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PLATO IN PETRONIUS: PETRONIUS *IN PLATANONA**

PLATO IN PETRONIUS

Petronius' *Satyrica* is an extremely allusive and intertextual work,[1] and among the many authors he draws on is Plato.[2] There are three sections in particular where his influence has been noticed. His *Symposium* is widely held to be an important model for the *Cena Trimalchionis* – the Dinner of Trimalchio (26–78): the episodic nature of the feast and the late arrival of the inebriated Habinnas, which recalls Alcibiades' drunken entry, are two of the factors to which attention is most commonly drawn.[3] It has also been shown that that the story of the Pergamene boy (85–7), in which Eumolpus gets more than he bargained for, is to a large extent a comic inversion of the famous account Alcibiades gives in Plato's *Symposium* of his unsuccessful pursuit of Socrates and the chaste night he spent with him (*Symp*. 217a2–219e5).[4] Both this brief narrative and the much larger *Cena Trimalchionis*

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[1] See, for instance, A. Collignon, *Étude sur Pétrone* (Paris, 1892); E. Courtney, 'Parody and literary allusion in Menippean satire', *Philologus* 106 (1962), 86–100; J.P. Sullivan, *The* Satyricon *of Petronius: A Literary Study* (London, 1968); P.G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel* (Cambridge, 1970); A. Cameron, 'Myth and meaning in Petronius: some modern comparisons', *Latomus* 29 (1970), 397–425; C. Gill, 'The sexual episodes in the *Satyricon*', *CPh* 68 (1973), 172–85; C. Panayotakis, Theatrum Arbitri*: Theatrical Elements in the* Satyrica *of Petronius* (Leiden, 1995); G.B. Conte, *The Hidden Author: An Interpretation of Petronius'* Satyricon (Berkeley, 1996); C.M. Connors, *Petronius the Poet: Verse and Literary Tradition in the* Satyricon (Cambridge, 1998); E. Courtney, *A Companion to Petronius* (Oxford, 2001); P. Habermehl, *Petronius:* Satyrica *79–141. Ein philologisch-literarischer Kommentar. Bd. 1:* Sat*. 79–110* (Berlin, 2006); J.R. Morgan, 'Petronius and Greek literature', in J.R.W. Prag and I.D. Repath (edd.), *Petronius: A Handbook* (Chichester, 2009), 32–47; and C. Panayotakis, 'Petronius and the Roman literary tradition', in Prag and Repath (edd.), 48–64.

[2] Plato is in fact mentioned towards the beginning of the extant portion of the novel (2.5). Socrates is mentioned or referred to at 5, 128.7, and 140.14, for the second of which see below.

[3] See A. Lehmann, 'Zu Petronius', *PhW* 20 (1900), 925–6; Sullivan (n. 1), 58, 59, and 125; A. Cameron, 'Petronius and Plato', *CQ* 19 (1969), 367–70; Walsh (n. 1), 40, n. 1; F. Dupont, *Le plaisìr et la loi: Du Banquet de Platon au* Satiricon (Paris, 1977); D. Gagliardi, *Il comico in Petronio* (Palermo, 1980), 64, and 82–3; N. Slater, *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore, 1990), 75; B. Boyce, *The Language of the Freedmen in Petronius'* Cena Trimalchionis (Leiden, 1991), 87–8; F. Bessone, 'Discorsi dei liberti e parodia del "Simposio" platonico nella "Cena Trimalchionis"', *MD* 30 (1993), 63–86; Conte (n. 1), 120–1; Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 103–4, 109–10 and 123; and Morgan (n. 1, 2009), 38–9. Another allusion by Petronius to part of Alcibiades' speech will be looked at below.

[4] See especially D.B. McGlathery, 'Reversals of Platonic love in Petronius' *Satyricon*', in D.H.J. Larmour, P.A. Miller and C. Platter (edd.), *Rethinking Sexuality: Foucault and Classical*

contain specific points of contact, but also depend on their intertexts on a more extensive, structural level, and this combination of individual allusions and allusive patterns will be important for the argument I wish to make. Thirdly, just before the text breaks off, a character with the name Gorgias appears. Assuming the ascription of the final extant speech to him is correct, this Gorgias encourages his fellow legacy hunters not to be shy of cannibalism. The sophistic persuasion techniques which he uses, and the connection between rhetoric and cookery, have led to the plausible argument that he was named after the historical sophist from Leontini, and with Plato's portrayal of him in mind.[5]

THE CIRCE EPISODE

The section of the *Satyrica* in which I shall argue there is sustained and significant Platonic intertextuality is the Circe episode (126–39). Circe herself does not appear after 132.6, and I shall concentrate on 126–32, since it is in Encolpius' dealings with her and the locations in which they meet that Petronius makes play with Plato. This episode has received a considerable amount of attention from scholars, a significant part of which has been concerned with the dense texture of allusion; indeed, Walsh says that 'This is at once the most extensively scabrous and the most literary episode in the *Satyricon*'.[6] The chief models include Homer, Ovid, *Amores* 3.7, Virgil, comedy and mime, and, some argue, a Greek novel tradition of which the extant texts are later examples.[7] As elsewhere in Petronius the tone of the allusions is often not so much parodic, as one which allows the author both to draw comparisons between Encolpius and the situations or characters to which he alludes, and also to sabotage his protagonist by making him provide ironically incongruous interpretations of his own adventures through the narration he gives.[8] On the allusiveness of this section Panayotakis comments that: 'This series of events (sc. the adventures at Croton) is perhaps the most elaborately constructed part of the surviving novel, because it includes direct and indirect references to such a wide range of literary genres which are so densely connected to one another

Antiquity (Princeton, 1998), 204–27; also Cameron (n. 3), 369; R. Dimundo, 'Da Socrate a Eumolpo', *MD* 10–11 (1983), 255–65; G. Sommariva, 'Eumolpo – un "Socrate Epicureo" nel *Satyricon*', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di lettere e filosofia* 14 (1984), 25–58, at 25–6; R.L. Hunter, 'Education at the margins', in A.H. Sommerstein and C. Atherton (edd.), *Education in Greek Fiction* (Bari, 1997), 191–205, at 200–5; Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 138; and Habermehl (n. 1), 93–4.

[5] See in particular Conte (n. 1), 134–9; also Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 212–13, and H.J. Shey, 'Petronius and Plato's *Gorgias*', *CB* 47 (1971), 81–4, who argues for a more extensive engagement with Plato's *Gorgias* in the *Satyrica*. Cf. E. Courtney, 'Petronius and the underworld', *AJPh* 108 (1987), 408–10, who argues for an influence of Plato's *Protagoras* on the end of the *Cena Trimalchionis*.

[6] Walsh (n. 1), 106. For the Circe episode as a whole or aspects thereof, with emphasis on its literary texture, see Courtney (n. 1, 1962), 99–100; Sullivan (n. 1), 67–76; Walsh (n. 1), 42, and 105–7; M. Pacchieni, '*Nota Petroniana*: L'episodio di Circe e Polieno (capp. 126–131; 134)', *Bollettino di Studi Latini* 6 (1976), 79–90; D. Blickman, 'The romance of Encolpius and Circe', *PSN* 17.1–2 (1987), 6–9; P. Fedeli, 'Encolpio – Polieno', *MD* 20–1 (1988), 9–32; Panayotakis (n. 1), 161–74; Conte (n. 1), 91–100; Connors (n. 1), 39–47; and Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 190–207.

[7] Assuming, that is, a Neronian dating for the *Satyrica*.

[8] See Conte (n. 1), *passim*.

that it is impossible to evaluate their function in the text if they are examined separately.'[9] Nevertheless, since so many of the allusions have been noticed and have been discussed to a greater or lesser extent, it does not seem too unreasonable to concentrate on another set which has received hardly any attention in order to examine its extent and function, although its connection to references to other genres, in particular Homeric epic, will feature at certain points.

