

CONFESSOR GLORIOSUS: A ROLE OF ENCOLPIUS IN THE SATYRICA*

In memoriam J.P. Sullivan

I

The voice of the *Satyrica* is always that of Encolpius: it may be that of the younger impressionable Encolpius or that of the older, perhaps somewhat jaded man remembering.¹ The observations related in the voice of Encolpius and constituting our text are obviously those put forward by Petronius. While the opinions of Petronius may lurk from time to time beneath the observations of Encolpius, we cannot know when, or where, or even if ever.² As I hope to show, even the clear voice of Encolpius is so unreliable, his perception so conditioned by his fantasy world, his statements of facts so regularly contradicted, his contexts so steeped in literature, that we are forced to treat all words out of the mouth of this narrator with utmost caution and scepticism. At the same time we function at the mercy of Encolpius to obtain all information; he acts, as it were, like a filter through which we get back to the characters and actions of A.D. 66. We may as readers be offended and perplexed at what Encolpius chooses to tell us that he saw: the deflowering of Psyche (26) or the eating of Eumolpus (post 141), e.g. He does not see life steadily and he does not see it whole. If, however, he does not look and keep looking, we are as good as blind: the narrator may see actions or at worst only imagine them, but at best the reader sees only words.

To begin with, we have to make certain assumptions about the narrator Encolpius. The story narrated in the fragmentary *Satyrica* takes place when Encolpius is

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¹ R. Beck, "Some Observations of the Narrative Technique of Petronius," *Phoenix* 27 (1973) 42-61.

² J.P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius: a Literary Study* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968) 98, reads 132. 15 as serious literary criticism. This is not consistent with Sullivan's earlier scepticism about believing anything said by Encolpius; cf. Beck's remarks *supra* (Note 1) 50 ff.

a young man (so, too, Ascyltus and Giton; Agamemnon, Trimalchio and Eumolpus are old by comparison). There is a body of evidence which suggests that the form of the *Satyrica* is that which was shaped some time after the events portrayed by an older narrator looking back at his past³. Confirmation that an older Encolpius is looking back at his younger days seems to be indicated by such statements as (65.1) *quarum etiam recordatio me, si qua est dicenti fides, offendit*; (54.1) *quae iam ex-ciderunt memoriae meae*; (70.8) *pu-det referre quae secuntur*. In the *Cena* it frequently happens that Encolpius the protagonist does not understand the situation which is reported by Encolpius the narrator and acts rashly – only to be laughed at (65.4): *conterritus praetorem putabam venisse ... risit hanc trepidationem Agamemnon et "contine te."* From these we are encouraged to conclude that the older narrator is more experienced than the younger protagonist and that there is thus some development from the protagonist to the narrator. In this narrow aspect we could say that the *Satyrica* resembles a *Bildungsroman*. I do not mean to imply (with Lukács) that almost all novels are somehow variations of *Bildungsromane*. Perhaps, however, we can say with Lukács that the novelistic form in which Encolpius the narrator looks back at his younger self might be interpreted as a "way towards a man's recognition of himself."⁴ I do not wish to spend any time attempting to argue that the *Satyrica* is a *Bildungsroman*, because I do not believe that it is. I want to make the point only that when we look at the narrator of the *Satyrica*, we keep in mind that there is a kind of growth in the hero of the *Satyrica* from protagonist to narrator, from younger to older, from wandering student to novelist; there is in our extant novel no *Bildung* or self-education of the hero. It seems to me that Beck has captured very well the nature of the protagonist-narrator in the *Satyrica*: "...what Petronius offers us [...] is a portrait of Encolpius the narrator shaping an amusing and sophisticated version of his past life and adventures which includes, as a theme of major interest, a detailed treatment of his own chaotic and fantasy-ridden former self."⁵ Winkler makes a similar statement about Lucius in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*: "As the reader progresses through the text two sets of characteristics are gradually perceived and assembled – those of Lucius then and those of the narrator now (*actor* and *auctor*) [...] Then there is the sustained incredibility of the events [...] the unremittingly dramatic and storied quality of Lucius' life is itself a strong indicator that it is a thing [...] reshaped by an autobiographical narrator who has learned to make the most of what really happened to him ..."⁶

³ F. Jones, "The Narrator and the Narrative of the *Satyrica*," *Latomus* 46 (1987) 815; see also P.G. Walsh, "Lucius Madaurensis," *Phoenix* 22 (1968) 148, who speaks of a younger and older Lucius, and R. Beck, "Encolpius at the *Cena*," *Phoenix* 29 (1975) 271–283.

⁴ G. Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1971) 80.

⁵ Beck, *supra* (Note 1) 60.

⁶ J. Winkler, *Auctor et Actor: a Narratological Reading of Apuleius's Golden Ass* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 139.

From time to time Encolpius relates events in which he states that he did something which he himself recognizes to be inappropriate. He accuses, as it were, himself. Then again he reports the speeches of other persons, in which they state what improper actions he has undertaken. Because Encolpius is the narrator, it makes no real difference whether he admits something about himself or reports what others say about him: both kinds of statements rest on the same authority and can be read as confessions of the narrator.

As the extant *Satyrica* from time to time might be said to resemble a work in the literary subgenre of confessions, so the narrator can be seen as one confessing – more in the manner of Lucius (confessions to entertain) than of St. Augustine. Slater's dismissal of Beck's work, which attempts to explain inconsistencies in Encolpius by postulating a protagonist who is a younger Encolpius and a narrator Encolpius who is older, is somewhat off the mark: the historical record is, after all, always written down after the event.⁷ Whether the first- or second-time reader sees the dual nature of Encolpius, it is nevertheless there to be seen.

As all parts of *The Golden Ass* are not confessions or autobiography, so too all parts of the *Satyrica* are not. How autobiographical is a metamorphosis into an ass? What does Augustine confess, when he omits the name of his mistress and skips lightly past the subject of his sexual orientation? In addition to confessing that he has made mistakes, Encolpius seems, like the follower of the Syrian goddess in *The Golden Ass* 8.28, to confess to crimes he has not committed⁸ (see below).

The *Satyrica* appears to be written in discrete episodes each with its own beginning and end but strung and held together by one narrator who is also an actor in each.⁹ Not only does the reader learn about the specifics of each episode, but he learns something indirectly about the narrator: Encolpius shows himself to be concerned with the sad state of education (1–5), only to be discovered as one posing to be concerned; he abhors the deception by friends (6–11), only to deceive his friends; stealing, cheating, lying are acceptable personal traits for himself (12–15) but decried in others; peculiar sexual excesses when performed by him (16–26) are seen as normal but criticized in others.

