prefers the vaguer interpretation "candidato" than petitor hereditatis. See, however, Leo 1914, 174, note 7, who interprets heres petitor as petitor hereditatis.

12 See Hor. Sat. II.v.23 ff.; Pers. Sat. VI.41-42; Juv. Sat. III.129, IV.19, XII.93 ff.; Mart. Ep. IV.56; Schmid 1951; Tracy 1980, 399-402.

influence from real life must not be forgotten: Pliny, *Ep.* II.20 is an extraordinary account of some of the tricks and methods which Regulus, an impudent legacy-hunter, adopted in order to gain generous legacies from his moribund friends (or, even, enemies!). Although all these factors may have played their part in the inspiration of this scene, the influence of the theatre was predominant, as the obvious comparison between mime and the novel's characters at Croton (117.4) indicates.

The 'novelty of the situation' (ad novitatem rei 117.1) that is presented by the vilicus, challenges Eumolpus[13] who, despite Encolpius' hesitations (117.2), immediately expresses his wish to have the appropriate theatrical equipment which would lend veracity to the scheme he has in mind (117.2).[14] Thus Eumolpus is presented as a comic poet who yearns to fulfil his ideas, but the lack of means puts a halt to his plans. The technical terms (largior scaena, vestis humanior, instrumentum lautius, 117.2) taken from the stage,[15] should not be seen as evidence to support the theory of an actual representation on stage of what has happened at Croton. Their significance lies in the fact that Eumolpus visualises the behaviour, actions and appearance of himself and his friends as a theatrical role-playing based on the infallible combination of deception (the figure of the childless and rich old man) and reality (the incident of the shipwreck). The purpose of this trick is the lucrative pleasures the heroes are going to enjoy when they reach Croton (ad magnas opes 117.2), and the amusement the audience of the novel will derive from an episode structured in the manner of a mimic farce. Likewise, Eumolpus' lengthy poem on the Bellum Civile effectively reflects the situation of moral degeneracy at Croton, but also

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[13] Zeitlin 1971(b), 672 aptly summarises Eumolpus' impressive repertoire: "[Eumolpus] displays a real flair for gratuitous trickery; he masterminds the disguise on board the ship, while the others flounder in more impractical plans. He dreams up the scheme in Croton. He can play many roles; he appears now as a serious poet and teacher, now as a bawdy raconteur, now as a practised diplomat, now as a wealthy old man who is grief stricken over the loss of his only son."

[14] On Plautine examples of the theatrical material that was occasionally presented on stage in order to make a trick more plausible see above, page 224, note 39. For such apparatus in the mimic theatre see Wiemken 1972, 191-197, 202-204.

[15] On instrumentum = apparatus, ornatus scaenicus see Fedeli 1988, 10, who refers to Fest. ap. Paul. 45.19L (choragium instrumentum scaenarum) and to Seneca, *Dial.* VI.10.1 instrumentis scaena adornatur. Cf., also, Pliny, *Ep.* VII.17.9 latior scena et corona diffusior; Suet. *Caes.* XXXVII instrumentum triumphorum.

parodies poetical compositions on this hackneyed subject[16] and helps to alleviate the tiredness of the journey.[17]

Eumolpus' scenario for a mime-piece ('quid ergo' inquit Eumolpus 'cessamus mimum componere?' 117.4) is a typical one.[18] He pretends to be a wretched millionaire who left his home because he could not bear the untimely death of his only son (117.6). His poor looks should be explained by the fact that he had just survived a shipwreck (117.7) (this is true: see 114.1-4; 115.1-5). Not everything in this scenario is strictly necessary for the ensuing plot. Eumolpus could easily have said that he did not have children at all and that the purpose of his trip, which ended to a shipwreck, was business. The additional details, however, give a melodramatic tone to the past life of this unfortunate pseudo-millionaire who thus becomes a perfect bait for the legacy-hunters (heredipetae) at Croton. It is interesting to note, also, that Eumolpus takes care to construct his scenario according to the clichés one would expect to find at a mime-performance, that is, the mimica mors of a non-existing son, the mimicum naufragium of more than two million sesterces, the sudden change of fortune, expressed in the contrast rich / poor, happy / wretched.[19]

The element of role-playing is clear.[20] Eumolpus and his friends are

already typecast theatrical figures: Encolpius and Giton, after having their heads shaved (103.3; do they still wear the blond wig and false eyebrows of 110.1-5?), are still posing as mimi calvi[21] or as servi (117.6);[22] Eumolpus is *actually* an old man (83.7 and 117.2) who plays the part of the dominus gregis (117.6).[23] The theatrical dimension of the new personalities which the friends acquire before entering Croton is reinforced by their comparison with legitimi gladiatores (117.5), figures of the spectacula in the amphitheatre.[24] Corax, the mercennarius Eumolpi (94.12; 99.6; 103.1; 117.11), is acting (117.12) like the buffoon slave of the Χαρίτιον-mime who used to complain and fart all the time.[25] Moreover, specific tricks are employed in order to stress Eumolpus' pretended bad health (117.9-10). Forgetfulness and frequent cough occur in satirical contexts (Hor. S. II.v.106-7) as symptoms of the imminent death of the rich old man whom the legacy-hunter must flatter, but Petronius' comment in Eumolpus' case (ne quid scaenae deesset 117.10) means that the general conception of the schemes in question is a theatrical and not a satirical one.[26]

It seems that, at least in the beginning, the heredipetae believe Eumolpus' story (124.3) and welcome him and his servants, offering presents of great value

21. On the μωρός φαλακρός see above, page 51, note 38.

22 For slaves in the mimes see Choricius, Apol. Mimorum 26 σχηματισηται μιμος ... δουλον. George 1967, 132, following Fraenkel, suggests emendation of the participle ficti (117.6), which is plural and refers to Encolpius, Giton and Corax, to fictum, in order to refer to the singular accusative dominum ('the master of our own making'). Cf., however, Müller's (³1983) apparatus ad hunc loc.:ficti ne deleamus neve fictum scribamus numerus obstat.

23 Fedeli 1987, 16 notes the double function the word dominus has for the narrative: "nella finzione del mendacium Eumolpo sarà dominus gregis, inventor e primo attore, ma nella realtà dovrà apparire come il vero e proprio 'padrone' di quegli schiavi improvvisati." Eumolpus was also responsible for the theatrical scenes at 94.15 and 106.1.

24 See their gladiatorial oath at 117.5 in verba Eumolpi sacramentum iuravimus: uri, vinciri, verberari ferroque necari, and cf. Schmid 1951, 34-35 and 177, note 16.

25 See Χαρίτιον-mime, lines 4, 24, 44, 45, 93 Page; cf. Arist. Frogs, 8 ff. On scatological humour in Aristophanic comedy see Dobrov 1988, 25.

26 See Schmid 1951, 26-53, and Sullivan 1963, 89, who regard the legacy-hunting episode in Petronius as a conventional satirical theme. In Plautus' Asin. 794-795 a false cough, done in such an exaggerated manner that the tongue is extended out of the mouth, is supposed to be a sexual insinuation made by a courtesan towards a man and reminds one of Eumolpus' false cough in front of the Crotonians.

in order to win the rich man's favour (124.4).[27] Although Eumolpus, filled with satisfaction, had forgotten the state of his previous fortune (*felicitate plenus prioris fortunae esset oblitus* 125.1), Encolpius continues to have reservations about the outcome of this scheme (*mendacium* 125.3) and wonders if they will have to run away again (125.4), perhaps a hint by the author that further adventures will follow.

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[27] Preston 1915, 268 draws attention to the similarity between Periplectomenus' description (Pl. *Miles* 705-715) of "the advantages that accrue to a wealthy bachelor from legacy-hunting friends and relatives" and "the joyous experiences of Eumolpus and his suite during their sojourn at Crotona."

CHAPTER TWELVE.
POLYAENON CIRCE AMAT: *SAT*. 126.1-130.8.

During Encolpius' love-affairs at Croton the audience of the novel should constantly bear in mind the mimic scheme devised by Eumolpus and followed by Corax, Giton and Encolpius (117.4-10), before they entered the city which existed in ancient times and was once the first city in Italy (urbem antiquissimam et aliquando Italiae primam 116.2). The author himself provides us with references to theatrical apparatus (117.2; 117.10), an explicit mention of the mimic theatre (117.4) and a detailed exposition of a mimic plot, according to which each one of the characters should adopt a particular role: Eumolpus becomes a childless old millionaire (117.6 ff.) and the others pretend to be his slaves (serviliter ficti 117.6). Thus the theatre of the mime functions as the 'backcloth' in front of which all the legacy-hunting adventures, structured farcically, will take place.

After all this effort has been carefully made for the creation of the companions' proper image, we expect that the ensuing chapters will deal with the same, or, at least, variations on the same, theme, that is, legacy - hunting. Thus it is strange that for the following fourteen chapters the author does not make even a single reference to this theme (the only hint is made *after* the end of the love-affair and the magic rites at 139.5), but draws his audience's attention towards another 'leit-motif' in the novel, Encolpius' personal erotic experiences and the problems that his impotence causes.[1]

This series of events is perhaps the most elaborately constructed part of the surviving novel, because it includes direct and indirect references to such a wide range of literary genres which are so densely connected to one another that it is impossible to evaluate their function in the text if they are examined separately.[2] A mere enumeration, therefore, of theatrical references in this part of the novel would not show the significance farcical theatre has for this episode, especially since, in comparison with the rest of the novel, few theatrical parallels can be

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[1] Sullivan 1968(a), 67 claims that "it is Petronius' practice to interweave two or three sub-plots in each episode ... Circe provides a digression from the legacy-hunting theme, as the Quartilla and Trimalchio episodes provide a digression from the Ascyltos-Giton theme." Sullivan's explanation seems to suggest that the novel followed a specific pattern (main plot - sub-plots); the chaotic condition in which the surviving text has been transmitted to us and the fact that even in the sub-plot (e.g. the Cena) we have other sub-plots, prove his theory wrong. This novel must have had a very loose -if any- connection between its parts.

[2] The best discussion of the dense literary frame of the Circe-episode is Pacchieni 1976, 79-90. See, also, Walsh 1970, 106-107; Blickman 1987, 6-9.

seen in Encolpius' romance with Circe, whereas epic and satire constantly pervade this part of the text. This, however, does not necessarily exclude theatre from many literary genres that may have worked as sources of inspiration for Petronius, when he was composing what seems to be the final adventure in his novel. What Petronius' debt to the theatre is, as far as the Croton episode is concerned, should be sought not only in its particular details, but also -and mainly- in the general spirit of the events.[3] The purpose of this chapter is to display both these details and the mimic spirit that permeate this part of the novel, as well as the preceding chapters.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

Encolpius / Polyaenus   Chrysis   Circe

Encolpius' personal adventures at Croton begin somewhat abruptly (126.1) with a speech addressed to him by a woman who, as is stated in the margin of codex l, is Chrysis ancilla Circes, speaking ad Polyaenum, that is Encolpius who has a Homeric pseudonym. Fedeli has a useful discussion on the change of Encolpius' name and the consequent influences on his new persona.[4] Expanding on the observations made by Barchiesi[5] on the name Polyaenus, Fedeli's remarks on the particular time that Encolpius assumed his pseudonym, that is, when he agreed to figure as a slave in order to deceive the Crotonians, are especially significant for the theatrical interpretation of the episode. He demonstrates that the name Polyaenus serves as an actor's name, since it refers to a person (Encolpius) who has changed his actual identity and has adopted the persona of a slave. The same name occurs in Aristaenetus, Ep. I.4 as a lover's name (cf. Encolpius' love affair with Circe) and belongs also to an Epicurean philosopher from Lampsacus, one of the chief direct disciples of Epicurus (see OCD, s.v.; for this Epicurean connection, cf. 128.5 vera voluptas). Finally, the Homeric meaning of the adjective πολύαινος = 'much-praised'[6] makes Encolpius a temptation to Circe's lust and a good example of the comic Odysseus, as he was parodied on

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[3] See Gill 1973, 180: "... in the attempted love-affair contrived and acted by Circe and Encolpius, with Encolpius as a recalcitrant male lead, the language and techniques of the romance recall specific features of comedy and mime."

[4] See Fedeli 1988, 9-32.

[5] See Barchiesi 1984, 171-173.

[6] See Schol. Om. on Iliad Λ 430 (page 206 Erbse).

the farcical stage.[7]

Due to the fragmentary state of the text we do not know if there had been a previous brief first encounter between Circe and Polyaenus but, as far as we can tell from Chrysis' monologue, there is no need to suppose this, because all the necessary information about Circe and her lust towards men of a lower social status is included there. In fact, when Chrysis makes her entry and delivers her memorized monologue, she functions like the introductory Prologue of the ensuing farce. Polyaenus, ignorant of the situation, is already on stage, Circe is waiting nearby[8] to be taken to him, and Chrysis enters on stage to prepare this meeting. It has been rightly suggested that

> perhaps the most perfectly conventional comic type in the *Satyricon* is Chrysis, the go-between or intermediary in the Circe-Polyaenos episode.[9]

Many elements in the personality of the maid justify this statement: her type-cast character, her name, her function in the novel and her stylized speech. The type of the clever *ancilla* is a stock-character in Roman Comedy, usually playing a significant part in the development of the plot.[10] In connection with the theatre, a woman with the name Chrysis occurs in Menander's $\Sigma\alpha\mu\iota\alpha$, as the concubine of $\Delta\eta\mu\epsilon\alpha\varsigma$, the senex, in Plautus' *Pseudolus* as a barmaid, in Terence's *Andria* as a prostitute, and in a fabula palliata by Trabea (*ex inc. fab.* I.5). Following the tradition of the common Plautine technique of 'speaking names', Circe's servant-girl is named Chrysis, because her task is primarily connected with money ($\chi\rho\upsilon\sigma\iota\acute{o}\nu$),

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7 Fedeli 1988, 27 indicates more levels of significance that this name has for Encolpius: "Encolpio-Polieno non solo dovrà incontrare la sua Circe, con le consequenti peripezie e gli inevitabili fallimenti, ma ... diverrà un instancabile parlatore-poeta, proprio come Odisseo ... un abile narratore di storie non vere, ma tali di sembrar vere."

8 In a theatrical representation of the scene she would have waited behind the siparium.

9 Preston 1915, 268.

10 In Plautus: *Amphitruo* (Bromia), *Casina* (Pardalisca), *Cistellaria* (Halisca), *Menaechmi* (Ancilla), *Miles* (Milphidippa), *Mostellaria* (Scapha), *Persa* (Sophoclidisca), *Poenulus* (Ancilla), *Stichus* (Crocotium and Stephanium), *Truculentus* (Astaphium). In Terence: *Andria* (Mysis), *Heauton Timorumenos* (Phrygia), *Eunuchus* (Pythias and Dorias). Cf. also Quartilla's maid and her brief monologue at 16.3-4 which serves as a kind of theatrical prologus for the ensuing events in that part of the novel. Currie 1989, 331 and note 38 observes that Chrysis "belongs to the tradition of the ancilla of love-elegy, new comedy, mime and tragedy (cp. for instance Phaedra's nurse in Euripides' *Hippolytus*)" and refers, especially, to Ovid's "contribution to the establishment of the type..." (cf. *Am.* I.11; I.12; II.7; II.8; *AA* I.351-398). Useful comments on the literary tradition of the ancilla are made by Hollis (ed.) 1977, 99-100.

since she has come there in order to buy, on behalf of her mistress, what Encolpius sells.[11]

The most important theatrical element in her behaviour is the role of go-between or conciliatrix; there are striking similarities between Chrysis' function in the romance of her mistress with Encolpius / Polyaenus and Milphidippa's behaviour in the pretended love-affair between Acroteleutium and Pyrgopolynices in Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*. Both of them stress the emotional situation of their mistresses (Pl. *Mil.* 998 and *Sat.* 126.5); both of them are ready to pay for the man's sexual services (Pl. *Miles,* 1061 and *Sat.* 126.4); both of them are misunderstood by the two men to want them for themselves, not for their mistresses (Pl. *Mil.* 1038-1040 and *Sat.* 126.8). Finally, the phrase procedentibus deinde longius iocis 'then, as the sports were prolonged for a longer time' (126.12) suggests the kind of puns and flirting gestures that were exchanged between Astaphium, the ancilla, and Diniarchus, the adulescens, in Plautus' *Trucul.* 115-138, where the young man sports with the maid of Phronesium, the attractive courtesan, by whose charms he is enchanted.