SOCRATES IN THE CIRCE EPISODE

What I should like to do with this section of the text, then, is pick out another thread of the allusive tapestry, or rather take hold of one which is already loose and pull it out further, for there is already a clear and well-known reference to Plato in this episode. At the end of 128 Encolpius has already been stricken with impotence, and Giton, his occasional beloved, has, we presume, although the fragmentary nature of the text makes this only an inference, spent the night with him. Giton complains to Encolpius:

itaque hoc nomine tibi gratias ago, quod me Socratica fide diligis. non tam intactus Alcibiades in praeceptoris sui lectulo iacuit.

So in his name I thank you that you love me with Socratic integrity. Alcibiades did not lie so untouched in his master's bed. (128.7)

This recalls the account of Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium* which I have already noted as a model for an earlier narrative in the *Satyrica*: the story of the Pergamene boy (85–7). At the end of this dialogue Alcibiades delivers a speech in praise of Socrates, the central section of which concerns Alcibiades' relationship with him and his unsuccessful attempts to seduce the older man (*Symp*. 217a2–219e5).[10] Alcibiades recounts how he finally persuaded Socrates to spend the night at his house, misconstrued Socrates' words, and lay down next to him under the same cloak; despite this, and spending the entire night there, Socrates did not take advantage of him. He then, at the climax of this account, swears to the assembled company, whom he has cast as jurors judging Socrates' arrogance:

εὖ γὰρ ἴστε μὰ θεούς, μὰ θεάς, οὐδὲν περιττότερον καταδεδαρθηκὼς ἀνέστην μετὰ Σωκράτους, ἢ εἰ μετὰ πατρὸς καθηῦδον ἢ ἀδελφοῦ πρεσβυτέρου.

Know well, by the gods and goddesses, that having slept with Socrates, I got up having undergone nothing more than if I had slept with my father or older brother. (Pl. *Symp*. 219c6–d2)

Giton shares Alcibiades' frustration, although not his subsequent admiration of his elder; Encolpius, on the other hand, hardly wants to act in a chaste and Socratic fashion. The import of this joke is pretty obvious;[11] however, it should not be taken

[9] Panayotakis (n. 1), 161.

[10] See K.J. Dover, *Plato: Symposium* (Cambridge, 1980), 164–5, for the comic paradox of an attractive young man failing to seduce an older admirer.

[11] To the extent that it is often afforded little attention by scholars: see e.g. Sullivan (n. 1), 235; Sommariva (n. 4), 27; Hunter (n. 4), 201–2; J.M. McMahon, Paralysin Cave*: Impotence,*

as an isolated comment, but rather read in context, and it is important to note for the ensuing discussion how directly Encolpius is compared with Socrates here. The disappointing encounter with Giton at the end of 128 is sandwiched in the wider episode of Encolpius' liaisons with Circe, and I think further Platonic elements are present in this episode and that the Platonic influence reaches deeper than one flippant remark, which itself acts as an explicit prompt to investigation. In my argument below I shall follow the narrative order of this episode, to try to replicate the way in which Petronius reveals and plays with his Platonic intertext.

PETRONIUS IN *PLATANONA*

The episode begins at 126 as Chrysis tells Encolpius, who is passing himself off as a slave with the name of Polyaenus, that he will make a lady very happy. This is not her, but her mistress, Circe, since she herself prefers *equites*. A delighted Encolpius asks Chrysis to bring her mistress into a particular spot:

procedentibus deinde longius iocis rogavi ancillam ut in platanona perduceret dominam.

Then as our jokes continued I asked the maid to bring her mistress into the grove of plane trees. (126.12)

This acts as a preliminary indicator of what kind of scenery it is in which Circe and Encolpius will play out their trysts, since the grove of plane trees, I should argue, is an allusion to the setting of Plato's *Phaedrus*.[12] There are two passages from towards the beginning of the dialogue which are important for this, and it is worth quoting both in full since more than one aspect of the setting will feature, and by doing so the stress laid on them, and especially the plane tree, will become clear:

(Phaedrus) Where would you like us to sit down and read?
(Socrates) Let's turn off here and go along the Ilissus; then we'll sit down quietly wherever you think best.
(Phaedrus) It seems it's just as well I happened to be barefoot; you always are. So we can very easily go along the stream (*τὸ ὑδάτιον*) with our feet in the water; and it will not be unpleasant, particularly at this time of year and at this time of day.
(Socrates) So lead on, and keep a lookout for a place for us to sit down.
(Phaedrus) Well then, you see that very tall plane tree (*ἐκείνην τὴν ὑψηλοτάτην πλάτανον*)?
(Socrates) I do indeed.
(Phaedrus) There's shade and a moderate breeze there, and grass to sit on, or lie on, if we like (*Ἔκεῖ σκιά τ' ἐστὶν καὶ πνεῦμα μέτριον, καὶ πόα καθίζεσθαι ἢ ἂν βουλώμεθα κατακλιθῆναι*).
(Socrates) Please lead on.

Perception, and Text in the Satyrica *of Petronius* (Leiden, 1998), 212; and Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 194. McGlathery (n. 4), 216, has a little more, linking it in with his treatment of the Pergamene boy tale.

[12] Pacchieni (n. 6), 83 n. 35, notes *Phdr*. 230b, as well as other comparisons which are given a little more prominence in the main text, and M. Scarsi, *Petronio:* Satyricon (Florence, 1996), 214–15, n. 5, notes the similarity to Plato's scene; neither, however, develops this.

(Phaedrus) Tell me, Socrates, wasn't it from somewhere just here that Boreas is said to have seized Oreithuia from the Ilissus?
(Socrates) Yes, so it's said.
(Phaedrus) Well, was it from here? The water of the stream certainly looks attractively pure and clear (*χαρίεντα γοῦν καὶ καθαρὰ καὶ διαφανῆ τὰ ὑδάτια φαίνεται*), and just right for young girls to play beside it. (*Phdr*. 228e4–229b9)[13]

(Socrates) By Hera, a fine stopping-place! This plane tree is very spreading and tall (*ἥ τε γὰρ πλάτανος αὕτη μάλ' ἀμφιλαφής τε καὶ ὑψηλή*), and the tallness and shadiness (*τὸ σύσκιον*) of the agnus are quite lovely; and being in full flower it seems to make the place smell as sweetly as it could. The stream, too, flows very attractively under the plane, with the coolest water (*ἥ τε αὖ πηγὴ χαριεστάτη ὑπὸ τῆς πλατάνου ῥεῖ μάλα ψυχροῦ ὕδατος*), to judge by my foot. From the figurines and statuettes, the spot seems to be sacred to some Nymphs and to Achelous. Then again, if you like, how welcome it is, the freshness of the place, and very pleasant; it echoes with a summery shrillness to the cicadas' song (*ὑπηχεῖ τῷ τῶν τεττίγων χορῷ*). Most delightful of all is the matter of the grass, growing on a gentle slope and thick enough to be just right to rest one's head upon (*πάντων δὲ κομψότατον τὸ τῆς πόας, ὅτι ἐν ἠρέμα προσάντει ἱκανὴ πέφυκε κατακλινέντι τὴν κεφαλὴν παγκάλως ἔχειν*). (*Phdr*. 230b2–c5)

The presence of the plane tree is heavily emphasized in both the conversation and Socrates' ironically enthusiastic speech,[14] and it dominates the scene.[15] This famous setting is used frequently, in one way or another, in Greco-Roman literature,[16] and it can be seen from many of the instances that the plane tree became totemic and was used to evoke and symbolize the erotic and rhetorical concerns of Plato's dialogue.[17]

[13] Translations of the *Phaedrus* are taken from C.J. Rowe, *Plato: Phaedrus* (Warminster, 1986).

[14] See Rowe (n. 13), 141, ad loc., for the humour here.

