I

Introduction: Theatricality and Narrative Structure in the *Satyrica*

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I.1 Aim

The purpose of this study is to bring into contact two prominent areas of Petronian scholarship that have never been systematically treated in combination: 1) the profound indebtedness of the *Satyrica* to the Graeco-Roman mime and other kinds of comic stage performances, 2) the character and function of the work's protagonist and narrator Encolpius. Investigating the interface between the two, I aim at describing the way in which Petronius adapts theatrical elements for narrative fiction, i.e. the way he creates Encolpius' first-person account out of characters, motifs, plots, and techniques associated with the comic stage.

Throughout this study, I will use the term 'comic' in a strictly generic sense, i.e. comic elements in the *Satyrica* are those elements that can also be found in the scripts of ancient comedy or are otherwise attested for this genre.[11] For reasons to be explained below, my notion of comedy comprises the 'literary' strand, represented by playwrights such as Aristophanes, Menander, Plautus, and Terence, as well as the 'popular' strand, including largely unscripted theatrical forms such as the *fabula Atellana* and the mime.

11 This means that I do not equate 'comic' with 'humorous', as many previous scholars have done; cf. e.g. Gagliardi (1980: 8) and Stöcker (1969: 1). On the problems of finding a coherent theory of humour, cf. e.g. Kindt (2017a; 2017b) with references for further reading. Studies on Petronius' humour and related phenomena include Canali (1986), Ruden (1993), Bessone (1993), Petersmann (1995), Napiorski (1996), Callebat (1998), Perutelli (1998), Ferreira (2000), Plaza (2000), and Schmeling (2001).

On the one hand, my comic reading will show that the theatrical subtext of the *Satyrica* is not limited to rather isolated occurrences of stage-like elements, as many past scholarly discussions might suggest. In fact, by investigating the incorporation of these elements into full-fledged narrative episodes, it will be shown that the parallels between the *Satyrica* and the plays of ancient comedy also pertain to large-scale effects created by the skilful combination of characters, situations and actions. I am using the term 'parallel' in a very broad sense, usually indicating the presence of a comic *topos* in the *Satyrica.* I do not suggest, however, that there is a 'direct' intertextual relationship between Petronius' work and the comedies discussed in this study.[12] Among other things, I will show that Eumolpus' excessive sexual appetite has clear forerunners in Aristophanes and Plautus, that Petronius' treatment of sexual violence should be understood against the backdrop of rape plots in New Comedy and the *fabula palliata,* that Giton possesses the seductive powers of comic prostitutes, and that the comic technique of role reversals is one of Petronius' favourites. As close parallels between the *Satyrica* and the comic tradition accumulate, we will observe that they render ever less likely Richard Heinze's (1899) influential hypothesis that Petronius' work constitutes, above all else, a parody of the Greek 'idealising' novel.

On the other hand, I will offer a comprehensive analysis of the narrative techniques employed by the first-person narrator Encolpius to represent theatrical action through the exclusive medium of words. While there are several strategies that bring about the impression of a stage performance, it will become clear that the *Satyrica* is not simply a narrative imitation of visual and auditory forms of entertainment. Instead, stage-like modes of representation exist side by side with such that exploit the full repertoire of a virtuoso storyteller, including manipulations of narrative speed and order as well as variations in focalisation. My study aims at showing that the techniques used in specific contexts are at times inconsistent not only with the viewpoint of Encolpius the protagonist, but also with any plausible intentionality on the part of Encolpius the narrator. This means that Petronius' narrator, who rarely emerges through the use of narrating focalisation but is of course present throughout his narrative, is neither exclusively *mythomanic,* as first proposed by Gian Biagio Conte (1996), nor exclusively detached and ironic, as asserted by Roger Beck (1973) and his followers. Rather, the narrator assumes either of these stances – and several other ones – according to the demands of

12 Cf. esp. chapter I.4. The *Satyrica* and the Graeco-Roman Literary Tradition.

the episode in question. In short, I will argue that the *Satyrica* is full of elements that seem to come straight out of ancient comic performances, and that Encolpius' narrative voice is Petronius' most versatile instrument for setting up a 'stage of words'.

I.2 Scope

My study will focus on three episodes of the *Satyrica*: 1) the First Rivalry over Giton, i.e. the conflict between Encolpius and Ascyltus near the beginning of the extant fragments (§§ 9–11), 2) the reconciliation between Encolpius and Giton after their breakup (§ 91), 3) the Third Rivalry over Giton, i.e. the conflict between Encolpius and the old poet Eumolpus in an apartment house (§§ 92–96). My close readings of these episodes will be preceded by some general observations on masculinity and male sexual desire in the *Satyrica,* in the 'idealising' novel, and in Graeco-Roman comedy.

I have selected these episodes for two reasons: Firstly, all three pertain to the overarching theme of sexual rivalry, allowing me to thoroughly investigate Petronius' treatment of this recurring motif. In the context of sexual rivalry, each episode involves a different set of characters and brings to the fore a distinct set of dynamics: The First Rivalry over Giton features three characters (Encolpius, Giton and Ascyltus), the reconciliation episode merely two (Encolpius and Giton), and the Third Rivalry over Giton revolves around an entire houseful of characters (Encolpius, Giton, Eumolpus, Ascyltus, and several minor characters). Since the Second Rivalry over Giton (§§ 79.8–82) involves many of the same elements as the First Rivalry (§§ 9–11), I have not devoted to it a separate chapter. Still, this passage will be part of the discussion at several points. It should be emphasised that – unlike the *cena Trimalchionis* (§§ 26.7–78) – the three episodes under investigation here have so far received comparatively little scholarly attention.

The second reason I have chosen these particular episodes is that they centre around Encolpius rather than other narrative agents and/or storytellers. This is essential to my study because I aim at investigating Encolpius as both a character in the story and as a narrator telling his story after the fact. Therefore, I will only treat in passing episodes of sexual rivalry that do not directly involve Encolpius, such as the fight between Fortunata and Trimalchio over the latter's affection for a beautiful slave boy (§ 74.8–17). Neither will I devote much attention to those parts

of the *Satyrica* that are exclusively related by intradiegetic narrators, such as Eumolpus' tale about the Pergamene youth (§§ 85–87) or his poems about the *Troiae halosis* (§ 89) and *bellum civile* (§§ 119–24). Still, other parts of the *Satyrica* will be taken into account whenever they are relevant to the discussion at hand. This is why, even though my investigation covers a fairly small portion of Petronius' text, it will allow for generalisations to be made about two interconnected issues: 1) Petronius' treatment of the motif of sexual rivalry and, 2) the role of Encolpius, as both character and narrator, in these rivalries.

A brief note on translations: Unless indicated otherwise, the translations of Aristophanes, Plautus and Terence are taken from the most recent Loeb editions, i.e. from Henderson (ed., trans. 1998–2007), de Melo (ed., trans. 2011–3) and Barsby (ed., trans. 2001) respectively. At times, I have made small alterations.[13] All translations of the *Satyrica* are my own.

I.3 Petronius and the Theatre

I.3.1 Theatrical Performances in Petronius' Day

One of the most basic presuppositions for a comic reading of the *Satyrica* is that its writer was aware of the theatrical culture of his time. Throughout this study, I will argue that Petronius' narrative was in many ways inspired by theatrical comedy in the broader sense, i.e. by characters, motifs, plots, and techniques associated with the manifold varieties of ancient comedy. In this regard, the term 'literary' comedy is conventionally employed to distinguish the genre's more sophisticated and scripted forms from the 'popular' and largely improvised ones.[14] The former category includes Greek Old, Middle, and New Comedy as well as the Roman *fabula palliata* and *fabula togata*.[15] The latter comprises the Graeco-Roman mime, the Greek *Phlyakes* and the Oscan/Latin *fabula Atellana*.[16]

13 Throughout this study, the Latin term *pudicitia* will be translated as 'sexual purity'; cf. n. 152.

14 Cf. e.g. Nicoll (1931) and Duckworth (1952).

15 It has been debated whether Middle Comedy should in fact be considered a category in its own right; cf. Hawkins & Marshall (2016: 3–7) with references to earlier literature.

16 For a comprehensive overview of the history of ancient comedy, cf. the contributions in Fontaine & Scafuro (eds. 2014) with references for further reading; on Roman comedy in particular, cf. Dinter (ed. 2019), Franko & Dutsch (eds. 2020) and Petrone (ed. 2020).

Of course, this distinction is schematic and hides the fact that several 'popular' forms acquired a literary status at some point in their development, such as the mime in the hands of Herodas and Theocritus or the *fabula Atellana* in the hands of Novius and Pomponius.[17] Below, I will argue that the considerable overlap between both strands of comedy allows for the use of a broad concept of comicality in this study. At this point, I will give a brief overview of the theatrical genres popular in Petronius' day and pay special attention to whether they were received through the medium of stage performances. The latter seems necessary because the *Satyrica* is usually assumed to emulate stage actions rather than dramatic scripts. This section will show that the evidence immanent in the *Satyrica* roughly corresponds to external sources in that they reveal the preeminent role of the Graeco-Roman mime in the early Roman Empire.

As so many other aspects of the text, the question of its theatrical context is complicated by the uncertain date and authorship of the *Satyrica*.[18] Most scholars assume that the narrative was written by emperor Nero's *arbiter elegantiae* Petronius, whose lavish lifestyle and extravagant death receive a memorable description in Tacitus' *Annales* (16.17–20).[19] However, it needs to be kept in mind that the identification with the consul mentioned by Tacitus is perhaps too appealing to be true and that the text's references to historical persons of the Neronian era provide us with no more than a *terminus post quem*. The earliest unambiguous *terminus ante quem* is a reference by Terentianus Maurus around 200 CE. Therefore, a later date cannot be ruled out and has been advocated by several scholars.[20]

17 Cf., e.g., Nicoll (1931) and Panayotakis (2019a: 35–39). Panayotakis (2019a) is more cautious in that he distinguishes between 'literary' and 'pre-literary' varieties of comedy.

18 Geue (2019: 201–34) has recently discussed how such uncertainties shape the way we engage with ancient literature.

19 The fullest discussion in favour of this view is still Rose (1971); cf. also the recent overview in Prag & Repath (2009: 5–9) and the references in Völker & Rohmann (2011: 660 n. 2).

