in 4 is a parody of the work of the Fates as described by other poets.[3] It is only in its beginning two lines, "Haec ait et turpi convolvens stamina fuso / abrupit stolidae regalia tempora vitae," and specifically in the word *turpis*, that we may detect a continuation of the same scurrilous thought. Indeed one can well ask why the *fusus* ("spindle," but also "crossbar") is *turpis* ("dirty, filthy"). That the circumstances of Claudius' death involved the application of a certain apparatus to his lower end for giving him relief there can be little doubt. Suetonius tells us, "nonulli inter initia consopitum, deinde cibo affluente evomuisse omnia, repetitumque toxico, incertum pultine addito, cum velut exhaustum refici cibo oporteret, an immisso per clystera, ut quasi abundantia laboranti etiam hoc genere egestionis subveniretur" (*Div. Claud.* 44. 3). In actual life the *clyster* was applied in order to relieve the emperor from surfeit, but the application of the *fusus* by Clotho in the *Apocolocyntosis* should have as a result the unblocking of the *exitus* so that the *anima* could escape. The first two lines of the relatively lengthy poetical excursus of 4 leave no doubt that Clotho complied with Mercury's wish to bring an end to Claudius' travail, for "with these words she turns the threads with her filthy spindle and brings a sudden end to foolish regal life." The author does not explain just how the action of the Fate helped Claudius die; indeed he does not have to tell us more than contemporary mythological belief concedes. The threads of life turn with the spindle and Clotho breaks the thread of Claudius' life. This is what happens on the divine plane. On the human level things are a

bit more mundane and realistic. The poetical interlude between the act of Clotho and the death of Claudius functions as a sort of speciously dignified relief.[4] It is as though the poet does not see fit to tell everything and to explain how the *turpis fusus* came to Claudius' aid. Instead of a poem continuing in the same vein, we get thirty lines of mockingly lofty hexameters telling us in exalted language of the coming of a new golden age and of an Apollonian ruler who will grant the weary citizens *felicia saecula* (lines 23–24).

However, at the end of this interlude, we are brought abruptly down to earth where the laboring emperor *animam ebulliit* (4. 2). The curtain of modesty is raised and we are allowed to see the result of the workings of (if I may be allowed a pun) the fatal *fusus*. The author is not vague about the manner in which Claudius finished his days on earth, nor does he hesitate to tell us which *exitus* the emperor's *anima* took: "ultima vox eius haec inter homines audita est, cum majorem sonitum emisisset illa parte qua facilius loquebatur: 'vae me! puto concacavi me.'" From the satirical point of view, this is by no means an anticlimactic end for a man who had considered the publication of an "edictum quo veniam daret flatum crepitumque ventris in convivio emittendi" (Suet. *Div. Claud.* 32). Further, it conforms with the application of the *clyster* by a human hand and of the *turpis fusus* by a charitable divine hand.

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3. For some parallels in Ovid and Horace, see K. Scott, *AJP*, LII (1931), 66–68.

4. This is not to deny that there is something "solemn"

about this passage, as B. M. Marti maintains, *AJP*, LXXIII (1952), 29.

IRA PRIAPI

Petronian scholars cleave with extraordinary devotion to the idea that the wrath of Priapus was one of the basic plot motifs of the *Satyri-*

con; perhaps *the* motif.[1] Now the very notion that there was a precise structure and recurrent theme in the *Satyricon* is more a matter of

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1. For recent manifestations, see, e.g., J. P. Sullivan, *The "Satyricon" of Petronius* (London, 1968), pp. 92–93 and *passim*; P. G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel* (Cambridge, 1970),

pp. 76 f.; A. M. Cameron, "Myth and Meaning in Petronius: Some Modern Comparisons," *Latomus*, XXIX (1970), 397 f.

faith than of evidence.[2] But even if the notion be assumed, the claims of *ira Priapi* are really very weak.