For many reasons (e.g., the text is complete) Apuleius' Lucius appears to be a more central figure than Encolpius. This happens, I believe, because the *Cena* and Trimalchio consume one third of the extant text, and Eumolpus (after 83) who is such a dynamic character, story-teller, and epic poet dominates the last half. While I cannot make a strong case from the evidence that Encolpius is both *actor et auctor* in the way that Winkler does for Lucius, Encolpius as *auctor* controls the flow of

⁷ N. Slater, *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) 46 ff.

⁸ Winkler, *supra* (Note 6) 109.

⁹ G. Schmeling, "The *Satyrica*: the Sense of an Ending," *RhM* 134 (1991) 352–377.

episodes, confesses to a life of unsavory deeds, and offers the reader an autobiography of sorts; as *actor* he is rarely the star of any episode.

Until we have checked all other pertinent references in the novel, we are well advised not to accept confessions or autobiographical items at face value: while the reader can readily accept Lucius' conversion to the cult of Isis, the reader at best understands his conversion into an ass as some kind of allegory. Augustine confesses to evil deeds but is surprisingly reticent about providing specific corroborating details: his conversion would not be special if in his preconversion life he had committed few and uninteresting sins. Also, there is a sense of the ending in confession and autobiography, a goal toward which the narrator is heading as he lays down his confessions: the conclusion is validated by the confession. While the endings might be based on some kind of historical truth, the confessions smack of fictions invented by fertile imaginations.

While Encolpius confesses to impotence and blames the *gravis ira Priapi*, Beck counters that "the hypothesis of divine persecution may well be no more than a fantasy spun by the hero partly so salvage his dignity in humiliating circumstances [...] and partly because, in any case, he is by nature a compulsive spinner of such fantasies."¹⁰ These fantasies are laid before the reader as confessions. I do not wish to bring up the controversy about whether or not the *gravis ira Priapi* is the mainspring of the plot or even a pervasive motif. Encolpius' frequent references, and those of others, to his past exploits, to his impotence, and finally to Priapus as the cause-and-then-cure, should alert the reader to the direction in which the *Satyrica* is pointing: Priapus will be the savior of Encolpius. One way read the *Satyrica* is as a confession¹¹ of past mistakes and sins which leads first to a conclusion of absolution by Priapus (perhaps in Lampsacus)¹² and then to Encolpius' assumption of a priesthood. The older Encolpius in looking back selects a few scenes from his younger days and strings them together in a sequence of entertaining episodes, dropping all dull, boring and uneventful activities which he as *actor* surely experienced. Encolpius as *auctor* then shapes a new life for the *actor*.

Winkler¹³ speculates that the occasion for the original reading of *The Golden Ass* might have been structured by Apuleius to imitate confessions declaimed in temple precincts, but he rejects this avenue because "it fails as an explanation on two counts: its proponents can explain neither why Isis is a secret for ten books nor

¹⁰ Beck, *supra* (Note 1) 55–56. E. Klebs, "Zur Composition von Petronius' Satirae," *Philologus* 47 (1889) 623–635, Sullivan, *supra* (Note 2) 40–48, and P.G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 76–77, all see the *gravis ira Priapi* as the driving force in the *Satyrica*.

¹¹ R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) 76 ff.

¹² A. Daviault, "La Destination d'Encolpe et la Structure du *Satiricon*: Conjectures," *Cahiers des Études Anciennes* 15 (1983) 29–46.

¹³ Winkler, *supra* (Note 6) 204 ff.

why if the entire AA is a bearing-witness the narrator *never* says so to us.”¹⁴ I do not propose to set such a rigid format for the implied medium of the narration by Encolpius as a confession which takes place in the temple precinct of Priapus at the conclusion of the novel. There are many ways to read the *Satyrica*, but I believe that reading it as a confession, which is also autobiographical, is elucidative.

But while for our limited purposes here we understand the genre, or rather sub-genre, of the *Satyrica* to be a confession and Encolpius to be a confessor, we should always keep in mind that Petronius portrays our interpreter of events as a confused¹⁵, bewildered and unreliable confessor. If the *actor* in the story is acknowledged by the narrator to be confused and in need of an interpreter for his own story (36.7 *non erubui eum qui supra me accumbebat hoc ipsum interrogare*; 41.2 *duravi interrogare illum interpretem meum*), what is Petronius signaling to the reader? One thing he is clearly communicating to the reader: “Do not rely on Encolpius as an interpreter.”

II

The autobiography of Encolpius is laced with hypocritical confessions and dubious self-accusations. To say that Encolpius is an unreliable narrator is to underestimate the role given him by Petronius. The reader must be ever vigilant not to accept at face value that which Encolpius hands him. I cite a recent article by Cerutti und Richardson¹⁶ as an example of work in which scholars accept as evidence of fact that which Encolpius as *actor* says about himself: “... Ascyllus, in the course of a quarrel with Encolpius, calls him *gladiator obscene*, and continues *quem de ruina arena dimisit. Non taces, nocturne percussor, qui ne tum quidem cum fortiter faceres cum pura muliere pugnasti ...* [9.8] This cannot be simply an inventive insult, but must be a reference to Encolpius’ having been a gladiator in the *pars obscena of the ludus*.”¹⁷ But Cicero (*ad Fam.* 12.22.1) after all hurls the invective *gladiator* at Antony and means only “scoundrel, traitor”. If we view these accusations put into the mouth of Ascyllus but reported by Encolpius (= a confession) and consider later direct confessions by Encolpius in the light of other evidence from the *Satyri-*

¹⁴ Winkler, *supra* (Note 6) 241.

¹⁵ C. Knight, “Listening to Encolpius: Modes of Confusion in the *Satyricon*,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 58 (1989) 335–354.