20 For Terentianus Maurus' statement, cf. fragment XX in Müller's edition of the *Satyrica* (ed. 2009: 181). Völker & Rohmann (2011) offer a critical reanalysis of the evidence, including an important epigraphic find of 1989, and conclude that the *Satyrica* might have been written by several Neronian Petronii other than the one mentioned by Tacitus. Laird (2007) and Schwazer (2017) tentatively suggest that the narrative was written in the second century CE. Martin (1975; 1999; 2001), Ripoll (2002) and Henderson (2010) favour a date in the Flavian or early Hadrianic period. Dowden (2007: 141) and Holzberg (2009a: 108) also question the Neronian dating. Ratti (2011; 2015) asserts that Petronius was a freedman of Pliny the Younger's and that he wrote the *Satyrica* after 107 CE. For further reading and discussion, cf. Völker & Rohmann (2011: 660 n. 1) and Poletti (2022: 33–49).

Questions of dating and authorship, however, have only a limited bearing on theatrical interpretations of the *Satyrica,* as the popularity of public and private performances in the Empire did not substantially alter between the mid-first and late second century CE.[21] The clearest evidence for Petronius' knowledge of contemporary theatre is the fact that his narrative contains explicit references to all major genres popular in the period. Mentions of the mime amount to no less than seven and thus outnumber the allusions to all other forms of 'popular' entertainment.[22] As this genre will be addressed in more detail in the course of this introduction, a very brief account shall suffice at this point. The Graeco-Roman mime can be most adequately described by differentiating it from neighbouring theatrical forms: Other than 'literary' comedy, the humorous treatment of the mime was mainly concerned with low-life situations and was performed by unmasked actors, both male and female. In contrast to the pantomime, mime actors made use of words for their performances.[23] Between the first and the third centuries CE, there was an "explosion of the popularity of the mime-genre" (Panayotakis 2010: 30), which saw it supersede all other forms of comic theatre in the Empire. This does not mean, however, that these other genres were insignificant to the period and the composition of the *Satyrica.*

The text of the *Satyrica* attests to Petronius' knowledge of at least two other comic genres. At § 53.12, Trimalchio claims that *et comoedos […] emeram, sed malui illos Atell⟨ani⟩am facere* ("I also bought comedians, but I preferred them to do Atellan plays").[24] Trimalchio declares his affinity for the *fabula Atellana,* originally an Oscan type of farce that was Romanised early on and was regarded as the native counterpart to the theatrical forms imported from Greece.[25] Same as for the mime of the Roman Imperial period, our evidence of Atellan farce mainly consists of various short references in other forms of literature. We learn

21 Augier-Grimaud (2014: 14) comes to the same conclusion.

22 Cf. § 19.1 (*mimico risu*); § 35.6 (*de Laserpiciario mimo canticum*); § 55.5 (*Pub⟨li⟩lium,* i.e. the mimographer Publilius Syrus, cf. Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011 *ad loc.*)); § 80.9 (*grex agit in scaena mimum*); § 94.15 (*mimicam mortem*); § 106.1 (*mimicis artibus*); § 117.4 (*mimum componere*). All citations of the *Satyrica* are taken from Müller's (ed. 2009) critical edition.

23 Cf. Panayotakis (2010: 1) for this definition of the mime.

24 There is another reference to the *fabula Atellana* at § 68.5 (*Atellanicos versus*).

25 On the *fabula Atellana,* cf. Nicoll (1931: 65–79), Duckworth (1952: 10–13), Kocur (2018: 257–67), and Panayotakis (2019a: 32–9). For the extant fragments, cf. Ribbeck (ed. 1898) and Frassinetti (ed. 1967).

that these largely improvised shows made use of stock characters distinguished by specific masks: 1) Maccus and 2) Bucco, both of whom were apparently associated with foolishness and gluttony; 3) Pappus, the gullible old man; and 4) Dossenus, the cunning trickster.[26] After the genre had been greatly popular in the early first century BCE, it apparently fell much behind the mime in the early Empire. We learn from Suetonius (*Nero* 39.3) and Juvenal (3.173–6), however, that Atellan farces were at least occasionally performed in the time relevant to this study.[27]

Though Trimalchio claims to prefer the *fabula Atellana,* his explicit mention of professional comedians (*comoedos,* § 53.12 (cited above)) is no less remarkable. In relative terms, our evidence of 'literary' comedy is abundant, as we can consult not only extensive fragments but also the (nearly) complete Greek plays of Aristophanes and Menander as well as the Latin *fabulae palliatae* of Plautus and Terence. Plays of Greek Old Comedy were apparently not staged under the Roman emperors, with the possible exceptions of Hadrian and Commodus.[28] Still, the works of Aristophanes, Cratinus and Eupolis, with their open criticism of contemporary politics, were known in literary circles and are regularly invoked by Roman satirists in particular.[29] New Comedy, whose plots revolve around domestic relations in bourgeois families and typically involve difficulties in love leading up to a happy ending, came to be associated first and foremost with Menander. The genre remained immensely popular in the Roman Imperial era, at least inasmuch as that the dramatic scripts of Menander's plays were widely read and used for school teaching. Live performances, however, appear to have been rare and to have taken the form of dinner entertainment rather than full-fledged productions in theatres.[30] Latin comedy in several regards shared the fate of Greek New Comedy, to which it was of course heavily indebted. For the early Empire,

26 Cf. Nicoll (1931: 69–73), Duckworth (1952: 11) and Kocur (2018: 259–61). The latter (*ibid.* 261–3) also discusses several minor characters.

27 Thereafter, the *Atellana* is briefly mentioned by the church fathers Tertullian (*spect.* 17.2) and Jerome (*epist.* 52.2, 147.5); cf. the discussion in Weismann (1972: 48–9).

28 Cf. Nervegna 2014: 394.

29 Various cases of the reception of Greek comedy in the Roman Empire are addressed in Hawkins & Marshall (eds. 2016); on the role of Old Comedy in Roman satire, cf. Ferriss-Hill (2015). Hanses (2020) discusses the afterlife of Roman comedy in oratory, satire and love elegy.

30 Nervegna (2013) is the most in-depth study of the reception of Menander in antiquity. For a concise summary of her discussion with regard to the Roman Empire, cf. Hawkins & Marshall (2016: 12–17). On Petronius' possible knowledge of Aristophanes, cf. also Panayotakis (2006: 495–8).

the only attested performance is of Afranius' *fabula togata* entitled *incendium* in the Neronian era (Suet. *Nero* 11.2). While Terence soon became a school author and was thus widely known, interest in Plautus only re-emerged with the writers of the Second Sophistic, such as Fronto, Gellius and Apuleius. It is important to point out, though, that much of the renewed attention was paid to Plautus' vocabulary and therefore does not imply reperformances.[31]

Petronius' knowledge of tragedy is apparent not only from two explicit references but also from various unmistakable allusions.[32] Nevertheless, it is an exceptionally vexed question as to the kinds of tragic performances he might have watched during his lifetime. Most importantly, just as traditional comedy was gradually superseded by the mime in the Imperial era, the genre of tragedy was to a large extent replaced by the pantomime, the *tragoedia saltata.*[33] Keeping terminological difficulties in mind,[34] we may state that this increasingly popular form of theatrical entertainment centred around a male dancer who performed mythological stories without the use of words. He impersonated all important roles by changing different masks throughout the show. The solo performance could be complemented by more dancers and by the accompaniment of music provided by a single instrument or by a larger group.[35] Remarkably, when Encolpius realises that all of Trimalchio's servants burst into song when they tend to the guests' wishes, he compares them to a *pantomimi chorum* (§ 31.7). The more 'traditional' tragedies of the Roman era fall into two groups: 1) *fabulae crepidatae,* i.e. plays with subjects from Greek mythology as written by Seneca the Younger, and 2) *fabulae prae-*

31 The most comprehensive study in this area is Deufert (2002) on the reception of Plautus in antiquity; cf. the brief overviews in Ferri (2014) and Manuwald (2019). On the role of comedy in the Second Sophistic, cf. May (2014). Weismann (1972: 46) discusses the few references to comic performances made by the church fathers, the latest of which is Aug. *Civ.* 2.8.17–8 (early fifth century CE).

32 § 108.11 (*tragoediam implebat*), § 140.6 (*periclitabatur … tragoediam evertere*). § 80.9, for instance, contains a clear allusion to the tragic conflict between Eteocles and Polynices.

33 On the popularity of the pantomime in the Empire, cf. Webb (2008: 58–94) and Hawkins & Marshall (2016: 13–4).

34 Ancient sources often do not make clear distinctions between the mime and the pantomime, both of which appear to have been very heterogeneous genres (cf. Wiseman 2008a).

35 This definition of the pantomime follows Hall (2008: 3). Hall & Wyles (eds. 2008) comprise recent scholarly contributions in this field. For an overview, cf. also Kocur (2018: 303–33) with references for further reading.

textae, plays revolving around Roman myth or history. Of the latter category, our evidence is fragmentary.[36] As far as the *fabula crepidata* is concerned, plays were still occasionally put on stage in the first century CE, but they were more regularly read or recited by a single speaker.[37]

To sum up, the text of the *Satyrica* suggests that Petronius knew sophisticated comedies and tragedies as well as mimes, pantomimes and Atellan farces. It seems reasonable to assume that he encountered the performing arts at both public and private venues. He probably gained his knowledge of 'literary' theatre mainly through reading and recitals, while full stagings remain a possibility. Overall, the theatrical culture of his time was dominated by the pantomime and the Graeco-Roman mime, the latter of which is likely to have inspired much of his work's comicality. With regard to a comic reading of the *Satyrica,* the greatest problem remaining is that the mime's importance to the Roman Imperial era is not reflected in the quantity and quality of our primary evidence.

I.3.2 Farcical Elements in 'Popular' and 'Literary' Comedy

Many previous scholars understood that the theatrical context of 1st- and 2nd-century Rome as well as the text of the *Satyrica* itself call for a comparison between Petronius' work and the contemporary mime.[38] While the interconnections between the two continue to be discussed,[39] the most important study in this field remains Costas Panayotakis' (1995) *Theatrum Arbitri,* who reads the entire *Satyrica* "as if it were the narrative equivalent of a farcical staged piece with the theatrical structure of a play produced before an audience" (*ibid.* ix). In this section, I will argue that scarcity of evidence is the chief impediment to a comprehensive 'mimic' reading of the *Satyrica* and that this obstacle may in part be overcome

36 Manuwald (2001) offers a comprehensive discussion of the *fabula praetexta.*

37 Cf. Boyle 2006: 186. Particularly in the case of Seneca the Younger, it has been hotly debated whether and how his tragedies might have been staged. For an overview of the scholarly discussion, cf. e.g. Schiesaro (2008: 279) and Liebermann (2014: 408–9); one of the most recent contributions is Braun (2022).

38 The earliest discussions of comic – and particularly mimic – elements in the *Satyrica* include Collignon (1892), Rosenblüth (1909: 36–55), Moering (1915), and Preston (1915). Leading up to Panayotakis' (1995) seminal study, it is also worth consulting Walsh (1970: 24–8), Sandy (1974), Rosati (1983), Cicu (1992), and Boroughs (1993).

