II

Overall Aspects: Sexuality in the *Satyrica*, the 'Idealising' Novel and the Comic Tradition

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In simplistic terms, the *Satyrica* can be said to revolve around Encolpius and his beloved Giton, whose relationship is constantly threatened by different rivals. The same-sex element permeating the plot is most commonly explained as being part of Petronius' engagement with the 'idealising' novel, as originally proposed by Heinze (1899): According to this view, Petronius' parody is not restricted to 1) the change from higher-class characters to lower-class ones and 2) the substitution of faithful lovers with unfaithful ones.[142] Rather, these two aspects are said to be brought to full effect by 3) "the conversion of the heterosexual erotic theme into a homosexual one" (Courtney 2001: 24).[143] In this chapter, I will argue that this hypothesis is insufficient to explain the complex issue of sexuality in the *Satyrica* – first and foremost because Petronius ostensibly does not ridicule homoeroticism as such. Giving an overview of references to male-male sexual relationships in Graeco-Roman comedy, I will suggest that the comic tradition paves the way for the *Satyrica* with regard to the character trait of indiscriminate lechery as well as a general interest in sex between males.

142 On the *Satyrica* as a parody of the 'idealising' novel, cf. section I.4.2.2. The *Satyrica* as a Parody.

143 Cf. Heinze (1899: 495 f.) and, most recently, Courtney (2001: 24, 49 n. 56) and Setaioli (2011: 374–5). For a discussion of sexuality in the Greek and Roman novel, cf. Konstan (1994: 14–138) and Morales (2008). Ingleheart (2015) and Endres (2015) discuss the modern reception of the *Satyrica* as a 'gay classic'.

II.1 Problems of Terminology and Categorisation

First of all, we need to be highly cautious when referring to 'hetero-' or 'homosexuality' in the *Satyrica,* since these terms are anachronistic. As Craig A. Williams (2010a: 20–9) has shown in his detailed discussion, rather than making a distinction as to whether a male was sexually interested in females or males, Romans considered a normal phenomenon what we would today refer to as 'bisexuality': Males could openly seek sexual relations with both sexes without being regarded as anything other than 'truly masculine'.[144] What mattered instead, and what Williams (2010a: 18) calls "the prime directive of masculine sexual behavior for Romans," is that a male must always (appear to) play the 'active' part in sexual intercourse. This means that he should be the one penetrating others, not the one being penetrated.[145] If a male did not comply with this directive, he lost (part of) his perceived masculinity and was liable to being seen as effeminate.[146] If he also fulfilled other criteria of effeminacy – e.g. a romantic disposition or a great concern for his outward appearance – he could be labelled a full-blown *impudicus, pathicus* or *cinaedus.*[147]

The principle underlying these social conventions – in both ancient Greece and Rome – is that penetration was conceived of as a type of subjugation, and that 'true males' were supposed to occupy the 'dominant' position rather than the 'submissive' one.[148] Viewed from this perspective, male-female sex (the male penetrating the female) is entirely unproblematic, inasmuch as it reaffirms men's 'natural superiority' over

144 Williams' (2010a) argument is based on a thorough analysis of virtually all references to (male) homoeroticism in ancient Roman sources, both textual and material. For the range of genres and authors taken into account, cf. Williams' (*ibid.* 455–66) index of passages cited; for the visual arts, cf. e.g. the images printed between p. 136 and 137. For a critical discussion of different theories on male-male relationships in antiquity (esp. in Greece), cf. Robson (2013: 59–63).

145 As Kamen & Levin-Richardson (2014: 449 f.) point out, the conventional terms 'active' and 'passive' can be misleading, inasmuch as they suggest a one-to-one correspondence between penetration and agency. In fact, Latin texts not infrequently cast penetrated males in active roles, be it in terms of morphosyntax and/or of movement and desire (cf. *ibid.* 452–5). The same is true for penetrated females (cf. Kamen & Levin-Richardson 2015).

146 Cf. Williams 2010a: 137.

147 Cf. Williams 2010a: 191–7. The most recent discussion of the *cinaedus* (κίναιδος) is Sapsford (2022).

148 Cf. Robson (2013: 60 f.) with references for further reading.

women. Male-male sex, however, is only uncontroversial if the insertive partner is socially superior to the receptive one. Ancient Greece – or at least some circles within ancient Greek society – knew the institution of pederasty, i.e. sexual relationships between two free citizen males, an ἐραστής ("lover") and an ἐρώμενος ("beloved").[149] The ἐραστής, who was superior in age and experience, was expected to be the 'active' partner in this constellation – not only in terms of penetration but also in terms of courtship. If the younger ἐρώμενος wanted to escape public censure, he had to avoid the impression that he enjoyed playing the receptive role[150].

In Rome, such 'Greek-style' relationships between free citizen males did not meet with approval. Rather, having sex with a freeborn boy constituted a case of *stuprum* ("illicit sexual intercourse"), a crime punishable under Roman law.[151] This is because free citizens enjoyed the right to physical inviolability, which did not only protect them against corporal punishment but also against sexual penetration. The only exception was sex between husbands and wives. If a citizen male allowed himself to be penetrated, he forfeited his sexual inviolability – which can be described as his *pudicitia* ('sexual purity')[152] – and thus approached the (sexual) status of slaves and other non-citizens.[153] These reservations, however, did not apply to other constellations of male-male sex, i.e. to those that were clearly in line with the hierarchy of ancient Roman society. Citizen males were free to penetrate their own slaves as well as prostitutes

149 Lear (2014) offers an up-to-date introduction to ancient Greek pederasty. Cf. also the discussion below.

150 Cf. e.g. Dover 1978: 90 f.

151 According to Festus (418.8–18), *stuprum* ("disgrace") did not have a sexual connotation in the time of Naevius and his contemporaries (2nd century BCE). The meaning "illicit sexual intercourse" becomes apparent from Plautus onwards, e.g. Plaut. Amph. 1015 f.: *nunc domum ibo atque ex uxore hanc rem pergam exquirere, | quis fuerit quem propter corpus suom stupri compleverit* ("Now I will go home and continue questioning my wife about this matter, who it was she filled her body with shame for"). For further discussion of the term, cf. Williams (2010a: 103–36) and Dixon (2012: 18–26).

152 The English words used to translate *pudicitia* – such as "chastity", "modesty", "honour", or "virtue" – typically reflect modern prejudices about gender roles, first and foremost about persons read as female. Throughout this study, I will therefore translate *pudicitia* with the deliberately cumbersome expression 'sexual purity', or occasionally simply 'purity'. I will always put the expression in inverted commas, even when quoting from translations published by other scholars, and indicate the Latin original in brackets. In case it is used (nearly) synonymously with *pudicitia*, I will also translate *pudor* and its derivatives as 'sexual purity' etc.

153 Cf. Williams 2010a: 106 f.

and other non-citizens of either sex.[154] Usually, the social inequality between the two partners was complemented by a certain age difference: Older citizen males tended to go after younger non-citizens. The latter were typically thought to be most desirable between the onset of puberty (around the age of thirteen) and the arrival of the full beard (around the age of twenty).[155] If their roles were reversed, i.e. if a freeborn male allowed himself to be penetrated by a non-citizen, this was perceived as a double humiliation: The citizen did not only subject himself to somebody else, but he did so with regard to a person low on the social ladder.