¹⁶ S. Cerutti and L. Richardson, “The *retarius tunicatus*,” *Suetonius, Juvenal, and Petronius*, *AJP* 110 (1989) 589–594.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 594. H. van Thiel, *Petron. Überlieferung und Rekonstruktion* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) 62 remarks about these insults, „sie besagen nicht mehr als Ciceros *bustuaris gladiator* (in *Pis.* 19).“ J. Colin, “Juvenal, les baladins et les rétiaires d’après le manuscrit d’Oxford (Juv. *Sat.* VI, 365, 1–26),” *AAT* 87 (1952–53) 315–386, discusses the deviant behavior of the *retarii*.

ca, I believe that we will conclude that we must be exceedingly sceptical about accepting literally any accusation against or confession by Encolpius.¹⁸

Sat. 9 begins with an accusation by Giton against Ascyllus: "tuus ... iste frater seu comes paulo ante in conductum accucurrit coepitque mihi velle pudorem extorquere". When Giton cries out, Ascyllus *GLADIUM strinxit et "si Lucretia es" inquit "Tarquinium invenisti."* Encolpius is not only describing a scene of rape and revenge but also is reframing reality to fit a literary mold: art imitates art and the *Satyrice* here reflects literature not life.¹⁹

Encolpius turns to Ascyllus: "quid dicis" inquam "muliebris patientiae scortum, cuius ne spiritus <quidem> purus est?" The expression *muliebris patientiae scortum* is clearly an encoded bit of banter between bisexual lovers, as the reaction of Ascyllus illustrates: *inhorrescere se FINXIT Ascyllus* ... It is after this, i.e. after his pretense that he was frightened, that Ascyllus adds the words cited above from Cerutti and Richardson: "non taces" inquit "gladiator obscene, quem †de ruina† harena dimisit? non taces, nocturne percussor, qui ne tum quidem, cum fortiter faceres, cum pura muliere pugnasti."

This is not a story about a *gladiator obscenus* or a *nocturnus percussor* in the simple dictionary sense. *Gladium* at 9.5 is surely a *double entendre*:²⁰ Ascyllus draws his sword and Giton sees him; Encolpius ever jealous of Giton's errant affections (e.g. 92.4) and appreciative of reality restructured to a literary setting, knows

¹⁸ The passages from Petronius dealt with by Cerutti and Richardson have been treated previously: G. Bagnani, "Encolpius *gladiator obscenus*," *CP* 51 (1956) 24–27; R. Pack, "The Criminal Dossier of Encolpius," *CP* 55 (1960) 31–32. Though these articles of Bagnani and Pack conclude that *gladiator obscene* is a term of abuse and not to be taken literally, and thus stand opposed to the view of C. and R., neither work, nor those listed below, is cited by C. and R.: J. Killeen, "Petronius 9.8," *Hermes* 97 (1969) 127–128 discusses the expression *quem de ruina dimisit* and finds numerous parallels for *dimittere* to mean "comes from" and *ruina* "financial ruin". Barry Baldwin points out that Scioppius, a 16th–17th century scholar, had suggested a transposition to *de arena ruina dimisit*. One can most profitably also consult P. Soverini, "Le perversioni di Encolpio (per una nuova possibilità di Petr. 9, 8s.)," *MCSN* 1 (1976) 97–107, who builds on M. Coccia, *Le Interpolazioni in Petronio* (Roma: Edizioni dell' Ateneo, 1973) 64–67, (footnote 244). That there is a strong sexual connotation to the *retiaris* is implied by Artemidorus *Oneirocritica* 2.32 who comments that a "husband who sees a *retiaris* in a dream will have a wife who is short of money, promiscuous, who runs around, and who associates easily with the first man who offers." Cf. in this regard also L. Robert, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec* (Paris: Edouard Champion, 1940) 16–17. Some years ago D. Mulroy, "Petronius 81.3," *CP* 65 (1970) 254–256, warned readers of these passages not to take them literally.

¹⁹ R. Wellek and A. Warren, *Theory of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, 1956³) 223, speak of "literature reminding itself that it is but literature". Cf. also Beck, *supra* (Note 1). On the mime and play-acting in the *Sat.* see M. Rosenblüth, *Beiträge zur Quellenkunde von Petrons Satiren* (Berlin: Eisenstädt, 1909).

²⁰ Cf. J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London: Duckworth, 1982) 20, 219; Adams cites this passage from Petronius on p. 21.

that the *gladius ferreus* was drawn so that the *gladius virilis* could be employed.²¹ This is a very sensitive point with Encolpius who has been struck impotent by Priapus,²² perhaps in Massilia even before our extant *Satyrice* begins.²³ Encolpius the actor and the audience could not have missed the reference: "... the frequency of *ad hoc* metaphors both in Greek and Latin shows that the sexual symbolism of weapons was instantly recognizable in ancient society."²⁴ Why would Ascytlus draw an iron sword against the soft Giton? After all, as we know from *Sat.* 92.9, Ascytlus is famous for his *gladius*. As Tarquinius threatened Lucretia (Livy 1.58.1) *stricto gladio*, Petronius uses similar vocabulary, *gladium strinxit*, but with a transferred and erotic meaning (cf. the discussion below of the comparison of Encolpius' impotence at 132.11 with Dido's down-cast eyes in *Aeneid* 6).

This is not the only time that Ascytlus draws a sword on Giton and threatens him. At 79.9 Encolpius discovers that Ascytlus has transferred Giton to his bed, contemplates killing both, but is unsure of himself. Ascytlus awakens and says: "*nunc et puerum dividamus*" ... *at ille gladium parricidali manu strinxit* ... Encolpius is now forced to reply in kind: *idem ego ex altera parte feci et intorto circa brachium pallio composui ad proeliandum gradum*. Every lover is a warrior, but this would-be duel of lovers can also be seen as a pair of gladiators which rapidly takes on epic proportions in Encolpius' mind (80.3): *puer tangebatur utriusque genua cum fletu petebaturque suppliciter ne Thebanum par* (see infra discussion of *paria*) *humilis taberna spectaret* (note that the statement is not in direct discourse but is reframed by Encolpius). Giton's pleas bring the combatants to the peace table and Ascytlus suggests that Giton should choose his own lover: Giton of course chooses that best gladiator.

Regarding the sword here in *Sat.* 80 and Ascytlus' sword in 9.5, we should ask ourselves if these are real swords,²⁵ or are they props, practice swords. We can question this because twice when a *novaculum* is used (94.12, 108.10) by Giton to slash his own throat or emasculate himself, the *novaculum* turns out to be a practice (i.e. dull) razor, and both times Encolpius naively believes that the *novaculum*

²¹ There is a similar situation in Plautus *Cas.* 908–910: (Olympio) *<ferrum ne> haberet metui: id quaerere occepi. | dum gladium quaero ne habeat, arripio capulum. | sed quom cogito, non habuit gladium, nam esset frigidus*. Adams, supra (Note 7) 20, provides this comment on Plautus: "The slave Olympio while searching Chalinus in the dark for weapons, unknowingly handles his penis. The terms *gladius* and *capulum* though innocent in his own eyes, could only be taken in a sexual sense by the audience".

²² Klebs, supra (Note 10); opposed to this is B. Baldwin, "*Ira Priapi*," *CP* 68 (1973) 294–296; cf. also Ovid *Am.* 3.7, a poem about impotence.