39 Cf. Callari (1995), Cucchiarelli (1999), Wolff (2003), Patimo (2007), Gianotti (2009), Kirichenko (2010: 185–99), Augier-Grimaud (2014), and Clark (2019: 99–122)

by acknowledging the substantial overlap between the different forms of ancient comedy. Therefore, I advocate broadening our scope beyond the mime-genre in the narrow sense, allowing us to also take into account farcical elements in the extant plays of 'literary' comedy. Even though an approach similar to mine has already been adopted by Panayotakis (1995), it has never received a full philological justification.[40] The latter is all the more necessary in my case, however, since I intend to complement the findings of Panayotakis and others by analysing the comic/farcical quality of more complex aspects of the *Satyrica* – matters of characterisation, interaction, plot development, and comic technique – and thus need to rely more heavily on the extant plays of Aristophanes, Menander, Plautus, and Terence.

Problematically, *μῖμος* or *mimus* are somewhat fluid terms in that they comprise at least two different varieties. In what corresponds to the conventional division of comic genres, 'mime' may refer to a 'literary' and a 'popular' or 'performative' strand.[41] The latter category denotes the mime as a form of theatrical entertainment in the narrower sense, i.e. the rather crude performances of low-life actions that largely relied on stock characters and improvisation.[42] As these shows were not only largely unscripted but also of low cultural esteem, our primary evidence is limited to a few papyrus finds that often give us no more than a rough sketch of the plays' plot and *dramatis personae.*[43] Otherwise, our knowledge of the 'popular' mime depends on archaeological evidence and (frequently disparaging) references in other genres.[44] The term 'literary mime', on the other hand, denotes those texts that transform the elements of the

40 Cf. Panayotakis (1995: xxv): "Throughout this book it will be demonstrated how the author of the novel [i.e. Petronius] does not confine himself to mimic 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 numerous indecencies of Atellan farce to role-playing in New Comedy and the organisation of games in Roman amphitheatres." Preston (1915) had drawn attention to the great overlap of elements between the mime and 'literary' comedy.

41 Cf. Panayotakis (2014: 379). Up-to-date introductions to the Roman mime are offered by Panayotakis (2010: 1–32) and Kocur (2018: 269–302); cf. also Sonnino (2014).

42 On the role of improvisation in the mime, cf. Wüst (1932: 1729–30 and *passim*) as well as Kocur (2018: 273–5).

43 Wiemken (1972) offers the most detailed discussion of these papyri; cf. also Rusten & Cunningham (eds., trans. 2003: 353–421).

44 Cf. Maxwell (1996) for the material evidence of the mime. The best overview of literary references is still Wüst (1932). On the Christian condemnation of the mime as part of the traditional Roman *spectacula,* cf. Weismann (1972).

'popular' mime into a sophisticated, often poetic genre which still retains the potential for theatrical performance.[45] The main representatives of this strand are the Greek writers Epicharmus, Sophron, Herodas, and Theocritus; as well as the Latin writers Laberius, Cn. Matius and Vergilius Romanus. Our most extensive evidence of the genre is provided by Herodas' *mimiamboi,* which, however, were perhaps never meant to be produced on stage.[46] Except for the three mime-like poems of Theocritus (Theoc. 2, 14, 15), all other 'literary' mimes have come down to us in fragments.[47]

The evidence we have provides us with a basic outline of the mime's general characteristics. For instance, we know that the mime was fond of humorous surprises, as it evidently featured sudden changes of fortune[48] and unexpected mix-ups.[49] It is certain that a bald-headed fool (μωρὸς φαλακρός or *mimus calvus*) made a regular appearance and that this stock character was commonly involved in an adultery plot.[50] To name but a few motifs and plot conventions, we learn of mimic shipwrecks,[51] indecency,[52] trickery,[53] slapstick scenes,[54] and of mime-plays' tendency to find abrupt endings.[55] However, we know next to nothing about how these elements were combined into full-fledged theatrical performances. With regard to the *Satyrica,* our knowledge of the mime allows us to

45 Cf. Panayotakis 2014: 379.

46 On the debate about the *mimiamboi* as pieces for stage performance, cf. the overview in Esposito (2014: 277–8; further reading on p. 281) as well as the recent contributions by Chesteron (2018) and Kutzko (2018).

47 On Theocritus' urban mimes, cf. Burton (1995), Krevans (2006) and Miles (2021) with references for further reading. The most recent edition of the Greek 'literary' mime is Rusten & Cunningham (eds., trans. 2003). It also includes Theophrastus' *Characters* and fragments of 'popular' mimes. For the fragments of Latin mimes, cf. Bonaria (ed. 1965) and Panayotakis (ed. 2010).

48 Cic. *Phil.* 2.27.65: *persona de mimo modo egens, repente dives.*

49 Aug. *Civ.* 6.1: *absurditate turpissima, qualis ioculariter in mimo fieri solet, peteretur a Libero aqua, a Lymphis uinum.*

50 On the mimic fool, cf. Nicoll (1931: 87–90). The adultery mime is discussed at length by Reynolds (1946) and Kehoe (1984).

51 Sen. *de ira* 2.2.5: *ad conspectum mimici naufragii contrahit frontem.*

52 Ov. *Tr.* 2.497: *mimos obscena iocantes.*

53 Cf., for instance, Juv. 6.41–4 on the mimic adulterer hiding in a chest.

54 See the references and discussion in Nicoll (1931: 88).

55 Cic. *Cael.* 65 (cited in section III.5.2.3. Condensation: Petronius' 'punchline'). For more ancient references to mimic stock elements, cf. Panayotakis (2010: 10–11 n. 19).

point out broad parallels in terms of theme, plot and characters, but we have almost no basis upon which to analyse matters of mimic discourse or characterisation, let alone the combination of structural elements to form a coherent composition. If we nevertheless wish to make assertion about these issues, as several scholars have done, it seems promising to search for parallels in other comic genres and use these for an indirect argument.

Adopting a somewhat broader perspective on the mime-like quality of the *Satyrica* seems to be justified by the fact that 'literary' and 'popular' comedies known in Petronius' day had a substantial number of elements in common. Among many others, these include the motifs of love and marriage, the stock characters of the trickster and the fool, as well as the comic techniques of slapstick and inversion. To make this case, I will for the most part draw upon the extensive literature on farcical elements in the Roman *fabula palliata,* i. e. elements likely inspired by or shared with the unscripted *fabula Atellana* and the mime. Although most scholarly arguments in question were originally advanced in the context of finding Plautine originality in Plautus' plays, they amply illustrate the enormous overlap between what we assume to be unsophisticated 'popular' comedy and what we find in the well-attested 'literary' varieties.

The cross-fertilisation between different comic genres up to Petronius' day was so strong that in many cases we cannot tell whether a specific element in the *Satyrica* derives from one or the other. In the first place, the mime in both Greece and Italy continuously borrowed elements from 'literary' comedy and *vice versa.*[56] Among the clearest indications of this convergence is the fact that several Church fathers – though, of course, writing later than Petronius – associate the mime with stock characters known from Menander, Plautus and Terence, such as the parasite, the wicked mother-in-law, the lovestruck old man, the naïve or lecherous father, as well as the rich young man in love with a prostitute.[57] Furthermore, the mimic theatre popular in 1st- and 2nd-century Rome was not identical with the mime of Hellenistic Greece, but the imported form had assimilated with the Italian *fabula Atellana* into a diverse Graeco-Roman genre.[58] To add to the general confusion, the Atellan farce itself had not only been influenced by the Greek *Phlyakes* of southern Italy, but by the

56 Cf. for instance Wüst (1932: 1738, 1740, 1743, 1751) and see the discussion below.

57 Cf. Weismann (1972: 49) with references to Novatian, Jerome, Augustine, and others.

58 Cf. Panayotakis 2014: 379.

1st century BCE it had also to some extent merged with 'literary' Roman comedy, i.e. the *fabula palliata* and the *fabula togata.*[59]

As our evidence in most cases does not allow for individual comic elements to be pinned down to a specific origin, some scholars working on Roman Comedy have closely focused on the basic distinction between 'literary' elements in the vein of Greek New Comedy and 'popular' elements felt to be inspired by unscripted contemporary performances. Initiated by Eduard Fraenkel's (1922) seminal study *Plautinisches im Plautus,* this new trend in scholarship acknowledged Roman Comedy as a literary genre in its own right and thus helped overcome the preoccupation with trying to restore the lost plays of Greek New Comedy.[60] Simply put, it was widely assumed at least until the 1990s that the Roman playwrights received sophisticated plays from their Greek forerunners and adapted them to their Roman audiences by making them more farcical, for instance by: 1) sacrificing the consistency of the overall plot for the sake of momentary humorous effects; 2) caricaturising the nicely drawn characters of the Greek plays and more heavily relying on 'low-life' characters (slaves and professional types, such as cooks, prostitutes and pimps); 3) superimposing Greek 'elegant humour' with simply ridiculous foolery (e.g. slapstick, wordplays and pointless quarrels).[61] All these farcical elements, then, were taken to be derived from unscripted comedy, as these forms presumably did not bother much about high artistic aspirations.[62] Of the extant *fabula palliata,* Plautus' plays are from this perspective clearly more indebted to 'popular' theatre than Terence's.[63]

It has to be borne in mind, however, that the arguments outlined above call for scepticism. First of all, Greek comedy itself is not free from the 'farcical' elements we find in Plautus; if anything, we can only argue

59 Cf., e.g., Nicoll (1931: 80), Duckworth (1952: 11–14).

60 For an overview of the history of Plautine scholarship from Fraenkel onwards, cf. Petrides (2014: 426–33).

61 These three categories correspond to Castellani's (1988: 57–67) discussion. In the context of Plautine originality, several representatives of the Freiburg School of Plautine scholarship have published articles in the same vein; cf. e.g. the contributions in Lefèvre et al. (eds. 1991) and Benz et al. (eds. 1995) as well as Vogt-Spira (1995; 1998), Lefèvre (1999; 2010), Benz (1999), and Blänsdorf (2003: 225).

62 At times, it is possible to identify Plautine additions to the Greek originals with reasonable certainty, e.g. when the action comes to a standstill and we encounter specifically Latin puns and/or references to things unambiguously Roman. A few such cases will be discussed in the course of this study.

