

et cociones, qui ad clamorem confluerant, nostram scilicet de more ridebant invidiam, quod pro illa parte vindica<ri vide>bant pretiosissimam vestem, pro hac pannuciam ne centonibus quidem bonis dignam. hinc Ascyrtos †pene† risum discussit, qui silentio facto 'videmus' inquit 'suam cuique rem esse carissimam; reddant nobis tunicam nostram et pallium suum recipiant' (*Sat.* 14.7 ff.).<sup>2</sup>

In the end Ascyrtos and Encolpius recover their *tunica* and the *pallium* is handed over to the rather questionable authorities, allegedly to await the pronouncement of legal arbitration.

So much for the narrative, however. What now of *pene* (*p(a)ene* ldmrtp<sup>1</sup>: *bene* p<sup>2</sup>)? Various suggestions have been made over the years,<sup>3</sup> including, fairly recently, *repente*<sup>4</sup> and *plane*.<sup>5</sup> No suggestion has yet proved acceptable to all, however, and so, influenced by *bene*,<sup>6</sup> I put forward yet another: *perite*. Not only is the word palaeographically easy,<sup>7</sup> but it also makes appealingly ironic sense. Firstly, Ascyrtos' words, though neatly balanced, are not particularly skilfully turned, instead sounding both trite and quasi-proverbial.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, as is emphasized by his current situation, his morals are dreadful. By reading *perite* one would allow the hint of a Petronian play on Cato, *Fil.* 14: 'orator est, Marce fili, vir bonus, dicendi peritus'. The great influence this passage had is clear from references to it elsewhere, e.g. in Quintilian (*Inst.* 12.1.1) and the Younger Pliny, *Ep.* 4.7.5, who quotes the verdict of Herennius Senecio on the *delator* Regulus: 'orator est vir malus dicendi imperitus'. While it would seem that in the *Satyricon* there survive no similar applications of irony to Ascyrtos, somewhat comparable is the irony with which Trimalchio's intellectual efforts are received by Encolpius, e.g. at *Sat.* 56.7 'iam etiam philosophos de negotio deiciebat'.

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<sup>2</sup> The text is that of K. Müller's 1995 Teubner.

<sup>3</sup> For some early ones, see F. Bücheler's apparatus (Berlin, 1862).

<sup>4</sup> K. Müller (Munich, 1961 and 1965); cf. P. G. Walsh's translation (Oxford, 1996): 'at this juncture, Ascyrtos suddenly broke into their laughter'.

<sup>5</sup> Printed by J. C. Giardina and R. C. Melloni (Turin, 1995), following the proposal of J. Delz in his review of K. Müller (Munich, 1961) in *Gnomon* 34 (1962), 681.

<sup>6</sup> Printed e.g. by Bücheler, ed. cit., and A. Ernout (Paris, 1950).

<sup>7</sup> For the easy confusion of *ri* and *n*, acknowledged by I. F. Gronovius's conjecture *periculum* (see the apparatus of Bücheler, ed. cit.), cf. e.g. R's *Veri afri* for *Venafri* at Scrib. Larg. 268. Although the adverb *perite* does not survive elsewhere in Petronius, the adjective *peritus* is used (of a skilful fowler) at *Sat.* 109.7.

<sup>8</sup> With 'suam . . . carissimam', cf. V. Fl. 5.643 'est amor et rerum cunctis tutela suarum'.

#### A SKILFUL PETRONIAN SIMILE: *frigidior rigente bruma* (*SAT.* 132.8.5)

In a small verse piece from the *Satiricon*, Encolpius narrates how, after having been unable to satisfy beautiful Circe, he tried in vain to cut his penis off (132.8); in absolute terror, his *mentula* finds shelter in his belly's folds to escape punishment:

Namque illa metu frigidior rigente bruma  
Confugerat in uiscera mille operta rugis. (5–6)