This function of the maid as a procuress was not confined to Roman Comedy.[12] One can also trace its features in the theatre of the mime.[13] The go-between Γυλλὶς in Herod. I.50-66 (Προκυκλὶς ἢ μαστροπὸς) tries, in vain, to convince Μητρίχη to indulge the desires of someone called Γρύλλος, using as an argument the fact that from the moment he saw Μητρίχη at a festival, he was

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[11] vendisque amplexus 126.1; nisi quod formam prostituis ut vendas? 126.2; sive ergo nobis vendis quod peto, mercator paratus est 126.4. See Schmeling 1969(b), 6: "Petronius employed Greek names for his characters to set the stage for comedy. To the Roman audience the use of such a high proportion (77%) of Greek names in a work of literature written by a Roman could mean only one thing: comedy ... the use of comic names would keep the tone of the *Satyricon* from becoming too serious and to remind the reader constantly that he is in the realm of comedy, not of moral satire." Against such a view see Priuli 1975, 22-27. See, also, Rosenblüth 1909, 38 who connects the way Petronius uses the names of his characters to the 'speaking' names of mimes: Μαλακός, an effeminate slave in the Μοιχεύτρια-mime, Βάτταρος, the aggressive pimp in Herodas II, Κέρδων, the greedy shoe-maker in Herodas VII.

[12] The title *Conciliatrix* as one of Atta's comedies (Atta, com. 7) seems to suggest that the motif was not limited only to the fabula palliata, but was exploited also by the writers of the fabula togata. See Daviault (ed.) 1981, 256.

[13] On the character of the bawd see Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro., xxxii-xxxv. Cunningham (ed.) 1971, 58 refers to Aristokles apud Ath. 621c [(ὁ δὲ μαγῳδὸς καλούμενος) ὑποκρινόμενός ποτὲ μὲν γυναῖκας καὶ μοιχοὺς καὶ μαστροπούς, ...] and to Sophron 69 Kock.

stung to the heart with love, and neither at night nor throughout the
day does he leave my house, child, but wails at me and calls me
mama and is dying of desire. (57-60)[14]

These similarities do not establish that Petronius had Γυλλίς, or Milphidippa, or
another comic maid in mind as the model for his Chrysis,[15] but they show clearly
that the author of the novel was working within the theatrical tradition in
delineating her character.

Another element of Chrysis' theatrical persona is the incongruity in the two
styles of speech she employs when she addresses Polyaenus. When she first
approaches him and proposes to buy his sexual services for her mistress (126.1-
7), her style is not at all appropriate to a slave.

The sentences are longer, the syntax more elaborate, the rhythmic flow
smoother and more contrived. Among the features which are more tangible
and more significant, one might mention the careful gradation of the
clauses beginning with quo.[16]

Petronius underlines this rhetorical dimension of her speech by pointing out the
impact it had made upon Polyaenus (oratione blandissima plenus 126.8). When
Polyaenus misunderstands her intentions and asks her in the same elaborate
rhetorical style (schema 126.8), if the one who loves him is none other than herself
and not her mistress, Chrysis reacts with long laughter and gives a brief picture
of her sexual preferences. This second speech (126.9-10) is

undisguised freedman language, both in its idiom (several of the
expressions which Chrysis uses reappear round Trimalchio's dinner table)
and even more so in its short, choppy, and inelegant sentences.[17]

This unexpected change of tone is rather puzzling, but the shift from the
sophisticated to the more colloquial style should not be explained only by the
assumption that Petronius was interested in describing in a realistic way how a
maid would speak. The pretence in the style of language that Chrysis chooses to
use should be seen as part of her whole role-playing and her pretence to be a

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[14] Translation by Cunningham 1993, ad loc. Cf. Sat. 126.5 accendis desiderium aestuantis.

[15] There are non-theatrical references, as well, to the type of the conciliatrix ancilla, which could
have had a certain influence on Petronius' Chrysis as 'go-between'. See Lucil. 291 Warmington;
Cic. De Nat. Deor. I.xxvii.77; Ps. Acr. on Hor. S. I.ii.130.

[16] George 1966, 344.

[17] George 1966, 344.

matrona.[18] When she addresses Polyaenus on behalf of her mistress, she wants to create an impression of a person of a high social status. But when Polyaenus addresses her personally, and not as an intermediary in the affairs of her mistress, then the true social status of a maid is revealed through the language she uses, although her specific sexual tastes have an extraordinary peculiarity (126.10). This stylistic use of language by persons totally inappropriate to it is a frequent Petronian technique.[19] The only target that Petronius aims at by presenting this 'acting' is to underline the 'mimic unreality' of the scene and to create comic situations out of it.

Chrysis' taste in men (126.9-10) might function as more than a mere comic reversal of the relationship between master and slave, according to the general reversal of things which takes place at Croton:[20]

> 'nolo' inquit 'tibi tam valde placeas. ego adhuc servo numquam succubui, nec hoc dii sinant, ut amplexus meos in crucem mittam. viderint matronae, quae flagellorum vestigia osculantur; ego etiam si ancilla sum, nunquam tamen nisi in equestribus sedeo.'

> ' "I do not want you" she said " to adore yourself so much. I have never lain down under a slave yet, and may the gods forbid that I should throw my arms round someone condemned for crucifixion. Let married women see to that, for they are the ones who kiss the scars of flogging; I may be only a servant-girl, but I never sit on top of anyone, unless he is a knight".'

Her words recall the statement of a mime-actress in public around 54 B.C. The whole incident is vividly described by Pseudacron (on Hor. S. l.x.76-77):

> Arbuscula quaedam mima fuit, quae cum sibilo vulgi eiceretur e theatro, placeret autem paucis equitibus, dixit 'contenta sum his prudentibus, quamvis pauci videantur esse fautores'. aliter: Arbuscula quaedam mima fuit, quae placebat bonis potius quam plurimis. haec aliquando explosa a populo dixit hoc 'equitum Romanorum plausu contenta sum';

> There was some mime-actress called Arbuscula; when she was thrown out of the theatre with hisses from the people, although a few

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[18] See Fedeli 1987, 17-18 and note 22; cf. Sat. 126.11 and 126.12 where Chrysis walks through a laurel grove and lifts her tunic in the manner of a lady who does not want to get it dirty by letting it crawl on the ground.

[19] Cf. Giton's speeches (9.4-5; 80.3-4; 94.10-11; 128.7) and the introductory monologue of the vilicus at 116.4-9.

[20] See Fedeli 1987, 3-34.

knights liked her, she said: "I am content with these prudent men, although they seem to be only a small number of fans." Another version: There was some mime-actress called Arbuscula; she was prized more by the worthy people than by a great number of them. When once she was driven off the stage by the clapping of the people, she said the following: "I am content with the applause of the Roman knights."

Could it be that Petronius was indirectly referring to this incident through Chrysis' words? If so, the fact that a mime-actress was the main person involved in the incident adds to the theatricality of Chrysis' personality.

In the same way that Acroteleutium, the meretrix, plays the role of the enamoured woman in Plautus' *Miles*, both Circe and Polyaenus treat their affair, in both sexual intercourse and sexual failure, as role-playing. Because of the role-playing theme in the elegiacs at 126.18,[21] it has been suggested that

Encolpius wishes to project himself into the role, *conceived as a role*, that Jupiter ought to play,[22]

that is, the role of a lover who has assumed the shape of many different animals or physical elements in order to achieve sexual fulfilment. Similarly, Circe

demands to know from her maid Chrysis if there is anything wrong with her costume or makeup, then tests her repertoire of facial expressions designed to please her lovers ... Circe views the failure in terms of performance of a role. She at least considers the possibility that Encolpius' failure is in response to an inadequate rendition of the role of lover on her part. Sexuality is thus placed firmly in a theatrical context ...[23]

These remarks rightly underline the visual dimension of the unsuccessful sexual intercourse. An audience would have certainly found it an amusing spectacle to watch a beautiful woman (Circe) on stage, a mima, after she failed to arouse her lover, making faces in front of a mirror, thus becoming ugly and making a fool of herself (128.4 omnes vultus temptavit, quos solet inter amantes risus fingere). It is worth adding that Chrysis, as well as her mistress, hints in her speech at Encolpius' role-playing in a subtle and clever way. The verb fateris (nam

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[21] On the elegiac connection of this poem see Alfonsi 1960, 254-255.

[22] Slater 1990(b), 124-125.

[23] Slater 1990(b), 125. Schmeling 1971, 341-342 interprets wrongly Circe's rhetorical questions (128.1) and Encolpius' musing to himself (128.5) as examples of the exclusus amator motif in the novel.

quod servum te et humilem fateris 126.5), instead of a more affirmative es, and the mention of an actor disgraced by appearing on stage (aut histrio scaenae ostentatione traductus 126.6) as one of Circe's sexual preferences,[24] could be taken as insinuations about Encolpius' 'acting' and, thus, should make clearer the theatrical dimension of the scene. One can, therefore, conclude that this brief scene between Chrysis and Polyaenus is the narrative equivalent of a conversation between an ancilla conciliatrix and an adulescens amans in a Roman comedy!

The scenery changes now into a locus amoenus.[25] Everything seems to be carefully staged. Circe must have been waiting all this time until Polyaenus, convinced by Chrysis, agreed to indulge her desires; finally, she is brought out e latebris (126.13)[26] and her beauty leaves the hero speechless. An ἔκφρασις follows (126.14-17) in which there is a detailed description of Circe's beauty. Her description is certainly meant to evoke similar depictions of other heroines in the Greek Romances.[27] Thus the contrast between the chaste maiden of the Romances and the nymphomaniac matron of Croton is sharp and entertaining. The Roman stage, however, does not lack the use of this motif. The young Agorastocles has eyes only for the beautiful Adelphasium whom he regards as comparable to Venus and as a reason for him to be considered an immortal god (Pl. Poen. 275-278). When, in Plautus' Truculentus, the attractive courtesan, Phronesium, comes on stage and asks the young man, Diniarchus, to join her inside, he flatters her by comparing her beauty to the scents and bloom of spring (353-354). Likewise, the impact which Erotium, the meretrix, makes on the eyes of Menaechmus 1, when she comes out of her house (Pl. Men. 179-181) is the theatrical equivalent of Encolpius' description of Circe.

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[24] Chrysis mentions (126.5-6) four categories of men that Circe, her mistress, prefers as sexual partners: the slave, the gladiator, the muleteer, the actor. See Slater 1990(b), 123: "What Circe cannot know is that Encolpius is at least three of these four: an actor playing a slave in a troupe sworn to follow Eumolpus like true gladiators (tamquam legitimi gladiatores, 117.5)."

[25] See platanona 126.12; note the daphnona, 126.12, through which Chrysis leads Polyaenus to Circe. Of course, this idyllic place is being employed ironically here, since the romance that is going to follow will fail completely. See Keuls 1974, 265-266.

[26] Both the appearance of Circe coming out of her hiding-place (126.13) and her departure into the temple of Venus (128.4) seem to me to be carefully staged theatrical entrance and exit, respectively.

[27] See Ach. Tat. I.4.3, I.19.1; Long. I.17.3; Xen. Eph. I.2.6; Heliod. I.2.5; III.4.2-6; Charit. II.2.2; and Pacchieni 1976, 80.

Faced with such sensual radiance, Encolpius unhesitatingly condemns his old passion for someone called Doris (126.18),[28] while Circe seems to have made the necessary inquiries about Polyaenus' personal life (127.2) and goes straight to the point:[29] she offers her love to Polyaenus (127.1) and boldly asserts that a male rival-lover will not be an obstacle to her desires (127.2). A proper introduction of herself takes place later on in a sophisticated play on names within a Homeric frame (127.6-7). Finally, the sexually chaste (!) heroine (feminam ornatam et hoc primum anno virum expertam 127.1) takes the initiative and draws her lover to the ground (127.8). Everything is too beautiful to be true; thus the contrast with the depiction of Circe, ruthless after Polyaenus' successive sexual failures, is more obvious and amusing.

Despite the strong connection between Circe's character and the heroine of the Greek Romance, the figure of the beautiful Homeric witch (cf. Chrysis' remarks at 129.10 'solent' inquit 'haec fieri, et praecipue in hac civitate, in qua mulieres etiam lunam deducunt ...')[30] and that of an Ovidian woman in love,[31] what was pointed out repeatedly from the first time Chrysis referred to her mistress, was not Circe's beauty but her lust towards slaves and other low-class men (126.5-7). The union of a free woman and a slave is well documented in ancient life and literature.[32] This motif has been repeatedly exploited by the comic stage. Herodas' Fifth Mime and the Oxyrhynchus mime of the Μοιχεύτρια[33] depict

28 Schmeling 1969(b), 6 speculates that Doris may have been a slave and a prostitute (cf. Juv. III.94).

29 Note the gestures implied in the phrase digitis gubernantibus vocem (127.1) inserted in the text as a kind of theatrical direction to point out the visual importance of the scene. See above, page 64, note 41.

30 See Coccia 1982, 85-90.

31 For the Greek Romances see above, page 251, note 27. For the epic connection see Collignon 1892, 318 and note 1. For the Ovidian poem see Walsh 1970, 42 and notes 1-2. Anderson 1982, 67 draws attention to the sexually insatiable women of Hellenistic literature, such as Arsake (in Heliodorus) or Melite (in Achilles Tatius), Stratonice or Semiramis (in the Ninus Romance).

32 See Arist. Thesm. 491-492; Xen.Eph. II.5.1-6; Petr. 45.7-8; Juv. VI.278-279; Mart. xii.58; Quintil. V.11.34; Tac. Ann. xii.53. For more references see Sullivan 1968(a), 121, note 1; on the love-affair of women with their slaves as a special satiric target see Rudd 1986, 193-205.