When it comes to these basic principles of Roman masculinity, the altercation between Encolpius and Ascyltus at § 9.6–10 is a case in point. The insults they hurl at each other cover a broad spectrum of sexual activities: Encolpius accuses Ascyltus of being a prostitute and of playing the receptive, i.e. 'female', role in sexual intercourse (*muliebris patientiae scortum*; "submissive whore, playing the woman's part"). The reference to his bad breath (*cuius ne spiritus quidem purus est*) is probably meant suggest that Ascyltus had performed *fellatio,* which was thought to cause *os impurum.*[156] Encolpius repeats the accusation of prostitution and effeminacy later in the story, this time not only directed at Ascyltus (*cuius anni ad tesseram venierunt, quem tamquam puellam conduxit etiam qui virum putavit*; "whose youth you could buy with a ticket, who was hired as a girl even by those who thought him a man", § 81.4)[157] but also at Giton (*qui [tamquam] die togae virilis stolam sumpsit, qui ne vir esset a matre persuasus est, qui opus muliebre in ergastulo fecit*; "who, on the day to put on the *toga virilis,* took a woman's garment instead; who was persuaded by his mother not to be a man; who played the part of a woman in a slave-prison", § 81.5). Ascyltus, in turn, accuses Encolpius of having had intercourse with female *fellatrices,* i.e. with women 'tainted' by oral sex (*qui ne tum quidem, cum fortiter faceres, cum pura muliere pugnasti*; "even in your best days you did not manage to fight with a clean woman, § 9.9). Both *facere* and *pugnare* can be used as metaphors for sexual activity; *fortiter faceres* is perhaps meant to insinuate that Encolpius now experiences bouts of impotence, which means that he is altogether unable

154 Cf. Williams 2010a: 19.

155 Cf. Williams 2010a: 19; for further discussion, cf. *ibid.* 78–84.

156 For a detailed discussion of the altercation between Encolpius and Ascyltus, cf. section III.2. Altercation (§ 9.6–10.7).

157 I take *tessera* to be a ticket for the distribution of corn or money; it may also refer to dice used in gambling (cf. Habermehl ed. 2006 *ad loc.*).

to perform sexually. What is important to note about these accusations and insults is that none of them concerns the question whether the opponent is into males and/or females. The mere fact that a male was sexually interested in other males – ideally young and beautiful ones – did not cause any raised eyebrows, neither in ancient Greece,[158] nor in Rome,[159] nor in the *Satyrica*. There is thus no basis for asserting that Petronius makes fun of male-male relationships *per se*.[160]

As T. Wade Richardson (1984: 117) has already pointed out, the lack of categorical criticism against 'homosexuality' in the *Satyrica* is not easy to reconcile with the widespread hypothesis that Petronius parodies the 'idealising' novel by turning the prototypical male-female couple into a male-male one. In fact, those who defend Heinze's theory have to acknowledge that Petronius' parody is literary above all else, inverting genre expectations without ridiculing homoerotic desire as such.[161] Yet, even this is not an easy supposition: For, of the five 'canonical' Greek novelists, no less than three – Longus, Xenophon of Ephesus and Achilles Tatius – present male-male relationships without any apparent disapproval.[162] Thus, in the words of Gerald Sandy (1969: 299), "the most fundamental reason for regarding the *Satyricon* as a parody of the Greek romances is without basis in fact."[163] Countering this argument, Heinze's followers point out that the Greek texts restrict male-male sex to secondary characters, whereas it is at the centre of the *Satyrica*.[164] Even if we accept this point, it becomes clear that Petronius' supposed parody of the 'idealising' novel is highly limited: It pertains to the conventional (male-female) protagonists only. We should also note that, in this formulation, the parody hypothesis is heavily dependent on our current state of evidence regarding the ancient novel. Findings such as the second-century

158 Cf. Dover 1978: 1, 66.

159 Cf. Williams 2010a: 17.

160 This point had already been made by Sullivan (1968: 96) and Richlin (1983: 190). We thus cannot follow the interpretation of § 9.8–10 proposed by Soverini (1976) and echoed by Lefèvre (2007: 160); cf. esp. note 337.

161 Cf. Courtney (2001: 49 n. 56). Heinze (1899: 497 n. 3) had made some cautious remarks in the same vein.

162 Cf. the stories of Hippothous and Hyperanthes (X. Eph. 3.1.4–3.2.14), Clinias and Charicles (Ach. Tat. 1.7.1–1.14.3), and Gnatho and Daphnis (Longus esp. 4.16.1–4.19.5); see Konstan (1994: 26–30) for further discussion.

163 Cf. also Wehrli (1965: 136–7).

164 Cf. Heinze (1899: 497 n. 3), Adamietz (1987: 332) and Setaioli (2011: 374 f.).

CE novel *Protagoras,* which apparently involved a strong homoerotic element, should caution us against drawing definite conclusions about what 'typical' novels might have looked like.[165]

Having called Heinze's hypothesis into question, Richardson's (1984: 118) own suggestion is that Petronius plays on clichés about pederastic relationships which "must have provoked appreciation, laughter, and perhaps even nostalgia in his own audience."[166] As the following discussion will show, Richardson's hypothesis is somewhat too narrow, inasmuch as it can only account for a small number of sexual interactions in the *Satyrica.* Most importantly, all hypotheses discussed so far do not take into consideration the full spectrum of sexual desire in Petronius' narrative: Although they openly express an interest in males, several major characters of the *Satyrica* are far from being straightforward 'homosexuals'.

II.2 Indiscriminate Lechery

II.2.1 The Evidence of the *Satyrica*

A number of Petronian characters engage – or are said to have engaged – in sexual relationships with both sexes. Encolpius, of course, is in love with Giton throughout the extant *Satyrica.* In their altercation, Ascyltus apparently hints at one or more sexual encounters between Encolpius and himself in the past: *cuius eadem ratione in viridario frater fui qua nunc in deversorio puer est* ("I was the same kind of brother to you in the garden, as the boy is now in the lodgings," § 9.10). Encolpius also shows a clear interest in Philomela's son (§ 140.11), and the fact that Lichas rec-

165 Alpers (1996) extracted 41 fragments of this novel from the ninth-century Byzantine *Etymologicum Genuinum.* Apparently, the parallels between the *Satyrica* and the *Protagoras* also include several other elements, such as robbery and lechery, sexual impotence, prostitutes, and a symposium; cf. also the brief discussion in Henderson (2010: 489). On the problematic distinction between 'idealising' and 'realistic' ancient novels, cf. section I.4.2. The Genre of the *Satyrica.*

166 For the existence of such clichés, Richardson (1984: 116), for instance, refers to Xen. *Symp.* 8.3–4, where Socrates mimics an ἐρώμενος in the following manner: σὺ δὲ μόνος, ὦ Ἀντίσθενες, οὐδενὸς ἐρᾷς; Ναὶ μὰ τοὺς θεούς, εἶπεν ἐκεῖνος, καὶ σφόδρα γε σοῦ. καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης ἐπισκώψας ὡς δὴ θρυπτόμενος εἶπε· Μὴ νῦν μοι ἐν τῷ παρόντι ὄχλον πάρεχε· ὡς γὰρ ὁρᾷς, ἄλλα πράττω ("'Are you the only person, Antisthenes, in love with no one?' 'No, by Heaven!' replied he; 'I am madly in love – with you.' And Socrates, banteringly, pretending to be coquettish, said: 'Do not pester me just now; I am engaged in other business, as you see'"). Trans. Todd (ed., trans. 1923).