²³ C. Cichorius, "Petronius und Massilia," *Römische Studien* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1922) 438–442; R. Waltz, "Le lieu de la scène dans le *Satiricon*," *RPh* 36 (1912) 299–212; see also Daviault, supra (Note 12).

²⁴ Adams, supra (Note 20) 19.

²⁵ *gladius* is mentioned 13 times in the *Sat.*; gladiators 4 times.

is real. Encolpius refers to the episode at 108.10 as a tragedy (108.11) and the razor by implication as a stage prop.

Yet once more Encolpius straps on a sword (82.1) *gladio latus cingor*, only to have it stripped from him almost immediately by a real *miles* (82.4): *ponere iussit arma et malo cavere*. And Encolpius does not demur. All *gladii* belonging to Encolpius are useless.

Let us return to 9.6 where we left Encolpius accusing Ascyltus of being a *muliebris patientiae scortum*,²⁶ *cuius ne spiritus <quidem> purus est*;²⁷ Ascyltus is not offended, though he pretends to be (*finxit*). For the audience the adjective (*im*)*purus* would, as Richlin has shown, brand Ascyltus: "Overtones [...] attach to the words *purus* / *impurus*, which almost always signify 'untainted ... tainted ...'."²⁸ Ascyltus replies by calling Encolpius a *gladiator obscenus*. In general I should not like to overburden the meaning of *obscenus*, and would follow Adams who defines it as a loose "evaluative term in reference to the sexual language."²⁹

Ascyltus continues: "*quem †de ruina† harena dimisit. non taces, nocturne percussor, qui ne tum quidem, cum fortiter faceres, cum pura muliere pugnavisti ...*" The opening clause is very difficult, but I believe that it must be read in the context of the whole passage, which is not really invective, but contrived literary banter. A schematic look at the parallelism in the insults of the two young men might be elucidative:

Encolpius: *quid dicis ... muliebris patientiae scortum
cuius ne spiritus <quidem> purus*

Ascyltus: *non taces ... gladiator obscene ...
(anaphora) (chiasmus)
non taces, nocturne percussor
qui ne tum quidem ... pura*

The heat of anger and emotion does not produce such balance.³⁰ Encolpius sees this conflict between the two of them as an epic struggle and worthy of fine literary form. He calls Ascyltus (1) *muliebris patientiae scortum* and (2) (*im*)*purus*; Ascyltus answers by returning the same accusations in slightly different words (1) *gladi-*

²⁶ Cf. Adams, *supra* (Note 20) 190.

²⁷ Martial 14.70: *Si vis esse satur, nostrum potes esse Priapum; ipsa licet rodas inguina, purus eris*; 9.67.7. Cf. Adams, *supra* (Note 20) 199 and A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus* (New Haven: Yale, 1983) 235, N. 34.

²⁸ Richlin, *supra* (Note 27) 28; 69. For ancient evidence of Seneca *Contr.* 1.2, Martial 11.61.13–14; 9.67.7.

²⁹ Adams, *supra* (Note 20) 36.

³⁰ Walsh, *supra* (Note 10) 87, comments about this passage: "... the language is the pointer to the artificial nature of the controversy."

ator obscene and (2) nocturne percussor ... cum (im)pura muliere and creating a reply which balances the charges against him. The adjective *obscenus* when applied to a gladiator (*retarius tunicatus*) can mean effeminate or at least homosexual.³¹

After gladiator obscene Ascylltus adds *quem †de ruina† harena dimisit*. Müller has obelized *de ruina* in all of his editions of the *Satyrica* and in the apparatus of his first ed. (*de *ruina mt*) indicated evidence for a lacuna between *de* and *ruina*.³² For our purposes here, however, I shall assume that *de ruina*, or something like it, exists in the text. I would like to suggest for our discussion that, as Ovid (e.g. *Am.* 1.9) and others³³ have described love affairs in military terms, so Petronius often portrays lovers in his novel in terms borrowed from the *harena*, from the *spectaculum*.

As I try to show above, gladiator obscenus probably does not refer to a real gladiator but is only invective hurled back at Encolpius by Ascylltus. Ascylltus accuses Encolpius of being a gladiator obscenus, i.e. he is similar to the disreputable *retarii tunicati* discussed by Cerutti and Richardson. As it happens, I would not exclude from possibility that in a small town in southern France or northern Italy³⁴ Encolpius had acted out the part of a gladiator – whether in a private house, garden, or small *harena*. Nevertheless I believe that I am correct to conclude that the phrase *†de ruina† harena dimisit* only on the surface refers to a *spectaculum*. The sense of the phrase, in so far as I can judge, is something like “the arena let him go *†de ruina†*.”

We might be able to proceed past this crux, if we look again at the sense of the episode. The verb *dimisit* is here used as an action taken as the result of a judgment, sentence. *de ruina* could then be a variant expression for the genitive of the charge and be seen as similar to *de vi*, *de alea*, *de ambitu*, *de pecuniis repetundis*.

³¹ For the language, cf. Seneca *QNat.* 7.31.3; *Contr.* 1, praef. 8–9, *cantandi saltandique obscena studia effeminatos tenent*; *Contr.* 4, praef. 11 *inter pueriles condiscipulorum sinus lasciva manu obscena iussisti*; Martial 6.50.3 *obscenos ... cinaedos*.

³² K. Müller, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon* (München: Heimeran, 1961) *ad loc.* The noun *ruina* appears 6 times, the verb *ruo* once. Three instances of *ruina* and the verb *ruo* occur in the poem *Troiae Halosis*. The remaining three appearances of *ruina* are here at 9.8, in a passage to be discussed later (81.3, *ergo me non ruina terra potuit haurire*) and at 115.16 *illum diis vota reddentem penatium suorum ruina sepelit*. It is possible that *ruina* at 9.8 is used in a similar fashion to that of 81.3, i.e. in some proverbial form.

³³ A. Spies, *militat Omnis Amans: Ein Beitrag zur Bildersprache der antiken Erotik* (Tübingen: Laupp, 1930). When describing erotic encounters, Petronius of course does not confine himself to military terms and expressions from *spectacula*. The *Satyrica* is generously sprinkled with lines such as (127.7) *nec sine causa Polyaeonon Circe amat: semper inter haec nomina fax surgit* (homoeopathic magic and magic of the name).

³⁴ Cf. supra Note 23. Cerutti and Richardson hold that the *ruina* was an earthquake or collapse of the amphitheatre and cite Suetonius, *Tib.* 40.