63 Cf. e.g. Duckworth (1952: 17 and *passim*).

that such elements are more pronounced in the Roman plays.[64] The assessment, for instance, as to whether the personality of a given comic character is 'caricaturised' or not, of course, involves a subjective evaluation. Since our evidence, as we have seen, is insufficient to present a comprehensive picture of unscripted ancient theatre, many scholars have cautioned against overstressing Plautus' indebtedness to the 'non-literary' tradition.[65] Still, there is an overall consensus that Plautus is in many regards more farcical than New Greek Comedy – with the caveat that the complex relations between the comic genres remain too nebulous for modern scholars to determine the origin of specific elements with any satisfactory degree of certainty.[66] This very realisation, however, shows that the boundaries between different forms of ancient comedy are much less clear than many 20th-century scholars assumed. As all comic genres – each emphasising some aspects more than others – were arguably working along the same broad lines, I propose to apply this principle to the comic interpretation of Petronius' work.[67]

Throughout my analysis, I will point out parallels between the *Satyrica* and the elements we find in ancient comedy, may they relate to characters, motifs, plots, or techniques. Special attention will be paid to material that could be referred to as 'farcical', since it is most likely to have featured in the mime, the genre to which Petronius' text is most obviously indebted. The impression of farcical theatricality can be created, for instance, by low-life situations and characters, a general light spirit, slapstick, the prioritisation of humorous effects over matters of verisimilitude, and many more aspects attested to in extant comedies.

64 Castellani (1988: 53–4) acknowledges farcical elements in both Old and New Greek Comedy. On 'popular' comedy in Aristophanes, cf. Murphy (1972), MacDowell (1988) and Kaimio (1990). Riess (2012: 235–378) discusses interpersonal violence – including slapstick – in Aristophanes and Menander. Krieter-Spiro (1997: 185–8) points out that the few instances of slapstick and obscenity in Menander usually involve low-life characters, such as slaves and cooks.

65 Duckworth (1952) discusses the same farcical elements in Plautus as Castellani (1988) does but qualifies his findings (*ibid.* e.g. 137, 168, 198). Fontaine (2014: 416–18) argues that Plautus is far more dependent on the Greek comic tradition than on the native Italian one; cf. Hutchinson (2013: 30–3) on elements of Greek Old Comedy in Plautus. Petrides (2014: 433) also adopts a sceptical perspective.

66 Cf. Panayotakis 2019a: 45.

67 Cf. Panayotakis' (2010: 27) assessment of the parallels between the mimes of Laberius and the *fabulae palliatae* of Plautus.

I.4 The *Satyrica* and the Graeco-Roman Literary Tradition

I.4.1 Terminology and Preliminaries

I.4.1.1 Intertextuality, Transtextuality and 'Parallels'

One of the thornier issues of this study is how exactly to conceive of – and to describe – the presence of comic elements in the *Satyrica.* Does Petronius, having watched/read specific comic plays, deliberately incorporate some of their elements into his narrative? Are his (un)intentional references perhaps more general in nature, relating to the theatre as a broader phenomenon rather than to individual plays or dramatic scripts? Or, indeed, is the perceived connection between the *Satyrica* and comedy something of an illusion? Are the elements that strike us as 'comic' merely commonplaces of the genre the *Satyrica* belongs to – possibly the novel, (Menippean) satire or Milesian tales – meaning that there is no direct relationship whatsoever between Petronius and the plays of ancient comedy?

My aim is not to prove that Petronius deliberately draws on the very comedies discussed in this study. Rather, I will demonstrate the presence of comic – more exactly: farcical – *topoi* in the *Satyrica,* leaving open how exactly these *topoi* 'entered' Petronius' work. Put more abstractly, I am little interested in intertextuality in the narrow sense of the term, as defined, for instance, by Genette (1997: 1): Intertextuality as "a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts" i.e. "the actual presence of one text within another", as in the case of quotes, allusions or plagiarism. At no point in this study will I suggest that Petronius establishes such an intertextual relationship between the *Satyrica* and any specific piece of Graeco-Roman comedy we know of. For, as far as we can tell, Petronius neither quotes nor alludes to (nor plagiarises) the plays discussed here.[68] Notably, the case is different for a few non-comic texts: When discussing the First Rivalry over Giton, (§§ 9–11), for instance, Petronius' clear allusions to Livy's *ab urbe condita* and Ovid's *Fasti* will be the starting point for my analysis.

The relationship between the *Satyrica* and comedy should be conceived of in terms of intertextuality in a wider sense or, to use Genette's (1997: 1) coinage, in terms of 'transtextuality': "all that sets the text in

68 For one possible exception, cf. Panayotakis (2006: esp. 496–8), who argues that § 117.11–13 alludes to Aristoph. *Ran.* 1–10.

a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts". In Genette's understanding, intertextuality is but one of five varieties of transtextuality.[69] I argue that the presence of comic *topoi* in the *Satyrica* – such as (stock) characters, motifs, plot elements, and techniques – establishes close transtextual links between Petronius' work and the comic tradition. Throughout this study, I will refer to these links by the more familiar term of 'parallels' between the *Satyrica* and comedy.

In fact, although Genette's concept of transtextuality may seem to be almost all-encompassing, it makes sense to think of the relationship between the *Satyrica* and comedy in even broader terms. For, what I suggest here is not so much that Petronius' text is (in one way or another) indebted to other *texts* (which is what Genette focuses on), but rather to *theatrical performances*: He forms a narrative (i.e. a sequence of words presented to an audience) on the basis of stage action (i.e. a complex array of visual and auditory information presented to an audience).[70] This, then, is more akin to what Julia Kristeva has in mind when she describes the process of 'transposition', a term central to her own understanding of 'intertextuality'. Transposition is defined as the *"passage from one sign system to another,"* for instance from theatrical performance to narrative.[71] When I speak of 'parallels' between the *Satyrica* and comedy, then, I refer to transtextual links (in the Genettean sense) that may also be established across different media, as it were. In simpler terms, we may envision these parallels as 'overlaps' between the *Satyrica* and the ancient comic tradition.

I.4.1.2 Hypertextuality and Architextuality ('Genre')

The discussion above has shown that my approach to the comic quality of the *Satyrica* is to a significant extent an indirect one. By pointing to parallels with ancient – preferably farcical – comedy, I attempt to bring to the surface elements in Petronius' work that possibly go back to mime

69 The other four varieties are hypertextuality and architextuality (discussed below), as well as paratextuality (e.g. titles and marginalia), and metatextuality (e.g. commentaries); cf. Genette (1997: 1–7).

70 This issue will be further discussed in the context of Petronius' narrative technique.

71 The quote is taken from Kristeva (1984: 59), emphasis in the original. Kristeva (1970: 139–176) discusses the transpositions that shaped early modern novels; the sign systems transposed into narrative include (the clamour of) the marketplace as well as carnivalesque festivities.

performances in the early Imperial period or are otherwise inspired by the author's knowledge of comic theatre. While there is *per se* some degree of uncertainty to such an approach, the situation is complicated by the fact that many elements associated with (farcical) comedy also occur in other genres, both theatrical and non-theatrical. This is particularly relevant to a text with such a problematic literary background as the *Satyrica,* "a seemingly spontaneous isolated creation which lacks readily discernible ancestors and clearly related successors" (Scobie 1969: 83).

Speaking in Genettean terms, we can be certain that there is some 'transtextual' relationship between the *Satyrica* and comedy, i.e. that there is some interconnection, no matter how obscure or indirect, between Petronius' narrative and ancient comic stage plays. Yet, we are unable to reconstruct how this relationship came about. One possibility is that there is a 'hypertextual' link between the *Satyrica* and ancient comedies: Petronius grafts his narrative (the 'hypertext') upon earlier comedies (the 'hypotexts') – many of the latter, however, being lost to us.[72] In other words: Petronius *deliberately* invests his text with elements he associates with the comic stage. Another possibility is that the elements Petronius' text shares with the comic tradition go back to the genre of the *Satyrica,* i.e. to the category Genette calls 'architextuality'.[73] The idea is that elements known from comedy had long become commonplaces of the genre the *Satyrica* belongs to – whichever genre this may be – by the time Petronius was writing. This would mean that the presence of comic elements in the *Satyrica* does not result from Petronius' deliberate engagement with stage plays, but rather from the given generic repertoire he was working with. In fact, it is likely that both of the above possibilities are partly true.[74]

Ultimately, we are likely dealing with both: 1) comic elements in the *Satyrica* that were indeed inspired by theatrical productions, and 2) comic elements that have entered the *Satyrica* on 'indirect routes', i.e. through

72 Cf. Genette (1997: 5): "by hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary."

73 Cf. Genette (1997: 1): "By architextuality I mean the entire set of general or transcendent categories – types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres – from which emerges a singular text." Cf. also Genette 1992.

74 Cf. e.g. Genette's (1997: 7f.) remarks on the overlap between 'hypertextuality' and 'architextuality'.

genres other than comedy. As far as I can see, however, we have no reliable means for separating the former category from the latter. This caveat should be kept in mind at all times – not only when trying to identify comic elements in the *Satyrica,* but also when attempting to assign Petronius' work to a literary genre. As we shall see in the following section, the latter endeavour is made exceedingly difficult by the uncertainties surrounding the *Satyrica.*

I.4.2 The Genre of the *Satyrica*

This section will give an overview of the long-standing debate as to whether the *Satyrica* should be considered a (Menippean) satire, a novel, a Milesian tale, or indeed an extraordinary piece of artistic ingenuity. Rather than taking sides in this dispute, I will caution against applying loaded – and often anachronistic – genre labels to Petronius' work.

Most commonly, the *Satyrica* is still referred to as an ancient novel – or otherwise as a text parodying the ancient novel. This categorisation is problematic, not least because the ancients did not have a distinct term for what we now call a novel: In Greek, 'novelists' could be referred to as ἱστορικοί or δραματικοί; they could be said to write ἐρωτικά or δράματα, δραματικά, μυθιστορία, πλάσματα, συντάγματα, or διηγήματα.[75]. In Latin, *fabula* was the most common term for prose fiction.[76]

For contextualising the *Satyrica,* it is equally important to note that the long-held distinction between 'idealising' Greek and 'realistic' Latin novels has been seriously challenged in recent decades. Erwin Rohde (1914: 583–91) was the first scholar to argue that the ancient novelistic tradition was made up of two sub-categories: the 'serious' Greek novel of love and adventure on the one hand, and the burlesque and 'realistic' Latin novel on the other. The first group is mainly represented by the five extant Greek novels by Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Achilles Tatius, Longus, and Heliodorus; the second group was said to comprise Petronius' *Satyrica* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses.* After Rohde's view had been followed by the majority of scholars until at least the middle of the 20th century, the distinction has been called into question by recent papyrus finds, most importantly the *Iolaos* papyrus, the *Tinouphis,* and

75 Cf. Marini (1991).

76 Cf. Horsfall (1991/2: 135) with references in n. 77.

the fragmentary novel *Phoenicica* by Lollianus.[77] These texts render the clear-cut distinction obsolete in that they prove the existence of obscenity and a comic spirit in Greek novels, i.e. the existence of elements that were previously taken to be exclusive to the Latin strand.[78] Consequently, we have to assume that both 'serious' and 'burlesque' novels drew on the same stock of Graeco-Roman literary knowledge and that the generic composition of the extant Greek novels is closely linked to that of the extant Latin ones.

