HAIR AS A LITERARY FEATURE IN PETRONIUS’ SATYRICA

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis comprises a case study, to explore one motif that Petronius uses throughout his work. The chosen topic is the use of descriptions of hair: how Petronius describes hair, where he includes it, and what significance he gives to it. Hair is a subject that was written about by prominent poets like Ovid and even emperors like Domitian, and in the Satyricon we see the importance of hair and appearance for art and social standing reflected. The thesis begins with a survey of important literary figures that Petronius drew upon, including Homer, Catullus, Virgil, Ovid, and Seneca, and how they use hair as a literary motif in their own works. It then proceeds to survey each of the major passages of the Satyricon that still survive to see how Petronius plays off of the work of his predecessors. In the first major passage, the Cena Trimalchionis, hair is presented as a mark of the social status of slaves and freedmen (Schmeling 2011), Trimalchio's inability to accept the loss of his hair and move on reflects his failure to move successfully from his slave status to that of a truly free man; thus his hair reflects his occupation of a limbo between servility and wealth that he cannot escape. In Roman society, a freedman like Trimalchio, no matter how rich or popular, is forever stuck in a social underworld from which he can never escape (Bodel 1994). In the passage about the voyage and shipwreck, the ties between hair and literature are strengthened, especially when Eumolpus gives his poem in praise of hair, and Encolpius and Giton have their hair shaved only to be replaced by wigs and painted eyebrows. In the final extant passage of the Satyricon in the city of Croton, Encolpius’ encounter with the alluring Circe shows how Petronius uses hair to add to the mock-heroic nature of the scene. Encolpius feels like an Odysseus, but in the end, just like the fake wig he is wearing at the time, this is only a pose.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Satyricon of Petronius is a complex, fascinating, and frustrating work. Much of its intrigue lies in the fact that only three to four lacuna-filled books out of a possible twelve or even twenty-four survive. Likewise, the author himself is elusive: is he really that Petronius who served as Nero's arbiter elegantiae (“arbiter of elegance”) until falling out of favor in the 60's BCE, or someone else entirely? Much time has been spent puzzling about his identity and possible reflections of his life in the work. It is risky to speculate about the identity of the writer or the content of the missing portions of his work; rather, it is best to look at the text as it exists and see what it can tell us, but to avoid pushing interpretation too far.

As an author, Petronius is highly educated and witty, and he densely packs his work with allusions to the great Roman authors of the past. He also makes the narrative convolutedly self-referential; it follows only a loose chronological order of Encolpius' journey from one Roman town to another while pursued by a vengeful Priapus; that is, one must keep track of all the threads, events, characterization, and patterns in one episode to understand fully what is happening in the next.

The aim of this project is a case study, specifically to explore one motif that Petronius uses throughout the extant work, the use of descriptions of hair: how Petronius describes hair, where he includes it, and what significance he gives to it. Hair is a subject that was supposedly written about by prominent poets, like Ovid, and even emperors, like Domitian, and in the Satyricon we see the importance of hair and appearance for art and social standing reflected.

This thesis will begin by surveying some of the important issues and background necessary to approaching this case study. First, we shall ponder the possible dates of the work and what impact this may have on how we approach Petronius' use of hair. Next, it is helpful to
consider first the Latin vocabulary for hair and hair styling instruments, and which words are most often used by Petronius and his predecessors. A fundamental point of this paper is that, despite Petronius' realism in some details of his world, descriptions of hair do not really reflect the hairstyles and stigmas of his own day, so much as form part of a complex literary game based on the writings of his predecessors. Thus it will also be necessary to examine the works of those predecessors, especially Catullus, Virgil, Ovid, and his contemporary Seneca, briefly survey their use of descriptions of hair and its implications for characterization and symbolism, and see how Petronius may be playing off of the types established in the work of his predecessors. Finally, we move on to the subject matter of hair in Petronius to survey references to hair throughout the extant Satyrica, especially where hair acquires greatest significance, that is, the Cena Trimalchionis (“Trimalchio's dinner”) and the episode aboard Lichas' ship. We answer two important questions: first why Petronius employs hair as a motif in his work, and second what it contributes to the overall themes or trends of the novel. Ultimately, we want to know why Petronius finds hair such an important detail that he even dedicates a poem that exclusively celebrates hair.

First it is necessary to consider the problem of the dating of the Satyrica before studying Petronius’ use of hair. As Caroline Vout says, "when betting on the date of the Satyrica, the smart money is on late in the reign of Nero,"¹ although other critics have advocated a Flavian date,² which even Vout admits is possible. One is tempted to compare Trimalchio's beard in the

² Schmeling (2011) xiv, who fully supports a Neronian date, although "the reader should maintain, however, at least a flicker of wariness and doubt." Several French scholars continue to favor and uphold the Flavian date, however, as, e.g., Daviault (2001) and Martin (2009).
pyxis aurea non pusilla (“a golden container of some size,” 29.8)\(^3\) directly to Nero's own first beard,\(^4\) while if the *Satyricon* were written under Domitian's reign, Domitian's treatise on hair,\(^5\) although lost, and his own baldness (Suet. *Dom.* 18.1-2), would add much biting significance to the play on baldness and wigs common in the *Satyricon*.\(^6\) Whichever time-period is the correct one (and it is most probably Neronian), most of the insight to be gained in the work comes from comparison with other writers, since Petronius never draws direct parallels between the 'real world' and his fictional creation.\(^7\)