[15] The plane tree is also brought to our attention when Phaedrus presses Socrates to respond to Lysias' speech, something that Socrates is apparently reluctant to do. Eventually Phaedrus finds the means by which to force Socrates to do as he wishes: (Phaedrus) 'I swear to you – but by whom, by which god? What about this plane tree here (*ἢ βούλει τὴν πλάτανον ταυτηνί*)?' (*Phdr*. 236d10–e1). Cf. the impetus to discussion provided by the cicadas in the plane tree and Socrates' story about them (258e6–259d8; see below on this in relation to Petronius), and Socrates' repeated references to the dialogue's backdrop which are scattered throughout the text.

[16] Pre-Petronian instances include Theocritus, *Idyll* 7, with R.L. Hunter, *Theocritus: A Selection* (Cambridge, 1999), 14, and 145–6; Cicero, *De oratore* (1.28–9 – see below) and *De legibus* (2.6–7); and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Demosthenes* (5–7, and 32). It seems likely that the setting for Narcissus' demise in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (3.407–510) is designed to recall the Phaedran scene: see S. Bartsch, *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire* (Chicago, 2006), 84–96, on the engagement of Ovid's treatment of this myth with the philosophical erotics of the *Phaedrus*. For the appropriation of Plato's famous scene in later literature, see M.B. Trapp, 'Plato's *Phaedrus* in second-century Greek literature', in D.A. Russell (ed.), *Antonine Literature* (Oxford, 1990), 141–73.

[17] It is no coincidence that Cicero uses the Phaedran setting towards the beginning of *De oratore*, since rhetoric is the principal theme of the second half of Plato's dialogue; see also A.A. Long, 'Cicero's Plato and Aristotle', in J.G.F. Powell (ed.), *Cicero the Philosopher* (Oxford, 1995), 37–61, at 43–4. In many cases the Phaedran setting is used as a place to talk, and the topic of conversation is frequently love: see Plutarch, *Amatorius* 749a, Ps.-Lucian, *Amores* (12, 18 and 31), Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Cleitophon* (1.2.3 and 1.15). In the first of these the setting is referred to explicitly and dismissively as a commonplace, presumably showing that emulation of it was well established by the end of the first century A.D.

It is, of course, a fair question to ask whether the reader of Petronius would think of, or was supposed to think of, Plato's *Phaedrus* when they came across the mention of a grove of plane trees at *Sat*. 126.12. Leaving aside the awareness of Platonic influence raised by the per/inversions of Plato's *Symposium* in the *Cena Trimalchionis* and in the story of the Pergamene boy, and ignoring for now the point that this is merely the first indication of the physical scenery of this episode and that the evidence does accumulate, there is another factor to be considered, highlighted in the following passage of Cicero:

dicebat tum Scaevolam, duobus spatiis tribusve factis, dixisse: Cur non imitamur, Crasse, Socratem illum, qui est in Phaedro Platonis? Nam me haec tua platanus admonuit, quae non minus ad opacandum hunc locum patulis est diffusa ramis, quam illa, cuius umbram secutus est Socrates, quae mihi videtur non tam 'ipsa acula', quae describitur, quam Platonis oratione crevisse: et, quod ille durissimis pedibus fecit, ut se abiceret in herbam, atque ita illa, quae philosophi divinitus ferunt esse dicta, loqueretur, id meis pedibus certe concedi est aequius. Tum Crassum: Immo vero commodius etiam; pulvinosque poposcisse, et omnes in eis sedibus, quae erant sub platano, consedisse dicebat.

He said that Scaevola, after taking two or three turns, said, 'Crassus, why do we not imitate Socrates as he appears in the *Phaedrus* of Plato? For this plane tree of yours has suggested this to me, which with its spreading branches casts as deep a shade over this spot as that one whose shade Socrates sought and which I think owes its eminence less to the 'little rivulet' described by Plato than to his language; and what Socrates did, whose feet were thoroughly hardened, when he threw himself down on the grass and so began the talk which philosophers say was divine – such ease surely may more reasonably be conceded to my own feet.' 'No', answered Crassus, 'but we will make things more comfortable still', whereupon he called for cushions, and they all sat down together on the benches that were under the plane tree. (*De oratore* 1.28–9)[18]

This is a useful comparandum for a number of reasons, not least the fact that Cicero is as concerned, if not more so, with emulation as with evocation, and with marking his difference from Plato as with establishing his debt:[19] no lying on grass, but comfortable cushions on benches for the interlocutors![20] Petronius' distance from the tenor of his source, however, will not be so slight, nor his attitude towards it so obviously reverential. Yet there is one small part in this Ciceronian passage that is particularly suggestive, and whose presence helps us to see a further clue as to what Petronius is doing at 126.12 and beyond: *Cur non imitamur, Crasse, Socratem illum, qui est in Phaedro Platonis? Nam me haec tua platanus admonuit* ('Crassus, why do we not imitate Socrates as he appears in the *Phaedrus* of Plato? For this plane tree of yours has suggested this to me.'). It is not just the presence of the plane tree and its shade which suggests to Scaevola that they imitate Socrates, I should argue, but also the word *platanus* itself, which is close, phonologically and textually, to *Platonis*.[21] Cicero here is exploiting the possibility of wordplay between Plato's name and the word for the tree whose presence at discussions

[18] The translation is from the Loeb edition, slightly modified.

[19] Cf. the allusion to the setting of the *Phaedrus* in Cicero's *De legibus* (2.6–7), which occurs as the second book of the dialogue is getting under way.

[20] It is also worth noting that the Phaedran elements evoked here – the plane tree, shade, stream and lying down on grass – are present in Petronius: see below.

[21] Scaevola's subsequent comment that the plane tree of the *Phaedrus* owed its eminence to Plato's language (*Platonis oratione*) might reinforce this.

Plato made famous,[22] and I suggest that we can see a similar process at work in Petronius. When Encolpius asks the maid to bring Circe *in platanona* ('into the grove of plane trees', 126.12), not only do we come across the phoneme *plat*, but *platanona* is also very close to the Latin accusative of Plato, *Platona* (as found at *Sat*. 2.5).[23] Petronius is keen on wordplay involving names:[24] I should suggest that this is meant as a pun in Petronius, acting as an indication to the reader both that the plane tree setting for the encounters of Encolpius and Circe is Platonic, and simultaneously that Plato and his thought are going to be important. With *in platanona* we are entering Platonic territory, and in more than one sense.

In this grove of plane trees, as soon as Encolpius sees Circe he is smitten by her beauty,[25] and recites a poem in response to the sight of her.[26] For her part Circe is no less keen than Encolpius, and after a brief conversation the latter comments:

haec ipsa cum diceret, tanta gratia conciliabat vocem loquentis, tam dulcis sonus pertemptatum mulcebat aëra, ut putares inter auras canere Sirenum concordiam.

[22] There is also the possibility that Plato does this himself in his use of the word πλάτανος – see R. Zaslavsky, 'A hitherto unremarked pun in the Phaedrus', *Apeiron* 15 (1981), 115–16; A. Geier, *Plato's Erotic Thought: The Tree of the Unknown* (Rochester, NY, 2002), 211; and S. Scully, *Plato's Phaedrus* (Newburyport, MA, 2003), 6, n. 16.

[23] Blickman (n. 6), 7, actually misquotes *Sat*. 126.12 as *ut in platona perduceret dominam*, which serves to show how similar the words are, to the modern ear or typist at least.

[24] For other examples see e.g. Connors (n. 1), 22, n. 7, and 122, and Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 42–3. For Trimalchio's puns see e.g. R.M. Newton, 'Petronian urbanity in the 'Carpe, carpe' joke (Petr. *Sat.* 35.7–36.8)', *Syllecta Classica* 3 (1991), 67–9. There seems also to be a play on Encolpius' name at 131.5, where the witch orders him to throw stones three times *in sinum* ('into his lap'), since 'Encolpius', a Greek name, means 'in the lap'. Encolpius is here masquerading as 'Polyaenus', and so there would then be the irony of the witch inadvertently hitting on the Latin version of Encolpius' real name.