33 Grenfell and Hunt (edd.) 1903, 40 ff; Page (ed.) 1942, 350-361. An extant theatrical analysis of the Μοιχεύτρια is in Sudhaus 1906, 247-277; Rostrup 1915, 88-107. The connection between Petronius' Circe and the mime-heroines was made for the first time by Rosenblüth 1909, 51-52. Cf., also, Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro. xlv-xlvi; Sullivan 1963, 76; Kehoe 1984, 89.

similar situations between noble ladies and slaves: the pairs are Βίτιννα and the slave Γάστρων in Herodas V and the κυρία and the slave Αἴσωπος in the Μοιχεύτρια-mime.[34]

Circe's affair with the slave Polyaenus is meant to be seen as a comic equivalent of such theatrical representations of everyday life, and not as an ill-fated erotic adventure portrayed in a realistic manner. References to the theatre are constantly made in relation to Circe's sexual preferences: the arena (an area where all sorts of spectacles took place) and the actor who is exhibited on stage (histrio scaenae ostentatione traductus 126.6) are among the causes that inflame Circe's lust. Moreover, when Encolpius fails to perform in his second sexual encounter with Circe, she becomes furious and gives orders for his punishment, similar to those that the Μοιχεύτρια gives for the punishment of the two slave-lovers who are unfaithful to her.[35] All the women in these texts show a tremendous jealousy towards the rival lovers of their slave partners (type of furens femina): Circe towards Giton, 128.1; 129.8 / Βίτιννα towards Ἀμφυταίη, 1-3 / the κυρία towards Ἀπολλ(ωνία), 20-23 Page. These details contribute to and reinforce the characterization of the Circe-Polyaenus love-affair as a caricature taken from the stage.[36] Thus the meeting between Circe and Polyaenus could have been a farcical theatrical piece, ridiculing the Homeric saga in the common vulgar manner of the mimes: again, only three actors / personae are mentioned (Polyaenus, Chrysis, Circe); the action of this exodium would be conveniently divided in two brief scenes: Polyaenus and Chrysis (126.1-12) / Polyaenus, Circe and (probably) Chrysis (126.13-128.6).

As far as we can tell from the surviving text, a brief scene between Giton

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[34] Cf. also the indirect reference in a mime by Laberius (Compitalia, 30 ff.): Mater familias tua in lecto adverso sedet, / servos sextantis utitur nefariis / verbis; Aristokles apud Ath. 621c (ὁ δὲ μαγῳδὸς καλούμενος) ὑποκρινόμενος ποτὲ μὲν γυναῖκας [καὶ] (del. Kaibel) μοιχοὺς καὶ μαστροπούς...

[35] See Μοιχεύτρια, 1-8 Page. Cf. also Sat. 132.2 et me iubet catomizari and Herod. III.3 τοῦτον κατ᾽ ὤμου δεῖρον; cf. Βίτιννα's orders to punish Γάστρων at Herod. V.18; 20-25; 31-34; 47-49.

[36] Bieber [2]1961, 49, figures 204-205, gives two illustrations of the Odysseus-Circe theme from the Kabeiric vases. "On Kabeiric vases travesties of the saga are represented by fat-paunched heroes. Odysseus in the costume of a goblin receives the magic drink from Circe on a vase in the British Museum, but then he threatens the witch-like Circe on a vase in Oxford." (page 48). We do not know if these vases depict actual theatrical performances, but both the Homeric hero and the beautiful daughter of the Sun are portrayed in a ridiculous manner like exaggerated caricatures of a farce. Rosenblüth 1909, 44, suggests that the Circe-Polyaenus love-affair is part of the mimic parody of the Odysseus-saga in the whole novel.

and Encolpius / Polyaenus follows the latter's first sexual failure with Circe (128.7-129.2). The hero sounds desperate because of his sexual problems (129.1) (Circe is equally distressed, 129.11), while his boyfriend is not at all pleased with the situation and complains in a sarcastic and sophisticated manner (128.7). For some obscure reason Giton does not want to be seen alone with Encolpius / Polyaenus and leaves his lover (129.2), probably not long before Chrysis re-enters the scene. Her actions are still in accordance with her role-playing as ancilla conciliatrix: she brings a letter from Circe (129.3) and expects an answer back (129.11).

Use of letters occurs in the Greek Romances[37] and "as a literary exercise practised in the schools of rhetoric".[38] In the theatrical tradition this theme occurs frequently. The letter-motif abounds in the titles of Middle and New Comedy writers: Εὐθυκλῆς, Ἄσωτοι ἤ Ἐπιστολή, Ἄλεξις, Μάχων, Τιμοκλῆς, Ἐπιστολή. The Roman stage too does not lack references: among the fragments of the fabula palliata we find an *Epistula* by Caecilius and a *Tabellaria* by Novius (cf. Turpilius, 196-197 Ribbeck[3]), while Afranius' *Epistula* seems to suggest that the same motif was exploited by the fabula togata, although of the nineteen surviving fragments none gives any indication about the kind of letter of the title.[39] Plautus has used letters several times either as true messages (the first love-letter of our surviving Latin literature is in *Pseud.* 40-73; cf. *Miles*, 130) or as devices to achieve a trick (*Bacch.* 728-747, 996-1035; *Cura.* 429-436; *Pers.* 501-527; *Pseud.* 997-1014; cf. *Epid.* 251-253; *Pseud.* 716; *Trin.* 774-777).[40] Circe's and Polyaenus' letters may have been composed within the tradition of theatrical letters,[41] because of the

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[37] Cf. e.g. the letter of Chaereas to Callirhoe in Chariton IV.4.7-10 and see the discussion of this and other passages in Blickman 1987, 8-9; cf. Pacchieni 1976, 79, note 7.

[38] See Walsh 1970, 106 and note 3.

[39] See Daviault (ed.) 1981, 169.

[40] A useful account of the stylistic features of the letters which were used in Euripidean tragedy and Plautine comedy is in Monaco 1965, 335-351.

[41] As far as I know, the only scholar who has argued strongly for the influence of the Plautine letters on Petronius is Gagliardi 1981, 189-192. Rosenblüth 1909, 53 notes in a vague manner that the sexual innuendos which are hidden in both letters are derived from the mimes, since that genre could adjust its literary style, and make it either vulgar or sophisticated, according to the demands of the plot they had to perform each time.

thematic and verbal similarities between the texts.[42] There are, however, in the letters of Petronius' text original elements which make Encolpius' brief correspondence with Circe slightly different to its Plautine equivalent: they are in prose; they do not form part of a trick; these letters are not necessarily actual love-letters, but either a threatening letter with a great deal of irony and sarcasm in it[43] or excuses and apologies in order to achieve permission for a second chance in love.[44] One may conclude that Petronius has neither followed strictly only one of the literary genres mentioned above nor intended solely a parody of them, but that he has combined different elements from all of them in order to create his own variation on the theme, suitable to the particular context.

A lacuna at what does not seem to be the end of the letter (placebo tibi, si me culpam emendare permiseris 130.6; surely Polyaenus would not have missed the opportunity of a heart-breaking farewell?), leaves space only for speculations on possible further promises and conditions set by Polyaenus, probably even concerning his relationship with Giton. The impact, however, that Circe's letter has made on him, is obviously very strong; from then on Polyaenus, afraid of Circe's threats and eager to please her, follows a specific physical and sexual diet (130.7-8) which represents merely the experimentations of an amateur sorcerer in comparison to the professional, but totally ineffective, recipes that will be provided by the hopeless witches Proselenos and Oenothea (131.4-5; 135.3-6; 137.10-12; 138.1-2).

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[42] A list of verbal parallels between Petronius' text and the Latin theatrical texts is conveniently provided by Gagliardi 1980, 125, note 34 and 1981, 190 ff. For parallels of the expression apud se non esse (Sat. 129.11) see Pacchieni 1976, 88, note 84. One should add in her list Herod. V.27 (ΓΑ: ἄνθρωπος εἰμ', ἥμαρτον) and Menand. fr. 432 (ἄνθρωπος ὢν ἥμαρτον. οὐ θαυμαστέον) as parallels to Sat. 130.1 (fateor me, domina, saepe peccasse; nam et homo sum et adhuc iuvenis).

[43] an tuis pedibus perveneris domum 129.5; narrabo tibi, adulescens, paralysin cave 129.6; vale, si potes 129.9; convicium 129.10. On the sarcasm hidden in the sexual innuendos of these phrases see Verdière 1967, 309-312; Soverini 1978, 258-263.

[44] This is the reason why I believe that we should not necessarily take at face value Encolpius' confession of his sinful past: proditionem feci, hominem occidi, templum violavi 130.2. For the opposite view see Soverini 1978, 267-268 with earlier bibliography on the subject.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN.

IMPOTENTIA SCAENAM DESIDERAT: *SAT*. 131.1-139.5.

The first 'act' of the mimic love-affair between Encolpius / Polyaenus and Circe had come to an end as day was giving place to night (130.8) and the audience of the novel was left in anticipation of the outcome of the narrator's relationship. The purpose of this chapter is to show that the climactic second scene of this event is structured in the same farcical tradition of sexual mimic bufoonery as was the first one.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Scaena Prima (131.1-7): Encolpius Chrysis Proselenos.

Scaena Secunda (131.8-132.5): Encolpius Circe Chrysis Proselenos Familia Circes.

Scaena Tertia (132.6-133.2): Encolpius Giton.

Scaena Quarta (133.2-134.6): Encolpius Proselenos.

Scaena Quinta (134.7-136.3): Encolpius Proselenos Oenothea.

Scaena Sexta (136.4-10): Encolpius and three geese.

Scaena Septima (136.11-138.4): Encolpius Oenothea Proselenos.

The setting of the first incident is again the idyllic grove of plane-trees, only this time it is loaded with many unpleasant memories (131.1). Encolpius is nervous while he is waiting for Chrysis: one can easily visualize all sorts of anxious looks and gestures behind the words locum inauspicatum timebam, coepique inter arbores ... expectare ... nec diu spatiatus (131.1-2); both he and the audience of the novel must have been equally surprised when, apart from Chrysis, a new persona appears on stage (131.2). At first sight the impression the narrator gets of her character is of a harmless old woman (aniculam 131.2). Once, however, she opens her mouth (131.3) and practises an improvised spell (131.4), Encolpius realises that he has to deal with a sorceress who has probably been employed by Circe or Chrysis in order to restore his virility. The name of this ancient witch is Proselenos, or 'Before-the-Moon' (132.5), and together with the formidable figure of her colleague Oenothea, or 'Goddess-of-Wine' (134.8), she sets the scene for the metaphysical part of the surviving novel in which her repeated attempts to practise techniques of witchcraft will fail farcically.

Witchcraft was frequently exploited in both Greek and Latin literature[1]; thus the precise source of inspiration for Petronius appears to be impossible to determine, especially since the dense literary background of Vergilian and

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[1] See Tupet 1976, 107-164 and 223-417.

Ovidian references is distorted by a risible treatment of the witchcraft-motif. But the ridicule of magic rites which is achieved through the constant failure of Encolpius' attempts to have an erection, affirms that Petronius modelled this scene on mimic ἐξόδια, where popular superstitions would probably have been exploited in the same subversive way.

Theocritus, in his second *Idyll* (Φαρμακεύτρια), describes the magic incantations that Simaetha performs with the help of her maid Thestylis in order to bring back her unfaithful lover Delphis.[2] The scholia mention that

> τὴν δὲ Θεστυλίδα ὁ Θεόκριτος ἀπειροκάλως ἐκ τῶν Σώφρονος μετήνεγκε μίμων,
>
> 'Theocritus tastelessly transferred the character of Thestylis from the mimes of Sophron',

and, in connection with the main subject of the *Idyll*, they add that

> τὴν δὲ τῶν φαρμάκων ὑπόθεσιν ἐκ τῶν Σώφρονος μίμων μεταφέρει
>
> 'he transfers the subject of the enchanted potions from the mimes of Sophron'.[3]

It is generally assumed that the mime referred to here is Sophron's Ταὶ γυναῖκες αἲ τὰν θεόν φαντι ἐξελᾶν,[4] but Gow rightly argues that Theocritus

> may have borrowed some hints from Sophron; it is unlikely that the debt goes much beyond that[5]

Although both the title and the plot of Sophron's mime remain open to speculation, one can reasonably surmise that magic rites were somehow presented on the mimic stage.

Another fragment of a mime attributed to Sophron and dated to the first century A.D. corroborates this theory, since it describes a magic ceremony in honour of Hecate.[6] The fragment does not seem to belong to the mime by Sophron mentioned earlier, and exhibits specific striking similarities with Oenothea's magic techniques.

A female magician and her assistant are performing an occult ceremony

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[2] See Gow (ed.) 1952, II. 33 ff.

[3] See Gow (ed.) 1952, II. 33-35.

[4] On this mime see Rosenblüth 1909, 43; Olivieri (ed.) 1930, 175-180; Arena 1975, 217-219; Tupet 1976, 144-153.

[5] Gow (ed.) 1952, II. 35.

[6] See Page (ed.) 1942, 328-331.

designed to liberate a group of persons (probably women) from illness or distress inflicted by Hecate. The scene is an inner room, of which the doors are closed, to be opened only when all is ready for the climax of the ceremony. The sorceress commands her patients to set down a table ... immediately. Then they must take salt in their hands ... and laurel about their ears ... Thus equipped they are to sit beside the hearth; which here, as often, serves for an altar. There follow preparations for the sacrifice of a dog. The magician bids her assistant give her a sword ... A dog is brought to her. Asphalt, a torch and incense are held ready for the act of lustration or purification which must accompany the sacrifice. The climax is now at hand. The doors are opened wide, letting the moonlight in. The patients are exhorted to keep their eyes fixed on the door. The torch is extinguished. Auspicious silence is demanded, and the invocation of - or imprecation against - Hecate begins.[7]

Likewise, Oenothea, the Priapic priestess, with the assistance of her fellow-witch Proselenos and her patient Encolpius follow another procedure, although a mock-ritual one, aimed at the restoration of the man's virility.

A serious magical scene or text, however, could equally well have been the starting point for the imagination of Petronius, who would then have undermined his model for comic effects. Once the hilarious mode in which Petronius presents Encolpius' adventures with the two witches is established, then not only Proselenos' quickly improvised magic (131.4), but also Oenothea's seemingly authoritative ceremonies (135.3-6; 137.10-12; 138.1-2) should be regarded as imaginative recipes, composed precisely in order to fail, rather than faithful representations of Roman magic techniques which might be genuine enough to be classified among our testimonia for such practices.[8]

Surprisingly enough, Proselenos' spells work and, in fact, they do so quite impressively (131.6-7). Repeated textual gaps do not make the picture clear, but it seems that Circe was again hovering somewhere near (perhaps in her house, cf. 132.3; 132.5) in anticipation of the successful outcome of Encolpius' 'operation'. The second encounter between Circe and Encolpius has the same bucolic atmosphere (131.9) as the first (126.12), and is accompanied by similarly

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[7] Page (ed.) 1942, 328-329.

[8] For recipes, found in magic papyri, concerning how to get an erection when you want to, see *PMG* VII.185 and *PDM* lxi.58-62 in Betz (ed.) 1986, 120 and 287-288, respectively. I owe this reference to Linda McGuire.

flattering erotic poems (126.18; 131.8).

A series of theatrical movements takes place; their dramatic function is to give the appropriate tone of sensuality to the atmosphere. Still retaining her sexually innocent mask, Circe blushes at the sight of Encolpius, orders them to be left alone and starts her sensual games:

> ... secundum invitantem consedi, ramum super oculos meos posuit, et quasi pariete interiecto audacior facta ...