The expression *de ruina* would then mean "on a charge of *ruina*" or "for *ruina*". And *ruina* (from *ruo*) could be taken as sexual breakdown, collapse, failure, and the clause rendered "the arena let him go on a charge of impotence."³⁵

The *harena* is associated with gladiators but also can be understood to be simply the place of wrestling and fighting, verbs concerning which are used metaphorically to mean making love: *harena* is then a place for that action. *harena* finds a parallel in the word *palaestra*, which according to Isidore Orig. 18.24 is a *locus ... luctationis*, and which Donatus, on Terence *Phor.* 484, explains as the *lenonis domum, a quo est exercitus amator assidue*. At *Phor.* 484 (*ab sua palaestra exit foras*) the meaning of *palaestra* is brothel, at Martial 10.55.4 (*post opus et suas palaestras*) it is a metaphor of place substituted for action, and at Lucilius 1267 (Marx) it is *podicis, Hortensi, est ad eam rem nata palaestra*.³⁶

If you cannot be a real gladiator, you can pretend to be one and hope to attract the better classes of women. Chrysis tells Encolpius that her mistress, Circe, is aroused by the sight of gladiators:³⁷ *quaedam enim feminae sordibus calent, nec libidinem concitant, nisi aut servos viderint aut statores altius cinctos. harena aliquas accendit aut perfusus pulvere mulio aut histrio scaenae ostentatione traductus* (*Sat.* 126.5–7), and therefore, among the many poses of Encolpius, I would like to suggest that at one or more times he poses as a *gladiator*, who has escaped death because, as he says, *eum harena dimisit*.

To pose as someone or something else is for Encolpius the work of a moment.³⁸ In the opening chapters of the *Satyrica*, for example, he poses as a *scholasticus* in order to cadge for free meals. At *Sat.* 102.13 Encolpius poses as a slave of Eumolpus to escape from Lichas: "*Eumolpus tamquam litterarum studiosus utique atramentum habet. hoc ergo remedio mutemus colores a capillis usque ad ungues. ita tamquam servi Aethiopes et praesto tibi erimus sine tormentorum iniuria hilares et permutato colore imponemus inimicis.*" [Note here that the expression *imponemus inimicis* is the same one I will discuss below when dealing with (81.3) *harenae imponui*.] Later, as our heroes are about to enter Croton, they plan to perpetrate an elaborate fraud by posing as wealthy individuals and attracting legacy-hunters (117.2): "*utinam quidem sufficeret largior scaena ... instrumentum lautius quod praerberet mendacio fidem ...* (117.4) *quid ergo*" inquit Eumolpus "cessa-

³⁵ A.E. Housman, "Tunica retiarum," *CR* 18 (1904) 395–398, believes that *de ruina* should be emended to read *de ruma*. He arrives at this emendation via a curious route from his work on Seneca *QNat.* 7.31.3, which work incidently preceded that of Richardson and Cerutti on the subject (*Supra* [Note 16]) but appears to be unknown to them. The reading *de ruma*, adopted by Housman because he feels that Ascylytus wanted a term of abuse to answer Encolpius' charge that he had *spiritus impurus*, is one of his less inspired emendations.

³⁶ Professor Krenkel was kind enough to point these out to me.

³⁷ K. Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 22.

³⁸ Encolpius poses as a *scholasticus* in *Sat.* 1–5; considered posing as a gladiator 117; an Ethiopian slave 102–103.

mus mimum componere?" ... *in verba Eumolpi sacramentum iuravimus: uri, vinciri, verberari ferroque necari ... tamquam legitimi GLADIATORES domino corpora animasque religiosissime addicimus.* In this approaching deceit Encolpius imagines himself and Giton as *gladiatores imposituros Crotoniensibus.*

The concentration of words referring to a *spectaculum* (*gladiator obscene, quem t̄de ruina† harena dimisit*) tends to make us think that Ascyltus is referring to a real *spectaculum*. I would suggest rather that Ascyltus is simply using a consistent metaphor. In another area Encolpius makes frequent references to mime, the stage, and acting, but I doubt that he was a stage actor. It is the context of these words referring to the *spectaculum* which leads me to suspect their use as metaphor. If, however, *harena*, while keeping up the metaphor of the *spectaculum*, is employed in the general sense of the scene of any struggle (cf. Lucan 6.63, Pliny *Ep.* 6.12.2), then the point of the insult is something like "no gladiator/lover stays long in the arena/bedroom without a good sword."

At 9.8–9 Encolpius' impotence is cast in the literary construct of a gladiatorial contest. At 132.11 Encolpius describes his impotence in the literary genre of epic by parodying *Aeneid* 6 and comparing *illa pars corporis* with the down-cast eyes of Dido:

*illa solo fixos oculos aversa tenebat,
nec magis incepto vultum sermone movetur
quam lente salices lassove papavera collo.*
(*Sat.* 132.11; cf. *Aeneid* 6.469–470; 9.436)

At *Sat.* 134–138 Encolpius will describe his latest bout of impotence in terms of a testimonial to a healing god. It is not intended that the reader should take seriously the gladiators, the epic, or the god of healing.

Again we return to 9.9. Ascyltus' next insulting remark to Encolpius is *nocturne percussor*, "stab in the dark," in the sexual, not criminal, sense, and it agrees with *pugnasti* in the following clause: "*qui ne tum quidem, cum fortiter faceres, cum pura muliere pugnasti ...*" *Pugno* and *percussor* (cf. Maximian *Elegiae* 5.133–134 [PLM, ed. Baehrens (1883) 5.346] *fert tacitum ridetque suum laniata dolorem / et percussori plaudit amica suo*)³⁹ are not the technical terms of law, but rather the metaphors or euphemisms of sex borrowed from the amphitheater. We see a similar episode in Apuleius *Met.* 2.17 (Fotis to Lucius): "*proeliare*", *inquit, "et fortiter proeliare, nec enim tibi cedam nec terga vortam; comminus in aspectum, si vir es, derige et grassare naviter et occide moriturus."*⁴⁰ Lucius had refer-

³⁹ Supra (Note 20) 147. *Percussor* like *gladiator* is a general term of abuse; cf. Cicero *Phil.* 4.15: *Est igitur, Quirites, populo Romano, victori omnium gentium, omne certamen cum percussore, cum latrone, cum Spartaco.*

⁴⁰ *Pugno*, ILS 5090, is a common verb for fighting in the amphitheater. Cf. also B. Baldwin, *An Anthology of Later Latin Literature* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1987) 48–51; Ovid *Am.* 3.8.19 *cerne cicatrices, veteris vestigia pugnae.*

red to the food to be eaten before making love to Fotis as *GLADIATORIAE Veneris antecenia* (2.15).