ognises Encolpius by touching his genitals (§ 105.9) likely implies that they can look back at a sexual relationship of their own.[167] It is worth mentioning that – with the notable exception of Ascyltus – the males Encolpius desires are described as being somewhat younger than himself.[168] Since the protagonists' background is not entirely clear,[169] it is possible that Encolpius is Giton's superior not only in terms of his age but also in terms of his social status; otherwise, their relationship may constitute a case of Greek-style pederasty between two free citizens. Encolpius and Ascyltus appear to be of equal social status – they are probably either freeborn citizens or freedmen. Although the fragments of the *Satyrica* do not provide us with unambiguous evidence, it seems most likely that the protagonists' sexual intercourse is conventional, inasmuch as that Encolpius (and Ascyltus) penetrate Giton rather than the other way around.[170] Seeing that Ascyltus compares his past sexual role to that presently occupied by Giton (§ 9.10, cited above), he appears to have been penetrated by Encolpius. These questions will be more thoroughly addressed later in this study.[171] Lichas, in turn, is apparently older than Encolpius and might even be his former master.[172]

On the other hand, Encolpius is certainly not averse to females. Most obviously, he expresses great interest in Circe (esp. § 126.13–18). Although the sexual encounter with her is unsuccessful (§ 128.1–2), I cannot agree with Thomas K. Hubbard's (ed. 2003: 386) claim that Encolpius seems "genuinely incapable of erectile performance with women." Firstly, Encolpius experiences the same bouts of impotence with Philomela's son

167 Cf. Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad loc.*) "Was diese Identifikation [i.e. by touching Encolpius' genitals] über das einstige Verhältnis der beiden aussagt, liegt auf der Hand." Cf. also § 109.3 and § 113.10 with Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 100.7).

168 Giton – just as Philomela's son (§ 140.11) – is called a *puer,* whereas Encolpius and Ascyltus are referred to as *adulescentes* (cf. section III.1.2. Rape and Comic Slave Characters).

169 Cf. section III.1.2. Rape and Comic Slave Characters.

170 Richlin (2009: 86) lists the episodes in which Encolpius and Giton appear to be a prototypical pederastic couple: "In the third rented-room scene, Eumolpus ogles Giton while Encolpius defends Giton against him (§ 92, § 94) and against recovery by Ascyltos (§ 97); Encolpius is jealous of Eumolpus, here and later (§ 100). Giton says he is to Encolpius what Alcibiades was to Socrates (§ 128.7); the gullible Encolpius gets Giton to swear that Ascyltos never forced him to have sex (§ 133.1–2)."

171 Cf. section III.2. Altercation (§ 9.6–10.7).

172 Cf. Courtney (2001: 49): "it may be that he [sc. Encolpius] and Giton were in fact freedmen of Lichas, and had run away without performance of the *operae* (duties, services) which such owed their patron."

(§ 140.11) and also with Giton (§ 128.7).[173] With regard to Encolpius' impotence, Proselenos says that *neque puero neque puellae bona sua vendere potest* ("He can sell his goods to neither boy nor girl," § 134.8). Secondly, the references to Encolpius' past relations to females do not indicate any erectile dysfunction. He calls Tryphaena his *amica,* refers to himself as her *amator,* and is jealous of the kisses she gives to Giton (§ 113.5–8). Furthermore, it is generally assumed that Lichas' wife Hedyle was seduced by Encolpius in some part of the novel now lost.[174] Encolpius also seems to be interested in Chrysis (§ 126.8) and refers to his old passion for a certain Doris (§ 126.18).

Similarly, Giton is not only with Encolpius and Ascyltus, but he is also not reluctant (*sine dubio non repugnaverat puer,* § 26.3) during his sexual encounter with the young girl Psyche. Moreover, he revives his past relationship with Tryphaena, which makes Encolpius jealous (cf. above).

Eumolpus informs Encolpius about his escapade with the Pergamene boy, apparently a freeborn youth from a wealthy family, whom he seduced in his capacity as a teacher (§§ 85–7). Eumolpus tried to keep this sexual relationship secret from the boy's father (cf. § 85.1), we have to presume, because it constituted the crime of *stuprum.*[175] As far as other males are concerned, Eumolpus shows his desire for Giton (§ 94.1–2) and Encolpius (§ 140.5, 140.13). We also have to note, however, that Eumolpus has sex with Philomela's daughter even though he could have chosen her son (§ 140.1–10). It is clear that all characters Eumolpus goes after are younger than himself.[176] Encolpius remarks that, even though he is already an *adulescens* (cf. e.g. § 3.1), Eumolpus thinks of him as a *puer* (the age category of highest sexual attraction which was occupied, for instance, by Giton and Philomela's son): *Eumolpus, qui tam frugi erat ut illi etiam ego puer viderer* ("Eumolpus, who was so temperate that, to him, even I seemed to be a boy," § 140.5). Encolpius' word choice (*frugi*) is, of course, ironic: Rather than being able to keep his sexual appetite in check, he suggests, Eumolpus is so lecherous that he desires even those who are past the prime of youth.[177]

173 What is more, Encolpius – quite intentionally – does not get an erection in response to the efforts of a *cinaedus* at Quartilla's orgy (§ 23.5).

174 Cf. § 106.2 and § 113.3 with Courtney (2001: 46), Habermehl (ed. 2006 *ad* § 100.7) and Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011 *ad* § 113.3).

175 Cf. Habermehl ed. 2006 *ad loc.*

176 Eumolpus is introduced as a *senex* (§ 83.7).

177 Cf. Schmeling & Setaioli eds. 2011 *ad loc.*

Trimalchio presents himself as no less promiscuous: On the one hand, he is married to Fortunata and stresses the point that they sleep together (§ 47.5, § 75.9). On the other hand, he also owns a *puer delicatus* (cf. § 28.4, 64.5–6), manumits one *puer speciosus* (§ 41.6) and kisses another (§ 74.8, 75.4).[178] Habinnas, who is married to Scintilla, also has a sexual relationship with one of his slave boys (§ 67.12, 68.6–69.6). Lastly, Trimalchio boasts that, when still a young slave, he used to perform sexual services for both his master and his mistress (cf. § 75.11).

We may summarise that most male-male sexual relationships in the *Satyrica* – in accordance with the paradigms known from other sources – are characterised by an inequality in terms of age and social status. A fact that has received too little attention is that several major characters of Petronius' text (esp. Encolpius, Eumolpus, Trimalchio, and Habinnas) openly express their desire for both sexes. Their excessive sexual appetite has aptly been termed by Augier-Grimaud (2014: 117) as "hyper-sexualité." The modern tendency to identify Petronius' protagonists, particularly Encolpius, as straightforward 'homosexuals' may in part be owing to the mutilation of the *Satyrica*: Encolpius' (likely) sexual encounters with Tryphaena, Hedyle and Doris are lost; his relationship with Circe is plagued by impotence. It is important to note that common explanations concerning the issue of sexuality in the *Satyrica* – i.e. either that Petronius plays on clichés about pederasty (Richardson) or that he parodies male-female relationships in the 'idealising' novel (Heinze and his followers) – do not take into account the character trait of indiscriminate lechery. In the remainder of this chapter, I will argue that the excessive sexual desire characterising Encolpius and others can most adequately be explained by acknowledging the considerable evidence of such indiscriminate sexual appetite in the comic tradition.