> '... I sat next to her, as she asked me to; she placed a branch over my eyes and became bolder, as if a wall had come between us ...'
> (131.10)

Her speech has not lost the sarcastic tones of her letter (131.10; cf. 129.5-7), but Encolpius feels confident enough, at least for the time being, to challenge her boldness and respond in an even more provocative way ('rogas' inquam ego 'potius quam temptas?' 131.11). The sight of a couple's love-meeting on stage would have been quite an agreeable scene in the plot of a licentious mime (cf. the alleged love-scenes in the adultery mimes), especially if the male partner fails once more to satisfy his woman and thus cause her outraged reaction.[9]

It seems that Encolpius, even after his temporary treatment by Proselenos, cannot have an erection (if that is the meaning of the obscure manifestis ... contumeliis, 132.2). The reason for this sexual contradiction between his meetings with Proselenos and with Circe should be sought in the dramatic effect that a second sexual failure has in the amused eyes of an imaginative audience.[10] The narrator keeps mocking himself and presents his sexual experiences as if his impotence were the subject of a mimic sketch[11] which would be titillating and comic enough to provide a form of low-class entertainment with its unexpected turns and its violent ending. This time there is no mercy for Encolpius[12] who receives a humiliating thrashing from Circe's whole household (cubicularios 132.2; omnes quasillarias familiaeque sordidissimam partem 132.3) and, moreover,

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[9] See above, page 252.

[10] Anderson 1982, 67 argues that the Greek romance should not be forgotten as possible source of inspiration for the scene of Encolpius' sexual failures with Circe in the garden, since also in Longus there are such scenes of sexual failure (see Anderson 1982, 150, note 2).

[11] See Sen. Ep. XCIV.71 ambitio et luxuria et impotentia scaenam desiderant. On impotence as a possible topic of ridicule in the mimes see McKeown 1979, 79 and 83, note 43.

[12] Sat. 132.2 et me iubet catomizari. Cunningham 1971, 104 cites as a parallel Herodas, III.3 τοῦτον κατ' ὤμου δεῖρον, but he accepts Ernout's emendation, catomidiari.

thinks that he deserves it (132.4). The mimic fracas is completed with the battering of Chrysis and the ejection of Proselenos (132.5), both of them regarded as equally responsible for the wrong done to their mistress.

The amusingly shocking conversation between Encolpius and his penis (132.7-11), which should not be regarded as an original touch,[13] is framed within specific role-playing (132.7 contingere languorem simulavi), and forms a kind of relieving reaction on Encolpius' part (132.7 quod solum igitur salvo pudore poteram, ... totum ignem furoris in eam converti); he resorts both to deeds (an impulse towards mimic castration, 132.8.1-7) and to words (132.8.8-9; 132.9-10) in order to take revenge. The fact that Petronius portrays Encolpius expressing his anger aloud in a soliloquy and waiting absurdly for an apology from his membrum virile ('quid dicis' 132.9; 'rogo te, mihi ... redde.' 132.10), as if it were a person who would justify his failure (132.10), is an indication of the farcical interpretation of the scene. Moreover, the crudity in which famous Vergilian quotations (Aen. VI.469 and IX.436, Ecl. V.16 / 132.11) are exploited for vulgar purposes during this ridiculous conversational monologue (Encolpius' penis becomes the shade of Dido in its answer at 132.11) is surely in the same tradition of the coarse mimic spirit of literary parody with its obscene adaptations of well-known texts.

Feelings of guilt at his immodest discourse vex poor Encolpius who suddenly changes and surprisingly becomes a modest and respectable citizen (132.12; cf. his similar reaction of shock at the obscene context of Quartilla's indecent proposals, 25.3). A list of references to similar situations in literary texts relieves his consciousness of mental suffering (132.13), but both the equation of himself with Ulysses (132.13), with characters from tragedy (132.13), or with people with damaged limbs (132.14), and the anomalies of the situations compared (on the one hand, Ulysses' heart, a tragic character's eyes, a person's feet, hands, eyes, and legs; on the other, Encolpius' penis) render this comparison risible and functional on the dramatic level of farce. The theatrical effect of Encolpius' soliloquy is reinforced by a slight pause (mox ... diutius 132.13) during which he rubs his forehead for a long while (perfricata diutius fronte 132.13), a visual sign that on second thoughts a counter-argument is going to refute earlier, unfair judgements and premature conclusions.

The famous elegiacs at 132.15 have to be understood within this farcical context of an impotent's musings. It is true that the lost beginning and end of the

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[13] On the literary tradition of one's address to one's penis see Salanitro 1971-72, 448, note 1.

novel make it impossible to know the precise circumstances which the author has created for his hero's narration;[14] whatever direct address, however, Encolpius makes to severe Roman conservatives (132.15.1) accounts only for Encolpius' (and not for Petronius') beliefs;[15] Encolpius seeks to justify his seemingly indecent behaviour like an actor who abruptly breaks the dramatic illusion and asks for his audience's proper understanding or sympathy.[16] Once Encolpius' address is put in its proper theatrical context, claims that Petronius is in this unique instance speaking to his audience in propria persona are crucially weakened.

Encolpius' apologia for speaking to his penis has been used not only to claim identification between the narrator and the author, who thus would be able to explain away the gross amount of sexuality in his novel and profess to be a supporter of Epicurean theories both in his life and in his works,[17] but also as an additional topical link between this novel and the indecent theatre of the mimes. No extant Latin mimic texts survive to prove that the mimic obscenities, which were supposed to have shocked and, no doubt, amused so many generations from the time of Cato until the Christian era, were actually performed on stage rather than simulated. It is generally accepted, however, that the theatre of the

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[14] See Courtney's sceptical remarks, 1991, 13, which unnecessarily lead him to conclude that at 132.12 "Petronius may both appear in and separate himself from Encolpius."

[15] See Beck 1973, 51: "The poem may be read - and read more naturally - as a continuation, without any break, of the rhetorical soliloquy that immediately precedes it." Cf., also, Zeitlin 1971(b), 676: "It is, in my opinion, an egregious error to isolate this passage as the personal view of Petronius who is said to be advocating a return to an earlier classical tradition of simplicity. The very terms of Encolpius' presentation deny this, ..." For the opposite view see Coccia 1979, 790-798 who supports the theory of the complete identification of Petronius with Encolpius when the latter delivers his apologia. The bibliography on 132.15 is enormous. Among others see detailed discussions in Beck 1973, 51-54; Barbieri 1983, 9 ff. with bibliography.

[16] In Plautus' *Amph.* 486-495, Mercury breaks the dramatic fiction and explains how Alcumena's alleged unfaithfulness to Amphitruo will be justified and excused by her husband and the members of the audience.

[17] See, for example, Gigante 1980, 72 who claims that only by accepting 132.15 as a genuine Petronian speech (or, at least, by identifying Encolpius with Petronius), can one argue that the author has moralistic intentions for his novel. The question whether Petronius was a true Epicurean or not is still a controversial subject. See Courtney 1991, 14: "My conclusion is that Petronius is in no sense propagating Epicurean doctrine, but is quite willing to allow his characters to justify their acts by recourse to a superficial Epicureanism, and to this extent to allow to emanate from his novel an attitude to life of which Stoics like Seneca would disapprove."

mimes presented, if not female nudity or sexual intercourse on stage, lascivious gestures and vulgar sexual speech in the form of either puns or explicitly crude expressions.[18] What Encolpius basically argues here is that it is entirely human to deal with sexual matters in the direct manner which, perhaps, mimic performances had chosen for their presentation of such themes. If we view the *Satyrica* within the literary tradition of sexual buffoonery, then the theatre of the mimes is the nearest genre which can claim that it influenced Petronius' novel in its portrayal of sexual topics.

Rosenblüth has connected Theophrastus' (?) definition of the mime as μίμησις βίου τά τε συγκεχωρημένα καὶ ἀσυγχώρητα περιέχων with Petronius' unrestrained treatment of sexual material in his novel, and has argued that both the mimes and the novel aimed at the amusement of their audience.[19] The case for a strong influence, however, of mimic sexual elements on Encolpius' erotic adventures weakens considerably if one considers both the sophistication of Petronius' novel, which renders sexual incidents as elaborately contrived amusement destined to entertain only an intellectual coterie, and the peculiar way in which the sexual element is presented in Petronius: the more 'pornographic' an action is, the less explicitly it is described by the narrator. Thus it is not entirely true that the narrator of this novel

> quodque facit populus, candida lingua refert. (132.15.4)[20]

'reports in unambiguous language whatever ordinary people do.'

A plethora of sexual euphemisms, metaphors, irrelevant images,[21] and a highly rhetorical tone create an impression of bookishness around the obscene act itself and present it in a grotesque mode which approaches the comically bizarre manner in which the mimic theatre must have presented sexual situations. A proper evaluation of the novel's dense literary texture renders it anything else but pornography, but, on the other hand, it does not offer firm grounds for arguing that Epicurean theories are put forward as a design for living. The risible context

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[18] See above, page 13, note 18.

[19] See Rosenblüth 1909, 37.

[20] Gill 1973, 183-185 skilfully defines sexual realism in Petronius: "... the claim of realism, at least in connection with the presentation of the sexual, must be seen as simply another piece of Petronian pastiche, a literary pose momentarily adopted by the author, rather than an attempt to break out of his work and speak directly and sincerely to his audience." (page 185)

[21] See gladium 9.5; pugnasti 9.9; vasculo tam rudi 24.7; facimus 87.9; instrumenta 130.4; leporem 131.7; floris extincti 140.1, etc.; cf. Rosenblüth 1909, 53.

of this apologia undermines any serious intentions one may have intended to apply to either the narrator or the author.

Despite textual gaps it seems that Encolpius in a rhetorically depressive mood cross-examines Giton about his most recent unfaithfulness with Ascyltus (133.1), but the boy exhibits again his usual attitude of exaggerated histrionics (tetigit puer oculos suos conceptissimisque iuravit verbis 133.2) and ambiguous responses: sibi ab Ascylto nullam vim factam 'that no violence was inflicted on him by Ascyltus' 133.2. From the way Giton has structured his answer, the inference is that he has not been unwillingly violated by Ascyltus, but, rather, that he readily accepted his sexual invitation.

Encolpius goes to a temple, where Priapus may have been worshipped (133.4 intravit delubrum), and tries to placate the comic equivalent of the angry Poseidon.[22] His solemn prayer to the god is interrupted by the entrance of Proselenos (133.4) who was perhaps looking for the person who had unleashed the wrath of gods against her (134.2 mihi deos iratos excitasti). The old woman had been thrown out of Circe's house earlier on (132.5), because she had failed to cure Encolpius' impotence and, thus, satisfy her mistress' sexual desires. The pathetically dishevelled appearance of her second entrance (133.4 anus laceratis crinibus nigraque veste deformis) aims at portraying her as a mimic hag,[23] who would have evoked laughter in a theatrical audience (cf. the same impression made by the portrayal of the old lady involved in the brawl at the inn, 95.8, or by the description of Encolpius' drunken landlady, 79.6).

The plot of mimic witchcraft at Croton passes into another stage now that the reputation of Proselenos as a witch is disputed (134.2); consequently, another witch is employed to come to the rescue of Encolpius' virility. The setting is the interior of a room (134.3) which belongs to Priapus' priestess, Oenothea (134.7). It must be visualised as a chaotic and untidy place which falls apart (135.3-4; 136.1), and its owner as an extremely old hag: Encolpius says that the ancient titbits of the pig's cheek she had stored to eat (sincipitis vetustissima particula 135.4), are as old as her birthday (coaequale natalium suorum 136.1). Her customary habit, whenever she visits her friend, is to have at least three drinks with her (136.11). Oenothea's literary character is believed to be

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[22] On Petronius' parody of similar prayers in Tibullus, Lygdamus and the Isis-cult see Raith 1971, 109-118. On the manner in which Roman Comedy parodies formal ceremonies and solemn prayers see Cèbe 1966, 86-95.

[23] On the characteristics of this mimic figure see Nicoll 1931, 93.

composed of two quite different elements - the respectable old housewife
Baucis, and a typical bibulous lena of comedy or elegy, with strong Priapic
associations.[24]

In this composite sketch of her figure, the μαστροπός of the mimes, such as
Γυλλίς who features in Herodas' First Mime, should be added as a possible
influential stock-character.[25]

Before Oenothea's entrance into the scene, an incident of physical violence
(134.3-5) occurs as Proselenos turns her anger against the still unresisting
Encolpius, who is thus beaten once more for his impotence. Encolpius' sufferings
through Proselenos' anger appear to be similar to the theatrical ordeals that
Encolpius and his friends suffered at the hands of Quartilla, another priestess of
Priapus (18.7-26.5).[26] This cruelty, which is obviously exaggerated by the
narrator (134.4 forsitan etiam bracchia mea caputque fregisset; 134.5 lacrimisque ubertim
manantibus), is not meant to shock or to show the ruthlessness of Petronius'
fictional (or real) world,[27] but is supposed to be regarded comically, especially
since every violent intention fails with the immediate breaking of the cane
(134.4).

The second witch-priestess, Oenothea, arrives eventually with a not-so-
gentle welcome (134.7), and Proselenos informs her in brief about Encolpius'
'crime' (134.8-9); he must have been still lost in his world of grief, because he
pays attention to Oenothea only after the extraordinary account of her magic
power (135.1 anumque inspicere diligentius coepi). Like an expert sorceress in a
farce, she makes a rather long theatrical pause to show the seriousness of the
situation and the pensive mood which will allow her to make a correct
prescription for the patient's cure (his auditis Oenothea inter utrumque consedit motoque
diutius capite 134.10). The impression she desires has been created, so she is
ready now not only to make in a triumphant tone confident promises concerning
Encolpius' future (morbum sola sum quae emendare scio 134.10; nisi illud tam rigidum

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24 Currie 1989, 329.

25 On her character see Cunningham (ed.) 1971, 57; Currie 1989, 328, note 28.

26 On the similarities and differences between the Quartilla-scene and the Oenothea-scene see
Cotrozzi 1979, 183-185.

27 See, e.g., Zeitlin 1971(b), 655: "Typically, unpredictable and often unpleasant accidents occur
which further emphasize the chaotic and even malevolent aspect of reality. Violence, assault, or
punishment far out of proportion to the so-called "crime" is a familiar pattern in the picaresque as in
the Satyricon."

reddidero quam cornu 134.11), and, indeed, to reveal the unpleasant recipe for the treatment (rogo ut adulescentulus mecum nocte dormiat 134.11), but also to embark on a mimic canticum, full of the conventional miracles that she, as a witch, is able to perform (134.12.1-10).[28] It has been unnecessarily suggested that these verses are attributed to Oenothea by Encolpius and were not spoken by her at the time.[29] Oenothea evidently has a high opinion of her magical powers, and the contrast between her opinion and her real abilities evokes laughter. This contrast is reinforced by Encolpius' naive statement of his astonishment at the time (135.1 inhorrui ego ... conterritus), while he agrees to obey Oenothea's orders (135.2) which are similar to the ones that had been given by Quartilla in the past (19.2) in order to soften Priapus.[30]

The ensuing first stage of the ceremonial proceedings is described in such a vivid manner that it depicts clearly the sordid and pathetic nature of Oenothea's witchcraft (et camellam [et]iam vetustate ruptam 135.3; sincipitis vetustissima particula mille plagis dolata 135.4; granaque sordidissimis putaminibus vestita 135.5). Incongruous and vulgar details in the procedure add to the farcical element of the scene: note the enormous size of the cooking pot (135.4), the fact that there are beans in the cupboard meant for the meat (135.4), the impatience of the old woman and her crude way of shelling the beans (135.6), Oenothea's alleged experience in reading the future (137.10).

The complex literary frame of the scene inside Oenothea's hut becomes apparent in the ensuing verse-composition that the narrator improvises, for in this poem his hopeless passion for literary role-playing transforms the disastrous and collapsing surroundings of the old hag's room into the humble and decent

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[28] Parallels of Oenothea's boasting in Latin texts and in magical papyri are in Courtney 1991, 38.