Critics do not seem to have paid the required attention to the phrase *metu frigidior rigente bruma* (5), qualifying Encolpius' penis.<sup>1</sup> The text offers no major difficulties of understanding: since the time of Livius Andronicus,<sup>2</sup> Latin poets often use words belonging to the vocabulary of cold and, therefore, of winter in passages dealing with fear—this is the well-known *topos* of cold fear. This usage, which is not peculiar to Roman writers, occurs from the beginning of Greek literature;<sup>3</sup> among Latin authors, though present in prose,<sup>4</sup> it is particularly frequent in poetry.<sup>5</sup> We should note that the formula *frigidior bruma* (= *frigidior hieme*) looks like a proverb,<sup>6</sup> but that Petronius seems to be the first author to have employed it:<sup>7</sup> he also uses it in a prose passage of the *Satyricon* (19.3), where Encolpius, stricken with fear, says he is 'colder than a Gallic winter' (*frigidior hieme Gallica*).<sup>8</sup>

Yet, in Encolpius' poem, the hint *metu frigidior rigente bruma*, which is clearly hyperbolic and nearly fills a whole verse, is more significant than it appears at first sight and goes beyond simple ornament. The comparison of the hero's *mentula* to the *bruma* is heavy with symbolic meaning and provokes several readings, which, far from being mutually exclusive, are complementary to each other. To discern all its nuances, it is essential to refer to some particular aspects of the Latin conception of winter. Thus, one of winter's features that Latin poets like to record is its infertility;<sup>9</sup> even if they occasionally mention its natural fruits,<sup>10</sup> they regard it as the sterile season above all. From this point of view, the comparison between Encolpius' penis and the effect of winter cold (*bruma*) may be understood as a subtle reminder that it has proved itself equally unproductive in Circe's bed. In a similar way, in Catullus' *Carmen* 63, the winter landscape in which the castrated Attis must live (*apud niuem et ferarum gelida stabula*, 53 and *algida Idae niue amicta loca*, 70) symbolizes his sterility (*ego uir sterilis ero?*, 69).

But winter must also have brought to ancient readers' mind the idea of old age, since a long tradition, inherited from Pythagoreanism, compared it to the fourth

<sup>1</sup> Besides editions and standard works, see esp., on Petronius' poems, E. Thomas, *Pétrone* (Paris, 1912?), 75–91; H. Stubbe, *Die Verseinlagen im Petron* (Leipzig, 1933); A. D. Leeman, 'Petronius als Dichter', *Hermeneus* 40 (1968), 65–9; P. B. Corbett, *Petronius* (New York, 1970), 112–5; A. F. Sochatoff, 'Imagery in the poems of the *Satyricon*', *CJ* 65 (1970), 340–4; P. Soverini, 'Il problema delle teorie retoriche e poetiche di Petronio', *ANRW* 2.32.3 (1985), 1706–79, esp. 1738–79.

<sup>2</sup> *Fr.* 30 (Blänsdorf): *cor frixit prae pauore*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g. Hom. *Il.* 5.740; Hes. *Th.* 936; Aesch. *Seven* 834.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Varr. *L. L.* 6.45.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. e.g. Pl. *Ps.* 1215; Lucr. 3. 305; Virg. *Aen.* 3.29; Ov. *F.* 1.97; Sen. *Ph.* 1053; Luc. 1.246; Petr. *Fr.* 48.4 (Ernout: *frigidus . . . horror*); Val. Fl. 3.577–8 (*pectora . . . I congelat hiberni uultus Iouis*); Sil. Ital. 6.170; Stat. *Th.* 10.622.

<sup>6</sup> See A. Otto, *Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten der Römer* (Hildesheim, 1962 [= 1890]), 59 and additions in M. C. Sutphen, *Nachträge zu A. Otto Sprichwörter und sprichwörtliche Redensarten der Römer* (Darmstadt, 1968), 141.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., later, Tert. *Marc.* 1.1.4 (*hieme frigidior*) and Aldh. *Ep. de metris* 14D (Migne 89.198: *frigidior brumis*).