178 Trimalchio's *deliciae* ("darling") is described as a *puer vetulus* ("an elderly boy," § 28.4). The oxymoron is apparently meant to emphasise the youth's ugliness (cf. Smith ed. 1975 *ad loc.*; Schmeling & Setaioli eds. 2011 *ad loc.*). Richlin (2009: 89–90) points to some other male sex objects with whom Trimalchio surrounds himself. These include *pueri capillati* (§ 27.1, 34.4, 70.8) and *pueri Alexandrini* (§ 31.3, 68.3). On sex with slaves in the *Satyrica*, cf. also Augier-Grimaud (2014: 118–21).

II.2.2 The Evidence of Graeco-Roman Comedy

When it comes to sex in the *Satyrica,* few scholars have drawn a connection to comedy. Patrick G. Walsh (1970: 26–7) briefly remarks that the homoerotic theme occurs in the mime and in the *fabula togata.* Roderick J. C. Boroughs (1993: 30–50), noting Eumolpus' "indiscriminate promiscuity" (*ibid.* 38), shows that Petronius' poet is a 'dirty old man' in the comic vein, perhaps best comparable to Philocleon in Aristophanes' *Wasps.* With regard to New Comedy and the *fabula palliata,* he notes that the Plautine *senex amator* is one of Eumolpus' closest literary relatives, since "every time Eumolpus attempts to seduce a girl or a boy, he ends up, like the Plautine old lovers, either being totally humiliated or, at least, looking quite ridiculous" (*ibid.* 49). A similar argument is made by Augier-Grimaud (2014: 112, 121), who adds that the *senex amator* comes close to the sexual extravagances of Trimalchio and Habinnas. She does not discuss the point in detail, however, since she believes the *senex amator* to be 'heterosexual'.[179] Yet, as the following survey will show, indiscriminate desire is far from uncommon in the comic tradition.

While it is true that elderly lovers in comedy usually chase after young women, we need to point out that several of these old men openly display an interest in both sexes. *Senes amatores* make an appearance in Plautus' *Asinaria, Bacchides, Casina, Cistellaria, Mercator,* and *Stichus*; they are also attested for the mime of the imperial period.[180] As Jane M. Cody (1976) has shown, Lysidamus, the *senex amator* of the *Casina,* defies categorisation along the lines of 'hetero-' or 'homosexuality'. Apart from lusting for the slave girl Casina – and apart from being married to Cleostrata –, he has a sexual relationship with his male slave Olympio. During their first homoerotic encounter in the play, the slave Chalinus

179 Augier-Grimaud (2014: 112): "il faut garder à l'esprit que le *senex amator* est hétérosexuel." There is a similar remark in Engels (2014: 122): "Neben dem Modell des *senex,* welches der Mimus Petron lieferte, wird ebenso die Zeichnung des lüsternen Alten durch Plautus auf die Darstellung des Eumolpos Auswirkungen gehabt haben. Petron lässt sich zwar vom Mimus und der Komödie inspirieren, verleiht der Figur jedoch eine unkonventionelle Note: Zwar wird Eumolpos wie der *senex* bei Plautus durch ein geradezu nie versiegendes sexuelles Begehren nach jugendlichen, hübschen Liebhaberinnen charakterisiert. Eumolpos zeichnet allerdings ebenso eine Vorliebe für junge Männer aus."

180 Cf. Ryder (1984) for an overview of Plautine *senes amatores.* As Duckworth (1952: 246) remarks, no such character exists in Terence. Ps.-Cyprian (*de spect.* 6) mentions lecherous old men in the mime; cf. Benz (2001: 106).

is eavesdropping on them. The initial topic of their conversation is, of course, securing Casina for Lysidamus:

Olympio: *erit hodie tecum quod amas clam uxorem.*
Lysidamus: *tace.*
ita me di bene ament ut ego vix reprimo labra
ob istanc rem quin te deosculer, voluptas mea.
Chalinus: *quid, deosculere? quae res? quae voluptas tua?*
credo hercle ecfodere hic volt vesicam vilico.
Olympio: *ecquid amas nunc me?*
Lysidamus: *immo edepol me quam te minus.*
licetne amplecti te?
Chalinus: *quid, 'amplecti'?*
Olympio: *licet.*
Lysidamus: *ut, quia te tango, mel mihi videor lingere!*
Olympio: *ultro te, amator, apage te a dorso meo!*
Chalinus: *illuc est, illuc, quod hic hunc fecit vilicum:*
et idem me pridem, quom ei advorsum veneram,
facere atriensem voluerat sub ianua.
Olympio: *ut tibi morigerus hodie, ut voluptati fui!*
Lysidamus: *ut tibi, dum vivam, bene velim plus quam mihi.*
Chalinus: *hodie hercle, opinor, hi conturbant pedes:*
solet hic barbatos sane sectari senex.
(Plaut. *Cas.* 451–66)

Olympio: Today you will have the object of your love behind your wife's back.
Lysidamus: Be quiet. As truly as the gods may love me well, I can barely hold my lips in check because of this and not kiss you, my darling.
Chalinus: What, you would kiss him? What on earth? What, "your darling"? I do believe he wants to dig out the overseer's bladder.
Olympio: Do you love me at all now?
Lysidamus: Yes, I love myself less than you. Can I hug you?
Chalinus: What? "Hug" him?
Olympio: You can.
Lysidamus: How I seem to be licking honey now that I am touching you!

Olympio: Away with you, lover, get off my back!
Chalinus: That is it, that is why he made him overseer. And some time ago, when I had come to meet him, he also wanted to make me the doorkeeper down by the back entrance.
Olympio: How submissive I have been to you today, how much pleasure I have given you.
Lysidamus: So much so that I should be more of a friend to you than to myself as long as I live.
Chalinus: Today they will conjoin their feet, I think. This old man really has a habit of chasing after bearded men.

Cody (1976: 455–6) is right in pointing out that this homoerotic encounter between Lysidamus and Olympio – together with their second one (Plaut. *Cas.* 723–41) – goes considerably beyond most other Plautine references to sexual relationships between masters and their male slaves. Lysidamus explicitly voices his desire to kiss and embrace Olympio (*deosculer … amplecti,* 453–7) and expresses his satisfaction when allowed to touch him (*mel mihi videor lingere,* 458). Olympio's question (*ecquid amas nunc me?,* 456) makes clear that this is not the first time he was thus approached by his master. Chalinus not only spells out the sexual innuendos (*ecfodere hic volt vesicam vilico … hi conturbant pedes,* 455 and 465), but also suggests that he himself had once been the target of Lysidamus' sexual advances (*et idem me … facere atriensem voluerat,* 461 f.). Similarly to what we have observed about Eumolpus, this old man's indiscriminate and excessive lust is further emphasised by the fact that he goes after males past the prime of their youth (*solet hic barbatos sane sectari senex,* 466).[181]

While it is true that Plautus devotes more attention to the relationship between Lysidamus and Olympio than to any other liaison between a master and one of his male slaves, it is certainly not uncommon for comic slave-owners to have *pueri delicati.*[182] Paegnium in the *Persa* is a prototypical case, as he has a telling name ("Plaything"), his remarks are full of saucy wit, and he makes an appearance in three major scenes of the play. Another such *puer* is Pinacium in the *Stichus,* a 'toy boy' who resembles