A confession of Encolpius at 81.3 repeats two words used in the accusation by Ascylytus at 9.8, *ruina* and *harena*:

ergo me non ruina terra potuit haurire? non iratum etiam
innocentibus mare? effugi iudicium, harenae imposui, hospitem
occidi.

Several scholars⁴¹ connect the expression from 9.8 (*quem †de ruina† harena dimisit*) to the first and third sentences above from 81.3, but overlook the second sentence which surely generalizes the first: "Could not the earth have swallowed me up? Or the sea, such a menace even to the innocent?" If Encolpius had been a gladiator who escaped in an earthquake from an amphitheater at 9.8, and who then at 81.3 asks why he could not have been swallowed up at that time because he was so evil, how could he imagine that the sea might swallow him in the arena? That is, of course, not the situation: Encolpius is simply asking why the land or sea (a common pairing) could not have ended his life and spared him all his current troubles. Encolpius' wishes that land or sea swallow him up are almost identical to Giton's pleas at 98.9, *utinam me solum inimicus ignis hauriret vel hibernum invaderet mare*. van Thiel calls these „stereotype rhetorische Fragen“. In *Die Sprichwörter* Otto lists *ergo me non ruina terra potuit haurire* among such expressions as *Aeneid* 10.675–6, *aut quae iam satis ima dehiscat/ terra mihi*.⁴²

The last (asyndetic) sentence of this confession (81.3) seems to indicate that Encolpius had earlier committed serious crimes, and the expression *harenae imposui* (see below) can be connected to the arena. The polished quality of the last sentence (ascending tricolon with one of Petronius' favorite clausulae, cretic + trochee, including avoidance of hiatus through elision)⁴³ alerts us that this confession by Encolpius is not, as it seems, blurted out in absolute frustration and anger over losing a lover. Encolpius is posturing, he is playing the role of the jilted lover, and his confession is the "appropriate response to the demands of a particular episode".⁴⁴

Each offense to which Encolpius confesses probably has only a small basis in reality and took place, as described, only in his own imagination. Events in his life have a way of being blown into larger than life scenes and of being reinterpreted and repackaged into well known literary forms. A few pages before the lines under

⁴¹ Cf. supra Note 18 and K. Müller, *Petronius. Satyrica* (Munich: Artemis, 1983³) *ad loc.* [Cf. already Müller²1978, p. 486, and Müller³1983, p. 508. – The editors.]

⁴² van Thiel, supra (Note 17) 63. A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (Hildesheim: Olms 1964 [1890]) 345. Bagnani, supra (Note 18) 25, adds: "The connection between these two passages is not clear and would not seem intrinsically probable. *Ruina terra haurire* is a more or less stereotyped expression equivalent to our own 'would the earth had swallowed me up,' and there is therefore no real connection between the *ruina* of 81.3 and that of 9.8".

⁴³ Müller, supra (Note 41) 449.

⁴⁴ Sullivan, supra (Note 2) 119.

discussion here, Encolpius and Ascyltus were engaged in a heated argument and even drew their swords. Of course no one is harmed – or even scratched; no matter how life-threatening Encolpius says his circumstances are, he is never hurt. But Giton pleads that they lay down their swords: *puer tangebatur utriusque genua cum fletu petebaturque suppliciter ne Thebanum par humilis taberna spectaret neve sanguine mutuo pollueremus ... sacra* (80.3). A quarrel over the affections of the fickle Giton assumes for itself the tragic proportions of the struggle between Polyneices and Eteocles, the sons of Oedipus, in which battle both brothers died and Thebes suffered greatly. It is possible that *Thebanum par* could be a reference to a kind of gladiator unknown to us.

Of the three charges which he levels against himself the most serious is *hospitem occidi*. That Encolpius could actually “cut someone down” is preposterous: it would be out of character with everything we know about him. The following lacunose section from the Quartilla episode describes the character of Encolpius and his comrades when confronted by violence (19.4–20.4):

tres enim erant mulierculae, si quid vellent conari, infirmissimae scilicet; contra nos, si nihil aliud, virilis sexus. sed et PRAECINCTI certe altius eramus. immo ego sic iam PARIA composueram, ut si DEPUGNANDUM foret, ipse sum Quartilla consisterem, Ascyltus cum ancilla, Giton cum virgine [***] tunc vero excidit omnis constantia attonitis, et mors non dubia miserorum oculos coepit obducere [***] “rogo”inquam “domina, si quid tristius paras, celerius CONFICE; neque enim tam magnum facinus admisimus ut debeamus torti PERIRE” ... duas institas ancilla protulit de sinu alteraque pedes nostros alligavit, altera manus.⁴⁵

The violent Encolpius and his two comrades in crime are easily overpowered by the priestess of Priapus who is suffering from *tertiana*, her maid, and the seven year old Pannychis. It is clear from 16.1–19.3 that Encolpius and his friends are in no danger from Quartilla and company. Encolpius, however, with his vivid imagination pictures the affair as an epic confrontation among gladiators: *praecinctorum certe altius gladiatorum paria III pugnabunt* is the way the poster would read in Pompeii and in the mind of Encolpius.

⁴⁵ At 82.2–4 where Encolpius meets a *miles* who quickly strips Encolpius of his sword, we see a picture of the non-violent Encolpius whose imagination is always running wild: *sed dum attonito vultu efferatoque nihil aliud quam caedem et sanguinem cogito frequentiusque manum ad capulum, quem devoveram, refero, notavit me miles, sive ille planus fuit sive nocturnus grassator, et “quid tu” inquit “commilito, ex qua legione es aut cuius centuria?” cum constantissime et centurionem et legionem essem ementitus, “age ergo” inquit ille “in exercitu vestro phaecasiati milites ambulant?” cum deinde vultu atque ipsa trepidatione mendacium prodidisset, ponere iussit arma et malo cavere. despoliatus ergo ...*

The *paria*⁴⁶ are, however, not those of gladiators but lovers, and the vocabulary of the *ludus* is really that of the brothel or bedroom: *depugnandum ... mors ... confice ... torti perire* are words employed both in the arena of gladiators and in the euphemistic arena of erotic writers⁴⁷. The word *occidi* at *Sat.* 81.3 can now be seen in its proper sense, as illustrated by Adams: "Akin to the metaphor of fighting is that of 'killing' applied to the male role."⁴⁸ Adams cites the passage from Apuleius *Met.* 2.17 (which I quoted above), *occide moriturus*. I would contend that Encolpius "finished off" his lover; he did not murder him. As he did not actually die at 79.8 (*ego sic perire coepi*), so I believe he did not commit murder here (cf. discussion of *Sat.* 130.2 *occidi* below).