The passage most often cited in support of the theory is the short poem declaimed by (presumably)[3] Encolpius at *Sat.* 139:

> Non solum me numen et implacabile fatum
> persequitur. prius Inachia Tirynthius ora
> exagitatus onus caeli tulit, ante profanam
> Laomedon gemini satiavit numinis iram,
> Iunonem Pelias sensit, tulit inscius arma
> Telephus et regnum Neptuni pavit Ulixes.
> me quoque per terras, per cani Nereos aequor
> Hellespontiaci sequitur gravis ira Priapi.

But the last two lines prove nothing. The bulk of the poem forms a register of divine angers against humans as epic themes; the speaker is doing no more than canonize himself as a Homeric hero. The mock literary flavor is given added spice by the fact that the last line is designed to recall a line of Virgil (*Georg.* 4. 111: "Hellespontiaci servet tutela Priapi"). Nor is it easy to think of weaker evidence from which to reconstruct the basic plot than the various poetic outbursts which stud the *Satyricon*. What fun one could have applying this criterion to some of the flourishes of, say, Eumolpus or Trimalchio! And, finally, the wrath of Priapus is the most obvious conceit for use by a randy picaresque hero temporarily frustrated by unwonted impotence.

This last point is cardinal. Impotence, usually occasioned by magic, was a common literary theme. Ovid devoted a poem to it (*Amores* 3. 7), and it is a feature of amatory poetry.[4] Elsewhere in the *Satyricon*, Encolpius was assaulted *diu multumque frustra* by a *cinaedus* (significantly, or by chance, this episode[5] also occurs in a sequence marked by textual corruption and the hovering presence of Priapus), and Eumolpus was almost reduced to impotence by the demands of his catamite in Asia.[6] It is as fair to say that Petronius is parodying (or simply using) a stock theme of erotic verse as to believe that he was sustaining a parody of the wrath of Poseidon.

True, Encolpius killed a sacred goose of Priapus (*Sat.* 137), and he had earlier seen something he should not have in the shrine of Priapus (*Sat.* 17). So Quartilla claimed, and Encolpius does not deny it. But he does reassure Quartilla that he will not betray the secret. Admittedly, he was not the sort to prize an oath too religiously, but *prima facie* he exhibits more respect (if only for reasons of self-preservation) than scorn for Priapus. And the sacred goose is not the *anser* to the question. Unless there is a great deal missing from the text, the killing of the goose is too close to the lament of *Sat.* 139 to give literal truth to the image of *ira Priapi* pursuing Encolpius over the seas.

Stress is often laid on the episode in which Encolpius' presence on Lichas' ship is betrayed by a dream in which Priapus appears to denounce Encolpius' whereabouts (*Sat.* 104). It is less commonly pointed out that Tryphaena immediately caps this by reporting her dream in which the presence aboard of Giton was revealed by a picture of Neptune. This balancing of dreams obviates any assumption that Priapus betrayed Encolpius out of his recurrent *ira*. Petronius is merely playing with the stock theme of revelatory dreams in epic literature (one thinks of the rash of these in *Aeneid* 2).

Finally, the fragment preserved by Sidonius Apollinaris, in which the Arbiter is connected with the gardens of Massilia and called *Hellespontiaco parem Priapo*,[7] is too isolated to prove anything. Certainly, it does not suggest any offense to the god. There is, in fact, no less likely candidate for the wrath of Priapus than Encolpius. His sight of what went on *in sacello Priapi* and the killing of the goose were both unintentional slights. And Priapus will not have been angry, as some used to claim, at Encolpius' taste for pederasty, for the god himself was traditionally a *puerorum amator*.[8]

2. This essentially goes back to E. Klebs, "Zur Komposition von Petronius' Satirae," *Philologus*, XLVII (1889), 623 f.

3. One must remember the extreme textual mutilations in the final sequences. I imagine it is Encolpius who declaims, but can we be sure?

4. One need only think of Catullus 67. 26–27, or Virro in Juvenal 9. The theme is frequent in the poems of the *Anth.*

Pal.: see, e.g., 5. 47, 11. 29, 11. 30, 12. 11, 12. 216, 12. 232, 12. 240. See G. Luck, *The Latin Love Elegy*[2] (London, 1969), pp. 92 f.; and K. F. Smith *ad* Tib. 1. 5. 41.

5. *Sat.* 23.

6. *Sat.* 86.