181 On Lysidamus' interest in bearded men, cf. also Williams (2010a: 86).

182 On *pueri delicati* in Roman comedy, cf. Lilja (1983: 16–20), Williams (2010a: 36–8) and Richlin (2017: 105–15).

the young Trimalchio in that he appears to please both his master and his mistress.[183] Although some *pueri* have grown up to be adult men at the time of the plays' action, as in the case of Olympio (cf. above), the close relation to their masters remains palpable.[184] The parallels between Giton and Plautine *pueri delicati* will be addressed in a later section.[185] What is important to remember here is that most comic masters in question are also in a relationship with females (their wives), which goes to show that their desire is not restricted to one sex.[186]

Senes amatores, however, are not the only comic characters openly expressing their interest in both sexes: In Plautus' *Asinaria,* the *adulescens* Argyrippus is in love with the female prostitute Philaenium. In a scene somewhat comparable to the homoerotic encounters in the *Casina,* Argyrippus allows his slave Libanus to ride on his back (699–710), strongly suggesting a sexual relationship between the two.[187] In the *Persa,* the central slave character Toxilus is not only in love with the *meretrix* Lemniselenis, but he also has an erotically charged friendship with his fellow-slave Sagaristio; additionally, he has Paegnium for his *puer delicatus.* The fact that Toxilus, himself a slave, owns another slave (a *servus vicarius*) can be explained by two factors: Firstly, Toxilus holds the relatively high position of an *atriensis,* the manager of his master's house. Secondly, in terms of comic stock types, he combines the features of a *servus callidus* and of a (usually freeborn) *adulescens* in love.[188] The plot of the *Miles gloriosus* is set in motion when the soldier Pyrgopolinices abducts the beautiful woman Philocomasium; he will later want to abandon her for another female, Acroteleutium. Pyrgopolinices' indiscriminate lechery is unambiguously expressed in a conversation with his slave Palaestrio. When the latter mentions Philocomasium's (imaginary) sister, Pyrgopolinices immediately asks him: *ecquid fortis visast?*

183 Cf. Lilja 1983: 18. While some other boys display comparable features (e.g. in the *Miles gloriosus* and the *Mostellaria*), there is no precise information as to any sexual relationship with their masters; cf. Lilja (1983: 18–9).

184 This is true, e.g., for Stalagmus in the *Captivi* (esp. 954–66); cf. Lilja (1983: 20–4) on adult *delicati* in Plautus and Williams (2010a: 84–90) on mature males as objects of desire in more general terms.

185 Cf. section III.1. Rape (§ 9.1–5).

186 Cf. Lilja 1983: 24.

187 Cf. Lilja 1983: 22–3.

188 For a detailed discussion of Toxilus' status as well as his sexual relationships, cf. Woytek (1982: 43–5).

("Did she seem good-looking?", Plaut. *Mil.* 1106). When, only a few lines later, Palaestrio informs the soldier about the ship's captain who had supposedly conveyed the sister, Pyrgopolinices' reaction is virtually identical: *quid is? ecquid fortis?* ("What about him? Is he good-looking?", Plaut. *Mil.* 1111). It is worth mentioning that, since the captain is surely not a beardless boy, the soldier resembles Lysidamus and Eumolpus in that his lust even pertains to males past their prime.[189] Finally, Palaestrio conveniently spells out Pyrgopolinices' excessive lechery: *abi sis hinc, nam tu quidem | ad equas fuisti scitus admissarius, | qui consectare qua maris qua feminas* ("Go away, will you? You would have made a proper stallion for the mares, you who pursue both males and females," Plaut. *Mil.* 1111–3).

We should note that – while many references to homoeroticism have been considered Plautine additions to the Greek originals[190] – the soldier Thraso in Terence's *Eunuchus* is in no way inferior to Pyrgopolinices when it comes to sexual desire for both females and males.[191] The last case in point is the *adulescens* Diniarchus in Plautus' *Truculentus,* who openly admits to having had contact with prostitutes of both sexes, and then proceeds to compare their respective (dis)advantages.[192] We should also point out that Plautus' relative emphasis on indiscriminate sexual appetite has a forerunner in Aristophanes. In the *Wasps,* Philocleon's lechery pertains not only to a slave girl (1342–53) and even his own daughter (607–9) but also to boys' genitals (578).[193] This point supports Boroughs' (1993) claim that there is a close resemblance between Philocleon and Eumolpus. In the *Acharnians,* Phales, the phallus personified, is associated with pederasty (265) just as well as with chasing after pretty slave girls (271–5). At the end of the *Knights* (1384–91), Demos is presented with sex objects both male and female. In the *Clouds* (1071–4), Worse Argument does not distinguish between the pleasures brought by boys and women.

We have observed that several major characters in the *Satyrica* openly express their desire for both sexes, a desire that regularly amounts to excessive lechery. On the one hand, this trait renders problematic the com-

189 For further discussion of Pyrgopolinices' interest in older males, cf. Williams (2010a: 87 f.).

190 Cf. section I.3.2. Farcical Elements in 'Popular' and 'Literary' Comedy.

191 Thraso is the lover of the female prostitute Thais, but also treats as sexual prey a young boy from Rhodes (Ter. *Eun.* 420–6).

192 Plaut. *Truc.* 147–57 (quoted in section III.2.2.3. The Dynamics of Comic Altercations). For an overview of such comparisons in Roman literature, cf. Williams (2010a: 22–4).

193 For a discussion of indiscriminate desire in Old Comedy, cf. Dover (1978: 135–7).

mon hypothesis that Petronius parodies the 'idealising' novel by substituting a male-female couple with a male-male one. On the other hand, it strengthens the ties between the *Satyrica* and the comic tradition, where indiscriminate desire is not an unusual phenomenon. While, at first sight, most extant comedies appear to focus on male-female love, the following section will demonstrate that male-male relationships (beyond those already discussed) were never absent from the ancient comic stage.

II.3 Other Male-Male Relationships in the Comic Tradition

In her discussion of the homoerotic element in the *Satyrica*, Augier-Grimaud (2014: 111) briefly remarks that we find numerous references to male-male sexual relationships in the comic tradition. She does not go into any detail, however, claiming that these references do not go beyond mere allusions. Rather, she suggests, it is only in the later genre of Roman satire that homoeroticism becomes a major motif, particularly through the satirists' condemnation of effeminate males characterised by sexual 'passivity'.[194] In this section I attempt to show that, in fact, the comic tradition paves the way for all central aspects of Petronius' representation of male-male relationships. We have already seen that this applies to master-slave relationships – as between Trimalchio, Habinnas, and their respective *puer delicatus* – and to the indiscriminate lechery displayed by several Petronian characters. It will also be seen to apply to homoeroticism between free citizens, as seems to be the case between Encolpius and Ascyltus and possibly – in the form of Greek-style pederasty – between Encolpius and Giton.[195] Furthermore, it is true for various insults hinting at sexual submission (as at § 9.6–10 and § 81.4–6), and for the very fact that penetrated males – Giton, (allegedly) Ascyltus, and Encolpius[196] – occupy central positions in the story. Lastly, there are comic forerunners of the sexual teacher-student relationship between

194 Augier-Grimaud (2014: 111): "Mais ces évocations [sc. in comedy] ne sont que des allusions, et il faut attendre la satire pour que la problématique des relations masculines devienne un motif majeur, au travers de la figure repoussoir de l'efféminé que les satiristes condamnent pour sa passivité sexuelle."

195 This will be discussed in more detail in the course of this study; cf. esp. chapter III. First Rivalry over Giton: Encolpius versus Ascyltus (§§ 9–11).