Most deaths in the *Satyrica* are, like those in the other ancient novels, examples of the *Scheintod* motif; attempted, unsuccessful suicides are frequent. Both *Scheintod* and attempted suicide seem so real to the fertile imagination of Encolpius that each is dramatically set out as if it were the real thing and fit for presentation on the stage: the suicide at 94.15 is seen by Encolpius as a mime (*mimicam mortem*) and the one at 108.11 as a tragedy (*tragoediam*).

While *effugi iudicium* refers to no extant criminal action (we must bear in mind that Encolpius-Ascylltus-Giton live by their wits on the margin of society), *harenae imposui* seems to refer to a specific incident. Later in the *Sat.* at 102.13 (passage discussed above) Encolpius schemes to trick Lichas, an old enemy, into believing that he is an Ethiopian slave, and he uses the expression *imponemus inimicis*. The precise interpretation of *harenae imposui* is dark; it is also very brief. We must, however, recall that two powerful motifs, which concern us here, also run through the *Satyrica*: gladiators (*harenae*) and frauds (*imposui*). It is possible to say that the arena was deceived in Apuleius *Met.* 10.29–35: a woman condemned

⁴⁶ *paria* is the regular term for the sets of gladiators in the arena: *CIL* 4.1179 *par(ia) xxx ... pugn(abunt)*; *CIL* 4.3884 *paria x pug(nabunt)*; Pliny *NH* 35.147 *triginta paria*. The term is so common in inscriptions and literature that the reader is not likely to miss the connection with gladiators. Professor John Bodet has kindly pointed me in the direction of a most useful work: P. Sabbatini Tumolesi, *Gladiatorum Paria. Annunci di spettacoli gladiatorii a Pompeii* (Tituli 1) (Rome 1980), Index p. 175 f., s.v. *paria*.

⁴⁷ *Supra* (Note 20) 159, 195–6. Like the debate over education and rhetoric, much of the terminology of sex here is similar to that in Seneca's *Controversiae*, which, viewed in a narrow sense, make perfect plots for novels: e.g. *Contr.* 2.3.1 *expugnatam ... pudicitiam*. The verb *depugno* seems to be a kind of technical term for a gladiatorial duel: Suetonius *Iulius* 39, Cicero *ad Fam.* 10.32.3; cf. P. Burman, ed., *Titi Petronii Satyricôn Quae Supersunt* (Utrecht: Guil. Vande Water, 1709) *ad loc.*, on *depugno. mors/morior*, used of sexual intercourse, is found in Propertius 1.10.5; *conficio* is employed both in the sense of "finish off, kill" (as a spectator might shout in the arena; cf. *iug[u]la, iug[u]la, ILS* 5134) and "to exhaust in sexual acts" (Suetonius *Nero* 29). *pereo* is used again by Petronius at 79.8 v. 5 to mean "to be exhausted by intercourse", and is, of course, the standard epigraphical verb employed to note the death of a gladiator; cf. *CIL* 2508 which gives a list of gladiators with a one letter indicator after each, *V* (= *vicit*), *P* (= *periit*), *M* (= *missus*).

⁴⁸ *Supra* (Note 20) 159.

to the beasts in the arena is first to be coupled with Lucius-*asinus*, but Lucius sneaks away and disappoints the crowd (= *harenae imposuit*).

At 130.1–4 Encolpius offers another confession, which is contained in his (Polyaenus') letter to Circe:

“fateor me, domina, SAEPE PECCASSE; nam et homo sum et adhuc iuvenis. NUMQUAM TAMEN ANTE HUNC DIEM USQUE AD MORTEM DELIQUI. habes confitentem reum: quicquid iusseris, merui. PRODITIONEM FECI, HOMINEM OCCIDI, TEMPLUM VIOLAVI: in haec facinora quaere supplicium. sive occidere placet, <cum> ferro meo venio, sive verberibus contenta es, curro nudus ad dominam. illud unum memento, non me sed instrumenta peccasse. paratus miles arma non habui.”

The confession of 81.3 *effugi iudicium, harenae imposui, hospitem occidi*, has become at 130.2 *proditionem feci, hominem occidi, templum violavi*. There is apparently no end to his crimes: *saepe peccasse*. More likely, however, Encolpius has a confession-compulsion. With his active imagination which sees all events in his life as episodes from literature or worthy of inclusion in literary trappings (tragedy, epic, history, the novel),⁴⁹ Encolpius cannot portray himself as just any *cloaca*; he must be the *Cloaca Maxima*. If we are to take seriously Encolpius' confession *hominem occidi*, we must also take seriously his offer to provide a sword so that Circe can kill him (*occidere placet, <cum> ferro meo venio*). Such would be patently ridiculous. An examination of the whole confession reveals its theatrical nature. Encolpius will confess to anything and agree to undergo any punishment, if it brings Circe back to him. After the opening sentence in which he pleads that Circe should remember his youth, he adds: *numquam tamen ante hunc diem usque ad mortem deliqui*. This line can be reconciled with *hominem occidi*, only if *occido* has a sexual meaning (cf. discussion of 81.3 *occidi* above).

At 130.2 Encolpius adds a new element to his confession: *templum violavi*. Is this a real offense or is it imaginary? It is fair to ask this question because at 127.3 Encolpius had called the *platanona*, in which he and Circe had tried to make love, a *templum*: *ac ne me iudices ad hoc templum [Amoris] gratis accedere, dono tibi fratrem meum*. Then only a few chapters later (133.3) we read his confession/prayer to Priapus *positoque in limine genu*:

... NON SANGUINE TRISTI
PERFUSUS VENIO, NON TEMPLIS IMPIUS HOSTIS
ADMOVI DEXTRAM, sed inops et rebus egenis
attritus facinus non toto corpore feci.
quisquis peccat inops, minor est reus.

⁴⁹ In *ad Fam.* 5.12.3 Cicero asks the Roman historian L. Lucceius to embellish and to exaggerate his deeds in public life. Since Encolpius writes his own biography, he has no need to seek outside help.

According to this confession, not only had Encolpius not desecrated a temple (*templum violavi*; at 16.3 Quartilla accuses Encolpius and friends: *vos sacrum ... turbastis*), he had not killed anyone (*hospitem/hominem occidi*)⁵⁰. There is some similarity here to what Winkler⁵¹ called a “hypocritical confession” of a follower of the Syrian goddess in Apuleius *Met.* 8.28:

infit vaticinatione clamosa conficto mendacio semet ipsum incessere
atque criminari, quasi contra fas sanctae religionis dissignasset
aliquid, et super iustas poenas noxii facinoris ipse de se suis
manibus exposcere.