Since male hair forms such a strong claim to societal status, let us look at the specific vocabulary used for hair and the shades of significance that result from Petronius' word choices. According to Smith,\(^8\) there are many common words for hair, including the nouns *capillus*, *capillulus* (“fine hair”), *capillamentum* (“of false hair”), *crinis* (“dressed hair, hair in locks”), *caesaries* (“long, flowing hair, especially of men”), *coma* (“ornamental hair, used of men and women both”), and *pilus* (“of individual hairs”). Adjectives include *horridus* (“bristly”),

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\(^3\) The Latin text of the *Satyricon* is taken from Müller’s Teubner edition (2009). All translations for the *Satyricon* are taken from Walsh (1996); for Catullus I use Lee (1990), for Virgil’s *Aeneid* Fagles (2006), for Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* Melville (1986), for Homer’s *Odyssey* Fagles (1996).

\(^4\) Schmeling (2011) 101 lists numerous similarities between Trimalchio and Nero, with the golden box first and foremost.


\(^6\) Pliny tells a story in *Ep.* 7.27.12-14 about how, during the reign of Domitian, he took as a sign that he would not be harmed by Domitian's persecution that his slave and former-slave dreamed that their “hair had been cut during the night by mysterious intruders, the connection being that it was common for those accused of crime to let their hair grow” (Bradley [1994] 29).


\(^8\) Smith (2000) 358.
capillatus, crinitus, comatus, villus (“rough, shaggy,” especially of animals), saeta/seta (“bristly”), and canus (“of grey hair”). Words for bald\(^9\) include calvus, praecalvus (“bald in front”), glaber (“hairless, used sometimes of beardless slaves, but mostly of the body”), area (bald spot), calvitium, and calvities (“baldness”). There are also the words for objects used to adorn or decorate the hair, such as the calamistra Giton mentions in 102.15 or Fortunata's golden reticulum (67.6).\(^10\) Petronius favors certain words for hair and related ideas, especially capillus, crinis, coma, pilus, capillatus, and calvus. Crinis is a favorite word in Petronius, especially when referring to women who tear their hair as part of cult worship or in mourning, as, for instance, the widow of Ephesus. Crinis is connected to the idea of matrons, as in the phrase capere crines, which means to marry, since Roman women dressed their hair in a particular way to distinguish themselves from unmarried girls.\(^11\) Although often using crinis to describe women, for the most part Petronius employs hair terminology to describe men, specifically freedmen and slaves (or those posing as slaves). Thus one should suspect that hair has a particular connection to slave-status in the Satyricon.

The rich complexity of Petronius' literary games in the Satyricon has fascinated scholars of the novel; for instance, Panayotakis (1995) studies the relationship between the Satyricon and Roman comedy and Rimell (2002) explores the Satyricon's self-referentiality. It seems obvious that Petronius is playing his hand at a long-standing literary game with his descriptions of hair as well, and not adding any sort of contemporary real-life detail to his work. Hair was, in fact, an integral component of the literary games of erotic poetry for many of Petronius' predecessors.


\(^10\) Kaufman (1932) surveys the work of Roman barbers and their various tools, as does Nicolson in an earlier study (1891).

Indeed, the following exploration of the use of descriptions of hair and the intentions of the poets Catullus, Virgil, Ovid, and Petronius' contemporary Seneca, shows the frequent use of hair as a symbol in erotic poetry, as well as, in other settings, an emblem of piety.

Petronius plays with the lighter works of Catullus and does not avoid the weightier Virgil or his contemporary, Seneca. Let us survey briefly how the authors Petronius draws on major works of Latin literature. As we shall see, Petronius uses the detail of hair as part of his complex literary game.

The most important poem on hair is Catullus’ *Coma Berenices* (66). This poem is most interesting for the connections between hair and literature since it is narrated by the lock of hair itself, which addresses Berenice, after being cut off. Line 39 has been especially debated by scholars because of Virgil's seeming appropriation of it: Catullus wrote *invita, o regina, tuo de uertice cessi*, which Virgil adapts into *Aeneid* 6.460, where Aeneas addresses Dido in the underworld: *invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi*. The work of Callimachus and Homer that Catullus translates and incorporates in this poem, and the delicate and surprising ways in which Virgil adapts the line into his epic, are fascinatingly discussed by Griffith (1995). Catullus' other connections of blonde hair with beauty (*in flavo saepe hospite suspirantem*, “she sighed for that fair-haired stranger,” 64.98), and spread out hair with mourning (*saepe fatebuntur gnatorum in funere matres, / cum incultum cano solvent a vertice crinem*, “Shall mothers often own at their sons' funeral, / when they shall loose dishevelled hair from their white crowns,” 64.349-50) and religious contexts (*e Beroniceo vertice caesariem / fulgentem clare, quam cunctis illa Deorum / levia protendens bracchia pollicita est*, “the lock of hair from Berenice's head, / Shining brightly, which she promised to all of the Gods, / Stretching out smooth arms in prayer,” 66.8-10), form part of the literary framework on which Petronius draws for his own work.
Virgil employs hair as a significant detail throughout the *Aeneid* and uses it for the most part in two very specific contexts: ritual mourning and as part of an erotic description of attractive young people. His use of the phrase *passis capillis* (“spread out locks”) or similar formulations to describe solemn acts will become very important when looking at what Petronius does with hair, especially in his *Widow of Ephesus* story. Virgil uses the phrase often in contexts of worship, such as in *Aen. 1.479-81*, when the Trojan women are praying to Athena in vain:

*interea ad templum non aequae Palladis ibant / crinibus Iliades passis peplumque ferebant / suppliciter* (“And here the Trojan women / are moving toward the temple of Pallas, their deadly foe, their hair unbound as they bear the robe ...”). This action of loosening and spreading out the hair is also described as customary and pious in *3.65* (*circum Iliades crinem de more solutae*, “...ringed by Trojan women, hair unbound in mourning”) and *11.35* (*maestum Iliades crinem de more solutae*, “Trojan women, their hair unbound in the mourners' way”). Similarly in mourning or tragic circumstances, as when Cassandra is dragged from the burning Troy, we find *passis Priameia uirgo / crinibus* (“the virgin daughter of Priam ... with torn hair ...”, *2.403-4*).

There are many examples of Virgil's use of hair in erotic contexts as well. In *Aeneid 1.590*, Aeneas is imbued with especial grace and beauty by Venus to impress Dido and make her vulnerable: *namque ipsa decoram / caesariem nato genetrix lumenque iuventae / purpureum et laetos oculis adflarat honores* (“his own mother had breathed her beauty on her son, a gloss on his flowing hair, and the ruddy glow of youth, and radiant joy shone in his eyes,” *1.589-91*). This scene is inspired from the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus is given added beauty by Athena, including hair flowing in curls, like hyacinths, in *Od. 6.229-231*: τὸν μὲν Αθηναῖη θῆκεν Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα / μεῖζονά τ᾽ εἰσιδέειν καὶ πάσσονα, καδ ὡς κάρητος / οὐλας ἢκε κόμας, ὑπακινθίων ἤθει ὁμόιας (“Zeus's daughter Athena made him taller to all eyes, / his build more massive now, and down
from his brow / she ran his curls like thick hyacinth clusters / full of blooms”). Similarly long hair is a trait of tragically slain heroes, as Troilus in the temple of Juno in Carthage in 1.477 and Hector in 2.277: *squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crinis* (“His beard matted now, his hair clotted with blood”). The unshaven, downy first beard of young men also marks them out as desirable, like the tragic young Nisus: *ora puer prima signans intonsa iuuenta* (“a young boy / sporting the first down of manhood, cheeks unshaved,” 9.181). When heroes have *tons a coma pressa corona* which is *in morem*, it is during the funeral games of *Aeneid* 5 (“... following custom, wear their hair bound tight / with close-cut wreaths,” 5.556).

For women in non-mourning or sacrificial contexts, hair is not long or free-flowing (as with the male Apollo who *mollique fluentem / fronde premit crinem fingens atque implicat auro, “his streaming hair / braided with pliant laurel leaves entwined / in twists of gold,”* 4.147-48) but rather bound up and ornamented (as with Venus in the guise of a huntress *crines nodantur in aurum, “her hair drawn up in a golden torque”* in 4.138, and the real huntress Camilla in 7.815). The Sibyl’s hair is described as arranged before her possession by Apollo: *non comptae mansere comae (“her braided hair flies loose,”* 6.48). Virgil even includes mention of an article women use in hair dressing, the hair-pin, to contrast Camilla’s more natural approach: *pro crinali auro, pro longae tegmine pallae / tigridis exuuiae per dorsum a uertice pendent (“No gold band for her hair, no long flaring cape, / a tiger-skin that covered her head hung down her back,”* 11.576-77).

This imagery of arranged hair can apply to men as an insult and accusation of effeminacy and orientalism, which Iarbas accuses Aeneas of in his prayer in 4.216-7 (*Maenonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem / subnexus, “.. his hair oozing oil, / a Phrygian bonnet tucked up under his chin ...”). Men do wear ivy or leaves when participating in some sacrifices, however (8.274); otherwise men veil their hair before sacrificing, in true Roman custom, *arsurasque comas*
obnubit amictu (“covering locks that soon will face the fire,” 11.77). Lausus' hair is arranged according to the fashion of his people when killed by Aeneas, *comptos de more capillos* (“hair combed according to custom,” 10.832).