[25] He says that *nulla vox est quae formam eius possit comprehendere, nam quicquid dixero, minus erit* ('There are no words that can contain her beauty, and whatever I say will fall short of her', 126.14). Although this sentiment is not especially noteworthy in itself, in the context of the grove of plane trees the perfection of her beauty might remind the reader of Plato's Form of beauty (see especially Socrates' second speech in the *Phaedrus*: 243e9–257b6). See Slater (n. 3), 224–5, for some brief comments.

[26] This includes the couplet: *nunc erat a torva submittere cornua fronte,* | *nunc pluma canos dissimulare tuos* ('Now it was time for you to sprout horns on your fierce brow, or to hide your white hair with feathers', 126.18). The reference to feathers is, of course, an allusion to Jupiter's seduction of Leda in the form of a swan, but the mention of growing feathers by someone in a grove of plane trees might recall a recurrent and striking image from Socrates' second speech in the *Phaedrus*: the wings of the soul (246a3–252c2, especially 251b1–d7 for the man whose soul has been recently exposed to the Form of beauty and who sees a beautiful body or face reminiscent of it). In Socrates' speech Zeus leads the other gods, whose souls are always winged because they are immortal, and they all have no difficulty in seeing the Forms (246a3–247e6). Part of Encolpius' reaction to the beautiful Circe is to allude to Zeus becoming feathered, but Zeus was not growing feathers in his soul because he was being reminded of absolute beauty: he was disguising himself, physically and literally, in order to seduce a mortal. There is a distance and dissonance between the Zeus of the poem and the Zeus of Plato, and also between Encolpius and each Zeus, since he does not, and shows little sign of being able to, emulate any aspect of the god, either in immortal and metaphysically enlightened status, or in erotic ability and stamina. The contrast between Encolpius the mortal failure and Zeus the immortal philanderer is clear, but the addition of the Platonic winged Zeus adds another layer to the humour. Cf. the mention of plumage at 127.8, quoted in text below.

Even as she said this, such grace made her words attractive, such a sweet sound caressed the enraptured air, that you would have thought the harmony of the Sirens was singing in the breezes. (127.5)

The mention of the Sirens fits well in this scene, as Circe reveals what she is called and comments on the appropriateness of their names, since Encolpius' pseudonym Polyaenus is an epithet of Odysseus.[27] It is obvious that creating a Homeric atmosphere is the principal reason for the reference to the Sirens here, especially since Odysseus encounters them on his way from Circe's island. In fact here we have a good example of how Encolpius appropriates, but continually misunderstands, mythical paradigms: it is Circe who warns Odysseus about the Sirens and how to avoid being bewitched by their song, and the Sirens themselves are deadly to men. This combination of the amorous and helpful Circe with the lethal Sirens as Encolpius likens the sound of the *faux*-Circe's voice to the song of the latter should sound an ominous note for the reader: will Encolpius be able to escape, or is he doomed to destruction?[28]

In addition there is arguably another allusion in this to an aspect of the setting of the *Phaedrus*: the cicadas. They are mentioned briefly towards the beginning (*Phdr*. 230c2–3), but return to form the focus of the discussion (258e6–259d8), as the dialogue makes its transition from set speeches on love to an analysis of speaking and writing well. Phaedrus is keen to prolong their talking, and Socrates points out that they have time and that they are being watched by the cicadas; these will be amused if the two men fall asleep in the midday heat just like anyone else would, but that:

ἐὰν δὲ ὁρῶσι διαλεγομένους καὶ παραπλέοντάς σφας ὥσπερ Σειρῆνας ἀκηλήτους, ὃ γέρας παρὰ θεῶν ἔχουσιν ἀνθρώποις διδόναι, τάχ' ἂν δοῖεν ἀγασθέντες.

'if they see us conversing and sailing past them unbewitched by their Siren song, perhaps they may respect us and give us that gift which they have from the gods to give to men.' (*Phdr*. 259a6–b2)

This gift is to report to the Muses which mortals honour which of them, and Socrates lists Terpsichore in the choral dance, Erato in love affairs, skips over the rest, and concludes with Calliope and Ourania who are concerned with philosophy and discussion. It is clear that it is these last two that he wishes to impress, and it is presumably up to the reader to decide what kind of account of Socrates' and Phaedrus' discussion the cicadas would give them. The unfortunate Encolpius, on the other hand, turns out not to be capable of performing in a way such that the cicadas would report even remotely favourably about him to Erato. So, while cicadas are not mentioned in the *Satyrica*, there is a link between the cicadas of the *Phaedrus* and Petronius' Circe in that both are likened to Sirens. Socrates will prove capable not only of resisting the soporific drone from the 'Sirens' in the tree, but also of engaging in discourse designed to impress them: Encolpius is immediately bewitched by Circe's voice to the extent that he likens it to the song

[27] Fedeli (n. 6); also: Blickman (n. 6), 8; Panayotakis (n. 1), 162; Connors (n. 1), 39–43; and Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 192.

[28] Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 192. See E. Courtney, *The Poems of Petronius* (Atlanta, 1991), 45, for a brief account of the Odyssean structure of Encolpius' adventures in the latter part of the surviving text, and Cameron (n. 1).

of the Sirens, and unlike Socrates and Odysseus, with whom both Encolpius and Socrates are compared, he yields to temptation without a moment's resistance. The self-control of the two main characters of the *Phaedrus* and the *Satyrica*, and their ability to achieve their ends, is strongly contrasted at this point, and the contrast is emphasized by the fact that the temptation is described by means of the same simile. Encolpius will not only reject Socrates' example by having a radically different set of desires, but he will also be incapable of satisfying those desires.

Circe, confident that she and Polyaenus will match the passion of their namesakes, draws Encolpius to the ground:

dixit haec Circe, implicitumque me bracchiis mollioribus pluma deduxit in terram vario gramine indutam.

Saying this, Circe embraced me in arms softer than down and drew me to the ground which was covered in variegated grass. (127.8)

The grass here is, including the Sirens, the third element from the setting of the *Phaedrus*, and lying down on it is what Socrates does (229b1–2, and 230c3–5 – see above). However, he, as always, is interested in discussion and philosophizing, not in what Encolpius is interested in. After a brief poem which reinforces the Homeric atmosphere (127.9),[29] the grass is mentioned again:

in hoc gramine pariter compositi mille osculis lusimus, quaerentes voluptatem robustam …

We lay together on this grass and amused ourselves with a thousand kisses, looking for robust pleasure … (127.10)

The setting of the *Phaedrus* is not the only part of that dialogue that lies behind this, since there are certain connections here between Circe's behaviour and the situation of the beloved in Socrates' second speech:

His desires are similar to his lover's, but weaker: to see, touch, kiss, and lie down with him (*ὁρᾶν, ἅπτεσθαι, φιλεῖν, συγκατακεῖσθαι*); and indeed, as one might expect, soon afterwards he does just that. So as they lie together (*ἐν οὖν τῇ συγκοιμήσει*), the lover's licentious horse has something to suggest to the charioteer, and claims a little enjoyment as recompense for much hardship; while its counterpart in the beloved has nothing to say, but swelling with confused passion it embraces the lover and kisses him (*περιβάλλει τὸν ἐραστὴν καὶ φιλεῖ*), welcoming him as someone full of goodwill, and whenever they lie down together (*συγκατακέωνται*), it is ready not to refuse to do its own part in granting favours to the lover, should he beg to receive them; but its companion [*sc*. the white horse], for its part, together with the charioteer, resists this with a reasoned sense of shame (*μετ' αἰδοῦς καὶ λόγου*). (*Phdr*. 255e2–256a6)

Circe's desires are certainly similar to Encolpius' and hardly seem weaker, and as the couple lie together, embracing and kissing, she is all too willing to grant favours to Encolpius and is hardly resisting 'with a reasoned sense of shame'. The Socratic lover's reaction to this depends on the relationship between the parts of his soul and on his devotion to philosophy; the true philosopher abstains:

[29] See Connors (n. 1), 40–2, and Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 193.