196 There is no scholarly consensus about whether Encolpius penetrates Giton (and Ascyltus) or whether it is the other way around (cf. section III.2. Altercation (§ 9.6–10.7)). Note that, at Quartilla's orgy, a *cinaedus* penetrates Encolpius and Ascyltus by force: *ci-*

Eumolpus and the Pergamene youth (§ 85–7). For reasons laid out in the general introduction, my survey will pay special attention to farcical forms of comedy, i.e. the mime, the *fabula Atellana,* and Plautine plays likely inspired thereby.[197]

Aristophanes' *Knights* is the earliest extant comedy to feature a penetrated male in a major role. The Sausage Seller, i.e. the character who outdoes the demagogue Paphlagon, openly professes that he used to be a prostitute in his youth, playing the receptive role for his male clients.[198] In the remaining Aristophanic plays, references to the receptive role in male-male sex mainly take the form of insults hurled against one's opponent. Such verbal abuse exploits every kind of perceived effeminacy.[199] While Aristophanes does not portray any sexual and/or love relationships between males, we know that other Old Comedy playwrights

naedus … extortis nos clunibus cecidit ("a *cinaedus* pulled our buttocks apart and banged us," § 21.2). On the sexual meaning of *caedere* and related verbs, cf. Adams (1982: 144–9). Schmeling & Setaioli (eds. 2011 *ad loc.*) and Kamen & Levin-Richardson (2014: 453 f.) discuss the unusual phenomenon of a *cinaedus* penetrating males. Note also that Oenothea penetrates Encolpius' anus with a leather dildo (§ 138.1).

197 In accordance with what has been pointed out in the general introduction, I do not wish to suggest that comedy is the *only* genre Petronius' representation of male-male relationships is indebted to. In her discussion of the literary forms that may have inspired the portrayal of love, sexuality and gender in the *Satyrica,* Engels (2014: 45–161) includes the Greek novel, epigram, comedy, satire, the Milesian tale, and love elegy. The standard works on male-male sexual relationships in ancient Greece and Rome are Dover (1978) and Williams (2010a) respectively; for an overview, cf. also Hubbard (ed. 2003), Robson (2013: 36–66) and the contributions in Hubbard (ed. 2014).

198 Aristoph. *Equ.* 1242: ἠλλαντοπώλουν καί τι καὶ βινεσκόμην ("I sold sausages, and now and then I also sold my arse"). Cf. also Dover's (1978: 141) discussion of this line. For all references to male-male relationships in the *Knights,* cf. Hubbard (ed. 2003: 89–93).

199 Cf. Dover 1978: 145; on sexual insults in Athenian comedy, cf. also Kamen (2020: 49–52). While Old Comedy usually appears to be in line with other kinds of contemporary literature in that it (positively) acknowledges the penetrative role in male-male sexual acts and condemns the receptive one (cf. Dover 1978: 139), Hubbard (1998) claims that Aristophanes attacks the aristocratic institution of pederasty as a whole, not sparing the penetrative partners. One important underlying argument is that in Old Comedy, "active/passive roles were widely imagined as interchangeable […], in part because any active pederast had himself most likely played the passive role at some point in his development" (Hubbard ed. 2003: 8). Lear's (2014a: 113) assessment is closer to Dover's when he asserts that Aristophanes' mockery of pederasty is comparatively mild. For a critical discussion, cf. also Robson (2013: 49–52), Lear (2014b) and Shapiro (2015). Robson (2013: 66) rightly stresses the point that, even if Aristophanes' works reflect certain suspicions against elite pederasty, "this is not the same as saying that the masses were ill-disposed towards all forms of homosexuality. Indeed, the occasional homoerotic fantasy in a popular genre such as Old Comedy […] – not to mention homoerotic themes in poetry, the existence of homoerotic graffiti, and so on – suggests a widespread recognition and acceptance in classical Athens of same-sex attraction as a fact of life."

did. The rape of the beautiful boy Chrysippus was likely the topic of an eponymous play by Strattis; the *Λάιος* by Plato Comicus probably followed the same plotline.[200]

Though evidence is scarce, Middle Comedy appears to have maintained a certain interest in homoerotic themes. Apart from various scattered references to effeminacy and to penetrated males, we find three titles suggesting that male-male sexual relationships occasionally took centre stage: Eubolus and Antiphanes each wrote a *Γανυμήδης*; the latter chose the unequivocal title *Παιδεραστής* for another play.[201] In contrast to the preceding periods, allusions to homoeroticism are almost completely absent from New Comedy. Apart from *Παιδερασταί,* a play title attributed to Diphilus, the only unambiguous reference detected by Lilja (1983: 35) is to be found in a fragment by Damoxenus. Plutarch states that Menander's plays were altogether free from pederastic love.[202] In the Roman *fabula palliata,* Terence follows the restraint of New Comedy: Mentions of male-male relationships amount to no more than three, one of which pertains to the lecherous soldier in the *Eunuchus* mentioned above.[203]

As has already become clear in the discussion of indiscriminate sexual desire, male-male relationships experience a rise in importance on the Plautine stage. Not only do several *pueri delicati* appear in person, but numerous characters insult their opponents by suggesting that they play the receptive role in sexual encounters. Most commonly, a slave insinuates that another slave has succumbed to the sexual advances of his master (e.g. *Asin.* 627–8, *Epid.* 66, *Mostell.* 894, *Rud.* 1074).[204] At times, such allegations are made by citizen characters, as when the old man Simo and the pimp Ballio mock Harpax (a *cacula,* "soldier's servant") for performing sexual services for the *miles* he follows (*Pseud.* 1175–81). It is worth pointing out, however, that Plautine references to homoeroticism go beyond free citizen masters and their servants: In the *Mostellaria*

200 Cf. Hubbard ed. 2003: 88.

201 For an overview of references to homoeroticism in Middle Comedy, cf. Lilja (1983: 36–8) and Hubbard (ed. 2003: 88).

202 Plut. *Mor.* 712c: οὔτε παιδὸς ἔρως ἄρρενός ἐστιν ἐν τοσούτοις δράμασιν ("In all these plays there is no one enamoured of a boy"). Trans. Minar et al. (eds., trans. 1961), with slight adaptations. On homoeroticism in New Comedy, cf. also Dover (1978: 151–3) and Hubbard (ed. 2003: 88).

203 Cf. Lilja 1983: 34; the other two allusions occur in the *Adelphoe* (214–5, 532).

204 For a detailed overview, cf. Lilja (1983: 25–8) and Richlin (2017: 106–10).

(718–24), the slave Tranio pretends not to understand the obvious sexual advances of Simo, a *senex* who is not his master.[205] In the *Persa,* the *puer delicatus* Paegnium belongs to Toxilus, who is a slave himself (cf. above). The latter also has a homoerotically coloured friendship with his fellow slave Sagaristio.[206] Furthermore, sex between two male slaves is insinuated at the end of the *Stichus.*[207] There is an unnamed male prostitute in the *Pseudolus* (767–89). He complains about having to perform *fellatio* (782) and fears having to endure anal penetration (785–7). In the *Curculio,* there are no less than three references to male prostitutes.[208] Several citizen characters insult others by suggesting that they are *pathici*: The parasite Ergasilus thus abuses the old man Hegio (*Capt.* 867), and the pimp Cappadox insults the soldier Therapontigonus (*Curc.* 584). Not infrequently, there is an innuendo that parasites allow themselves to be penetrated in order to gain another man's favour (cf. e.g. *Curc.* 400–3 and *Pers.* 132).[209] In exceptional cases, slaves hurl such insults at free characters: once at an old man (*Aul.* 637) and twice at a pimp (*Pers.* 848, *Pseud.* 313–4). Lastly, there are numerous jokes hinting at the receptive role, usually made by slaves, once by a cook.[210] For instance, the slave Lampadio amuses the audience by stating that *faciundum est puerile officium: conquiniscam ad cistulam* ("Now I have to do a boy's part: I will bend over and pick up the casket"). Of course, there are also references to effeminacy that do not explicitly indicate *pathici.* Such may be puns made by cooks[211] or insults exchanged by citizen characters.[212] Comic allusions and insults hinting at sexual submission will be revisited later on.[213]

Taking the references to homoeroticism together with the indiscriminate lechery discussed above, it is fair to say that male-male sex plays a

205 Cf. Lilja 1983: 19.

206 cf. Woytek 1982: 46–7.