The god Mercury is described as having *crinis flauros*, showing that blonde hair is a characteristic of divinity, and Mercury in particular (4.559), though it is also a particular trait of Dido (4.590 and 4.698). Note that Dido is a barbarian, just as the German invaders depicted on the shield of Aeneas in 8.659: *aurea caesaries ollis atque aurea uestis* (“gold their flowing hair, their war dress gold”). Blonde hair was a favorite for wigs and hairpieces in historical Rome, and such hair was mostly acquired from barbarians.\(^\text{12}\) White hair is, obviously, indicative of old age as *canities* or *crines albi* or *barba alba*, as well as the hair of the goddess Vesta.\(^\text{13}\)

From Virgil’s description of hair, let us now move to Ovid's poetry, in which he uses hair as an element of erotic poetry, as a metaphor for the poet and his art, a trope well discussed, particularly in *Ars Amatoria* 1 and *Amores* 1.14.\(^\text{14}\) In *Ars Amatoria* 1.505-24,\(^\text{15}\) Ovid provides advice for men trying to attract their love interests, and he pays especial attention to the grooming of the hair. In *Amores* 1.14, in which Ovid mourns the loss of his mistress' hair because of excessive dyeing, appears to be an obvious archetype for Eumolpus' mock eulogy to Encolpius' lost hair aboard Lichas' ship in the *Satyricon*, as well as the more overt use Eumolpus makes of Encolpius’ and Giton's bald heads as parchment for literary production.\(^\text{16}\) Other striking points of contact between *Amores* 1.14 and *Satyricon* 103-110 include the mention of hair-curling

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\(^{12}\) Bartman (2001) 114.

\(^{13}\) *Aen.* 1.291.


\(^{15}\) Williams (2010) 144.

\(^{16}\) Rimell (2002) 113 and passim.
(the *calamistra* for Petronius and *ferrum et ignis* for Ovid) and the wig that is used in place of the lost locks in each case. Zetzel notes the many ways in which Ovid makes his mistress' hair representative of his poetry:\(^{17}\) for instance, the use of words such as *dociles* to describe the hair. Likewise the loss of the hair from too much artificial decoration (dye or curling irons, which are used to describe rhetoric in earlier authors)\(^{18}\) is Ovid's way of warning against artificiality in poetry, which must be allowed some natural freshness, otherwise it will die.\(^{19}\)

Seneca is an obvious author to search for references to hair that may have influenced Petronius. As Star mentions in his recent book on the relationship between Petronius and Seneca, many scholars hastily jump to the conclusion the two authors are obviously hostile (this impression is not helped by Tacitus' views on the subject).\(^ {20}\) What is evident, however, is that the writers do indeed refer to each other's literary productions and ideas in their own works. A good starting point for investigation is Seneca's *Morales Epistulae ad Lucilium*, especially 49-57, since the journey Seneca takes around Naples has many parallels with Encolpius' own travels. Epistle 114 is also of interest because in it Seneca links changes in literary style with the morality of the time; an immoral society produces florid speech while a moral one produces austere speech (114.2). In fact, Seneca uses hair as a metaphor for describing such moral differences.

Given the above selected discussion of authors Petronius certainly knows and draws upon, the reader should note that Petronius is playing with a long-standing tradition where hair is used metaphorically in literature, especially when each author comments on literary style.

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\(^ {17}\) Zetzel (1996) 79.

\(^ {18}\) Zetzel (1996) 79.

\(^ {19}\) Zetzel (1996) 81.

CHAPTER 2: THE CENA TRIMALCHIONIS

There are only two references to hair in the portions of the Satyrica preceding the Cena, which deserve some mention as good examples of how Petronius employs such descriptions. The first reference is found in 15.4, when Encolpius and Ascytlos are attempting to recover the old cloak that held a trove of gold coins; the argument over the cloak and tunic is interrupted by a bystander according to legal procedures:

nescio quis ex cocionibus, calvus, tuberosissimae frontis, qui solet aliquando etiam causas agere, invaserat pallium exhibiturumque crastino die affirmabat.

One of the dealers, a bald man with a wart-covered face who doubled as a part-time court-pleader, laid hold of the cloak and undertook to produce it next day.

This man is introduced as extremely ugly because of his warts and baldness, an addition to his characterization as a shady character, a black-market dealer in a bad part of town who also happens to be a corrupt lawyer-type. We do not know what role he may have played in any ensuing courtroom scenes, but we do know from this example that Petronius uses baldness for negative and lowly characterization, and we should bear this in mind when turning to the Cena, where baldness becomes very important thematically. The second mention of hair before the Cena takes place as Quartilla and Encolpius begin to get romantic: mulier basiavit me spissius et ex lacrimis in risum mota descendentes ab aure capillos meos lenta manu duxit (“her tears were transformed into laughter, and with lingering fingers she stroked the hair tumbling over my ears,” 18.4). Encolpius' hair is described as long and flowing and marks Encolpius out as an object of desire. Such flowing hair is consistently used by Petronius for men and consistently demarcates the erotic setting of sexually attractive, young male figures, specifically slave boys.
This is likewise an extremely important association to bear in mind in following sections of the work. Let us now turn to the Cena Trimalchionis, where, as we shall see next, there is a dramatic increase in references to hair.