Well then, if the better elements of their minds get the upper hand by drawing them to a well-ordered life, and to philosophy, they pass their life here in blessedness and harmony … (*Phdr*. 256a7–b1)

This is contrasted with those who give in to their base desires, but only sparingly,[30] yet it is clear from elsewhere in the *Satyrica* and from his enthusiasm here that Encolpius is beyond such restraint and that he has no compunction about having sex with Circe. The real problem for him, and the central irony, is that since he is incapable of 'robust pleasure' he cannot yield to his desires and is doomed to failure. Circe, after wondering what it is about her that has displeased Encolpius, leaves disappointed and insulted. Next, as we saw earlier, Encolpius has no more luck with Giton, and the allusion to Socrates and Alcibiades (128.7) maintains and makes explicit the Platonic presence in this episode.

An exchange of letters between Circe and Encolpius ensues, and on the following day he returns to the same location:

postero die, cum sine offensa corporis animique consurrexissem, in eundem platanona descendi, etiam si locum inauspicatum timebam, coepique inter arbores ducem itineris exspectare Chrysidem. nec diu spatiatus consederam, ubi hesterno die fueram, cum illa intervenit comitem aniculam trahens.

Next day, since I had got up without injury in mind or body, I went down to the same grove of plane trees, even though I was afraid of the unlucky place, and proceeded to wait among the trees for Chrysis to lead me on my way. After walking up and down a short while, I sat where I had been the day before, and Chrysis arrived, bringing an old woman with her. (131.1–2)

The recurrence here of *in … platanona* from 126.12 is emphatic, as is the stress laid on this being precisely the same spot that saw his first meeting with Circe, and these factors should lead the reader to think carefully about why and how Petronius is using this setting. The reader should also consider why Encolpius thinks this *locus*, which he himself suggested for their first tryst, is *inauspicatus*: is it only because of what happened, or did not happen, during his previous liaison with her, or is it because there is something about the place itself? Might the presence of plane trees, famous from a dialogue which contains a speech eulogizing chaste, 'Platonic' love, be unlucky for those wishing to indulge in carnal satisfaction?[31]

ANOTHER *LOCUS INAUSPICATUS*

The old woman whom Chrysis brings into this grove of plane trees is a witch who seems to cure Encolpius of his problem,[32] and after a lacuna we encounter a poem on the setting, although it is probably a different grove, at Circe's house:[33]

[30] *Phdr*. 256b7–c7.

[31] E. Keuls, 'Une cible de la satire: le *locus amoenus*', *LEC* 42 (1974), 265–75, at 265–6, Slater (n. 3), 175, and Panayotakis (n. 1), 167, n. 13, see the irony in the juxtaposition of the idyllic location and the romantic failure, but not the connection with Plato's *Phaedrus*.

[32] Socrates claims that his mouth was 'bewitched' (καταφαρμακευθέντος 242e1) when he delivered his first speech, in praise of the man not in love.

[33] Sullivan (n. 1), 70; and Courtney (n. 28), 33, and (n. 1, 2001), 196.

nobilis aestivas platanus diffuderat umbras
et bacis redimita Daphne tremulaeque cupressus
et circum tonsae trepidanti vertice pinus.
has inter ludebat aquis errantibus amnis
spumeus et querulo vexabat rore lapillos.
dignus amore locus: testis silvestris aëdon
atque urbana Procne, quae circum gramina fusae
ac molles violas cantu sua rura colebant.[34]

The noble plane tree and Daphne crowned with berries and the quivering cypresses and the shorn pines with their swaying tops spread a summer shade. Among these played a stream, foaming with meandering waters, and disturbing the pebbles with its chattering flow. The place was suitable for love: the woodland nightingale and urban Procne bore witness as they hovered about the grasses and soft violets and looked after their territory with a song. (131.8)

There was, of course, a long tradition of *loci amoeni* available to Petronius for him to draw on. Stöcker argues that this short poem is heavily indebted to Ovid, especially his *Metamorphoses*, among other sources,[35] but this does not mean that we should not look for another, more pointed, influence. We have already had a double dose of plane trees, lying down on grass, and a clear reference to a famous incident told in a Platonic dialogue; in this poem the Phaedran elements are numerous and, after such a build-up, unmistakable: a plane tree, shade, a stream and grass.[36] Moreover, by virtue of its emphatic position at the start of the poem the plane tree is arguably the most important element, and this replicates the emphasis on, and initial place of, the plane tree in Socrates' description of his and Phaedrus' chosen spot (*Phdr*. 230b2–c5). The fact that Encolpius recites a poem in response to the setting may also pick up on Socrates' eulogy of his scenery: Socrates is seemingly enthusiastic about his location, and Encolpius is genuinely so about his. However, Socrates is being ironic, whereas Encolpius is clearly getting carried away by the situation; he does not realize that trilling away about plane trees and streams is, in Platonic terms, an unreflective and so inappropriate reaction to such a setting, and Petronius can again extort humour at his protagonist's expense. Not only that, but Encolpius' bursting into verse recalls the recurrent theme of poetic inspiration in Plato's *Phaedrus*: Socrates is inspired by others (235c2–d3); appeals to the Muses at the beginning of his first speech (237a7–b1); comments part way through that he is close to uttering dithyrambs (238c5–d3); claims at the end of it that he has now moved from dithyrambs to epic (241e1–5); compares himself with Homer and Stesichorus (243a2–b7); attributes his second speech to the latter (243e9–244a3); describes poetic madness (245a1–8); claims, before attempting the feat himself, that it is not possible for an earthly poet to celebrate the region above the heavens (247c3–6); mentions some pseudo-Homeric verses on Love (252b4–9); and describes his second speech as a palinode, with an apology for the poetic language used (257a3–6). Encolpius is particularly prone to uttering verse in

[34] Although it does not affect what I wish to say, it should be noted that the text in the second half of the last line is not secure.

[35] C. Stöcker, *Humor bei Petron* (Nuremberg, 1969), 41–3.

[36] On this poem Scarsi (n. 12), 226, n. 3, refers back to her note on *Sat*. 126.12 (214–5, n. 5), but does nothing more. The allusion to the *Phaedrus* does not, of course, cover every detail of this poem – see below for the others – but I am not arguing for an exclusively Platonic atmosphere, rather one in which Plato is particularly prominent.

this section of the *Satyrica*, and this looks like another connection to the Platonic character who likened his speeches on love and beauty, delivered on the grass in the shade under a plane tree by a stream, to poetry.

I think further corroboration for the argument that this is an allusion to the *Phaedrus* can be acquired from the epithet applied to the plane tree: *nobilis*. Some editors have preferred to read *mobilis*, arguing that this fits better with the movement of some of the other trees, although it must be noted that it is not specified that the laurel is moving.[37] One of the advantages of reading *nobilis* here, however, is that it is an ambiguous term – it could mean either 'noble', and in this capacity it is sometimes used to describe trees or places,[38] or it could mean 'notable, famous'.[39] A convenient case of a combination of these meanings can be found in Horace, *Odes* 1.14,[40] where the poetic voice is addressing, quite possibly metaphorically,[41] a ship about whose safety and wellbeing it is concerned: *quamvis Pontica pinus, | silvae filia nobilis, | iactes et genus et nomen inutile …* ('Although you are made of Pontic pine, the daughter of a noble forest, and you boast of your lineage and name, it is useless …', 1.14.11–13). The Pontic forest was well known for providing timber for shipbuilding, and the idea of nobility is evoked in the idea of the tree boasting of where it comes from. Petronius' plane tree, then, could be 'noble' in the sense that, in Encolpius' opinion, it was an especially fine example of the species, or because the height of plane trees made such an adjective applicable.[42] It could also be both 'noble' and 'famous' since, I suggest, *nobilis* should be taken as referring to *the* famous plane tree, the one we find at the beginning of Plato's *Phaedrus* and which oversees the entire discussion. Not only is it well known, but it has a literary lineage equalled by no other.[43] This would be a good instance of what Hinds has called self-annotation: Petronius is drawing attention to the fact that he is making an allusion by labelling the principal element in it.[44]

A similar aspect to this can be found where Petronius tells us what kind of setting it is – *dignus amore locus* (a 'place suitable for love') – since we are prompted to ask why (and, as we shall see, whether) it is suitable. However, before commenting further on this phrase, it is worth looking at a passage from

[37] K. Müller, *Petronius:* Satyricon Reliquiae[4] (Munich, 2003), whose text I reproduce here and throughout, reads *nobilis*, but Courtney (n. 28), 32–3, who records a majority of MS readings in favour of *nobilis*, reads *mobilis*, adducing Sen. *Thy*. 168 and Stat. *Silv*. 4.3.61. However, he does not respond to the arguments of Stöcker (n. 35), 41, n. 1, who rejects these alleged parallels and prefers *nobilis*.