[29] See Beck 1973, 49: "Might we not suppose that the verse represents not the narrator's reconstruction of Oenothea's own pretensions to magical power, but rather the reconstruction of what he himself in the past, with the fervid literary imagination that he carried into all his adventures, would expect a witch to claim on first encounter? The verse on this supposition, would not really be Oenothea's at all, but rather the imaginings of Encolpius himself projected on to Oenothea in his later re-shaping of his adventures for narration."

[30] See Schmeling 1971, 356 on Encolpius' expurgation by the so-called Priapic rituals performed by Quartilla and Oenothea.

cottage of the poor and hospitable Callimachean Hecale.[31] The juxtaposition of Encolpius' literary imagination and the reality contributes to the buffonery of the scene. This is witnessed not only earlier through Oenothea's first words (134.7) and the ruin of her house (135.4), but also immediately after the poem through her farcical tumbling down on to the hearth, since the stool she had used to reach the cupboard for meat broke under her weight (136.1-2).[32] A mimic Hecale is presented as an ancient, helpless, bibulous and fat hag with a burnt elbow and a face covered totally with ashes. This slapstick accident would have been effective on the stage of a mimic play; in fact, Encolpius notes his reaction as if he were the audience of such a performance:

> consurrexi equidem turbatus anumque non sine risu erexi.
>
> 'I stood up in alarm and, laughing, helped the old woman to her feet.' (136.3).

The water of the cooking-pot put out the fire and one more scene of the second act of the witchcraft-mime at Croton ends, as usual, with the sudden exit of one of the characters, Oenothea (cf. the sudden exits in mimic plays reported by Cicero, *Cael.* 65). She goes to look for fire and will return at 136.9 but by then Encolpius will have committed another of his mimic 'crimes' against Priapus, the farcical incident of the slaying of the god's favourite goose (136.4-5).

The comic battle (proelium 136.12) between three geese and Encolpius

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[31] Apart from the Callimachean poem, Perutelli 1986, 136-141 discusses the influence of two Ovidian passages (*Met.* VIII.701 ff.; *Fasti* II.571 ff.) and of the pseudo-Vergilian *Moretum* (92-94) as possible literary models for the description of Oenothea's hut and of the magic rites she performed, and concludes: "Insomma il rito di Enotea assume con vari punti di riferimento nel contesto un indiscusso carattere comico e in particolare la relazione sia con l' inserto poetico di 134.12 che con quello di 135.8 è assolutamente di antagonismo, rovesciamento farsesco delle situazioni ivi espresse." (page 138). Cf., also, Currie 1989, 328-329. Rosenmeyer 1991, 403-413 argues convincingly that Callimachus' 'Victoria Berenices', in the third book of his *Aetia*, has presented Petronius with the perfect model for subversion: on his way to kill the lion of Nemea, Herakles stays with Molochus, an uncourteous and poor host who is terrorized by an invasion of mice and chases them in a manner reminiscent of epic battle-scenes. Likewise, Encolpius has similar experiences with Oenothea's hospitality and the flock of her geese.

[32] See Preston 1915, 263: "Oenothea's tumble from a rickety stool is described with an evident straining after comic effect." Cf. Brozek 1972, 287 where he treats the description of the room and the objects referred to, as respective scenery and props of a theatrical type.

could be characterized as a farce-within-a-farce,[33] as it displays features of a slapstick performance within the hilarious framework of witchcraft which we have seen permeating the events. It is described through the narrator's literary opportunism in the tone of an epic scene,[34] similar to the fight between Hercules and the Stymphalian birds (136.6.1-2) or the Argonauts and the Harpies (136.6.2-4). The reality, however, is quite different: three geese who probably belonged to Oenothea, and among whom at least one was Priapus' favourite pet, arrive at the door of the room in order to be fed (136.4).

Müller [3]1983 justifiably brackets the word sacri at 136.4, because Encolpius finds out from Oenothea that Priapus was particularly fond of them only later at 137.1-2. If, however, one accepts Beck's theory that Encolpius' narration is that of an omniscient commentator who recounts and re-shapes for entertainment his past experiences,[35] then the deletion is not necessary. On the other hand, this Petronian passage is the only piece of evidence we have to show that geese were sacred animals dedicated to Priapus. Moreover, one could challenge even this assumption, since Oenothea says merely that the slaughtered goose was

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[33] For a similar interpolated farce see the incident of the two Syrian thieves in the overall structure of Quartilla's mime, 22.3-5.

[34] See Beck 1973, 58: "The passage is a particularly interesting one in that the hero's fantasies are allowed to spill over into the preceding prose (136.4-5), where we find, often in the same sentence, a subtle mixture of heroic posturing and absurd or very ordinary reality. In the protagonist's imagination his foes are viciously formidable (impetum ... trepidantem) and their leader a sort of Mezentius: dux et magister saevitiae. But probably they are only looking for their midday meal (qui ... exigere), and part of the injuries which they inflict on Encolpius, the tearing of his tunic and the breaking of his sandal straps, are scarcely compatible with heroic dignity. Again Encolpius defends himself armata manu, but his weapon is actually a table-leg, and a diminutive table-leg (pedem mensulae) at that! Finally, the battering to death of the dux which had been rash enough to bite Encolpius' leg is spoken of as an act of epic vengeance: morte me anseris vindicavi." Cf., also, Courtney 1991, 45 who compares the killing of the goose with the killing of the cattle of Helios (Od. μ 260 ff.), and Encolpius' attempt to redeem himself through the offer of money (137.4-9) to Od. μ 345-347.

[35] See above, page 187, note 56.

Priapus' darling, not that it was dedicated to him.[36]

Whatever the case, it seems that the combination of the geese's aggressive nature and their hunger transforms them in Encolpius' picaresque mind into legendary carnivorous creatures ruthlessly attacking to kill. These strange enemies, divided appropriately into the cruel leader and his two milder followers (cf. 136.4 dux ac magister saevitiae), appear to have a specific method in their assault: all together they run towards their poor defenceless victim (Encolpius), stand round him and attack simultaneously different parts of their victim's body: Encolpius' tunic, shoe-straps and leg (136.4). The mimic fight continues with a counter-attack against the assailants. Encolpius decides that the situation is very serious, and that it calls for equally violent action (oblitus itaque nugarum 136.5). A small table-leg confronts savage bites which turn out to be mere scratches;[37] satisfaction comes only after the dangerous leader of the hostile army is dead (nec satiatus defunctorio ictu, morte me anseris vindicavi 136.5). This farcical fight ends with the return of the remaining two geese to Priapus' temple, defeated and without their leader (136.7) but content that they had beans for lunch (136.7), whereas Encolpius, proud of his labour, takes care of his heroic wounds (136.7) and prepares himself for an un-heroic exit (136.8). His intentions are frustrated by the sudden return of Oenothea (136.9), who forces him to remain indoors and to adopt the pose of an impatient person who has been waiting too long for an appointment (136.10).

The incident of the geese contains many of the elements that constitute a mimic or comic sketch: it is brief, it has slapstick elements, for example, Encolpius' fighting posture, pretended violence, and an unexpected ending (see

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[36] See Richardson 1980, 103: "on both internal and external grounds it seems most unlikely that Petronius was responsible for sacri ... Its presence is owed to that class of corruption known as the explanatory gloss ... In this case the information was prompted by Priapi delicias and the fuss over the killing of the goose and suggested by some scribe's notion of Roman sacral lore. The interpolation was detected by the structural difficulties which it gives the passage (which go away after deletion), and by the lack of external corroboration. When it comes to linking geese with Priapus in any fixed and sacral sense one feels that in the future Petronius should best be left out of the argument."

[37] See 136.7 'not a deep wound on the foot' (vulnusque cruris haud altum) and compare both the kind of weapons used in other mimic battles earlier on in the novel (at the inn, 95.5-9, and on the deck of Lichas' ship, 108.8-9), and the mimic wounds in Eumolpus' eyebrow, 98.7. In Pl. Trucul. 627-629, Stratophanes, the soldier, threatens Cyamus, the slave, with his sword, and the slave considers of fighting back with a spit. Cf. above, page 233, note 70.

Oenothea's reaction at 137.1-3). Moreover, there is a fourth century B.C. Athenian vase which shows two men, perhaps cooks, wearing the common stuffed costume of comedy with a phallus, standing next to an enormous cooking pot and trying to defend themselves from the attack of two geese.[38] It is unlikely that this picture represents an actual scene from comedy, because it would have been rather hazardous to put real geese on stage and expect that they would behave according to the script. Nevertheless, even if this scene perhaps shows how the vase-painter imagined an attack of geese described in a comic monologue (or dialogue), or performed with actors in costume, it is good evidence to suggest that such an incident was likely to have been included, because of its slapstick possibilities, in an Old Comedy plot. Such a slapstick scene was, I believe, the intention that Petronius had in his mind when he was composing this brief incident.

Oenothea, annoyed that her bibulous friend delayed her departure (136.11) and, consequently, the continuation of her sacrificium (136.3), returns in a bad mood only to find her previously chaste reputation stained (137.3), the favourite pet of the god, whose devoted priestess she was supposed to be, murdered (137.13) and the murderer praising himself for his deed (136.12). Her reaction must be imagined as an extreme manifestation of melodramatic feelings (magnum acremque clamorem sustulit 136.13; quaerebam quid excanduisset 136.14; illa complosis manibus 137.1; noli clamare 137.4; anserisque fatum complorat 137.5) which confuse (136.14), embarrass (137.4) and amaze (137.5) Encolpius, ready once more to redeem the wrong he committed:

> ego tibi pro ansere struthocamelum reddam.

'I will repay you with an ostrich instead of a goose.' (137.4)[39]

The picture becomes more ridiculous when Proselenos arrives, inquires into the death of the goose and weeps even louder than Oenothea (137.5). This false grief, an equivalent of Quartilla's theatrical tears, must have lasted for quite a while, for Encolpius states not only his disgust, but also his boredom at the mourning of the old women (137.6). The point of the witches' exaggerated sorrow is, of course, not their pious fidelity to the worship of Priapus, but their hypocrisy (137.7; 137.12) and the intense contrast with their future eagerness to

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[38] See Bieber [2]1961, 48, fig. 203.

[39] Note the sexual insinuation that Encolpius makes through the phallic image of the ostrich. See Festus, page 410 Lindsay: Strutheum in mimis praecipue vocant obscenam partem virilem, <a> salacitate videlicet passeris, qui Graece στρουθός dicitur.

accept immediately Encolpius' money as compensation, and to forget gladly the whole episode (137.7-8). Just as Quartilla's mimic grief was turned abruptly into hysterical mimic laughter once she heard that Encolpius, Ascyltus and Giton were ready to participate in her religious orgy (18.2-19.1), so Oenothea's loud reproaches become apologetic reassurances that Proselenos' and her own angry reactions were due to their personal concern for Encolpius' future and were not expressed for either the god's or their own sake (137.7).

The power of money (137.9), a topic already mentioned in connection with the market-place scene (14.2), removes all obstacles, and lets the second stage of the interrupted sacrificial ceremony begin (137.10; 138.1-2). An expurgatory procedure and a meal of Priapus' 'sacred' goose (137.11-12) ensue, but even Encolpius' practical mind understands the ridiculously elementary rules Oenothea applies for her metaphysical fortune-telling:

> nec me fallebat inanes scilicet ac sine medulla [ventosas] nuces in summo umore consistere, graves autem et [plenas] integro fructu ad ima deferri.
>
> 'It did not escape my attention that the nuts which were empty and without a kernel, naturally stayed on the surface, whereas the heavy ones with a complete fruit were carried to the bottom.' (137.10)

Performances of obscene ceremonials (138.1-2), sex and violence in the attempt of two lecherous, drunken, old women to chase and assault an impotent young man (138.3-4; cf.137.13), an abrupt ending when the plot could develop no further, are motifs which would have amused an audience in a conventional mimic performance of a farce with Encolpius' Crotonian adventures as its theme; at this point of the Petronian narrative, they signify that the sketch of mimic witchcraft employed unsuccessfully to restore the hero's virility has reached its end.

The fragments from 138.5 to 139.4 have such an incoherent connection with each other that it is difficult to see the development (if any) of the plot.[40] Apparently, Chrysis states her enchantment with Encolpius (perhaps at 138.5; certainly at 139.4); Encolpius seems to praise in his usual sophisticated way a woman (138.6), probably again Circe, and remains unyielding in his affectionate devotion towards her, since he thinks she is able to remove the spell cast on him (138.7). He regards the love-sufferings that will not let him sleep (139.1) sufficient to classify him in the long tradition of legendary mortals pursued by gods in the

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[40] See Van Thiel 1971, 60.

past (Hercules, Laomedon, Pelias, Telephus, Ulysses) (139.2).[41] In a desperate hope to regain Circe's favour, he asks Giton if any visitors had come for him (139.3), and the boy responds, annoyed (me accersito sermone lassasset 139.3) and rather maliciously, that only threats had been delivered the previous day by a good-looking woman (139.3) (would Circe herself have visited Encolpius' lodgings, since in the past she always preferred the intervention of an intermediary?). Encolpius' sexual and magical adventures at Croton during the last two days of the narration end with a message from the angry Eumolpus, who threatens severe punishment for his servant Polyaenus if he fails to return immediately to his old post.

The farcical events that befell Encolpius have made us forget for a while the mimic frame of the Crotonian legacy-hunting pretence that Corax, Giton, Encolpius and Eumolpus had sworn to keep up (117.5). So far, however, neither has the hero's impotence been cured (cf. the final strange cure at 140.12 by someone or something which the narrator's fertile imagination likes to identify with Mercury) nor has the outcome of his love-affair with Circe (or Chrysis) been definitely shown. We do not know what happens after the reading of Eumolpus' will (141.2-11; will Chrysis help the heroes to escape the wrath of the fooled Crotonians?) but for the time being the plot can move no further and, like a mimic performance, must have a contrived ending.

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[41] In a similar tone Pleusiples evokes Achilles' wrath to justify the length to which men in love can go because of their passion (Pl. Mil. Glor. 1284-1289). One should read the widely commented gravis ira Priapi (139.2.8) within this imaginary role-playing. See above, page 66, note 46; page 67, note 48.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN.
PYGESIACA SACRA: *SAT*.140.1-11.

The Philomela-episode (*Sat.* 140.1-11) is one of the less commented scenes of the *Satyrica*.[1] It is a brief example of the kind of gifts that the Crotonians offered Eumolpus in order to win his favour and, possibly, a share in his vast legacy (124.4). Petronius sets forth the story of a matron who excelled all the others in nobility of social class and character (matrona inter primas honesta 140.1)[2] who entrusts her children to Eumolpus' wisdom and benevolence (prudentiae bonitatique 140.2)[3] with the hidden motive of gaining some of his wealth.

We have already seen that legacy-hunting may have been employed by the native theatre of the fabulae Atellanae and the farcical theatre of the mimes.[4] The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the anecdote of the matron Philomela was composed by Petronius as a narrative equivalent of a theatrical farce. The theatrical nature of this anecdote will be examined in the structure, the characters, the staging, the language and the multiple levels of its description that demonstrate its theatricality.