Trimalchio is the Roman equivalent of those older men today who deny the irresistible advance of old age by continuing to comb hair over their constantly receding hairlines. He certainly is bald, yet he portrays himself as *capillatus* in the autobiographical wall painting in his home (29.3), surrounds himself with young long-haired boys (27.1), and, after hearing a werewolf story, says that it made his hair stand on end (63.1). It becomes apparent very soon that references to hair made in the Cena mark the social status of slaves and freedmen, and Trimalchio's inability to accept the loss of his hair and move on reflects his inability to transform successfully from his slave status to that of a truly free man; thus his hair reflects the limbo between servility and wealth from which he cannot escape.

Hairstyle is one of Petronius' favorite details to include when describing a character. Whether the characters in the Satyrica have curly hair, blond hair, long hair, or no hair at all, Petronius calls attention to it, sometimes almost using such a description as a title or in lieu of any other trait whatsoever (*puer capillatus*, “boy with a fine head of hair,” 57.9). Petronius focuses especially on the hair of freedmen and slave boys; throughout the entire Cena Trimalchionis, for example, the only direct reference to a woman's hair is to Fortunata's valuable golden hair net (67.6) and the spread-out locks of matrons from the Roman past (44.18). By contrast, when we first meet Trimalchio he is described as *senem calvum* (“a bald old man,” 27.1), he keeps his beard in a golden box (29.8), and he longs for the days when he was *capillatus* (both on a wall painting, depicting his life and career in 29.3, and when he tells a story about the good old days in 63.3). Does Trimalchio simply obsess over his vanishing hair the way
any other ageing man would, or does Petronius use such personal details for a reason and with a concrete agenda?

Since there are only a few references to hair before the *Cena* (2.8, 15.4, and 18.4), as we saw above, the *Cena*, and especially the fascinating problem of Trimalchio's baldness, is the first place in the extant text that hair becomes highly significant. What follows is a summary of the relevant references to hair in the episode of the *Cena*. This summary will allow the reader to see the connections between these different references in the scene more clearly. Descriptions of hair appear almost as soon as the *Cena* begins. Encolpius and his compatriots head to the baths before dinner and catch their first glimpse of Trimalchio, a *senem calvum, tunica vestitum russea, inter pueros capillatos ludentem pilae* (“a bald old man wearing a red shirt and playing ball with some long-haired young slaves,” 27.1). After the game, Trimalchio washes his hands in water, and *digitosque paululum adspersos in capite pueri tersit* (“and after perfunctorily washing his fingers [he] wiped them on the slave's head,” 27.6). Upon leaving the baths, Encolpius and his company enter Trimalchio's house and see Trimalchio's autobiographical wall-mural, on which one scene shows *ipse Trimalchio capillatus caduceum tenebat Minervaque ducente Romam intrabat* (“Trimalchio himself was there, sporting long hair and holding a herald's wand; Minerva was escorting him on his entry into Rome,” 29.3). Further down the passage they see Trimalchio's first beard, kept in a large golden box (29.8). Trimalchio himself is carried into the dining room with his shaven head covered in a scarlet cloak (32.2), and the wine is soon served by two Ethiopian boys with long-hair (34.4). Encolpius asks his neighbor to describe all the other guests at dinner, and one of them is described with the phrase *non puto illum capillos liberos habere* (“I don't think he can count his hair his own,” 38.12). A few courses later, the freedman Hermeros

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21 There are some other references to hair in the *Cena* that are more important for discussions focused on other
launches into a tirade against Ascytlos, protesting that *homo inter homines sum, capite aperto ambulo* (“I'm a man among men; I walk about with my head uncovered,” 57.5), and that *contubernalem meam redemi, ne quis in <capillis> illius manus tergeret* (“I purchased my partner's freedom to ensure that no one used her hair as a towel,” 57.6), and that *puer capillatus in hanc colonam veni* (“I came to the colony as a long-haired slave,” 57.9). Hermeros next turns his wrath on Giton, asking: *etiam tu rides, cepa cirrata* (“are you laughing as well, you curly-topped onion?” 58.2)? Hermeros also threatens Giton, saying he will make him pay despite the fact that Giton has a golden beard (58.6). Later on, Niceros is invited to tell a tale, and after his werewolf story, Trimalchio remarks: *mihi pili inhorruerunt, quia scio Niceronem nihil nugarum narrare* (“You can take my word for it that my hair stood on end. I know that Niceros doesn't deal in trifles,” 63.1); he launches into his own scary story with the introduction: *cum adhuc capillatus essem, nam a puero vitam Chiam gessi* (“when I was still a long-haired lad (even from my early years I lived as the Chians do),” 63.3). The party continues to grow more and more wild, until Trimalchio invites the slaves to take part in the fun, saying of one of his male slaves that *hodie servus meus barbatoriam fecit, homo praefiscini frugi et micarius* (“Today a slave of mine has celebrated his first shave. He's an honest lad, so help me, and careful with the money,” 73.6). The last mention of hair before the chaotic end of the Cena appears during Trimalchio's scenes rather than the present argument: a dish is served in a hunting theme by a man with a huge beard (40.5). The freedman Phileros recalls a recently departed friend as one who *aetatem bene ferebat, niger tamquam corvus* (“bore his age well, black as a crow,” 43.8). Ganymedes interrupts Phileros' speech to talk about the good old days, when *stolatae ibant nudis pedibus in clivum, passis capillis, mentibus puris* (“matrons would walk around with bare feet on the street, with spread out hair, pure minds,” 44.18). Later, Trimalchio's wife Fortunata shows off her jewelry to her friend Scintilla, including a *reticulum aureum, quem ex obrussa esse dicebat* (“a golden hairnet, which she said was of pure gold,” 67.6).
angry tirade against his wife, when he relates his autobiography; while describing his youth spent as the *deliciae* of his master and mistress, he notes that *et ut celerius rostrum barbatum haberem, labra de lucerna ungebam* (“and I’d grease my lips from the lamp to get some hair to grow round my gob more quickly,” 75.10).  