<sup>8</sup> On cold Gallic winters, cf. Cic. *Fam.* 8.15.1–2; Caes. *B. G.* 4.20.1; 8.5.4; Liv. 7.25.3; Diod. 5.25.2; 26.2; Plut. *Caes.* 25.4.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Virg. *G.* 3.352–3; Ov. *Ex P.* 1.2.23; 4.10.31; *Rem.* 188; *Tr.* 4.1.58; *Nux* 127–30; *Priap.* 84.2–4 (Bücheler–Heraeus); Sen. *H. O.* 1577; Luc. 4.108; Mart. 8.68.10 (*sterilis . . . hiems*) and the whole epigram. In prose, cf. Varr. *L. L.* 5.61.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Lucr. 5.940–1 (arbutus berries); Virg. *Buc.* 10.20 (acorns); *G.* 1.305–6 (acorns, laurel and myrtle berries, olives); 2.519–20 (olives, acorns, arbutus berries); *Priap.* 85.9 (B.-H.: olives); Sen. *Epigr.* 3.4 (Prato = A. L. 237.4 [Riese]: olives).

season:<sup>11</sup> by means of this simile, Petronius indirectly likened Encolpius, a young man, in the prime of life, to an old man, stricken in years. The prose development that follows Encolpius' verses confirms such an analysis, since the character tells there how disappointed he is to have seen his flourishing years betrayed and defeated by *old age's languor* (132.10: *Hoc de te merui . . . ut traduces annos primo florentes uigore, senectaeque ultimae mihi lassitudinem imponeres?*). This is not all: Latin thought likewise associated winter with death<sup>12</sup> and, in this respect, the assimilation of Encolpius' numbed penis to the *bruma* may become an image for the sexual death (impotence) which he experienced in front of Circe. This reading of the passage is corroborated by a phrase occurring previously in the *Satiricon*, when a defective penis is similarly called frozen with a thousand deaths (20.2: *inguina . . . mille iam mortibus frigida*); another confirmation is to be found in the sequel of Encolpius' tale itself, where the *mortal* fright that has caught his penis is taken into account (*mortifero timore*, 8).

Moreover it has been established that Encolpius' poem has a parodic and humorous flavour,<sup>13</sup> so it may be consistent to think that our image contributes in some way to that aspect of Petronius' composition. In fact, the words *rigente bruma*, which probably travesty Lucan's manner,<sup>14</sup> must be a comic allusion to the *mentula's* incapacity to *rigere*, even when seized with cold:<sup>15</sup> Encolpius' *mentula* is frigid (*frigida*), but not rigid (*rigens*), contrary to the *bruma*, which has both characteristics. We should not forget that the *Satiricon* is a Priapic novel,<sup>16</sup> where the *dramatis personae* never stop competing one with another in sexual ardour, nor that Encolpius, further on (133.2–4), will address Priapus, believing that the god is responsible for his own failure with Circe. Thus the mention of *bruma* carries a further conceit. Petronius is here turning Encolpius into an *anti-Priapus*<sup>17</sup> and the reference to winter emphasizes this intention: one recurring image in Latin Priapic literature<sup>18</sup> presented the god's ithyphallic statue facing bad weather or wintry inclemencies, a statue which kept its phallus insolently

<sup>11</sup> Cf. e.g. Hipp. *Hum.* 11; Arist. *G.A.* 5.3.784a (17–19); Pl. *Merc.* 984; *Trin.* 398; Hor. *C.* 4.13.12; Ov. *M.* 2.30; 15.199–213; Galen 16.26, 345, 424 (Kühn); Diog. *L.* 8.10. Cf. also works of art representing winter as an old man or woman: wall painting from the *Domus Aurea* (Rome, A.D. 64–9), mosaic from La Chebba (second century), mosaic from El Djem (third century). See G. M. A. Hanfmann, *The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks* (Cambridge, 1951), 1, 134; F. G. Maier, 'Winteridylle? Erfahrung und Bild des Winters im Altertum', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 299 (23 Dez. 1988), 36; P.-J. Dehon, *Hiems Latina* (Brussels, 1993), 28.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. e.g. Virg. *G.* 4.507–27; Hor. *C.* 4.7.9–16; Ov. *M.* 2.822–8. See P.-J. Dehon, 'Letalis hiems', in Gh. Viré (ed.), *Grec et Latin en 1985 et 1986* (Brussels, 1986), 145–53 and Dehon (n. 11), 29 and 85; cf. V. Todoranova, 'Winter in Roman poetry', *Philologia* 8–9 (1981), 57–65 and Maier (n. 11).

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. M. Rat, *Pétrone. Le Satiricon* (Paris, undated), 555–6; J. P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius* (London, 1968), 217–8; C. Stöcker, *Humor bei Petron* (Diss., Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1969), 141; H. D. Rankin, *Petronius the Artist* (The Hague, 1971), 48.