The same papyrus finds have given new impulses to the discussion about the genre of the *Satyrica.* Petronius' place in the novelistic and/or Menippean and/or Milesian tradition continues to be discussed.

I.4.2.1 Formal and Thematic Characteristics

Joachim Adamietz (1987) offers a systematic overview of the links between the *Satyrica* and the tradition of Menippean satire. The genre is commonly held to have been originated by the cynical philosopher Menippus of Gadara (3rd century BCE), our knowledge of whom is largely indirect.[79] His work is associated with the σπουδαιογέλοιον, i.e. with a mixture of serious and humorous elements, and with the *prosimetrum,* i.e. a combination of prose and verse insets that typically are the author's own creation. Menippus' most important Roman followers are said to include Varro (*Menippeae*) and Seneca the Younger (*Apocolocyntosis*).[80] Some scholars have understood Menippean satire to be a much broader category.[81]

77 The *Phoenicica* has been edited and discussed by Henrichs (1969; 1972); cf. also Stephens & Winkler (eds. 1995: 314–57). The obscure Greek model for Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* is also relevant to this discussion; cf. the overview in Pinheiro (2014: 204).

78 Pinheiro (2014: 205) offers an overview of the scholarly discussion with references to further literature. For the evidence of 'obscene' novels, cf. Stramaglia (1992: 141) and Henderson (2010: 489–90).

79 Cf. e.g. Coffey (1989: 162–3) and Relihan (1993: 39–48).

80 The most detailed discussion of Menippean satire is still Relihan (1993). We should note that Holzberg (2016) has recently called into question the conventional dating and the authorship of the text commonly referred to as *Apocolocyntosis.* He argues that the text was written by a *Seneca impersonatus* of the mid-second century CE. Freudenburg (2015: 93–8) also offers a critical survey of the evidence but tends towards the traditional view, i.e. that the *Apocolocyntosis* was authored by Seneca the Younger.

81 Bakhtin (1981[1941]: 27) famously stated that the "*Satyricon* of Petronius is good proof that Menippean satire can expand into a huge picture, offering a realistic reflec-

According to Adamietz (1987: 330), what most clearly marks the *Satyrica* as a piece belonging to the Menippean tradition is the *prosimetrum.* Petronius' peculiar mixture of prose and verse is said to be incompatible with the genre of the ancient novel, for instance Chariton's *Callirhoe,* where verse insets occur very rarely and usually take the form of quotations from esteemed authors.[82] In the opinion of other scholars, however, the aforementioned papyrus finds strongly hint at a tradition of Greek prosimetric fiction.[83] Still, these papyri hardly suffice to speak of a fully-fledged genre of prosimetric novels.[84] Seeing that the fragments are dated to the second century CE, we cannot exclude the possibility that they follow in Petronius' footsteps rather than the other way around.[85] Furthermore, it is possible that the Greek prosimetric texts were themselves inspired by the Menippean tradition.[86] Lastly, we should bear in mind that a mixture of prose and verse also occurs in other genres, notably in

tion of the socially varied and heteroglot world of contemporary life." As pointed out by Branham (2019: 86) Bakhtin's concept of Menippean satire – going back to the Renaissance – comprised more or less the entire category of the σπουδαιογέλοιον; furthermore, he stressed its close connection to carnivalistic folklore (cf. *ibid.* 83 and 93). Branham (*ibid.* 105–166) offers an in-depth investigation of the Bakhtinian concept of 'heteroglossia' – the intermingling of various voices from different cultural contexts – in the *Satyrica*; cf. also the earlier discussion by Goldman (2008).

82 Cf. Adamietz (1987: 338). On the use of the *prosimetrum* in Menippean satire, cf. Relihan (1993: 18): "What is crucial to Menippean satire is the creation of characters who do not merely quote but actually speak in verse, and of a narrative whose action is advanced through separate verse passages."

83 Cf. Parsons (1971) and Astbury (1977) on the *Iolaus* fragment as well as Stephens & Winkler (eds. 1995: 400–8) on the *Tinouphis.* Other ancient prosimetric narratives include Apuleius' *Hermagoras* as reconstructed by Perry (1927), the *Alexander romance* as well as the *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri*; cf. Stramaglia (1992: 138–9) with references for further reading. Stramaglia's list should now be complemented by *P.Oxy.* LXX.4762 (early third century CE), featuring a sexual encounter between an ass and a woman in prosimetric form; cf. May (2010: esp. 78).

84 Cf. Adamietz (1987: 342 n. 47), Conte (1996: 164), Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011: xxxiv).

85 Cf. Stephens & Winkler (eds. 1995: 365) and Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011: xxxi). Jensson (2004: 270), however, stresses the point that the date of the papyri gives us nothing but a *terminus ante quem* for the dating of the work itself.

86 Cf., e.g., the qualifications mentioned by Parsons (1971: 65). Though the *Iolaus* is commonly called a novel, it has also been read as a fragment of Menippus himself (cf. Cataudella 1975a; 1975b). The same is true for the *Tinouphis* (cf. Haslam 1981). Stragmalia (1992: 141: 79) objects to Cataudella's view, arguing that there might have been an "osmosis" between the novelistic and the Menippean tradition.

the Graeco-Roman mime.[87] Intriguingly, there are also some indications that Milesian tales, which will be discussed below, could take the prosimetric form.[88]

Apart from the formal element of the *prosimetrum,* most characteristics that could mark the *Satyrica* as a Menippean satire involve subjective evaluations.[89] Those advocating the satirical tradition have argued against novelistic aspects and *vice versa.*[90] In what amounts to a more fruitful approach, Adamietz (339–40) lists satirical *topoi* – particularly those known from the fragments of Varro's *Menippeae* – that have close parallels in the *Satyrica.* These include the criticism of poor rhetorical education (§§ 1–5), of superstition (§§ 15–26.6), the *poeta vesanus et libidinosus* (§§ 83–90), and the satirical banquet (§§ 26.7–79.7). To these we should add various elements from verse satire, such as Agamemnon's direct reference to Lucilius (§ 4.5), the motif of legacy-hunting (§ 116–7) and of course the satirical banquet yet again.[91] While these *topoi* establish close links between the *Satyrica* and the satirical tradition – not only the Menippean one – we need to bear in mind that a considerable portion of the narrative revolves around matters of love and intrigue, hallmarks of the novel.[92] Significantly, Macrobius mentions Petronius together with Apuleius, calls their works *fabulae,* and emphasises their erotic subject matter.[93]

87 Cf. Reich (1903: 569–74), Nicoll (1931: 127) and Kocur (2018: 297–9). It should be noted that the plotlines of the *Iolaus* and *Tinouphis* have been compared to comedies and mimes, cf. Stephens & Winkler (eds. 1995: 358, 400) and Conte (1996: 164).

88 For the evidence of the *prosimetrum* in Milesian tales, cf. Jensson (2004: 97).

89 In fact, Conte (1996: 144 n. 5) claims that in his volume on Menippean satire Relihan (1993) "cannot formulate definite formal constants beyond the mere prosimetric structure."

90 For the *Satyrica* as a satire, cf. esp. Adamietz (1987) and Relihan (1993: 91–9); for the work as a novel, cf. Conte (1996: 140–70) and Schmeling (1996).

91 For a detailed discussion of elements of verse satire in the *Satyrica,* cf. Rimell (2005: 170–2).

92 Cf. Conte 1996: 159, 161.

93 Macrob. *In Somn.* 1.2.7.8: *fabulae, quarum nomen indicat falsi professionem, aut tantum conciliandae auribus voluptatis, aut adhortationis quoque in bonam frugem gratia repertae sunt. auditum mulcent vel comoediae, quales Menander eiusve imitatores agendas dederunt, vel argumenta fictis casibus amatorum referta, quibus vel multum se Arbiter exercuit vel Apuleium non numquam lusisse miramur* ("Fables – the very word acknowledges their falsity – serve two purposes: either merely to gratify the ear or to encourage the reader to good works. They delight the ear as do the comedies of Menander and his imitators, or the narratives replete with imaginary doings of lovers in which Petronius Arbiter so freely indulged and with which Apuleius, astonishingly, sometimes amused himself"). Trans. Stahl (trans. 1952). Among others, this point has been stressed by Conte (1996: 160) and Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011: xxxi).

Among the most serious problems with both hypotheses, i.e. that the *Satyrica* is a Menippean satire or a novel, is the fact that these genre labels are anachronistic. As mentioned above, there is no ancient term for 'novel'.[94] Similarly, *saturae Menippeae* did not refer to a literary genre but to the satirical works of Varro only.[95] Some scholars, however, have attempted to be more historically accurate, arguing that contemporaries would have referred to the *Satyrica* as a *fabula Milesia.* We learn from ancient authors such as Ovid and Plutarch that these 'Milesian tales' were sexually explicit stories more or less closely associated with the city of Miletus.[96] As far as we know, Milesian tales were first given a literary form in the Μιλησιακά of Aristides (2nd century BCE), whose work was translated into Latin by a certain Sisenna (possibly the praetor of 78 BCE). Unfortunately, we possess only one fragment of Aristides and ten of Sisenna, which is why our understanding of the genre predominantly relies on indirect evidence. Most remarkably, it is referred to at the beginning of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (1.1.): *at ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram* ("But I would like to tie together different sorts of tales for you in that Milesian style of yours").[97]

Traditionally, it was assumed that the Μιλησιακά was merely a collection of salacious short stories and that, if any, there was only a very loose connection between the individual tales.[98] More recently, Harrison (1998) and Jensson (2004: esp. 261–2) have suggested that Aristides' work was indeed a kind of travelogue in which a first-person narrator was told various stories that he inserted into the overall narrative. This is taken to mean that the Μιλησιακά constitute "the first ancient literary text that deserves the generic title of novel" (Jensson 2004: 296). Harrison and Jensson claim that the two crucial characteristics they have identified in Aristides, i.e. a first-person narrator and the technique of incorporating

94 Cf. n. 75. Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011: xxxiii) understand a novel to be work of "extended narrative prose fiction." In the case of the *Satyrica,* of course, we need to allow for the prose to be interspersed with verse.