The structure of the story, which Petronius ironically calls a 'tragedy' (140.6) is quite clear. At first, the narrator presents the preliminary pieces of information

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[1] The interest of scholars is focused mainly on its textual problems or on its sexual dimensions. The most controversial passage in this scene for many years now has been *Sat.* 140.5 and the attempt to define what is the exact meaning of the †pigiciacat† sacra. Sullivan 1968(a), 75, notes the "wit of the prose" and the "farcical nature of the scene", but is mainly concerned with the sexual point of view of the episode (239 ff.). There are, however, a few scholars who have commented on the theatrical elements in this scene, though partially and briefly. Gill 1973, 180 ff., considers this episode as an obvious example of the literary characteristics of the sexual scenes in this novel and Slater 1990(b), 131-132, notes the role-playing of the main characters. Dimundo 1987(a), 47-62, notes the similarities of both subject-matter and verbal terms between the Philomela episode and the two Milesian tales narrated by Eumolpus earlier on in the novel. Most of these parallels exist; the reason, however, for their existence is not an intertextual relationship among the episodes of the novel, but rather that all three of the short stories have a common sub-literary source (Milesian tales, mime), in which farcical elements abound.

[2] Honesta has the ironical meaning of a 'socially and morally irreproachable' woman. On the adjective honestus as titulus honorificus, especially for women, see *ThLL*, s.v., I.A.1.II.

[3] The obscure content of bonitas is cleared up at *Sat.* 140.7. The same combination of sex and moral education occurs in Lucius Pomponius, *Maccus Virgo* 71-72 (Frassinetti):

praeteriens vidi Dossenum in ludo reverecunditer

non docentem condiscipulum, verum scalpentem natis.

[4] See above, 239.

(*Sat.* 140.1-4), that is, the general plot and the persons who are going to take part in the episode, information which is necessary for the audience to know in order to understand the show that will follow (*Sat.* 140. 5-11). In other words he introduces the argumentum and the dramatis personae, to use the appropriate theatrical terms, and then goes on to describe the †pigiciaca† sacra, the most extraordinary incident of this tragoedia.[5]

At *Sat.* 116.7 we are informed that children in Croton were a sign of social isolation, since their parents were deprived of all advantages (omnibus ... commodis) of Croton's social life, that is, dinners and shows: non ad cenas, non ad spectacula admittitur. Philomela, therefore, a legacy-huntress who in the past had used her charms to extort legacies, prostituted her children to old, rich, and childless people and by this substitution succeeded in prolonging the use of her art (per hanc successionem artem suam perseverabat extendere 140.1). The reading of the woman's name is not the same in all manuscripts.[6] I am inclined, however, to accept the reading Philomela -which all editors follow- as correct for two reasons: the connection of this person with children, both in mythology and in this novel, and the fact that it is Petronius' habit to subvert mythological facts and turn them into amusing distorted tales.[7] Moreover, an interesting piece of evidence for the employment of this legend on the stage is provided by Juvenal, *S.* VII.92, where it is stated that high offices were distributed by actors and pantomimes (such as Paris) who performed fabulas salticas, such as the Pelops or the Philomela stories: praefectos Pelopea facit, Philomela tribunos. In the well-known myth she was involved

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[5] The word tragoedia which, in this scene, characterizes the unfortunate and unhappy future life of a childless podagricus, and comes in juxtaposition with the extremely funny sequence, occurs in the sense of a mock-tragic performance, that is, of theatre and pretence in general, at *Sat* 108.11, when Giton threatens to castrate himself. See above, page 233.

[6] The ms. I has Philomena while one scribe has written in the marginal Philumene, which is the Latin transliteration of the Greek word φιλουμένη, the 'loved-one', a word appropriate to a prostitute. The classical Philomela (= nightingale) becomes Philomena in mediaeval Latin. This may be an explanation for the reading of I. However, we have a Philumena as a character in a fabula palliata by Caecilius Statius, 141, and in Plautus' *Stichus.* For parallels in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum* see Collignon 1892, 385.

[7] Dimundo 1987, 57-58, adds a third reason: "potrebbe esistere un' intima relazione tra i nomi Filomela / Eumolpo, entrambi parlanti e dotati di un esplicito riferimento alla musica e al bel canto." On the ironical use of mythological names in Petronius see Sullivan 1968(a), 228; Schmeling 1969(b), 8; Priuli 1975, 54-57.

in the murder of Itys, her nephew, by her sister Prokne.[8] In the *Sat.* she is playing the role of a procuress, a lena. The character of the leno (πορνοβοσκός) is fairly common in most of the ancient theatrical texts,[9] whereas, on the contrary, the figure of the lena does not occur so frequently.[10] Apart from the obscure figure of a bawd that we find in a fragment of Trabea's fabula palliata, *Ex inc. fab.* 1, this type occurs in two Plautine comedies and functions in a way which is similar to Philomela.[11]

Eumolpus plays the role of a victim of gout and weak loins (podagricum ... lumborumque solutorum 140.6) and the whole perverse joke that follows is based on this premise. The word podagricus occurs twice more in the novel (*Sat.* 64.3 and 132.14; cf. 96.4), in its literary sense.[12] In Eumolpus' case, however, it is clearly a device (et si non servasset integram simulationem, periclitabatur totam paene tragoediam evertere 140.6), similar to those suggested to him by Encolpius, Giton and Corax on their way to Croton (117.9-10).

Encolpius and Corax are still pretending to be the slaves of the rich dominus

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[8] See *OCD²* s.v. and W.H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexicon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, III.2, 2343-2348. She did not kill her own children for revenge as Sullivan 1968(a), 75, note 1 says. Bieber [2]1961, 29 and figure 105, speaks of *Tereus*, the lost tragedy of Sophocles (see *TrGF* IV, page 435 ff. Radt), and gives an illustration of it, showing probably Tereus and Prokne or Philomela. Dobrov 1993, 189-234 argues that the Aristophanic presentation in *Birds* 92 ff. of the Tereus-saga is a "systematic usurpation of Sophoklean innovation ... a sophisticated synthesis of reactions to specific people, events, dramatic performances, and texts." (page 228).

[9] We find him in the title of one fabula Atellana by L. Pomponius 58, in the second mime of Herodas [see Headlam-Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro. xxxvi-xxxix and Cunningham (ed.) 1971, ad loc. for parallels], in the Middle Comedy (Anaxil. 2.272 K.; Eub. 2. 194-5 K.), in New Comedy (Men. *Colax* 120 ff.) and in the Roman Comedy (Plautus, *Curculio*; *Persa*; *Poenulus*; *Pseudolus*; *Rudens* and Terence, *Phormio*; *Adelphoe*).

[10] Bieber [2]1961, 96 and figure 349, gives comments on and an illustration of the lena. On the character of the mimic hag see Headlam - Knox (edd.) 1922, Intro., xxxii-xxxvi; Nicoll 1931, 93.

[11] In the *Asinaria*, Cleareta, the lena, will not allow her daughter Philaenium, the meretrix, to spend a whole year with Argyrippus, the adulescens, unless he brings her a certain amount of money. In the *Cistellaria*, if the lena did not prostitute her daughter, Gymnasium, her household would perish by mournful hunger.

[12] The key for the assumption of this specific role by Eumolpus lies, I think, in the fact that "gout was assumed to be a consequence of wealth; cf. Juv. XIII.96 ff." [So Smith (ed.) 1975, ad 64.3]. Mayor (ed.) ad loc. gives also many parallels to support this; note, however, that Eumolpus adopts the role of a character we find in a mime by Laberius, *Aquae Caldae* 5.

(117.6), that is, servi, one of the most famous types in theatre;[13] as far as Philomela's children are concerned, both Plautus, in some of his plays, and the sophist Choricius from Gaza in his description of mime-characters affirm the existence of children in the cast of theatrical performances.[14]

So far we have in the cast a lena, a podagricus and two servi. The element of their acting, their role-playing is quite clear.[15] The sense of simulatio is attributed both to Eumolpus (140.6) and to Philomela (140.4): she pretends religiosity and goes to the temple to pray for the fulfil ment of her desires; he pretends to suffer from gout -a device that makes his complicated sexual teaching even funnier. Both Philomela's children are well-taught: the response of the speciosissima filia to Eumolpus' invitation is characterized as an artificium (140.8), that is, not simply an art but an expertise, a profession, a craft.[16] Similarly, when Encolpius attempts to approach sexually the frater ephebus, he finds him a doctissimus puer (140.11).[17]

The staging of the scene is fairly simple. The place is a bedroom, Eumolpus' cubiculum (140.4), in which Philomela left her children to the wholesome instructions (salubribus praeceptis 140.2) of a sick, old man (podagricus senex). The scenery consists of one bed (140.7), the floor (pavimentum) of the room (140.7), and of a peculiar clostellum (140.11). The narrator is working in a reductive way. As in the early mime-performances, in which the background curtain (siparium) was mainly the only prop on stage[18] and the rest depended on the audience's imagination, so here we have not a complete description of the decoration of the rich Eumolpus' cubiculum but the reference only to what is

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[13] On the role of slaves in Roman Comedy see Duckworth 1952, 249-253; in the mimes see Sen. Ep. Mor. XLVII.14; Choricius, Apol. Mimorum 26 κἂν ἰατρὸν ἢ ῥήτορα σχηματίσηται μῖμος ἢ μοιχὸν ἢ δεσπότην ἢ δοῦλον, μιμεῖται μὲν ἅπαντα.

[14] For children in Roman Comedy see Prescott 1910, 31-50; 1936, 103, 110-111 and note 15. In the mimes see Choricius, Apologia Mimorum 16 οὗτος τοίνυν ὁ Πλάτωνα λαχὼν ἐραστὴν μιμεῖται μὲν ἄνδρας, μιμεῖται δὲ γύναια. φθέγγεται δὲ καὶ παιδίον αὐτῷ μήπω γινῶσκον ὀρθῶς οὐ μητέρα καλεῖν, οὐ πατέρα προσαγορεύειν; 110 παιδάριον ψελλιζόμενον. Bieber 21961, 251 and figure 836, gives additional pictorial evidence for the existence of children in a mime-cast.

[15] See Dimundo 1987(a), 58.

[16] For parallels see Sat. 56.1; Sen. Ep. XV.7; Cic. De Orat. I.130.

[17] On the word doctus in the same meaning of a person taught by practice, an expert cf. Sat. 74.5; 84.5.

[18] See Nicoll 1931, 105-109; Beare 1964, 154 and 267-274; Wiemken 1972, 199-202.

needed for the †pigiciaca† sacra and Encolpius' sexual failure: a bed[19] and a key-hole.[20]

The show witnessed by the boy itself is the operation of "a mechanism for sexual intercourse" and

> is depicted as an aesthetic spectacle, a source of admiration and amusement both to Philomela's admiring son and to the participants themselves.[21]

The puzzling †pigiciaca† sacra and its meaning in the passage are a topic of dispute by scholars.[22] The clue which leads to a most probable solution for the corrupt †pigiciaca† is the πυγησιακὰ which a scribe wrote in ancient Greek in the margin of the manuscript. The scribe must have been simply transliterating a fictitious word, which Petronius had written in Latin. There are many more

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[19] For the existence of actual beds on stage, when necessary in the mime-performances (especially, the adultery-mimes) see John Chrysostom 6.55B (= Migne *P.G.* lvi. 543).

[20] Baldwin 1977-1978, 120, observing that "clostellum (presumably for claustellum) seems unique to this passage", notes that there is an incongruity in the text: "However in some way not explained in the narrative, the boy is got out of the bedroom, for when Encolpius attempts him, he is watching his sister in action per clostellum, which appears to mean key-hole." He offers three possible explanations to solve the problem: "either the narrative of Petronius is a shade careless, or there is something missing from the text, or clostellum does not mean key-hole.' Indeed, there is something peculiar in the function of this unique word in the passage. The *OLD* interprets it as 'key-hole', referring only to this Petronian passage. The *ThLL* renders it as instrumentum claudendi, which does not make very good sense in the context. In the Μοιχεύτρια-mime the siparium represents a door (line 43 Page πορευθεὶς τῇ πλατ(ε)ία θύρᾳ). This could be the case also here: the boy is looking through a gap in the curtain. I believe, however, that none of Baldwin's suggestions is correct. The clostellum is most probably a 'key-hole' through which the boy admires the 'mechanical movements of his sister' (140.11). This is not the first time that the motif of peeping-through-a-hole occurs in the novel (cf. 26.4, 96.1 and, possibly, 11.2: see Sullivan 1968(a), 244, note 3). There is no reason at all for us to search for the exact moment in time when the puer and Encolpius left the room. Baldwin's question is false because we do not need a logical explanation but we must just accept the fact that they have moved away from the lectum Eumolpi.

[21] Gill 1973, 181. Mimic performances often enacted sexual intercourse on stage, in extreme cases quite realistically; see Nicoll 1931, 123.

[22] For a brief summary of the emendations suggested see Gill 1973, 181, note 29, and Baldwin 1977, 119-121. Müller [3]1983 prints Bücheler's emendation, Aphrodisiaca sacra.

Graecisms that Petronius uses in his novel[23] and similarly at 140.5 he needs the Greek ritual word to provide his mock-ceremony with the ridiculous authority of a pseudo-religious atmosphere. The best reading, therefore, is the one adopted by Ernout in the Budé edition [5](Paris, 1962): pygesiaca sacra = a sacred ceremony dedicated to πυγή. In spite of Eumolpus' homosexual preferences (85-87; 94.1-2) it is not so important and crucial to decide whether Eumolpus and the puella had vaginal or anal intercourse. More important for the audience is to understand that

> the whole scene is essentially a game, played by the fictional characters
> with their bodies and by the author with his language.[24]

Two phrases in the text must not escape the audience's attention: veluti oscillatione ludebat (140.9) and sororis suae automata (140.11). Regarding the former, one can note that the conception of having sex as a game is found again in the Sat. 11.2 and 127.10.[25] Eumolpus' intercourse is just like a swing. He and the girl are sitting on the swing doing nothing while Corax (another 'speaking name' in the Plautine manner which Petronius introduces into his novel)[26] is moving the

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[23] Cf., e.g., deuro de 58.7; laecasin 42.2; madeia perimadeia 52.9; sophos 40.1; topanta 37.4. Graecisms are often found in the surviving fragments of the Roman popular theatre of the Atellan farces and the mimic after-pieces: see Bacherler 1928, 162-170.

[24] Gill 1973, 182.

[25] Cf. also, Pomponius Adelphi, 1; Sen. Contr. I.2.22; Catul. LXI.204.