The first time Encolpius and the gang meet their host, Trimalchio, is when they go to the baths before the anticipated feast and see him as an old bald man playing among long-haired boys. The contrast between the old man and his boys is absurd, and we are meant to notice immediately that, although Trimalchio himself is bald (whether by choice or by age, or both), he associates himself with the *pueri capillati* and plays childish games with them. Trimalchio, by placing these attractive young boys around him, can more easily forget his own state and become again, in his mind, one of the boys playing ball. In his commentary, Schmeling notes that “baldness is a condition about which Romans were very sensitive” and cites remarks made by Suetonius, Juvenal, Artemidorus, Lucian, Seneca, and Tacitus on the subject. Trimalchio's young slaves contrast with him with respect to both age and hair. These *pueri capillati* were sexually desirable slaves, and their long hair is a special symbol of this attractiveness (according to Schmeling [2011] 87, specifically by Seneca and Martial). Likewise, according to Schmeling (2011) 87.

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22 Perhaps lamp oil was just one of the many odd hair treatments in adolescent boys; see Williams (2010) 24 for some other examples, such as ants eggs for preventing armpit hair. Cf. Catul. 37 for connection between the attractiveness of long hair and a thin beard.

23 See Morgan (1997) 212 for a discussion of a reverse scene in Martial, where the sycophant Menogenes would pick up balls out of the dirt and praise a bald man for having Achillean hair.


25 Attractive slave boys often became the *deliciae*, or boyfriends, of their masters, like Trimalchio's *deliciae* (28.4) or Trimalchio himself (75.10).
Bartman and Christenson,\textsuperscript{26} long, well-maintained hair is a symbol of effeminacy and orientalism, and both traits would apply to Trimalchio, as a young slave and \emph{deliciae}, and to the \textit{pueri} who now surround him. Towards the end of the \textit{Satyricon}, in Eumolpus’ \textit{Bellum Civile} (119-124), in a list of the many luxuries indulged in by the sinful age of that poem, there is a description of boys castrated in order to preserve their youthfulness to serve as \emph{deliciae} for their older lovers, and flowing hair is listed as one of the reasons for this indulgence: \textit{scorta placent fractique enervi corpore gressus / et laxi crines et tot nova nomina vestis, / quaeque virum quaerunt (“hence all sought their joy / in harlots, in effeminates’ mincing steps, / in flowing hair, in novel garb oft changed / In all that captivates men’s minds,” 119.24-27). Being surrounded by young boys emphasizes Trimalchio’s indulgent lifestyle. Therefore we are called to notice that where the \textit{pueri} are young, Trimalchio is old, and where the \textit{pueri} have long-flowing locks, i.e., are attractive, Trimalchio is now ugly, most specifically because of his baldness. The contrast is extreme from the audience’s perspective, but as seen in the following, Trimalchio has a little more difficulty in perceiving the discrepancy.

And yet, Trimalchio does all he can to counteract reality. After the bath, as Encolpius is entering Trimalchio’s house and viewing Trimalchio’s bibliographical mural, he sees the mural, and notices in one scene that Trimalchio, dressed as Mercury, entered Rome with Minerva as his guide (29.3). Trimalchio enters the city as a slave,\textsuperscript{27} an important period in his life that is directly connected to his characteristic long hair at that time.\textsuperscript{28} Trimalchio styles himself as Mercury (by means of the \textit{caduceus} he carries in his hand as well as the long hair) while he makes the


\textsuperscript{27} The text is corrupt here but generally read as \textit{Romam intrabat}, Schmeling (2011) 98-99.

\textsuperscript{28} Schmeling (2011) 98.
monumental steps that will lead him from slavery to freedom and success. This detail becomes interesting when one also considers Mercury's role as ψυχοπομός, leader of souls to the Underworld. Not only does self-representation as a deity come from the actual funerary art of Asiatic freedmen of the period, as Bodel says, but the chosen deity, Mercury, has a direct connection to the Underworld. Even though Mercury in this context first suggests commerce, one cannot avoid remembering the underworld, especially when noticing the many allusions creating a parallel between the Cena and a κατάβασις, a journey to the Underworld. Despite Victoria Rimell's impression that Trimalchio has a shaved head in a later part of the mural, when he is lifted up by the chin to his freedom, the text in no way specifies Trimalchio's hair as anything other than capillatus in this mural—and so, we cannot determine whether Trimalchio would include an image of himself as a bald-headed freedman on the mural. One could assume that Trimalchio would show himself as a bald freedman in the mural because he would want to represent himself in his current greatness; but, given the fact that Trimalchio never refers to himself as calvus (we are only told that he is through Encolpius' eyes), and everywhere surrounds himself with capillati, depicts himself as capillatus, and talks about the days when he was capillatus, one could conjecture that everything in his life is based on the pretense of his connection to the long hair of his youth. We only know about the reality of his baldness from the

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29 Consider Encolpius' speech in 140.12: *Mercurius enim, qui animas ducere et reducere solet, suis beneficiis reddidit mihi quod manus irata praeciderat* (“for Mercury, who is accustomed to lead souls (i.e., to the Underworld) and lead them back, returned to me with his blessings that which an angry hand had removed”). See also Schmeling (2011) 543.