7. *Frag.* 4.

8. See K. F. Smith *ad* Tib. 1. 4. 3 for the references.

One has to be honestly negative and admit that no one can prove anything about the presumed plot of the *Satyricon*. But if anything has been more exaggerated by critics than the sexual element in the work, it is the supposed theme of parody of epic. For a picaresque novel to work at all, the hero has to get into all sorts of scrapes which compel flight and travel. Otherwise, there can be no action. Undeniably, Petronius derived much literary fun from comic perversions of literary themes. But they are much more important as details than as basic plot. It is still valid to believe that the *Satyricon* may have been a series of self-contained adventures; characters recurred, not a running motif.

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AN ASPECT OF THEOCRITEAN HUMOR

Amid the spate of recent works on Theocritus (in one of which he emerges as a modern symbolist), the part played by incongruity in his humor has received scant attention. This note looks at a few instances, involving literary allusion and parody.

Gorgo and Praxinoa may owe their timeless appeal to their being so very like the woman next door, but the careful reader will be periodically startled by Homeric or other erudite allusions of varying nature in their chatter. These are sufficiently far apart for the easy flow of the dialogue not to be impaired, but constant enough to warrant the assumption that Theocritus has consciously and deliberately chosen incongruity as an ingredient of his humor. The predilection of Praxinoa's husband for slums in outer suburbs earns him the description ὁ πάραρος τῆνος (15. 8) from her lips. In the literal sense of "joined beside," etc., παρήορος is well enough attested, but the metaphorical use, "out of one's mind," is remote from the former, and it is a comparative rarity. One's comprehension of the single occurrence in Homer (*Il.* 23. 603) is aided by the juxtaposition of ἀεσίφρων, and Archilochus (Frag. 56) added νόου for clarity. Praxinoa is the last person from whom one would expect the metaphorical use, and her unique contracted form πάρᾱρος is, furthermore, a splendid instance of πλατειάσδειν. Still complaining of her husband's ineptitude, Praxinoa ends a line (17) with ἀνὴρ τρισκαιδεκάπαχυς, after Homer's line-end δυωκαιεικοσίπηχυ (*Il.* 15. 678). The irrelevance of physical stature to skill in shopping makes Praxinoa's Homeric affectation appear all the more ridic-

ulous. Gorgo, too, has her share of trouble: Diocleidas has brought her home expensive, but inferior, fleeces. There will be no end to the washing and mending, ἔργον ἐπ' ἔργῳ (20). Had not Hesiod said something similar on what life was all about: ἔργον ἐπ' ἔργῳ ἐργάζεσθαι (*WD* 382)? Praxinoa's vindication of her broad accent (90 f.) contains not only a smattering of history and mythology, but in one line (94) φύη, an aorist optative based on δύη (*Od.* 18. 348), the unparalleled substitution of Melitodes for Persephone, which has not been satisfactorily explained, and the rare construction of καρτερός with the genitive, which is found in Archilochus (Frag. 26) and Theognis (480). And Gorgo makes her exit (149) with a pseudo-Homeric hiatus in χαῖρε, "Ἄδων (cf. χαῖρε, ἄναξ, *passim* in the *Homeric Hymns*). She has a little knowledge, but the digamma *is* tricky.

Theocritus' hillside as well as his back street may be the setting of such literary sport. The Alexandrians in general were fond of plays on variable vowel quantities, but τὰ μὴ καλὰ καλὰ πέφανται, Daphnis' warning to Polyphemus in *Idyll* 6. 19, comes closest by far to the Homeric original from which the affectation stems— Ἄρες, Ἄρες (*Il.* 5. 31 and 455). Aegon's athletic pretensions are humorously magnified in φαντί νιν Ἡρακλῆι βίην καὶ κάρτος ἐρίσδειν (4. 8). Here the Ionic form, retained from the Homeric tautology (cf. *Od.* 13. 143, *et pass.*), contrasts glaringly with Corydon's Doric ἐρίσδειν; and the herdsman has, furthermore, revived the Homeric construction of ἐρίζειν with the dative of the person and accusative of the thing (cf. *Il.* 9. 389; *Od.* 5. 213). Cory-