207 Esp. *Stich.* 729–32; cf. Lilja (1983: 31 n. 73).

208 *Curc.* 382–3, 473, 482. Further references can be found in *Truc.* 150–3 and possibly in *Poen.* 690 (cf. Lilja 1983: 30) as well as in a fragment of Plautus' *Gemini Lenones* (cf. Richlin 2017: 117).

209 Cf. Lilja (1983: 25) for a few more references and Fontaine (2009: 223–46) for a thorough discussion.

210 *Amph.* 348–9 (slave), *Aul.* 283–6 (cook), *Merc.* 203–4 (slave), *Poen.* 611–12 (*vilicus*).

211 *Aul.* 402 and 422 (the cooks Anthrax and Congrio respectively).

212 *Men.* 513 (an *adulenscens* insulting a parasite), *Poen.* 1317–8 and *Truc.* 609–11 (a soldier insulting *adulescentes*).

213 Cf. section III.2. Altercation (§ 9.6–10.7).

significant role in the Plautine oeuvre. It is most pronounced in the *Casina,* in the meetings of Lysidamus and Olympio as well as in the transvestite finale of the play, where sexual contact between males is all the more important.[214] It is equally prominent in the *Persa,* where the outspoken *puer delicatus* Paegnium appears in three scenes of considerable length. In most other plays, the homoerotic element takes the form of erotically charged encounters and/or of various jokes and insults. Only two of Plautus' twenty extant comedies are altogether devoid of references to male-male sexual relationships.[215]

There are two aspects in which Plautus' treatment of homoeroticism appears to break with the Greek comic tradition. Firstly, the relevant references in his work vastly outnumber those in New Comedy and in Terence. Secondly, many Plautine allusions to male-male sex appear to be his own additions to the Greek originals. With regard to the latter proposition, the conversation between the parasite Curculio and the moneylender Lyco is a case in point (*Curc.* 400–3):

Curculio:	*quaeso ne me incomities.*
Lyco:	*licet inforare, si incomitiare non licet?*
Curculio:	*non inforabis me quidem, nec mihi placet*
	tuom profecto nec forum nec comitium.

Curculio:	I ask you not to bug me in public.
Lyco:	Can I bugger you in your privates if I cannot bug you in public?
Curculio:	You will certainly not bugger me in my privates, and I really do not like your public or your privates.

As pointed out by Williams (2010a: 38), Lyco's homoerotic allusion involves two puns that are unambiguously Roman: He links "the words *incomitiare* ("to insult as one might in a public assembly") and the Comitium (the place of public assembly itself) on the one hand, and *inforare* ("to bore into", a handy sexual metaphor) and the Forum on the other". Since these Latin puns cannot be straightforward translations from the Greek, this passage is in all likelihood a Plautine element. The same argument can be made for references to male-male sex which pun on the

214 This Plautine scene will be further discussed in section III.3. Punishment (§ 11.1–4).

215 The plays in question are the *Bacchides* and the *Trinummus*. The fragments of the *Vidularia* are equally free of such references.

verb *comprimere* ("to keep in check", "to penetrate anally").[216] Lastly, two of the three references to male prostitutes in the *Curculio* (473, 482) appear to be genuinely Plautine, as these belong to a description of different places in the city of Rome.[217] Apart from these rather straightforward cases, there are several homoerotic allusions that occur in passages commonly thought to be Plautine additions, i.e. in passages that do not advance the plot and are generally characterised by farcical humour.[218]

Since Plautus' relative emphasis on the same-sex element is at odds with Greek New Comedy, some scholars have sought out connections to Roman forms of 'popular' entertainment.[219] In general terms, there is ample evidence to suggest that male-male relationships were a common element on the Roman stage. Though the extant fragments of the *fabula togata* – i.e. comedies with a Roman setting – contain nothing but a handful of references to effeminacy, we learn from Quintilian (*Inst.* 10.1.100) that pederastic love was a hallmark of the playwright Afranius: *togatis excellit Afranius: utinam non inquinasset argumenta puerorum foedis amoribus* ("Afranius excels in the *togata*: if only he had not defiled his plots with shameful love affairs with boys").[220] Williams (2010a: 103) stresses the point that Quintilian must refer to love affairs with freeborn boys, not with slaves. Remarkably enough, although the mime is notorious for its indecency, the surviving fragments are almost completely free from references to homoeroticism.[221] Perhaps, this is owing to the fact that the mime allowed female actors to perform on stage.[222]

216 *Cas.* 361–2 and *Rud.* 1072–6; cf. Jachmann (1931: 58 n. 2), Lilja (1983: 24) and Williams (2010a: 38).

217 Cf. Lilja (1983: 30) and Williams (2010a: 36).

218 On the criteria for identifying Plautine elements, cf. section I.3.2. Farcical Elements in 'Popular' and 'Literary' Comedy. For instance, Fraenkel (1922: 116) – without referring to the same-sex element – considers *Asin.* 591–745 to be largely Plautine. Krieger (1915: 23 n. 4), Burck (1956: 267–8) and Dohm (1964: 244) think the same of *Aul.* 283–6. Cody (1976: 472–6) argues that all homoerotic encounters in the *Casina* were added by Plautus. Fraenkel (1922: 257–8) and Jachmann (1931: 188–9) regard as genuinely Plautine the joke revealing Pyrgopolinices to be interested in both sexes (*Mil.* 1104–13). For further discussion, cf. Lilja (1983: 16–33).

219 On the link between Plautus and 'popular' theatre, cf. above section I.3.2. Farcical Elements in 'Popular' and 'Literary' Comedy.

220 Translation based on Williams (2010a: 103). For possible homoerotic allusions in the *togata,* cf. Lilja (1983: 40–1).