[38] See *Sat*. 116.3 and 124 (*Bellum Civile* 279), and cf. 119 (*BC* 29). See also e.g. Verg. *Aen*. 7.564.

[39] Cf. the similar ambiguity of *ignobilis* at Apuleius *Met*. 5.4.3, with E. J. Kenney, *Apuleius: Cupid and Psyche* (Cambridge, 1990), 143.

[40] Noted and partially quoted by Stöcker (n. 35), 41, n. 1.

[41] See e.g. R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace:* Odes *Book I* (Oxford, 1970), 178–88, especially 179–80.

[42] Cf. *Phdr*. 229a8, and 230b2–3; also: *cur non sub alta vel platano vel hac | pinu iacentes …* ('Why don't we lie down beneath a tall plane tree, or this pine here …', Horace, *Odes* 2.11.13–14), with R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace:* Odes *Book II* (Oxford, 1978), 173, ad loc., who comment with regard to the first Phaedran passage that it is 'the prototype for much of this sort of scene-painting'.

[43] Cf. *fies nobilium tu quoque fontium* ('You too will be one of the famous springs', Horace, *Odes* 3.13.13).

[44] S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* (Cambridge, 1998), ch. 1, 'Reflexivity: allusion and self-annotation'.

another author which bears both a general and a specific similarity to Encolpius' poem. Towards the beginning of Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* we find the following comments from the anonymous narrator:[45]

καὶ ταῦτα δὴ λέγων δεξιοῦμαί τε αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπί τινος ἄλσους ἄγω γείτονος, ἔνθα πλάτανοι μὲν ἐπεφύκεσαν πολλαὶ καὶ πυκναί, παρέρρει δὲ ὕδωρ ψυχρόν τε καὶ διαυγές, οἷον ἀπὸ χιόνος ἄρτι λυθείσης ἔρχεται. καθίσας οὖν αὐτὸν ἐπί τινος θώκου χαμαιζήλου καὶ αὐτὸς παρακαθισάμενος, "Ὥρα σοι", ἔφην, 'τῆς τῶν λόγων ἀκροάσεως· πάντως δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος τόπος ἡδὺς καὶ μύθων ἄξιος ἐρωτικῶν.'

And with these words, I took him by the hand and led him to a neighbouring grove, where the plane trees grew thick and plentiful and the water flowed by cool and clear, just as it comes from freshly melted snow. I sat him down there on a low bench, and sat myself next to him. 'Well, it is time to hear your story', I said. 'A setting such as this is delightful, and just right for erotic tales.' (1.2.3)[46]

This is, of course, an allusion to the setting of the *Phaedrus*, which is evoked with economy and precision.[47] By having the anonymous narrator highlight its suitability as the setting for Clitophon's tale, Achilles Tatius annotates his own allusion. What Petronius does is similar, since in saying that the place is 'suitable for love' he draws attention to the allusiveness of this descriptive poem and to the associations which the reader is expected to make from it. The difference between the two texts, on the other hand, is that in Achilles Tatius the initial Phaedran scene is the setting for talking, whereas in Petronius it is the setting for attempted action.[48] In addition it is not only Petronius the author who says that the setting is suitable for love: it is simultaneously Encolpius the narrator and, if we are supposed to imagine that he recited this poem to Circe, actor who says it too. As often, he is wrong, since not only is the setting he has described the kind of place in literary terms in which to talk about love, or have a discussion generally, rather than indulge in

[45] This text was probably written around a hundred years after the *Satyrica*. For assessments of what little evidence there is concerning this author, see E. Vilborg, *Achilles Tatius:* Leucippe and Clitophon*. A Commentary* (Stockholm, 1962), 7–9; K. Plepelits, 'Achilles Tatius', in G. Schmeling (ed.), *The Novel in the Ancient World* (Leiden, 2003), 387–416, at 387–91; T. Whitmarsh and H. Morales, *Achilles Tatius:* Leucippe and Clitophon (Oxford, 2001), xii–xv; and Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius'* Leucippe and Clitophon (Cambridge, 2004), 4–6.

[46] The translation is from Whitmarsh (n. 45), slightly modified.

[47] This has been noted frequently, although mostly without development. Those who discuss the significance of this include P.M. Martin, 'A good place to talk: discourse and topos in Achilles Tatius and Philostratus', in M. Paschalis and S. Frangoulidis (edd.), *Space in the Ancient Novel*, *Ancient Narrative Supplementum* 1 (Groningen, 2002), 143–60; Morales (n. 44), 50–60, especially 51–3; and K. Ní Mheallaigh, 'Philosophical framing: the Phaedran setting of *Leucippe and Cleitophon*', in M. Jones and J.R. Morgan (edd.), *Philosophical Presences in the Greek Novel, Ancient Narrative Supplementum* 10 (Groningen, 2007), 231–44.

[48] Cf. Ach. Tat. 1.15 which both evokes Plato and, tantalizingly, contains many similarities to Encolpius' poem at *Sat*. 131.8: there are plane trees, pines, shade, violets, bubbling water and swallows. At this point Clitophon enthusiastically describes the garden in which he tried to impress the object of his affections, just as Encolpius is prone to erupting into verse in idyllic settings. Clitophon is also like Encolpius in that he is, ultimately, interested in sex rather than philosophy. These parallels enable us to see more clearly how Petronius is using his philosophical intertext. For further comparisons between the two actors/narrators, see J.R. Morgan, 'Kleitophon and Encolpius: Achilleus Tatius as hidden author', in M. Paschalis, S. Frangoulidis, S. Harrison and M. Zimmerman (edd.), *The Greek and the Roman Novel: Parallel Readings. Ancient Narrative Supplementum 8* (Groningen, 2007), 105–20.

amorous pursuits, but the contents of his poem signal an unsuccessful outcome to his rendezvous. He mentions Daphne, and, as anyone with an ounce of mythological knowledge knows, she was a nymph who was chased by Apollo and turned into a tree before he could rape her.[49] She is not, therefore, a necessarily propitious presence to have when trying to have sex with someone, especially, perhaps, when that person uses the name of a mythological character: Circe. The most inappropriate comment, however, is that the flitting about and singing of the nightingale and swallow (Procne) confirm the erotic atmosphere. Birds who had previously been the wife and sister-in-law of the barbaric Thracian king Tereus, the latter of whom had been raped repeatedly by him and had her tongue cut out to ensure her silence, and who together had killed, cooked and fed his son Itys to him,[50] could hardly be thought favourable omens for a romantic encounter. That Encolpius considers these birds suitable witnesses is yet another aspect of his misguided mythomania.[51] Connors argues for the inauspiciousness of the cypresses, pines, and the plaintive and violently disturbing stream as well,[52] and on the plane tree she comments that: 'If the plane tree is *mobilis* (following R, with Courtney; other manuscripts have *nobilis*) trembling in a light breeze, then it is probably important that this word can also carry connotations of fickleness and changeability.'[53] This might well be true, but I should maintain that the plane tree should be considered an ill omen for Encolpius' and Circe's intentions because of its Platonic associations,[54] and that although they would not be negated if *mobilis* were read, they are enhanced by reading the allusively significant *nobilis*. So, what does happen in this setting which is supposedly 'suitable for love'? Encolpius, despite enjoying Circe's kisses, is again afflicted with impotence, and she runs off and orders her slaves to abuse him.[55] That is the last we see of Circe, and Encolpius now becomes embroiled in a series of escapades involving witches.