From where does Encolpius get the ideas behind the outrageous crimes for which he confesses? If we look at one incident (as an example) in Encolpius’ life and the language used to describe that happening, we might learn something about the source of his crimes. When Encolpius is attacked by a goose sacred to Priapus, he kills it and is accused of a horrible crime by Oenothea: (Encolpius) *morte me anseris vindicavi* (136.5) ... (Oenothea) “*sclerate*” *inquit “etiam loqueris? nescis quam magnum flagitium admiseris: OCCIDISTI Priapi delicias, anserem omnibus matronis acceptissimum. itaque ne te putes nihil egisse, si magistratus hoc scierint, IBIS IN CRUCEM. polluisti sanguine domicilium meum ante hunc diem inVIOLATUM”* (137.1–3). Later when Encolpius confesses to this crime, one wonders how he will embellish it, into what literary mold will he cast it. From Oenothea’s words I believe that Encolpius will interpret the events something like this: *occidi Priapi delicias, iturus ad crucem, pollui sacerdotis ante hunc diem in-violatam domum*. But will Encolpius explain to the reader that the *deliciae* was only an *anser*, or will he allow the reader to conclude that *deliciae* was a person?

It is hard to say exactly why Encolpius confesses so often to so many crimes, unless he believes that his past misdeeds will impress others. He adopts the position of the penitent at the temple, *positoque in limine genu*, and then confesses that he did *not* kill anyone or rob a temple: ... *non sanguine tristi / perfusus venio, non templis impius hostis / admovi dextram* ... He changes his plea from “guilty” to “innocent” because he wants Priapus to forgive him, heal his impotence, and grant him Circe.

Encolpius’ two specific claims in his oath, “I have killed no one”, and “I have robbed no temple,” are similar to the two claims which, as Merkelbach has shown, priests of Isis swear to the goddess.⁵² Is the reader supposed to pick this up and understand that Encolpius here is pleading to be considered a devotee of Priapus? I would answer in the affirmative. But unlike Lucius in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, Encolpius is, I believe, not interested in becoming a serious follower of any

⁵⁰ Wilhelm Ehlers in Müller’s edition, *supra* (Note 41) 329, translates the passage thus: „Nicht tiefend von grässlichem Mordblut/ steh ich vor dir, und nicht hat die Hand in frevelnder Schändung/ Gotteshäuser berührt.“

⁵¹ Winkler, *supra* (Note 6) 109.

⁵² R. Merkelbach, „Ein ägyptischer Priestereid,“ *ZPE* 2 (1968) 7–30.

deity. It would, however, make a splendid closure to the *Satyrica*, if Encolpius is consecrated (?) into the priesthood of Priapus.

But before we connect Encolpius' oath too closely to religious practices, we must go back to something Burman observed as long ago as 1709:⁵³ Encolpius' confession/oath to Priapus at 133.3 has interesting parallels in the Tibullan corpus at 3.5.7–14 and 1.2.81–84:

non ego temptavi nulli temeranda virorum
 audax laudandae sacra docere deae,
 nec mea mortiferis infecit pocula sucis
 dextera nec cuiquam taetra venena dedit,
 nec nos sacrilegi templis amovimus ignes,
 nec cor sollicitant facta nefanda meum,
 nec nos insana meditantés iurgia mente
 impia in aversos solvimus ora deos. (3.5.7–14)
 num Veneris magnae violavit numina verbo
 et mea nunc poenas impia lingua luit?
 num feror incestus sedes adiisse deorum
 sartaque de sanctis deripuisse focus? (1.2.81–84)

The first passage from Tibullus (Lygdamus) has numerous echoes in Encolpius' confessions and, together with the second, emphasizes the two elements (*hominem non occidi, templum non violavi*) which we have seen in the oath at 133.3 and Merkelbach in the oaths to Isis. Koenen has continued the study and illustrated that the protests of innocence in the oaths of priests have much in common with Roman elegy.⁵⁴ Raith extends further this same study and connects the oath of Encolpius at 133.3 to those in Roman elegy and to the oaths of the priests of Isis.⁵⁵

The literary texture of the *Satyrica* is indeed rich: the confessions and oath of Encolpius in which he stresses *hominem (non) occidi* and *templum (non) violavi* are discovered to have a long literary history. Encolpius' confession at 133.3 is thus a literary motif or perhaps a parody of a literary motif.⁵⁶ His familiarity with literature is great, and his narrative skills produce a realistic story. What I have attempted to do in this paper is to cast serious doubt not on Encolpius as narrator, who after all relates an exciting narrative, but on the facts behind his confessions. Suffice it to say that the facts of the crimes in his confessions are unreliable and dubious. By making his confessions conform to literary motifs, Encolpius encourages his reader

⁵³ Burman, *supra* (Note 46) 635.

⁵⁴ L. Koenen, „Die Unschuldsbeteuerung des Priestereides und die römische Elegie,“ *ZPE* 2 (1968) 31–38.

⁵⁵ O. Raith, „Unschuldsbeteuerung und Sündenbekenntnis im Gebet des Enkolp an Priap (Petr. 133.3),“ *Studii Clasice* 13 (1971) 109–125.

⁵⁶ H. Kleinknecht, *Die Gebetsparodie in der Antike* (Hildesheim: Olms 1967 [1937]) 190–191. Petronius may have Encolpius utter his prayer in imitation of something like *Priapea* 37.

to see the artifice in which his narrative is couched. The reader must not rely solely on Encolpius' utterances to reconstruct his past actions. Encolpius' exceedingly vivid imagination coupled with his ability to draw on a vast store of literature make him the Walter Mitty of ancient prose fiction: in the world of Walter Mitty the reader must take pains to distinguish between the times the *actor* lets us into his imagination (reality for the *actor*) and the times the *actor* shuts us out of his imagination (reality for the reader).⁵⁷

Univ. of Florida, Gainesville

Gareth Schmeling

⁵⁷ James Thurber, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," in *My World - And Welcome to It* (New York: Harcourt, 1969 [1937]). Walter Mitty is the most famous fictional character created by the American writer James Thurber (1894-1961). I compare Mitty with Encolpius: both are emasculated by women, display a love-hate relationship with practical elements of modern life, are attracted to fantasy as a release from reality, are fascinated with words, and both assume heroic roles in the dramas of their imagination.