221 Lilja (1983: 44–5) finds three such allusions in the fragments of Laberius (around 150 lines in total).

222 Cf. Lilja 1983: 45.

When it comes to the relative frequency of homoerotic allusions, the *fabula Atellana* outdoes every other genre of ancient comedy: In the roughly 300 extant lines, Lilja (1983: 41–4) detects no less than twenty references to male-male sex. Some of the fragments in question present an unambiguously Roman perspective, such as the following line attributed to Pomponius' *Prostibulum,* a play dedicated to a male prostitute performing services for other men: *continuo ad te centuriatim current qui penem petent* ("Right away they will run up to you, arranged by voting-group, looking for a penis").[223] As Williams (2010a: 316–7 n. 87) points out, the "adverb *centuriatim* introduces the humorously incongruous image of the Roman citizenry assembled in the *comitia centuriata* to enact laws or elect magistrates." It is equally important to remark that, while Greek sources never mention male prostitutes hired to play the penetrative role, the *fabula Atellana* does so very bluntly.[224] A comparable fragment is to be found in the *Pappus Praeteritus* by Novius: *dum istos invitabis suffragatores, pater,* | *prius in capulo quam in curuli sella suspendes natis* ("As long as you encourage those supporters, father, you will be putting your behind on a sword-hilt before you put it in the magistrate's chair").[225] In this case, the reference to the *sella curulis* firmly locates the statement in a Roman setting; the image of a penis as a sword or a hilt (*in capulo*) is twice attested in Plautine comedy (*Cas.* 910, *Pseud.* 1181).[226] We may add a few more striking parallels between Plautus and the *fabula Atellana*: In Pomponius' *Prostibulum,* someone – presumably the title character – makes the following statement: *ut nullum civem pedicavi per dolum* | *nisi ipsus orans ultro qui ocquinisceret* ("I have not butt-fucked a single citizen by deceit – only when he himself came up to me begging to bend over").[227] Apart from the clear reference to free citizens (*civem*), we may note the use of 'bending over' for 'playing the receptive role in

223 Pomponius fr. 149 Frassinetti = 153 Ribbeck. Trans. Williams (2010a: 30), slightly adapted. The manuscripts read *panem,* but Frassinetti has convincingly emended to *penem.* His emendation is followed by Lilja (1983: 42 n. 119) and Williams (2010a: 316–7 n. 87).

224 Cf. Williams (2010a: 90) with references for further reading.

225 Novius fr. 74–5 Frassinetti = 75–6 Ribbeck. Trans. Williams (2010a: 30).

226 On weapons representing the phallus, cf. Adams (1982: 19–22). This imagery occurs in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (632, 985); for further discussion, cf. Philippides (2015: 248 f. n. 17 and 18).

227 Pomponius fr. 154–5 Frassinetti = 148–9 Ribbeck. Trans. Williams (2010a: 30), slightly adapted.

sex', a metaphor that also occurs in Plautus' *Cistellaria* (657, cited above) and in Pomponius' *Pistor.*[228] What is more, in Novius' *Exodium* we find a comparison between boys and women as objects of sexual desire, comparable to Plaut. *Truc.* 147–57 mentioned above.[229]

These striking parallels have led both Cody (1976: 45) and Lilja (1983: 48–9) to conclude that Plautus' emphasis on homoeroticism likely stems from his close engagement with Roman 'popular' comedy, particularly with the *fabula Atellana.* Bearing in mind the numerous points of contact between the *Satyrica* and farcical stage productions, it seems plausible that Petronius' treatment of male-male sex was at least partly inspired by this strand of the comic tradition.

When Augier-Grimaud (2014: 111, cited above) remarks that the condemnation of penetrated males is more pronounced in satire than in comedy, she ignores the fact that Roman satire itself was likely influenced by the 'popular' theatre.[230] In the case of Juvenal 9, a satire revolving around an impoverished client who must sexually please his patron, Susanna M. Braund (1988: 174) has argued for a "sustained allusion" to Pomponius' *Prostibulum.* Therefore, we must not jump to conclusions when detecting parallels between the *Satyrica* and the tradition of Roman satire. For instance, Juvenal mentions a teacher fond of having sex with his students, a reference that might remind us of Eumolpus seducing the Pergamene youth (§§ 85–7) and offering to become Giton's *paedagogus et custos* (§ 94.2).[231] However, such a sexual teacher-student relationship is already attested to in the *Maccus Virgo* by Pomponius: *praeteriens vidi Dossenum in ludo reverecunditer | non docentem condiscipulum, verum scalpentem natis* ("As he walked by I saw Dossenus in school not respect-

228 *nisi nunc aliquis subito obviam occurrit mihi, | qui ocquiniscat, quo conpingam terminum in tutum locum* ("Unless someone suddenly comes up to me now to bend over, so I can plant my boundary-post in a safe place"). Pomponius fr. 124–5 Fras. = 125–6 Ribbeck. Trans. Williams (2010a: 30), slightly adapted.

229 *puerum mulieri praestare nemo nescit, quanto melior | sit cuius vox gallulascit, cuius iam ramus roborascit?* ("Everyone knows that a boy is superior to a woman, and how much better is one whose voice is breaking, whose branch is just growing"). Novius fr. 22–3 Frassinetti (cf. 20–1 Ribbeck with a slightly different reading). Trans. Williams (2010a: 23), slightly adapted.

230 On the close relationship between Roman satire and comedy, cf. n. 115.

231 Juv. 10.219–224: *quorum si nomina quaeras | promptius expediam, quot amaverit Oppia moechos | … quot discipulos inclinet Hamillus* ("If you ask their names, I could sooner state the number of Oppia's lovers, […] the number of pupils laid by Hamillus"). Trans. Braund (ed., trans. 2004).

fully teaching his fellow student but 'scratching' his butt").[232] These common elements demonstrate once again that we cannot neatly separate the satirical tradition from the comic one; at least in the case of the *fabula Atellana,* comedy's treatment of penetrated males is no less blunt than satire's.

This chapter started out from the common assumption that Petronius' parody of the 'idealising' novel includes the replacement of a male-female couple with a male-male one. We have seen that there are serious objections to this interpretation. Most importantly, the hypothesis that Petronius turns heteronormative narratives on their head is hardly compatible with the fact that several key characters – particularly Encolpius, Eumolpus, Trimalchio, and Habinnas – clearly display an interest in both sexes. Elaborating on this point, I argued that we do not need the 'idealising' novel to account for the treatment of male-male relationships in the *Satyrica.* The indiscriminate (and often excessive) desire of Petronius' characters has forerunners in Aristophanic lechers and particularly in the Plautine *senex amator.* In fact, it could be shown that all major constellations of male-male sex in the *Satyrica* – master-slave relationships, Greek-style pederasty, ridicule of penetrated males, teacher-student relationships – are attested in Graeco-Roman comedy well before Petronius' lifetime. It is significant that comedy's uninhibited approach to homoeroticism appears to have been particularly pronounced in the *fabula Atellana.* Seeing that Plautus' treatment of male-male sex may well be indebted to this form of 'popular' entertainment, it is tempting to speculate that Petronius tapped into the same strand of farcical comedy. Scarcity of evidence, however, should caution us against suspecting a case of direct reception. We cannot tell whether the extant fragments of the *fabula Atellana* are representative of the genre as a whole, not to speak of whether complete Atellan plays resembled the *Satyrica* in aspects more than superficial. Despite these reservations, it has emerged as a distinct possibility that Petronius' treatment of male-male relationships was inspired by the comic tradition. If anything, parody of the 'idealising' novel has to be considered a complementary element functioning on a strictly literary level.

232 Pomponius fr. 71–2 Frassinetti = 75–6 Ribbeck. Trans. Williams (2010a: 82), slightly adapted. Augier-Grimaud (2014: 122) mentions this Dossenus in her discussion of Eumolpus. Several Roman authors, such as Quintilian (*Inst.* 1.2.4) and Pliny (*Ep.* 3.3.4), are concerned with shielding young male students from sexually predatory teachers; cf. Williams (2010a: 81 f.) for further discussion.