PLATO IN THE CIRCE EPISODE

Before considering what this analysis of allusions to Plato in this episode might contribute to our appreciation of the surviving text as a whole, it is worth tying these allusions together to see how they cohere and enhance our reading of the episode itself. This is necessary not least because only some of them have been noticed and most have not been developed, but also, more importantly, since the possibility of sustained Platonic intertextuality in this episode has never before been raised.

In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates meets Phaedrus and they stop next to a plane tree where Socrates lies down on the grass. Encolpius meets Circe in a grove of

[49] Most famously treated in Ovid, *Met*. 1.452–567. Cf. Clitophon encouraging himself in his pursuit of Leucippe at Ach. Tat. 1.5.4–7: his reaction to a song about Apollo's pursuit of Daphne is to chide himself for his hesitation in pursuing his girl – he completely ignores the unfortunate outcome (for both parties) of the mythological story to which he compares his situation!

[50] See e.g. Ov. *Met*. 6.424–674.

[51] Conte (n. 1), *passim*.

[52] (n. 1), 71–2.

[53] (n. 1), 72.

[54] Cf. the discussion of the *locus inauspicatus* of 131.1 above.

[55] It should be noted that the text is lacunose at this point.

plane trees, *platanona*, and they lie down on the grass. In such a setting Phaedrus and Socrates exchange speeches on why a non-lover, that is a physical lover who is not in love (or claims not to be in love), is preferable to one who is in love. Encolpius is not up to the task of loving Circe, and she would certainly prefer a lover rather than the non-lover that Encolpius turns out to be. Socrates gets up to leave (242a1–2) when he has finished his first speech, but feels compelled to return to recant and argues instead that the lover is to be preferred. Socrates' ideal lover, however, does not go any further than keeping company with his beloved and regards sex as something that is worldly and beneath the philosopher; what he is interested in is contemplating beauty as a way of remembering the Forms and attaining a state of philosophical enlightenment. Encolpius, on the other hand, goes back to the grove of plane trees, is aroused by a witch, and finds Circe in a setting which prompts a poem on the plane tree, stream, shade and so on. Is he intent on philosophical enlightenment and exploring or revisiting the mysteries of the universe? Hardly, and again he is unsuccessful, ironically and unwillingly fulfilling the role of philosophical lover, since he proves incapable of giving into the base desires which Socrates argues should be avoided. The incongruity between Encolpius' desires and Socrates' ideas on love is cruelly emphasized by the irony of Encolpius' failure.

The mentions of the plane trees, with the pun on Plato's name, the lying down on grass, the allusion to Socrates and Alcibiades sandwiched in between, and the final, climactic poem, show how careful and thorough Petronius is in establishing the Platonic flavour of the settings for this lewdly un-Platonic episode.[56] It should also be noted how central the settings are to this narrative strand, and that this reflects the importance and significance of the scenery of the *Phaedrus*. From being a place to engage in (relatively) serious discussion and conclude that attraction and love are ideally not about sex, it becomes the backdrop to an encounter which has all the promise of satisfaction, but which manages in fact not to involve anything robust. The chief irony is that this is not achieved by the strict mental abstinence which Socrates envisaged, but by Encolpius' inability to rise to the occasion. Petronius deliberately chooses the setting from one of the most famous works of antiquity on love, or non-love, for the episode in which his anti-hero suffers from a bout of impotence. The moral of the Circe episode seems to be that it is better not to arrange a date near plane trees, in case the spirit of Socrates is watching. That is to assume, of course, that the object of the exercise is more than just *textual* intercourse.

Read as an individual strand, the allusions to the *Phaedrus* in this episode constitute one pattern of ironic play and juxtaposition, but, when added back into the full mix, this pattern becomes part of a broader literary game. Intertextuality, as mentioned towards the start of this article, is particularly important in the episode involving Circe, even by the standards of the *Satyrica*. But just as Homer is crucial to an appreciation of this section of the text, so, I hope to have shown, is a knowledge of Plato's discussions of love and desire. There are at least two significant and sustained webs of allusion operating simultaneously; the one, the Homeric, is explicit, the other, the Platonic, less so, but it is no less important for

[56] Cf. McGlathery (n. 4), 211: 'The parody of the seduction scene of Plato's *Symposium* in "The Pergamene Boy" is reinforced by striking similarities in plot. Both seductions employ the same progression of setting and action.'

that. This interaction with other texts is a fundamental part of Petronius' literary strategy: the free-form nature of his novel and the lack (as far as we can tell) of generic norms enable the author to combine manifold allusions and generic registers into a literary smorgasbord, of which Plato is one of the most important dishes.[57] Petronius also structures certain of his narratives in an allusive manner. The story of the Pergamene boy is a small-scale example of this phenomenon, and in the Circe episode we have narrative patterns which are designed to provoke comparison with the *Oydssey*. There is also a Platonic influence pervading it which provides both its scenic background and, in an ironic fashion, its thematic unity. As ever, Petronius' modelling involves the inversion and re-branding of narratives, and instead of reworking a single model, here we find Petronius combining more than one in an especially complex and ambitious episode.

PLATONIC LOVE IN PETRONIUS

Petronius shows his versatility also in varying how he uses Plato: in the Circe episode we do not find 'a humorous exposure of the Platonic ethic of chaste pederastic union and the elaboration of Greek homoerotic courtship in general',[58] such as we find in the Pergamene boy story, but rather a commentary on the Platonic ideal of philosophical restraint, its plausibility and its desirability. The allusion at 128.7 to the part of the *Symposium* parodied in the Pergamene boy tale highlights the similarities and differences between the two sets of allusions, and the differences are as, if not more, significant.[59] To take the earlier narrative first, when Eumolpus describes how, as part of his seduction strategy, he affected such extreme embarrassment in amorous conversations at dinner that the boy's mother regarded him as one of the philosophers (85.2), he evokes a complex set of assumptions. The sort of philosopher he alludes to, and to which he thinks the mother assumed he would conform, is the abstinent philosopher dependent on the Socratic paradigm: Alcibiades' account in Plato's *Symposium* of the relationship between himself and Socrates seems to have been believed by Latin writers.[60] However, the philosopher in Roman culture was not such a straightforward figure, especially as far as sexuality was concerned, and received a very different reputation – for preying on youths

[57] See E.D. Finkelpearl, *Metamorphosis of Language in Apuleius: A Study of Allusion in the Novel* (Ann Arbor, 1998), 18, and 24–35, who argues that the novel, a late genre, attempts a degree of self-definition through allusion. However, I should prefer an emphasis on creative possibilities and literary opportunities rather than the one she places on uncertainty.

[58] McGlathery (n. 4), 226.

[59] One obvious difference, of course, is that the Circe episode involves heterosexuality rather than the homoeroticism with which Plato was concerned and which we find in the Pergamene boy tale. However, I do not think this is problematic, since Encolpius and Eumolpus seem to accept sexual partners of either gender with equal facility, and there is no literary reason why fun with the concept of Platonic love and the idea of sexual abstinence could play a part in the one kind of relationship and not the other. Indeed, for an argument in favour of the possibility of heterosexual 'Platonic' love, and from a more serious, philosophical, perspective, see Plut. *Amat*., especially 766e–67b, with J.M. Rist, 'Plutarch's *Amatorius*: a commentary on Plato's theories of love?', *CQ* 51 (2001), 557–75.