95 For a full discussion, cf. Relihan (1993: 12–7).

96 Bowie (2013) offers the most recent survey of the surviving evidence; with reference to the *Satyrica,* cf. esp. Jensson (2004: 255–71, 293–301).

97 Trans. Hanson (ed., trans. 1989).

98 It was commonly asserted that some inset tales of the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius and the *Satyrica,* especially the story about the Pergamene youth (§§ 85–7) and of the widow of Ephesus (§§ 111–2), belonged to the Milesian tradition; cf. e.g. Courtney (2001: 137) and Benz (2001: 89–107). The latter's discussion also includes the episode revolving around Eumolpus, Philomela and her children (§ 140.1–11).

short stories into a larger frame, also mark the *Metamorphoses* and the *Satyrica* as Milesian tales.[99] Ultimately, Jensson's (*ibid.* 279–92) argument is that Petronius' work – just as Apuleius' – is an adaptation of an earlier text, a Greek Milesian tale entitled Σατυρικά or perhaps Μασσαλιωτικά (cf. *ibid.* 299).[100] Jensson's hypothesis is intriguing, but – seeing that it is extrapolated from only a few lines of ancient texts – it clearly belongs to the realm of speculation.

I.4.2.2 The *Satyrica* as a Parody

When it comes to the question of Petronius' place in literary history, the parodic readings of his work deserve particular attention. The most common interpretation, i.e. that the *Satyrica* amounts to a parody of the 'idealising' novel, goes back to Richard Heinze's 1899 article *Petron und der griechische Roman.* Therein Heinze argues that – contrary to what was the *opinio communis* at the time – the *Satyrica* is closely related to the extant Greek novels, albeit in terms of theme and plot rather than in terms of tone. There is the structural parallel that the action revolves around a pair of lovers whose travels are governed by τύχη/*fortuna* and/or a deity who present them with various threats to their relationship, such as sea storms and shipwrecks, scenes of jealousy, and suicide attempts. However, according to Heinze, the mode in which Petronius engages with the novelistic form is one of parody. He replaces the faithful male-female couple with an unfaithful male-male one and transposes most of the story into the low ranks of society. The parodic tone is also said to be evident in Encolpius' way of narrating his life, for instance in that he compares trivial events to heroic achievements or tragic scenes. Here, I will briefly summarise the objections other scholars have raised against Heinze's hypothesis; later on, I will criticise his (inverted) heteronormative reading of the *Satyrica* in particular.[101]

99 Harrison (1998) focuses on the *Metamorphoses*, Jensson (2004) on the *Satyrica*. Their argument can be considered a reformulation of Bürger's (1892) hypothesis. For different views on the narrative structure of Aristides' Μιλησιακά, cf. e.g. Walsh (1970: 14–7) and Bowie (2013: 247).

100 Prior to Jensson, scholars such as Collignon (1892: 323) and Veyne (1965: 321–3) had suggested that the *Satyrica* might have had a Greek model. For scepticism towards this view, cf. e.g. Henderson (2010: 488) and Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011: xxxi).

101 Cf. chapter II. Overall Aspects: Sexuality in the *Satyrica*, the 'Idealising' Novel and the Comic Tradition as well as chapter VII. Final Remarks: The Sex Life of Petronius' Characters.

While Heinze's hypothesis has been supported by many scholars and has recently been reformulated by Edward Courtney (2001: 24) and Aldo Setaioli (2011: 369–90), the most obvious objection against it is that we have no clear evidence that the genre of the 'idealising' novel even existed in Petronius's day, which most scholars – including Courtney – still believe to be the Neronian era. The problem is that Chariton's *Callirhoe,* our earliest representative of the genre, is probably no older than the mid-first century CE, possibly even younger.[102] For his hypothesis to make sense, Heinze (1899: 519) argues that the 'idealising' novel must have been established at the time Petronius was writing, while unfortunately our evidence of the genre surfaces only much later. The *Ninus* papyrus, which is likely somewhat older than *Callirhoe,* may be seen to corroborate this hypothesis.[103] Most of the chronological problems can be overcome by allowing for the *Satyrica* to have been composed in the second century CE.[104]

Other scholars, most recently John R. Morgan (2009), have argued that reading the *Satyrica* as a parody does not require any direct relation to the 'idealising' novel.[105] Apart from pointing to the issue of chronology, Morgan (*ibid.* 44) claims that the recent papyrus finds – rather than being forerunners of the *Satyrica* – show that the genre of the Greek novel was a much vaguer target for parody than Heinze suggests. His overall argument is that Petronius' humour is effective even if the *Satyrica* is not a parody of the 'idealising' novel, since in fact all elements commonly taken as parody are either "commonplaces of many literary forms, or straightforward reflections or reality" (*ibid.* 45). In other words: Petronius only seems to be parodying novelistic texts because he draws on largely the same stock of literary *topoi* as the extant 'idealising' novels. Morgan (2009: 45) stresses the point that parody of the 'idealising' novel – even if it were accepted – sheds light upon the love plot of the *Satyrica* only, whereas it fails to account for its other parts, most importantly the *cena Trimalchionis* and the discussions about literature.[106]

102 Cf. Courtney 2001: 16–7.

103 The *Ninus* dates from the early first century CE, cf. Stephens & Winkler (eds. 1995: 23). Adamietz (1987: 331) thinks that this gives a Neronian Petronius enough time to parody the genre of the 'idealising' novel; Henderson (2010: 490) takes the opposing view.

104 Cf. Henderson (2010).

105 Cf. also, e.g., Sullivan (1968: 92–8) and Henderson (2010: 485–7).

106 This concession is also made by Setaioli (2011: 384).

Since the exact target of Petronius' parody remains elusive, this element is inadequate to pin down the genre of his work.[107] Even if we consider the *Satyrica* to be a parody of the 'idealising' novel, this leaves open the question whether Petronius inaugurated the genre of the parodic novel or rather drew on pre-existing (Greek) models.[108] If the *Satyrica* is unrelated to the 'idealising' novel, it may still participate in a tradition of novelistic entertainment, represented by literary forms such as the *fabula Milesia* (cf. Morgan 2009: 45). While it is sometimes argued that the parodic element connects the *Satyrica* to the Menippean tradition,[109] this is clearly but one of several possibilities.[110]

I.4.2.3 Open Questions

As we have seen, some of the opposing views in Petronian scholarship are the result of subjective evaluations, particularly when it comes to questions of narrative coherence and authorial standpoint. Most of the remaining problems revolve around matters of chronology and the originality of Petronius' work. For the sake of clarity, we may picture the conceivable options in the form of a triangle, with the three extreme positions being the following:

1) The *Satyrica* is deeply rooted in the tradition of Menippean satire. The novelistic elements play a subordinate role at best. The satirical tradition has left its mark on the *Satyrica* in the form of familiar themes and, most importantly, in the form of the *prosimetrum*. Other prosimetric texts – narrative papyri of the second century, mimes and perhaps Milesian tales – are either unrelated to Petronius's work, or imitations of it, and/or themselves inspired by the Menippean tradition. 2) The

107 Apart from Heinze's (1899) and Morgan's (2009) position, we may note that Relihan (1993: 92) regards the *Satyrica* as a parody of verse satire.

108 Heinze (1899: 518 n. 3) thinks the latter option more likely. Courtney (2001: 26) points out that, if the *Satyrica* was the first work to parody the 'idealising' novel, we would have to "imagine Petronius in one language [sc. Latin] conceiving the original enterprise of parodying works written in another language [sc. Greek], which is not a very easy supposition." Jensson (2004: 246–55; 271–9) takes stock of the widespread idea that Petronius was an extraordinary literary innovator.

109 Cf. Adamietz (1987: 336). On parody in the Menippean tradition, cf. Relihan (1993: 25–8).

110 Of course, parody may occur in various genres, notably in Milesian tales (cf. Harrison 1998) and in comedy.

Satyrica is innovative inasmuch as it is the first work to parody the genre of the 'idealising' novel, and the first work to present a long piece of narrative fiction in the prosimetric form. The other prosimetric texts are either unrelated to it or follow in Petronius' footsteps. 3) The *Satyrica* belongs to the novelistic tradition; there is no direct link to Menippean satire. The *Iolaus* and *Tinouphis* are part of a genre of light-hearted prosimetric novels that was well established at the time Petronius was writing and that might have included prosimetric Milesian tales.

Likely, the truth lies somewhere in between these three extremes. The *Satyrica* may be regarded as a 'generic hybrid'[111] or indeed as a text that defies genre labels altogether.[112] As it stands, however, we have no means of drawing any far-reaching conclusions.[113]

A key fact to keep in mind about the literary background of the *Satyrica* is that a number of open questions are unlikely to be answered beyond doubt. Part of the problem is due to the scarcity of our evidence. In addition to the fragmentary state of the *Satyrica* itself, we are facing a high degree of uncertainty when it comes to its possible inspirations, such as Varro's *Menippea,* Aristides' *Μιλησιακά,* or indeed the Graeco-Roman mime.

The *Satyrica* has been described as "a work parasitic on almost every known literary form" (Rimell 2005: 160), ranging from the 'idealising' novel and Milesian tales to satire and iambic poetry, epic, historiography, comedy and mime, tragedy, love elegy, and oratory.[114] Arguably, however, a similar description can be applied to several literary forms that, in

111 The influential notion of *Kreuzung der Gattungen* was introduced by Kroll (1924: 202–24). Though originally concerned with the development of new literary genres out of older ones, 'generic crossing' now commonly refers to an author's technique of evoking several traditional genres within the same text (cf. Barchiesi 2001: 147; Walde 2009: esp. 17–20). When discussing the satirical and novelistic elements in the *Satyrica,* many scholars come to the conclusion that the work is a hybrid of both genres; cf. e.g. Walsh (1970: 29), Adamietz (1987: 345–6), Relihan (1993: 95).

112 Slater's (1990) analysis of the *Satyrica* puts forward the idea that the expectations a contemporary audience might have had about the work were constantly being frustrated as they read the text. Christesen & Torlone (2002: esp. 154) argue that it is unsatisfactory and potentially misleading to label Petronius' work a novel, a Menippean satire, or a unique (and strikingly modern) piece of literature. They (*ibid.* 135) argue that the *Satyrica* constitutes an extreme case of "a Roman literary tradition which privileged experimentation with and mixing of genres inherited from the Greeks." Only the *Apocolocyntosis,* they claim (*ibid.* 164–6), employs the same strategy of exploiting jarring generic juxtapositions for comic effect.