30 Bodel (1994) 246.

31 For a thorough discussion of this, Bodel (1994).

first description made by Encolpius, the outsider at the Cena. After that first mention, Trimalchio's baldness no longer seems to exist in the text; the reader must continue to recall the fact on his own to notice its significant absence throughout the Cena.

The way that Petronius uses descriptions of hair in other episodes of the Satyricon reinforces my claims about the importance of similar descriptions in the Cena. In the shipwreck episode of the Satyricon (99-116), the youthful Giton and Encolpius submit to having their hair and eyebrows shaved off in order to avoid discovery by the captain of the ship, Lichas (103.1). After they are, predictably, discovered, the two are dressed up in wigs and false eyebrows by Tryphaena's maid (see below). In the festivities that occur later, Eumolpus decides to entertain the passengers and crew by an elegy on lost hair, designed to mock Encolpius and Giton's baldness. This poem seems strange and ill-fitting in the context because it is describing lost hair as symbolic of the fleeting nature of youth and the unavoidable advance of old age and death (109.8-10). However, both Encolpius and Giton are young (Giton is very young at 16), and they probably have many happy years of full heads of hair before them. Thus the poem is incongruous with the situation. While that is certainly a mark of Eumolpus' general bad taste, as seen elsewhere, this poem is extremely fitting when one thinks back to the Cena and applies it to Trimalchio. Trimalchio does seem to be an old man mourning his lost youth, as described in Eumolpus poem: vernantesque comas tristis abegit hiemps (“grim winter has removed spring's foliage green,” 109.9). What is laughable in its own context is fitting when applied to the context of the Cena. Trimalchio is preoccupied with death and fixates on his lost youth, a fitting subject

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33 Eumolpus’ mercennarius doubled as a barber; having one's hair groomed regularly was important for Romans according to Bartman (2001) 3.

34 Encolpius and Giton are laughable, especially because they resemble mime figures, according to Panayotakis (1995) 141.
of Eumolpus' poem.

Another, even more puzzling connection to Trimalchio's youth is the golden box in which he keeps his first beard, *pyxis aurea non pusilla, in qua barbam ipsius conditam esse dicebant* ("a golden container of some size, in which they said Trimalchio's beard was stored," 29.8). Most link this practice directly to Nero, as an example of Trimalchio's pretentious aping of imperial customs.\(^{35}\) So, although Trimalchio idolizes the time when he himself was a sexually-attractive slave *capillatus*, he also views himself as the equal of the most important free-born man in the empire: the emperor himself. The first beard links him both to that age when he was just growing a first beard and was still a *deliciae*, and his later wealth and pretensions to imperial status, as seen in the *pyxis aurea*. The confusion between Trimalchio's two hair-types mirrors the conflict within his personality as one who cannot escape the stigma of being a freedman for all the money in the world. The *barbatoria* ("beard-cutting ceremony") is further important in reflecting Trimalchio's exchange of the role of *deliciae* to the adult role of a *dominus* in his own right; and perhaps his youthful eagerness to make his beard grow faster reflects this desire (75.10). The first beard, just like long hair or a shaven head, is a status symbol, and shaving the beard is representative of a change of social status. Trimalchio tries to emphasize his status as *dominus* (for instance, by his behavior towards his slaves, like when he uses their long hair as a towel to clean his hands on 27.6). His pride at his own success may explain why he calls for a toast to celebrate a young slave's imminent *barbatoria* (73.6). Trimalchio may see in the young slave a reflection of his former self.

Trimalchio is unable to avoid discussing his time as a slave; in fact, his slave life seems, especially through his connection to *capillatus*, to dominate the *Cena*. However, his baldness

literally bursts through his fictitious appearance, as seen when he first enters the dining room. When he is carried in on a litter, his outrageous manner of dress *expressit imprudentibus risum*.