[60] See e.g. Quint. *Inst*. 8.4.23: Alcibiades' speech is designed to demonstrate Socrates' *invictam continentiam* ('invincible self-control') which was impervious to the advances *speciosissimi hominis* ('of a very beautiful man'); cf. Nep. *Alc.* 2.2; it should also be pointed out that *Sat*. 128.7 is evidence for this too.

and even for sexual deviancy.[61] It is this figure to whom Eumolpus will actually conform, and not only does the mother seem to make the fundamental mistake of thinking he will resemble Socrates rather than the stereotype of the man who uses the cloak of philosophy to keep company with attractive youths, but her mistake is signalled to the reader of Plato who knows that Socrates was far from reluctant to discuss erotic matters and that Eumolpus' reactions to the contrary show that he protests too much.[62] The humour in this narrative is enhanced by the fact that the Socratic paradigm of Platonic love is exemplified in the part of Plato's *Symposium* whose narrative is parodied here. In addition – and this is a point which will be important when we return to Encolpius in the Circe episode – in his telling of his encounter with the Pergamene boy it is as much Eumolpus as the Platonic intertext who bears the brunt of the joke. For one thing, the tables are turned on him in the course of the knowing play with both the conventional norms of homoerotic courtship and the literary and cultural stereotype of the pseudo-abstinent philosopher; secondly, Eumolpus is a literate man,[63] and in gladly assuming the role of a philosopher he himself evokes the figure of Socrates. However, he quickly found that he lost control of the situation, as his subversion of the Socratic role led to his meeting more than his match.

In the Circe episode Encolpius does not play the role of a philosopher, and so in one sense the relationship with the Platonic intertext is less obvious. In another, though, it is more direct, since it is not mediated in the same way by a tradition of various perceptions and realities concerning philosophers and their sexuality. Although the Pergamene boy tale engages with the narrative of Alcibiades' account in Plato's *Symposium*, it also relies for its effect on additional assumptions and understandings. The humour in the encounters with Circe, however, is more intertextual and literary, combining allusions to Homer and Plato in particular. Since he is not playing the part of the generically and culturally recognizable figure of the philosopher, Encolpius can be more directly compared with Socrates and what he says. I have described the humour derived from the engagement with the *Phaedrus*, but a further question arising from this use of Plato is the extent to which the Platonic intertext is the only target of fun here. As with the case of Eumolpus in his narrative, the reader is invited to examine the self-presentation of the narrating Encolpius. It is explicitly clear that Encolpius' 'Polyaenus' fails to emulate Homer's Odysseus, and Encolpius is also asking for trouble in choosing a grove of plane trees for an erotic encounter and in attempting to eroticize the setting in a poem, since he invites a direct comparison with Socrates and Plato's philosophy.[64] But it is not simply a case of the author poking fun at his character without his realizing it, since, like Eumolpus, Encolpius claims to be a man of letters.[65] Just as

[61] See e.g. M. Nussbaum, 'Eros and the wise: the Stoic response to a cultural dilemma', *OSAPh* 13 (1995), 231–67, and Bartsch (n. 16), especially 96–113, and 164–82.

[62] There is another level of humour here, since it seems that the boy's parents were not shy of talking *de usu formosorum* ('about the use of beautiful boys', 85.2) with a man they can hardly have known well: Hunter (n. 4), 202–3, has some suggestive comments.

[63] Even if he does say so himself. His attitude towards literature and the arts is established as soon as he is introduced (83.7–84), and then again after the narration of the Pergamene boy story (88): I do not think it is a coincidence that philosophy is emphasized in this latter chapter.

[64] For Encolpius' situation, cf. Scaevola's suggestion that they imitate Socrates in a Phaedran setting at Cic. *De or.* 1.28–9 (quoted in text above).

[65] His attitude to literature and rhetoric can be seen in the first two chapters of the extant text. Although he is criticizing current rhetorical training and so is concerned primarily with style,

Encolpius knows his *Odyssey*,[66] and so should be able to tell what a pale imitation of Odysseus he is, so it is a fair assumption he has read his Plato and should be able to see the disjunction between his own character and behaviour and those of Socrates.[67] It seems as if Encolpius, like Eumolpus, wants to cock a snook at Plato by appropriating a famous Platonic scene and using it for the purposes of casual sex. The last laugh is on him, though, because while one could have seen erotic success in such a setting as a jibe at Socrates and Plato, erotic failure looks like a triumph for 'Platonic' love.

In addition to increasing our awareness of Petronius' use of Plato and of his intertextual strategies, and in addition to providing another aspect of the sabotaging of his protagonist, two linked questions arise from this discussion, concerning the importance of Plato to the *Satyrica* as a whole, and why Petronius uses his works as intertexts. To take the latter first, Plato's appeal seems to have been based on several factors. First, as indicated by Encolpius' remarks at 2.5, he was one of the greats of Greek literature and thought,[68] and as such exercised a fascination on Latin writers, particularly from Cicero on. This was due not least to a second aspect of his appeal: the character of Socrates. Plato's presentation of him led to his becoming the exemplar of the philosopher, and he joins characters such as Odysseus and Aeneas as heroic and admirable figures with whom Encolpius and others unwisely and unsuccessfully compare themselves. A third factor is that Plato was frequently concerned, and especially so in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, with erotics. Coupled with his literary and philosophical distinction and vivid characterization, this formed a combination that was irresistible to a writer with the concerns Petronius reveals in what survives of his novel. The first question, that of the importance of Plato to the *Satyrica* as a whole, is impossible to answer, of course, since only a fraction of the novel is extant. However, when we add the *Cena Trimalchionis* and the Gorgias character to the Pergamene boy story and now the Circe episode, we can see that Plato is a significant presence in a large proportion of what does remain. We will almost certainly never know how pervasive and insistent this influence was overall, but, especially if the erotic theme of the central narrative and many of the inset episodes and tales were maintained (as seems more than likely), it is possible that Plato might not have been too far from the surface throughout. Petronius, then, provides us with an example of a kind of intertextuality which became relatively widespread among later authors;[69] the concept of Platonic love in particular was one that went on frequently to receive humorous and satirical treatment in writers such as Lucian and Achilles Tatius.[70] What I hope to have done here is to show

the impression that style is more important than substance is probably not only relevant to the debate in which he is engaged but also a part of Encolpius' general characterization: see Walsh (n. 1), 84–5, Conte (n. 1), ch. 2, 'The mythomaniac narrator and the longing for the sublime', 37–72, especially 44–5, and Courtney (n. 1, 2001), 56. His self-presentation as a literate man is confirmed at 10.5 when he says (addressing Ascyltus): *et tu litteras scis et ego* ('You know your literature, and so do I').

[66] See in particular 97.4–5, 98.5, 105.10, 132.13 and 139.4.

[67] Encolpius mentions Plato at 2.5 and understands Giton's comment at 128.7. Plato is on Agamemnon's curriculum too (5).

[68] He was second in rank only to Homer for Greek writers of the Imperial period: see P. De Lacy, 'Plato and the intellectual life of the second century A.D.', in G.W. Bowersock (ed.), *Approaches to the Second Sophistic* (University Park, PA, 1974), 4–10.

[69] See Trapp (n. 16).

[70] See e.g. allusions to Acibiades' night with Socrates at Lucian, *Philosophers for Sale* 15, Ach. Tat. 5.22.5, 5.25.7 and 8.5.2, Philostratus *Ep.* 7, and [Lucian], *Am.* 49 and 54. Cf. I.D.

that this process can already be seen in a more extensive way in Petronius' novel than hitherto realized, and also in a way which demonstrates further his versatility and, possibly, originality.

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Repath, 'Platonic love and erotic ignorance in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*', in K. Doulamis (ed.), *The Ancient Novel and its Reception of Earlier Literature*. *Ancient Narrative Supplementum* (Groningen, forthcoming).