113 Cf. Stephens & Winkler (eds. 1995: 365–6), Conte (1996: 164), Courtney (2001: 26).

114 For this list of genres, cf. Holzberg's (2009b) bibliography; cf. also Vannini (2007).

turn, have been referred to for the contextualisation of Petronius' work. This is true for Roman satire, which bears rich variety in its very name and is not only known for its extensive parody of other genres but also for its indebtedness to comedy.[115] It is equally true for the notoriously 'polyphonic' Greek novel, which has been said to draw on epic (the reference point for all other ancient genres),[116] tragedy, New Comedy, lyric poetry and epigram, historiography, rhetoric, ecphrasis, epistolography, and oral storytelling – many of the same matrices as those discussed in Petronian scholarship.[117] Much of the same diversity is attested for the mime, whose heterogenous nature has already been addressed. We have to concede that many of the elements in Petronius' work – e.g. the motifs of jealousy and deception or plots of love and trickery – had long become literary commonplaces by the time he was writing and thus have very limited value for discussions of genre.

While this uncertainty cannot be eliminated, for the purposes of this study it is ultimately unimportant where exactly Petronius' comicality stems from. As has been stated at the beginning of this chapter, my aim is neither to prove a 'direct' intertextual relationship between the *Satyrica* and the extant plays of comedy, nor to show that comedy's impact on Petronius is greater than that of other genres. Instead, I wish to bring to the fore the close proximity between Petronius and extant comic playwrights in their treatment of characters, motifs and plot elements.

I.5 Basic Premises for a Narratological Reading of the *Satyrica*

Since – as Rimell (2005: 162) rightly points out – genre labels can function as self-fulfilling prophecies, throughout this study I will refer to the *Satyrica* simply as a (prosimetric) narrative. While this term does not

115 For a discussion of the evidence pertaining to the ancient *satura,* cf. Coffey (1989: 11–8). On the various authors evoked in the satires of Horace and Persius, cf. e.g. Freudenburg (2005: 13–14). Freudenburg (2013) explores the fuzzy boundaries between verse satire and the Menippean tradition. Ferriss-Hill (2015) discusses the relationship between satire and Old Comedy. On satire and New Comedy as well as the *fabula palliata,* cf. esp. Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.11–2 as well as Leach (1971), Hunter (1985), Hanses (2016), Traill (2020), and Manuwald (2020: 387–8).

116 Ambühl (2019: 167–75) gives an overview of the ways in which ancient theory and practice defined literary genres in terms of their proximity to epic. Ps.-Longinus' treatise *On the Sublime* (9.15), for instance, suggests a close connection between the comic tradition and Homer's *Odyssey.*

117 The seminal study on the generic composition of the Greek novel is Fusillo (1989).

help us in placing Petronius' text in Graeco-Roman literary history, it suffices to highlight one fundamental difference between the *Satyrica* and the various comedies I will compare it to: the difference in medium. Petronius' work is a narrative, i.e. a long sequence of words uttered by a narrator (or several narrators) – words that are meant to be read and/or listened to when recited. One aim of this study is to investigate how this narrative interacts with a text type that is not meant to be read or recited but *performed*: ancient comic stage plays. These are not confined to words – although the characters' dialogue is often crucial – but also pertain to a variety of *visual and auditory aspects,* including intonation and loudness, gestures and facial expressions, noise and music, lighting, props, and the design of the stage set. As we shall see in the chapters on narrative technique, Petronius needs nothing else than words to create the impression of a stage performance before the inner eye of his audience.

I.5.1 Protagonist vs. Narrator

Seeing that the *Satyrica* has frequently been read from a narratological point of view – and with markedly different outcomes – I shall briefly outline some basic assumptions that will be central to the main body of this study. My first assumption is that the extant *Satyrica,* though fragmentary, allows for meaningful statements to be made about its narrative structure. The lack of a beginning and an ending – in addition to everything else that has been lost – has to put us on our guard when debating such questions as Encolpius' narrative perspective and his possible development in the course of the story. We need to accept that assertions about the *Satyrica* as a whole always involve speculations about lost portions of the text, and that this applies to narratological approaches in particular. For instance, a reading that systematically distinguishes between the experience of first-time readers as opposed to those reading the text another time around – as Winkler (1985) has done for Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* – is simply out of the question for the *Satyrica.* Still, the text as we have it is at least substantial enough to compare to one another the representation of distinct episodes, most of which have a clear beginning and ending and all of which are held together by the presence of Encolpius as both protagonist and narrator.

My second assumption is that the principles of modern narratology can be applied to an ancient text such as the *Satyrica,* allowing me to

describe the structure of the work with the help of Genettean terminology.[118] At the most basic level, Encolpius the narrator can be classified as homodiegetic, since he is himself a character in his story,[119] and as extradiegetic, seeing that – as far as we know – his narrative is not itself framed by another narrative told by a different narrator.[120] Inasmuch as Encolpius is also the hero of his own narrative rather than a mere observer, he may be further classified as an autodiegetic narrator.[121]

Admittedly, such broad categorisations do not have much value for our understanding of the *Satyrica*. What is more pertinent is the distinction between Encolpius the protagonist and Encolpius the narrator as well as the latter's relationship to the implied author, issues that have received ample discussion in the past decades. First of all, Encolpius the protagonist is a character in the story, i.e. someone who performs acts in the story world of the *Satyrica*.[122] We can be sure to be dealing with the level of Petronius' characters when Encolpius *does* something in the story, e.g. striking Giton's head (§ 96.3) or speaking to Agamemnon (§§ 1–2) – for, a speech act amounts no less to an event in the story than a straightforward action. Another function of the protagonist is that the narrator may tell his narrative by means of focalisation through him (experiencing focalisation), i.e. by suppressing hindsight knowledge and recounting the action as it was perceived by the protagonist at the time of action.[123] In such cases, if the narrator makes use of the first person singular, we speak of the 'narrated I' rather than of the 'narrat-

118 Cf. Genette (1980; 1988). For a detailed discussion of how narratological concepts have been applied to ancient, medieval, and early modern texts, cf. the contributions in Contzen & Tilg (eds. 2019).

119 The alternative is a heterodiegetic narrator, i.e. one who is "absent from the story he tells" (Genette 1980: 244), such as the Homeric narrator in the *Iliad*.

120 Conversely, a narrator who tells a narrative within another narrative is called intradiegetic; cf. Genette (1980: 245). In the *Satyrica* this classification applies, among others, to Eumolpus at §§ 85–7 or § 89.

121 For the terminology, cf. Genette (1980: 245). The same classifications are made by Schwazer (2017: 75).

122 Story refers to "the succession of events, real or fictitious, that are the subjects of this [narrative] discourse, and to their several relations of linking, opposition, repetition, etc." (Genette 1980: 25). It is "a totality of actions and situations taken in themselves, without regard to the medium, linguistic or other, through which knowledge of that totality comes to us" (*ibid.*).

123 Focalisation is Genette's (1980: 186) reformulation of narrative 'perspective' or 'point of view'. Crucially, it should not be confused with narrative 'voice', i.e. with questions of *"who is the narrator?"* or simply *"who speaks?"* (Genette 1980: 186). Instead, focal-

ing I'.[124] The latter mode of storytelling (narrating focalisation) is clearly identifiable only when there is an indication as to the narrator's distinct standpoint, i.e. as to the difference between protagonist and narrator in terms of 1) time, 2) knowledge and 3) communicative situation.

For instance, at § 47.7, the narrator tells us that *nec adhuc sciebamus nos in medio [lautitiarum], quod aiunt, clivo laborare* ("Little did we know we were but halfway through [the delicacies] and were still climbing up the hill, as they say"). Here, the narrator not only refers to the temporal distance between himself and the protagonist by the use of past tense, but – more importantly – he also points to the difference in knowledge between the two Encolpii (*nec adhuc sciebamus*): The narrator, looking back in hindsight, hints at the further development of the *cena Trimalchionis,* which is beyond the capacities of the protagonist at the time of the action. Apart from paying attention to time and information, we may identify the narrating I when the narrator refers to the communicative situation he finds himself in, i.e. to the act of telling a narrative (*quicquid dixero, minus erit,* "Whatever I say will be too little," § 126.15) or to the act of remembering (*sexcenta huiusmodi fuerunt, quae iam exciderunt memoriae meae,* "There were six hundred of this kind, which have now escaped my memory," § 56.10).[125]

For the narratological discussion in the main part of this study, we need to keep in mind that such clear cases of narrating focalisation are very rare in the *Satyrica,* as experiencing focalisation is arguably the narrator's default option.[126] In the absence of such clear indications as exemplified above, the presence of the narrator cannot be gathered from *what* he tells, as he cannot change the events and characters of the story (cf. below), but only from *how* he tells it, since he may employ various methods of representing the story. The narrator's representation then

isation is exclusively concerned with questions such as *"who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective? – or, more simply, the question who sees?"* (*ibid.*), all emphases in the original. Accordingly, it is mainly concerned with the flow of narrative information and its relationship to the knowledge of the characters in the story.

124 For these definitions, cf. Genette (1980: 199 and 252).

125 In this context, 'narrating' refers to "the act of narrating taken in itself" (Genette 1980: 26), i.e. to the fact that the narrator is telling a tale and to the circumstances surrounding this act of narration.

126 For passages indicative of the distance between Encolpius the protagonist and Encolpius the narrator, cf. Stöcker (1969: 136–8), Plaza (2000: 22), Goldman (2006: 4–8), and Schwazer (2017: 86–89). On the predominance of experiencing focalisation, cf. e.g. Plaza (2000: 20), Jensson (2004: 199), Breitenstein (ed. 2009: XVIII), and Schwazer (2017: 78).

gives rise to manifold questions as to the relationship between the narrative he tells and the story it is based on.[127] These questions are at the heart of narratology.

When it comes to the distinction between the protagonist and the narrator, Roger Beck's (1973; 1975; 1982) articles mark a milestone in Petronian scholarship. While previous scholars had often tried to find the perspective of Petronius himself in the *Satyrica,* Beck proposed a different way of explaining the, at times, radically different views expressed in the narrative.[128] Beck claims that there is not only a considerable temporal difference between Encolpius the protagonist and Encolpius the narrator, but that the two are also "very *different* characters. The narrator […] is sophisticated and competent, while his former self is chaotic and naïve" (Beck 1973: 43, original emphasis). He argues that Encolpius the narrator establishes an ironic distance between himself and the protagonist, thus deliberately trying to amuse the audience of his autobiographical tale (cf. Beck 1973: 45).

Beck' hypothesis was accepted by many,[129] a noteworthy follow-up being Gareth Schmeling's (1994/95: 210) reading of the *Satyrica* as "a confession of past mistakes and sins" made by the narrator Encolpius. Schmeling (2018) has recently restated his interpretation, retelling the *Satyrica* as a seemingly endless succession of humiliations and shortcomings confessed to by Encolpius. Taking Beck's distinction between the two sides of Encolpius as a starting point, Gottskálk Jensson (2004: 29–83) proposes to read the *Satyrica* as a *narratio in personis,* i.e. as a speech characterised by the fact that Encolpius the narrator impersonates all other characters in the text, including the protagonist (*ibid.* 29–37). Jensson does not claim that the older Encolpius is more mature than

127 Narrative (or 'narrative discourse') refers to "the narrative statement, the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events [i.e. of the story]" (Genette 1980: 25).