[26] The most recent discussion on the function of the name Corax is Labate 1986, 135-146. Labate notes that "Corax è nome di servo plautino e, insieme ad altri nomi di derivazione comica, dimostrerebbe una relazione privilegiata fra il Satyricon e appunto la commedia." (page 138). Since, however, there is no evidence in the surviving novel which would demonstrate the greedy nature of Corax in the manner of a Plautine servus, Labate finally argues that Eumolpus' attendant has this particular name because, like the corvus in Ovid, Met. II.536 ff., he is not going to keep his mouth shut but he will reveal the whole fallacy to the Crotonians. This view is as speculative as the previous one concerning the connection with Plautus; although there are hints of Corax's betrayal at 125.3, the legacy-hunters 'are exhausted and minimize their generosity' (exhausti liberalitatem imminuerunt 141.1), not because Corax has spoken to them but because time passes by and there is no sign of the wealth Eumolpus promised to them (141.1). The noun κόραξ signified also a military engine for grappling ships: see LSJ, s.v., II.1; OLD, s.v. corvus, 5.a; ThLL, s.v. corvus, V. In his position under the bed the servant Corax is transformed into a mechanical device which moves the αὐτόματα on top of the bed. Another suggestion is put forward by Schmeling 1969(b), 6, where he notes the existence of a lorarius with the same name in Plautus' Captivi (657), without, though, stressing the point too much.

swing to and fro and creates the actual intercourse.[27] The second phrase is more significant for the theatricality of the scene. The best interpretation of the Graecism automata is given by OLD (= automatic or puppet-like movements) differentiating it, thus, from the other instances in the novel at which the word occurs in the sense of an automatic contrivance, an automaton.[28] The theatrical emphasis is much stronger if we bear in mind that the expression τὰ αὐτόματα (only in plural) is used for marionettes.[29] This word induces us to visualise Eumolpus' intercourse in the spirit of a puppet-show. One can easily imagine the puella and the senex as the lifeless puppets while Corax is the person behind the stage who moves them.[30]

If this scene of the *Fugitive Millionaire*-mime had been performed on stage, its farcical dimensions would have depended upon the mimic actors' gestures rather than the verbal part of their role: Eumolpus, the archmime, is already lying in bed. Philomela enters on stage through the siparium with her children. She addresses the man:

> Liberos meos tuae prudentiae bonitatique commendo. Credo et vota mea. Tu solus in toto orbe terrarum es, qui praeceptis etiam salubribus instruere iuvenes quotidie potes. (140.2) (To her children) Relinquo vos in domo Eumolpi, ut illum loquentem audiatis. (140.3)

Perhaps she corroborates the validity of her hypocritical intentions by adding a pseudo-moralistic argument:

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[27] See Gill 1973, 179: "The rich artificiality of the language used to describe sexual events, and the disparity between verbal style and physical content (or sometimes between different styles in the same episode), do not reinforce the fictional reality of the action presented. Rather they tend to make each scene a temporary performance or display, the directness of the sexual impact undercut by the self-conscious style of the presentation. This quality of the language of the work is supplemented by the way in which characters are used, in the constructions of particular situations, to make scenes into theatrical spectacles."

[28] 50.1; 54.4. See Dimundo 1987(a), 56: "non siamo in presenza di macchine ma di esseri umani: la degradazione degli uomini è al tempo stesso la degradazione della macchina e l' automatismo che coinvolge Corace, Eumolpo e la fanciulla in un unico stravagante congegno, ha il potere di ridurli in una sorta di *automatum* del sesso." Cf., also, Dimundo 1987(b), 211-212; and above, page 124, note 155.

[29] See Aristotle, *De Generat. Animal.* 734b10 and Heron, Περὶ Αὐτοματοποιητικῆς I.1. According to OCD², Heron was a mathematician and inventor, known as ὁ μηχανικός, and his floruit was A.D. 62. It is likely that his treatises were known to the cultivated Arbiter Elegantiae.

[30] On the popularity of puppet shows in Rome see Balsdon 1969, 288.

Quae sola potest hereditas iuvenibus dari. (140.3)

She then exits and leaves her children into the room. Eumolpus does not hesitate to choose the young girl for his sexual lesson:

Ad pygesiaca sacra te invito. (140.5) Supra commendatam bonitatem, amabo, sede. Lectum, Corax, subi positisque in pavimento manibus lumbis tuis me commove. (140.7)

The young boy, not chosen by his tutor for a lesson of wisdom this time, withdraws silently, perhaps behind the door, and watches his sister performing. The action is mainly focused on the area of the bed (140.7). Corax is lying under the bed, Eumolpus is lying on the bed, Philomela's daughter is lying on Eumolpus.[31] The audience's amusement must derive from the grotesque position of the three human bodies and the movements of the actor who plays the servant. Perhaps the weight of Eumolpus' and the girl's bodies is too heavy for him to lift and he protests with comic grimaces of pain (cf. his buffoonish reactions at 117.12). He starts moving his buttocks up and down slowly at the beginning (140.8) but he proceeds in a faster rhythm when he hears Eumolpus shouting: Officium spissa (140.9). At the same time Encolpius who might, or might not, have been on stage during these happenings, approaches the boy and starts flattering him in order to assault him sexually (140.11).

In a theatrical representation of this incident even the space behind the clostellum is included in the stage-action and forms part of the show. Eumolpus, the puella and Corax are the first spectacle, the puer is the audience. Nevertheless, this same audience, namely the puer together with Encolpius, becomes the second spectacle for the audience in Nero's court and for the readers of every age thereafter. The double audience-actors structure of the scene is so clear that we could say that we have a play-within-a-play scene.[32] It is important to note that the eyes of an audience in a theatre must be focused on these two places simultaneously (i.e. Eumolpus - puella - Corax and Encolpius - puer), so that they can observe the victory of the first device and the failure of the second at the same time; the comic effect is derived precisely from this juxtaposition: Eumolpus wins again, Encolpius fails again. The best proof for Eumolpus' theatrical and sexual triumph is his laughter:

hoc semel iterumque ingenti risu, etiam suo, Eumolpus fecerat (140.10).

[31] The number of actors who enacted a mimic plot was regularly three. This is valid in the pygesiaca sacra - spectacle as well: Eumolpus / puella / Corax.

[32] For similarly structured scenes in Plautus see above, page 39, note 42; page 40, note 44.

> 'Eumolpus performed this not only once but several times amid huge
> laughter, including his own.'

Laughter in this novel is usually not a natural expression of joy but either invokes fear or it is so exaggerated that it becomes clearly theatrical.[33]

If one captures the colour that all these pieces of evidence render to the episode as a whole, in general, and to the complicated sexual contrivance, in particular, then one can see in the story nothing else but a trick, a funny show organised by the clever wit of Eumolpus, performed by himself and the puella, and conducted by the servant Corax. It is improbable that the scene should be considered an example of the exclusus-amator motif[34] or a sample of perverse imagination which casts a light on the author's psychology.[35] These interpretations miss clues that the text itself provides for its own understanding. The parody of ritual and sacred ceremonies is inevitable[36] but the ultimate purpose must be none other than fun.[37]

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[33] See above, pages 62-63 and note 34.

[34] Schmeling 1971, 338 and 354-355.

[35] Sullivan 1968(a), 238 ff.

[36] We do not really know the provenance of the ritual, if any, Petronius parodies here (pygesiaca sacra 140.5). For a discussion of this topic with bibliography see Schmeling 1971, 354-356. He speculates that Eumolpus' anal copulation with the young daughter of Philomela may signify that the "sexual acts of a young girl or a young bride are anal on the first night, the cunnus being reserved for Priapus under the ius noctis primae. Underlying Eumolpus' choice of the young girl's culus may be the ritual prohibition against breaking the hymen and shedding blood." (page 355). It is worth noting, then, that Eumolpus' improvisational ritual should be related to the theme of parody-initiation (especially, Priapic rituals) in the Satyrica as a whole. The most prominent example of this is, of course, in the episode of Quartilla (16.1-26.6), on which see Cosci 1980, 199-201; note, however, that the pseudo-rituals in both episodes are framed within a theatrical context of play-acting and pretence (on the mimic qualities of the Quartilla-scene see above, pages 54-75); they assume, therefore, a predominantly theatrical appearance, whatever their source of inspiration for Petronius was. Parody of ceremonies was popular on the comic stage: see Reich 1903, 80-88; Cèbe 1966, 67-75.

[37] See Arrowsmith 1972, 326, for a moralistic interpretation of the Philomela-episode and cf. the acute remarks made by Anderson 1982, 72, against this interpretation: "the humour here is concerned with the ingenious ruse which Eumolpus needs to invent in order to seduce his pupil, while still concealing the fact that he is not a cripple ... the physical arrangements are similar to those of the lovers on top of the tub in Apuleius (Met. IX. 7) - with the same element of amused voyeuzism as in the episode of the woman and the ass in the Onos (52). Both of the latter cases are morally neutral, and it is difficult to see what is different about this one."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN.
MIMICA MORS: *SAT.* 139.5 & 140.12-141.11.

Many questions seem unanswered: what has happened to Circe? How did Encolpius respond to Chrysis' love? (139.4). How and why at this point of the narrative did Encolpius regain his virility? (140.12).[1] It is clear, however, that, as far as Eumolpus' trick is concerned, the situation at Croton becomes more and more difficult for the false millionaire and his slaves, because the *captatores* are tired out and their generosity is shrinking (141.1). What follows is Eumolpus' will according to which his slaves, Encolpius, Giton, Corax and possibly new ones (139.5), are manumitted, while his other heirs must cut Eumolpus' body in pieces and eat it in the presence of a crowd (141.2), if they wanted to inherit his 'wealth'.

A direct connection between theatre and the unusual content of this will seems, at first sight, unlikely.[2] The introduction of this theme in the novel should be explained by the combination of many different factors. The custom of ἀνδροφαγία has behind it a long historical tradition

> which ranges from Herodotean-sophistic points of view (influenced no doubt by early 'Ionian' sources as well) to the school θέσεις of First Century A.D. Rome.[3]

The Petronian incident may be another link in this chain. The *exempla* of ἀνδροβορία (141.9-11) are presented in the manner of a rhetorical exercise in a school, where the student has to defend the practice of cannibalism with a speech in a legal and rhetorical style containing specific arguments.[4] On the other hand, satire, too, has employed cannibalism as one of its themes.[5] Petronius may have borrowed the motif from this literary genre with which his novel has so many other elements in common. The question of the author's source of inspiration becomes more complicated due to the fragmentary and unfinished condition of the text which does not allow us to find out whether

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[1] Schmeling 1971, 357 claims that Mercury was not the one "who restored his [Encolpius'] health and sexual vigor", but that he was "merely part of the metaphor used to describe his [Encolpius'] return from the dead ... When Encolpius goes on to add ut scias me gratiosiorem esse quam Protesilaum aut quemquam alium antiquorum, the reader may be assured that he has become an actor on stage, comparing his plight to that of the great heroes of antiquity."

[2] For a detailed discussion of the passages 141.1-11 see Fröhlke 1977, 85-95.

[3] Rankin 1969(b), 384. Cf., also, Schmid 1951, 47; 49-50.

[4] See Rankin 1969(b), 384; Walsh 1970, 108.

[5] See Juvenal, *S.* XV. and Mayor (ed.) ad loc.

Eumolpus pretends to be dead or is actually dead; and if so, whether the actual consumption of his body takes place or not. It is impossible to conclude anything from the surviving passages. But it is in this missing part of the novel that the theatrical aspect of cannibalism, as it is presented in the *Satyrica*, is hidden.

The majority of the scholars that have dealt with the reconstruction of the final (?) lost part of the novel speaks of a pretended death in which Eumolpus' corpse is a dummy or someone else's corpse or the flesh of dead animals, while Eumolpus himself and the rest of his companions manage to escape, either with Chrysis' help or after a mimic brawl with the angry Crotonians.[6] This speculation is not at all out of the question, if one bears in mind that the mimus which was sketched out by the poetaster before entering Croton (117.4-10), continues to be performed, and that the false death was a favourite theme not only in the Greek romance[7] but in the mimes as well (mimica mors).[8]

Eumolpus is an old man (83.7), and it is tempting to see in this episode a suitable opportunity for the author to bring to an end the connection of his senile poetaster "with the hero in the way Lichas ended his - by death".[9] It must be noted, however, that even Lichas' death does not contain any serious moral lesson, since it is ironically undermined by Encolpius' hackneyed funeral-speech. Moreover, Trimalchio's pretended death (78.5) and the reading of his will (71.1-4) come to mind as another instance of the macabre habit of mock-funerals such as the ones mentioned elsewhere by Tacitus and Seneca.[10] Nevertheless, we cannot assume that

> perhaps, as with Trimalchio at the end of the Cena, his [Eumolpus'] imagined creation, the role of rich, ailing senex, has in the end swallowed him up.[11]

In Eumolpus' case, a 'Scheintod' fits the pattern of the Dives Fugitivus-mime more aptly than a real death which could be misinterpreted as 'grotesque horror ... unique in literature prior to Swift."[12]

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6 See Walsh 1970, 108; Corbett 1970, 109; Van Thiel 1971, 50-51; Labate 1986, 145, note 28; Conte 1987, 530 and note 2; Slater 1990(b), 133 and note 41.

7 See above, page 200, note 29.

8 See above, page 201, note 33; page 234.

9 Sullivan 1968(a), 76.

10 See Tac. *Hist.* iv.45; Sen. *Brev. Vit.* XX.4; *Ep.* XII.8 and Smith (ed.) 1975, 211.

11 Slater 1990(b), 133.

12 Arrowsmith 1972, 316 [134].

Is this the final end or nearly the end of the novel? Schmeling seems sceptical even of the fact that Petronius ever actually finished the novel and resorts to a compromising, but safe, position:

> the episodic structure of the picaresque novel is so elastic that no conclusion to the whole project is required. Surely no conclusion which rewards the innocent, punishes the guilty, and sets finally everything right according to some cosmic order. Like the picaresque novel, the end of the *Satyricon* may simply have remained unfinished.[13]

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[13] Schmeling 1991, 377.

CONCLUSION.

GREX AGIT IN SCAENA MIMUM.

The elegiacs of 80.9, which underline the notion of theatricality through the living stage performance of a mimic plot, have been succinctly characterized as "an epigraph for the whole of the *Satyricon*."[1] The analysis of this novel from the theatrical point of view in fifteen chapters, which could constitute fifteen separate farcical spectacles, has justified this assumption.

We have seen that Petronius did not confine himself only to a circumstantial borrowing of types and elements of plot from the Roman farcical stage, or, indeed, to a faithful reproduction of everyday language, according to his mimic models. He also expanded the idea of theatricality in his novel to the appropriate exploitation of the actual structure of staged plays. Thus we find in the *Satyrica* large scenes and brief incidents constructed as if they were the prose-equivalent of theatrical scripts produced before an imaginary audience. Nevertheless, it is essential to stress once more, in Sandy's words, the unlikelihood .... that

> Petronius' work of comic prose fiction can be reduced to a string of low-comedy 'skits', intended for performance.[2]

Nor should one argue that Petronius was re-working in a sophisticated way scenarios of mimic performances which he had himself watched or had included in his vast reading-repertoire.[3]

Before seeking a probable explanation for Petronius' frequent employment of features of the mimic theatre in his novel, it is essential that we refute the theory that from the surviving theatrical genres *only* mime influenced this author in the composition of his work which lies on the margins of literature.[4] This thesis showed that the Plautine and -to a lesser extent- the Terentian *fabula palliata*, although, by Petronius' time, extinct from the actual stage-performances,[5] had a considerable impact on specific aspects of the novel's narrative technique and

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[1] Slater 1990(b), 89.

[2] Sandy 1974, 341.

[3] Such an unsustained theory lies behind Abbott's words (1911, 267-268): "The theory that Petronius may have had the composition of his *Satirae* suggested to him by plays of this type (i.e. mimes) is greatly strengthened by the fact that the mime reached its highest point of popularity at the court in the time of Nero, in whose time Petronius lived."

[4] See Collignon 1892, 282-283.

[5] On the evidence for what was actually performed at Pompeii around Petronius' time see Horsfall 1989, 194 and 206, note 4.

the characterization of main and secondary figures in the plot.