<sup>14</sup> 1.17 (*bruma rigens*); cf. also Man. 2.190–1 (*rigentem l . . . hiemem*). The association of *bruma* with *rigere*, somewhat systematic in Lucan (cf. again 6.478 and 9.874), may have caught Petronius' eye.

<sup>15</sup> In verse 2, it was called *languidior coliculi . . . thyrsos*; cf. Cat. 67.21, where a *mentula* is described as *languidior tenera . . . beta*.

<sup>16</sup> See V. Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature under Nero* (London and New York, 1997), 212–3, who rightly compares Encolpius' first person narrative to that used in the *Priapea*, and R. Martin, *Le Satyricon. Pétrone* (Paris, 1999), 34–9.

<sup>17</sup> For Rudich (n. 16), 213, the person of Encolpius may be considered in general as 'Priapus' own satirical mirror image . . . a very frustrated one, plagued by the most un-Priapic sorrow, impotence'.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Tib. 1.4.1–6; *Priap.* 63.4–6 (note *Rigetque dura barba uincta crystallo*, 6); 84.3–4; 85.9 (B.-H.).

erect—unlike Encolpius’—in all circumstances, even in the depths of frosty winter. In our text, by means of an implicit parallel, Petronius wished his readers to recognize this traditional and familiar image, but chose to reverse it, producing a sort of negative cliché.

Here are ambiguity and complexity developed with real skill from a modest simile which, like the best Virgilian models,<sup>19</sup> is interdependent with the context and shows how coherent the composition is. Only three words, but one has to dwell on them if one is not to miss either the author’s nuances or his wit. Petronius is a virtuoso with language, a lover of the written effect, a creator who leaves nothing to chance.<sup>20</sup>

#### ADDENDUM

By the time this paper was ready for print, a new study of Petronius, *Satyricon* 132 by P. Murgatroyd had been published in *Latomus* 59 (2000), 346–52; though clearly conscious of the importance of some themes developed here (impotence, death, old age), the critic does not seem to have noticed the crucial part played by the winter image in this respect (cf. 347–8).

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<sup>19</sup> See e.g. R. A. Hornsby, *Patterns of Action in the Aeneid* (Iowa, 1970), esp. 84–5.

<sup>20</sup> See Martin (n. 16), 146, 151, and 166–8.

#### APION, THE JEWS, AND HUMAN SACRIFICE

In his account of Apion’s anti-Semitic slanders, Josephus reports (and refutes) a particularly graphic one involving the capture of strangers, their imprisonment in the Temple, and their ultimate offering as human sacrifice (*C. Ap.* 2.89–111).<sup>1</sup> It has long been acknowledged that many themes in Apion’s story are folkloristic in nature and can be found in the tales of many peoples.<sup>2</sup> True as this is, I think that a specific source of influence can be usefully recognized.

We know Apion’s malicious tale only from Josephus and so cannot determine how accurate Josephus’ representation is and whether he may have made any adaptations better to suit his own tendentious purposes. Thus, we must accept the story as it is.

In one particular feature, Apion’s story deviates from a folkloristic pattern. It is clearly a story with emphasis on the Greeks. Josephus introduces it with the words, ‘Apion tells another story, about Greeks’ (2.89). In his ensuing polemic Josephus remarks the Greek-centeredness of Apion’s story (2.99). And the story itself stresses the Greekness of the victim (2.95: The Jews, we are told, took ‘an oath of enmity toward the Greeks’).

Thus, I suspect that at least on one level Apion’s tale has a Greek literary source—and it is easy to identify. Euripides’ *Iphigeneia among the Taurians* is the story of a temple-priestess who captures and imprisons Greek strangers for the purpose of human sacrifice in the temple.<sup>3</sup> It seems likely that the particular theme of the capture

<sup>1</sup> The bare statement that the Jews offered human sacrifice is already found in Theophrastus. See W. W. Fortenbaugh et al. (edd.), *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for his Life, Writings, Thought and Influence* 2 (Leiden, 1993), 422–3.

<sup>2</sup> See especially E. Bickermann, *MGWJ* 71 (1927), 171ff.

<sup>3</sup> See especially *I. T.* 38–41, 72, 247, 337–9. Compare too the particularly grisly account at *Hdt.* 4.103.