128 Veyne (1964) argued that, throughout the *cena Trimalchionis,* the narrator Encolpius functions as the mouthpiece of the author in that he directly expresses Petronius' critique of Trimalchio and his freedmen guests. In the rest of the narrative, however, Encolpius' narration is said to be full of self-mockery, resulting from the fact that Petronius increases the distance between himself and the narrator and thus has the latter become the butt of jokes. In many regards, Veyne's (1964) hypothesis is followed by Goga (1998) and Laird (1999: 216–7). For attempts to find Petronius' own voice in the *Satyrica,* cf. also Stubbe (1933: 150–3), Sullivan (1968: 98–9), Stöcker (1969: 141–5), and Slater (1990: 13).

129 Courtney (2001: 37 f. n. 31), for instance, claims that Beck's articles "despite some reservations remain fundamental for the distinction between actor and narrator." Cf. also Habermehl (ed. 2006: XX).

his younger self, but that they are merely differentiated by a temporal and cognitive distance – the narrator knowing the outcome of the story – as well as by the fact that the narrator tells his tale for the amusement of an audience.[130]

I.5.2 The Unreliable Narrator and the Implied Author

The views of Gian Biagio Conte (1996) oppose – or are at least partly incompatible with – those of Beck. He does not focus on the distinction between the narrator and the protagonist but argues that the ironic tension perceivable in the text ultimately stems from the 'hidden author' and his detached gaze at his literary creation. Conte's argument is based on the assumption that Encolpius is a *mythomaniac* narrator who "naively exalts himself by identifying with heroic roles among the great mythical and literary characters of the past" (*ibid.* 2). It is the hidden author's 'game' to have Encolpius live through adventures inevitably foiling every attempt at greatness. The author thus invites his readers/listeners to distance themselves from the narrator's point of view and to adopt the author's ironic perspective instead.[131]

By now, it has become a commonplace in Petronian scholarship that Encolpius the narrator tends to tell his narrative in a way that amounts to a misrepresentation of the story, a phenomenon that is commonly know as narrative unreliability.[132] As Conte (1996) has clearly shown, in such narratives it is helpful to expand our narratological model by the introduction of the implied author (whom Conte calls the 'hidden author'). This entity is not to be equated with the historical author Petronius, but it constitutes the moral, intellectual and aesthetic standard of the *Satyrica* that readers may reconstruct from the text.[133]

130 Jensson's interpretation has been taken up by Kirichenko (2010: 197–9), who adds that there must be yet another speaker, the ultimate mastermind, behind the mask of Encolpius the narrator.

131 Jones (1987: 811–2) had criticised Beck for virtually ignoring the potential of authorial irony.

132 A narrator is unreliable if she/he "misreports, -interprets or -evaluates, or if she/he underreports, -interprets or -evaluates [sc. the elements of the story]" (Shen 2014: 896). Prior to Conte (1996), Walsh (1970: 81) had characterised Encolpius as an unreliable narrator in more general terms; cf. also Rudich (1997: 186). On his 'self-delusion' by means of literary comparisons, cf. Sandy (1969: 295) and Beck (1973: 49).

133 This definition is based on Schmid (2014a: 288).

While this category can never be 'objective', since different readers will construct different implied authors, the concept is highly useful for analysing narratives told by an unreliable narrator. For, claiming that Encolpius misrepresents (part of) what he tells and that this amounts to a satire of self-delusion (cf. e.g. Sandy 1969) implies that there is some standard – not spelled out in the text but still somehow discernible – from which Encolpius deviates. This is most obvious when we perceive the narrator's representation to clash with the events of the story, for instance when Encolpius describes himself as an infuriated warrior whose 'rampage' is brought to an end by the sudden appearance of a common soldier (§ 82.1–4).[134] In this case it is, strictly speaking, unnecessary to refer to the implied author, as 1) the concept of 'story' as used by Genette (1980) is sufficient to explain the discrepancy between the fictional 'reality' and Encolpius' representation,[135] and 2) Encolpius himself admits that he got carried away by his *temeritas* (§ 82.4). Elsewhere, however, the case is different. When, for instance, Encolpius uses epic language to describe his killing of a goose and subsequently likens himself to Herakles (§ 136.4–6), nothing in the narrative nor in the story marks Encolpius' comparison as a self-deluded. If we nevertheless, as most scholars do, interpret this episode as another case of *mythomania,* what Encolpius' representation clashes with is an assumption we have about the text and its moral/intellectual/aesthetic background, e.g. about what it means to be a 'true hero' – and the sum of these assumptions is exactly what I will refer to as the implied author.

While I am aware of the possible circular argument underlying the concept of the implied author – pointed out in Jensson's (2004: 23) criticism of Conte (1996) –, I acknowledge the fact that a comprehensive interpretation of the *Satyrica* cannot be achieved without some such standard; one that is based partly on subjective evaluations and partly on circumstantial evidence. In Jensson's (2004: 210–3) case, this standard is provided by Encolpius' audience – or, more exactly: by what Jensson assumes/infers to have been Encolpius' audience. Modern narratology might refer to this concept as the implied reader.[136] Of course, then,

134 For a discussion, cf. Conte (1996: 1–14).

135 Cf. n. 122. On the other hand, of course, the story is part of what readers use to reconstruct the implied author.

136 The implied reader is "the idea, in the real author's head, of a possible reader" (Genette 1988: 149), more precisely, "the author's image of the recipient that is fixed and objectified in the text by specific indexical signs" (Schmid 2014b: 301).

Jensson's standard is no less a reconstruction than the implied author, and thus amounts to nothing but a relocation of the problem.

In short, in this study I will use the term 'implied author' to refer to a hypothetical instance between the historical author and the narrator. As described by Conte (1996: 24), this 'agent' may design the story in such a way as to systematically expose Encolpius' unreliability, thereby creating a sense of irony and inviting the audience of the novel to identify with the implied author, so to speak, behind the narrator's back.

I.5.3 Narrator vs. (Implied) Author

Before moving on, I need to point out another – though not unrelated – assumption underlying my narratological approach. As has already been hinted at, I suppose that Encolpius the narrator merely represents the story; he does not invent or alter it in any way, since the story as such – just as the narrator himself – is the creation of the author. I emphasise this point because it is not in line with how Schmeling (1994/95; 2018) and Jensson (2004) understand the function of the narrator.

According to Schmeling (2018: 78 and *passim*), the narrator puts words into the mouths of all characters in the story, which is why even what is said by characters other than Encolpius can be read as part of his deliberate confession. In Jensson's (2004: 29–37) view, the narrator can make alterations to the discourse uttered by other characters and, at least occasionally, he can also influence the plot in order to entertain his audience.[137]

I do not mean to suggest that their readings of the *Satyrica* are invalid: It is perfectly possible to interpret Encolpius the narrator as a confessor or entertainer; only, I believe, such readings need to account for the fact that the narrator himself is part of the author's literary creation. The practical reason for assuming that the narrator cannot alter the story – and for taking the characters' discourse as part of the story – is akin to the discussion of the implied author above: If we allow Encolpius to invent and/or change (parts of) the story, we forfeit the possibility to systematically analyse the discrepancies between the story, the 'reality'

137 Cf. e.g. Jensson (2004: 49): "The way in which he [Encolpius] organizes his narrative can also have significance for the over-all impact he wishes to create. At the dinner party of Trimalchio, the host tyrannizes the faculty of speech and **must, quite literally, be narrated to the pot** to enable the famous speeches of the freedmen to take place (41.9)" (emphasis added).

of the story world, and Encolpius' representation of it. It blurs the lines between story, narrative, and narrating, the clear distinction of which forms the basis for most previous work on Petronius' narrative technique,[138] be it on particular episodes,[139] narrative speed[140] or the relation between Encolpius as *actor* and *auctor*.[141]

I.6 Summary: My Methodological Approach

This study aims to investigate from a narratological perspective elements in the *Satyrica* that can be referred to as comic in a narrow sense of the term, i.e. characters, motifs, plots and techniques associated with performances of ancient comedy. The theatrical forms most relevant to Petronius' work can be roughly subsumed under the broad category of 'farce', whose elements, however, are not exclusive to 'popular' comedy but also occur in its 'literary' varieties, perhaps most conspicuously so in the *fabulae palliatae* of Plautus.

The relationship between such plays and the *Satyrica* is not assumed to be one of 'direct' intertextuality. Rather, I suggest that Petronius incorporates into his narrative a range of comic *topoi* – with the caveat that we often cannot tell whether he deliberately alludes to the theatre (as when he explicitly refers to theatrical genres), or whether he is merely reworking comic elements that had long become conventional to the kind of novel/satire/Milesian tale he is writing.

Throughout my analysis, I will adhere to basic principles of Genettean narratological theory, the most important of which are the clear distinction between the novel's characters, focalisers, narrators, and its author,

138 Callebat (1974), Plaza (2000: 19–27), Goldman (2006). Cf. also Laird (1999) and Rimell (2007) on the narrative representation of speech and writing. Puccini-Delbey (2004) and Wolff (2009) focus on the role of the (implied) reader and of reduplication and contrast respectively. Schwazer's (2017: 74–99) Genettean analysis of Petronius' narrative is incorporated into his overall argument that the *Satyrica* was probably not composed in the Neronian era but in the second century CE (cf. *ibid.* 13); therefore, the aim and structure of his study are entirely different from mine.

139 Cf. Brożek (1972) on the representation of scenery; Aragosti (1979) and van der Paardt (1996) on the market episode (§ 12–15).

140 Cf. Segura Ramos (1976), Barchiesi (1981), Petrone (1991), Gagliardi (1999), Branham & Kinney (2000/1), and Jurado (2005).

141 Cf. Knight (1989), Perutelli (1990), Callebat (1995), Codoñer (1995), Baier (2007), and Labate (2013). The terms *actor* and *auctor* for 'protagonist' and 'narrator' are indebted to Winkler's (1985) seminal study of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

with the corresponding functions of 'doing', 'seeing/feeling', 'telling' and 'composing/writing' respectively. My focus lies on the techniques used to incorporate comic elements into full narrative episodes, whereby I wish to show that comic effects are not limited to isolated parallels between dramatic scripts and Petronius' work, but that they include large-scale matters of characterisation as well as the overall design of several episodes.