Thus when the author of the *Satyrica* employs a motif or a technique of the stage, which presents him with the opportunity to create a comic effect, he does not follow the slapstick tone of *either* the popular drama, as it is represented by the Atellan sketches and Plautus' 'cloaked' plays,[6] *or* the mimic tradition of the Graeco-Roman mime, as it survives on the phlyax-vases, or in the plays of Rhinthon, Sophron, Epicharmus, Herodas, Decimus Laberius, Publilius Syrus and innumerable other authors or even mere street-entertainers. It is rather the farcical tradition of comedy in general to which Petronius is indebted for the theatrical situations of his novel. On the other hand, Nero's Arbiter of Elegance is clearly not writing a comedy or a mime, nor is he drawing material exclusively from these genres.[7] On many occasions throughout this thesis we saw instances in the text, in which the author's source of inspiration of a character or of a motif in the plot is not derived from a theatrical text. Yet Petronius' borrowings from elegy, epic, satire, the Greek romances, oratory, historiography, Milesian tales and folklore are inserted in a frame of role-playing and pretence, and become elements in a sexual farce.

The *Satyrica* is not a disorderly gathering of elements from different literary genres. The originality of this literary creation lies in the sophisticated humour of its learned author, who, without deviating from the tradition of satura in its general sense, or spoiling the literary integrity of his formative genres, manages to intertwine these elements, and to compose an amusing series of immoral adventures enacted against the constant background of the farcical theatre.

The dramatic aspect of this text would be evaluated only partly, if we argued that mime, or, more generally, the Roman stage, functioned as a formative genre of the *Satyrica* mainly on the Cena Trimalchionis and not on the rest of the surviving text. The theatrical analysis of the events both preceding and following the description of Trimalchio's feast demonstrate that

> the mimic underpinning extends throughout the work as we have it, often forming the basis of an evocative metaphor that perfectly expresses the

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6 On the farcical aspects of Plautine theatre and its debt to earlier forms of popular drama in Rome see Little 1938, 205-228.

7 See Knoche 1975, 119-120: "the influence of the mime is clearly present in matters of theme and individual portraits and was already felt by antiquity. But the mime too should not for this reason be considered the main source of the novel." Cf. Coffey 1976, 186 and 268, note 44.

character and tone and possibly the provenance of an entire episode.[8]

It is generally assumed that Petronius' work of comic prose-fiction was influenced, to a certain extent, by the ideal romance, although all the surviving Greek romances date later than Petronius' era, and the mere fragments of the Ninus-romance, dated perhaps circa 100 B.C., do not provide a substantial corpus for analysis and comparison with the narrative of Encolpius' adventures. It seems instructive, therefore, for the proper assessment of the role of theatre in the formation of the *Satyrica* to see briefly if the authors of Greek love-stories employed, to the same high degree as Petronius, motifs and linguistic characteristics of the stage in their description of the successive misfortunes that befell their heroic couples. A reading of the corpus of Greek novels, as it has come down to us in the works of Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Achilles Tatius, Longus and Heliodorus, shows that this happens only to some extent. In her study of the descriptive passages in the ancient novels of Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus, Shadi Bartsch provides an admirable discussion on the presentation of events in these two novels as spectacles, thus transforming their readers into theatrical audiences and their authors into playwrights.[9] One can frequently find references to, or metaphors from, the world of the stage also in the romances of Chariton and Longus.[10] But a recent evaluation of the influence of the theatrical tradition on the ideal romance suggests that it is of minor importance:

> We cannot point with any confidence to any specific influence of mime on ideal romance, although Petronius drew heavily on the form. There is however a general similarity between the Charition situation (the adventures of Greeks abroad) and episodes in some Greek romances, especially that of Xenophon's *Ephesiaca* (3.11 notably). There is also similarity in fictional content and in the representation of ordinary people.

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[8] Sandy 1974, 341. Cf. Gagliardi 1980, 139: "La tela del romanzo si svolge appunto come un' azione mimica attraverso le trappole, i colpi di scena, le situazioni da farsa, la spregiudicata libertà d' osservazione."

[9] See Bartsch 1989, 109-143. The topic of staged episodes in the *Aethiopica* had been already discussed at the end of the last century: see Walden 1894, 1-43. Technical theatrical terminology abounds also in the romance of Achilles Tatius: see 1.10.7, 1.16.2, 2.9.3, 2.28.1, 3.20.3-4, 3.20.7, 3.21.6, 3.22.3, 4.9.3, 6.16.4, 6.16.6, 7.2.1, 7.11.1, 8.9.1, 8.10.8, 8.17.3, 8.15.4.

[10] See Charit. 1.1.12, 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.4.8, 3.4.1, 4.7.7, 5.3-4, 5.8.1-2, 6.3.6, 8.7.1, 8.7.3, 8.8.15; Longus, 4.15.2.

Mime, however, was more realistic in subject and treatment.[11]

But now many questions arise. Why did Petronius make so much use of theatre in his novel, deriving material from both the dramatic texts and the technical aspects of a, usually mimic, performance? And why did he prefer the broader kind of theatrical entertainment to a Terentian type of more idealized and edifying plays? Throughout the theatrical reading of this novel we have seen that scholarly opinions, at least among those who accept the influence of the mime as greater than that of other literary genres on this novel, diverge into disparate theories. I am going to summarize the general tendencies without mentioning all the scholars who support each interpretation.

An extreme case, which because of its oversimplification and generalization disregards the highly literary character of the novel, and for this reason can scarcely be considered as right, is that of Perry:

> Petronius wrote farce because he did not dare to write anything else; and he wrote a long farce instead of a short one, in other words a burlesque novel instead of a mime or a Milesian Tale, because he needed a large framework, or container, into which he could pour with some hope of impunity all the wealth of literary, philosophical, and artistic expression that was welling up within his fertile genius and demanding an outlet.[12]

It is highly unlikely that the eccentric author of this novel was eager, for reasons of self-expression, to share with other people the wealth of his literary knowledge, and that the only way to fulfil this desire, without the risk of Nero's jealousy or anger, was to work on a mimic model. Gellie is, perhaps, closer to the truth, when he regards realism as the invisible link between the *Satyrica* and the farcical stage:

> Petronius seeking a model of realistic story-telling, turned inevitably to the mime. His novel, apart from a few more serious interludes, can be viewed as a series of mime-situations, a succession of 'entertainments'.[13]

But was mimic realism, and indeed Petronius' realism, a naturalistic performance of everyday life? It is true that

> the mime was the most direct imitation of life attempted by the ancients. It dealt with unidealised human beings in the recurring situations of every

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[11] Reardon 1991, 163, note 50.

[12] Perry 1967, 205.

[13] Gellie 1959, 98.

day, looking like human beings, sounding like human beings.[14]
Auerbach is on the right track when he suspects the feature of mimic realism as
the only literary precedent of Petronian realism.[15] The mistake, however, of these
scholars who consider the mime as faithful representation of low-life reality with,
occasionally, elevated literary overtones, lies not in the hackneyed distinction
between what the ancients thought *as* realistic and what a modern-day scholar
thinks *as* realistic. I find it difficult to believe that, even in the ancient sense of
realism, whatever that was, the Greek and Roman audience of a mime-
performance perceived as realistic the innumerable blows that the *stupidus*
received from the *archimimus*, the false death and resurrection of a character, the
slapstick nature of the hiding suffered by an adulterer, the exaggerated
grimacing and risible facial expressions of a *sannio*, the distorted atmosphere of
pretence and role-playing in a mimic world of sex and violence; these elements
create only an impression of superficial reality which, for that reason, should be
defined as conventional reality presented skilfully through improvised
histrionics.[16]

Similar observations can be made on Petronius' realism. It is true that the
freedmen at Trimalchio's dinner-party speak in accordance with their social
status, and that the text itself provides ample references to   many aspects of
Roman public and private life. But everything is surrounded, as we have seen, by
such an intense literary ambience that it is hazardous to assume that Encolpius'
adventures were events which could realistically happen to an ordinary Roman
rogue. In addition, Petronius, like the mimes, constantly undermines his picture of
realism by subtly inserting in his text apparently insignificant details,
metaphorical language and comparisons with the stage, which effectively
destroy the validity of any realistic epithets one may want to attribute to this
novel's narrative.[17] Following a completely different path from Gellie, Auerbach

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14 Gellie 1959, 98.

15 Auerbach 1953, 30-31: "Petronius' literary ambition, like that of the realists of modern times, is to
imitate a random, everyday, contemporary milieu with its sociological background, and to have his
characters speak their jargon without recourse to any form of stylization. Thus he reached the
ultimate limit of the advance of realism in antiquity. Whether he was the first and only writer to
embark upon such a venture, whether and how far the Roman mime had blazed the trail for him, are
questions which need not be taken up in this context."

16 See above, page 10.

17 See above, page 262 and note 21.

and the other 'realistic' interpreters of the *Satyrica*, I reach the same conclusion with them, namely that realism was, indeed, Petronius' motive in exploiting in such an abundant manner the humorous effects of the farcical stage in his novel; but I conceive this realism as a theatrical, or, more specifically, a mimic one, rather than a description of everyday-life events, which was consciously faithful to reality.[18]

In the tradition of the so-called "WasteLanders", Niall W. Slater is the most recent representative of the school which reads a message of despair through the lines of the *Satyrica*. We have already seen that he prefers to discern behind the exaggerated histrionics of the novel's characters not the eccentric desire of the author to entertain in a sophisticated way his educated audience, but the deeper meaning of the characters' desperate attempts to define themselves as humans and fill the content of their inner selves.[19] Nero's age was an age of fear, political chaos and anarchy, not unlike the reigns of his predecessors or his successors. Froma W. Zeitlin, however, believes that the lack of coherence and looseness of the novel's surviving fragments is a conscious reflexion of the anarchy of the author's era, and that the overwhelming use of the mime contributes to the overall effect of a world without order or human values.[20] This interpretation seeks to exploit modern psychoanalytical and sociological theories to explain the work of an author who shows no signs of such anxieties. It is much more reasonable to assume that Petronius shaped his vision of the contemporary world cynically with the imagery of the theatre: *grex agit in scaena*

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[18] See Gagliardi 1980, 38: "Se si vuole dunque qualificarne la vera tonalità di fondo non di realismo 'tout court' bisognerà parlare, ma di realismo comico, non soltanto per la Cena, ... ma anche per tutti gli altri frammenti e le schegge del romanzo." Jones 1991, 118-119 argues that the result of the intense self-dramatization and pretence of the novel's characters is the lack of anything realistic behind the role-playing, and that "if the world or life is a stage, there is nothing outside the stage, only an ontological game."

[19] See above, page 54, note 2; page 187.

[20] Zeitlin 1971(b), 636: "Although, in one sense, ... the *Satyricon* is a product consonant with its time, in another sense, Petronius, on his own initiative, overturns this principle too. For in addition to the mixture of genres, he raises to the literary level sub-literary prose fiction and the still more sub-standard mime, thus enlarging the range and focus of subject-matter and its treatment which are permissible for literature." Anderson 1982, 65 is much more correct when he suggests that mime is used in order to undermine the genres which Petronius has so opportunistically exploited.

mimum.[21]

Another group of scholars, who deal with the theatricality of this novel, sees Petronius as a real Roman satirist who preaches through the description of comic situations. For example, Wooten argues

> that Petronius is doing more in these scenes than allowing himself to be influenced by another genre of literature. Just as the description of Trimalchio has several purposes in the work, to entertain as well as to attack certain aspects of society, these scenes where the inspiration of the mime is evident are both funny, a result of the influence of the mime which has been pointed out by others, and simultaneously raise serious problems, in conjunction with the attack on Roman education at the opening of the novel. What is really interesting about Petronius is that one cannot say that in a particular scene he is doing this or that, for he is generally doing several things at one time. Form does not necessarily reflect content.[22]

In Petronius' case we are not dealing with matters of form, although the prosimetric form of the *Satyrica* could well be explained by the prosimetric form of the mimes,[23] but with matters of content. Since the novel's theatrical reading, attempted in this thesis, has proved that there is a strong case to argue for an intense connection between the content of comic and mimic plays and the content of the Petronian narrative, this farcical texture necessarily projects its aim of Saturnalian merriment on the Petronian novel.

These remarks bring me to the final category of scholarly interpretations of the novel's staged character. Among others, Christopher Gill explains the considerable amount of sexual scenes and their function in the novel as

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[21] See Sandy 1974, 341: "My belief is that the underlying theatrical quality echoes a dominant interest in the court of Nero artifex." Cf. above, page 15, note 22. Sandy 1974, 342: "... it would have been natural for a writer intimately associated with, and culturally attuned to, Nero to infuse what is in many ways a fictional chronicle of the court with the theatrical spirit so pronounced in the court itself that it persisted to the last few minutes of the princeps on earth (Suet. Nero 54.1)." Wooten 1976, 72 connects Nero's fondness for melodramatic theatrical performances (see Tac. Ann. XV.39; Suet. Nero XXI) with the assumption "that Petronius, in conjunction with his attack on the rhetorical education based on declamations, is also reflecting in his novel the self-conscious artificiality which must have been apparent everywhere among Nero and his court."

[22] Wooten 1976, 73, note 6.

[23] See Astbury 1977, 30-31, note 41.

elaborate theatrical performances with the structure of an audience watching a spectacle,[24] while P.G. Walsh is, to my knowledge, the only scholar who uses the frequent references of the novel to the mime as part of a quadruple argument to prove that "the *Satyricon* was written as bawdy entertainment."[25] In support of this theory comes the nature of the mimic theatre itself as a literary, or sub-literary, form which never changed its primary purpose: the mimic laughter, in other words, popular entertainment not only for the vulgar crowd but also for men of letters was the aim of theatre in Petronius' time.[26] Petronius, however, has gone further than this, and included in his text literary material only educated persons could understand or appreciate. In this sense he can be clearly distinguished from the mimes whose variety in style allowed them to assume sometimes a highly moral tone, although not to rise to a highly intellectual and complex level, which an average audience would not be able to follow.

The question of Petronius' deliberate predilection for farcical forms of theatrical shows rather than more decent types of staged plays should be considered, I believe, in the light of the Arbiter's relationship with his predecessor in Nero's intimacy, Seneca. Seneca derived material for his plays from the sphere of mythological tragedies, combined it with elements from Stoic philosophy, and presented it in a highly rhetorical and verbose style. Petronius succeeded Seneca as the expert on cultural and aesthetic matters in Nero's court, but the difference in tone and style between the works which both of them produced is so striking that one rightly wonders whether

> the *Satyricon* as amusing farce was written as a deliberate successor to
> Seneca's worthy Stoic plays.[27]

Petronius' decision to write a novel which was considered a disreputable literary form *per se* makes a sharp contrast with Seneca's conventional artistic preferences. The introduction, however, of a considerable amount of farcical elements from the sub-standard mimes into his novel would make this contrast even sharper and more amusing.

The *Satyrica* is not an easy text to understand. Moreover, its fragmentary

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24 See Gill 1973, 179-180.

25 Walsh 1974, 185.

26 On the mimic genre as appreciated by learned Greeks and Romans see McKeown 1979, 71-72.

27 Walsh 1974, 190. On Petronius' literary feud with Seneca see Sullivan 1968(b), 453-467; 1985(a), 176-179.

state produces more speculations on its real meaning than conclusions based on facts. A sensible scholarly approach, therefore, which takes into account the literary attributes of the popular theatrical tradition and applies them moderately to Petronius' novel, can claim to come much closer to the author's artistic intentions than the imaginative interpretations which seek in a far-fetched manner to identify this text with something more than it actually is: a sophisticated, scabrous book.

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