*pallio enim coccineo adrasum excluserat caput* ("the sight of him evoked laughter from the unwary, for his shaven head protruded from a scarlet dressing-gown," 32.1-2). His bald head bursts forth hilariously from beneath the fabric with which he had tried to cover it, causing Schmeling to wonder if he is "a jester at his own banquet." 36

The conflict between Trimalchio's bald and long-haired self is furthered in later parts of the *Cena*. After hearing Niceros' werewolf story, Trimalchio describes Nicero's veracity and his own reaction in an odd way:

> *atonitis admiratione universis 'salvo' inquit 'tuo sermone' Trimalchio 'si qua fides est, ut mihi pili inhorruerunt, quia scio Niceronem nihil nugarum narrare: immo certus est et minime linguosus. nam et ipse vobis rem horribilem narrabo: asinus in tegulis. cum adhuc capillatus essem, nam a puero vitam Chiam gessi ...* (63.1-3)

We were all dumbfounded. Trimalchio said: "Saving the presence of your story, you can take my word for it that my hair stood on end. I know that Niceros doesn't deal in trifles, but comes straight to the point without wasting words. But I too will tell you a hair-raising incident, as scary as 'the donkey on the roof'. When I was still a long-haired lad (even from my early years I lived as the Chians do) ..."

This is an odd way to express himself: Trimalchio, obviously bald, speaks as if he still had hair that was *able* to stand on end! Even though such a phrase is likely as colloquial then as now, it is

36 Schmeling (2011) 114.
contradicting reality a little too much. Trimalchio could be referring to what remains of his hair, for instance, at the nape of his neck, and remarking on that tell-tale feeling when one's hair stands on end. However, the fact that immediately afterwards, he tells a story and dates it as occurring when he was *capillus*, shows that Trimalchio himself is either reminded by his remaining hairs standing on end of the glorious head of hair that once was, or has completely forgotten or is in denial about any absence of hair whatsoever. There are many possible shades to the interpretation of this passage: perhaps Trimalchio is trying to amuse his guests, or what is to him purely a figure of speech is to us, the audience, an opportunity for mockery, or he could be longing so much for his hair and his “Chian” life that, for a moment, he thought he really did have hair. Either way, he launches into his witch story, using the state of his hair (the long, attractive hair of the slave/*deliciae*) to describe the temporal setting of the story. Thus we see that, again, the state of Trimalchio's hair is a way to organize various time periods in his life, precisely because it is a symbol of his status. Back in the day, he was a *deliciae*, a slave, a *capillus* young man. Now, at the time of the *Cena*, he is *libertus*, *calvus*, *dominus*.

Additionally, when Trimalchio launches his tirade against Fortuna and his concomitant autobiography, he again brings up his hair. In his youth he was the sexual object of both his master and mistress, and mentions that during that time *ut celerius rostrum barbatum haberem, labra de lucerna ungebam* (“I'd grease my lips from the lamp to get some hair to grow round my gob more quickly,” 75.10). His reasons for mentioning this activity are difficult to determine. Generally, a boy lost his sexual attractiveness, especially as a *deliciae*, when finally shaving his beard in the ceremonial *depositio barbae*. However, in the *Satyricon*, Giton has enough of a

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37 This was quite the norm according to Bradley (1994).

38 See Richlin (1993) 535 for the connection between a boy's hair and sexual attractiveness, and 547 for *depositio*
beard at 16 years old to warrant a remark from Hermeros about his *barbam auream* (58.6) in addition to being a long-haired *cepa cirrata* (58.2). Giton is certainly the *deliciae* of the older Encolpius as well as of Ascytlos and Eumolpus, despite already having a beard. Of course, Encolpius and his various lovers and rivals in love do not necessarily obey traditional mores of any sort; most characters in the *Satyrica* bend the rules of Roman behavior quite a lot, so it is not surprising that Encolpius would have *fratri* as old as Giton or even Ascytlos without thinking anything of it. It seems possible that Trimalchio was rather trying to hasten his adulthood to achieve the status as a *dominus* rather than to avoid the status of a *deliciae*.

Hermeros deserves careful analysis at this point because his speech is laden with statements about hair that are parallel to Trimalchio's, and his speech, which morphs into his autobiography, occurs between Trimalchio's autobiographical mural and autobiographical tirade against Fortunata. After Ascytlos laughs outrageously at some dish of dubious wit, Hermeros takes offense and attacks Ascytlos in an angry speech for insulting his *conlibertus*, Trimalchio. Continuing in that fashion for some time, Hermeros shifts from defending Trimalchio's lifestyle to defending his own, stating *homo inter homines sum, capite aperto ambulo* (“I'm a man among men, I walk about with my head uncovered,” 57.5). Schmeling explains this phrase, with references to Plautus and Seneca, as Hermeros saying that he “can hold his head up high without a disguise,”39 This claim seems connected to the description of Trimalchio entering the banquet at 32.1: *pallio enim coccineo adrasum excluserat caput* (“for his shaven head protruded from a scarlet dressing-gown”). If Hermeros is proud to walk around with uncovered head, does this imply that Trimalchio is ashamed or embarrassed about his bald head and freedman status? He is

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39 Schmeling (2011) 236.
certainly proud about his career as a successful slave and his career as a successful rich businessman, but perhaps the grey area between the two states gives him some sort of discomfort. Nevertheless, based on what he said in 57.5, Hermeros is proud of his current state. He also boasts of his success, which enabled him to purchase the freedom of his *contubernalis* (57.6), which he primarily secured so that no one would use her hair as a towel. Trimalchio used one of his slave's heads as a towel on which to wipe his hands in 27.6. Hermeros therefore aimed at freeing his *contubernalis* from the sort of humiliation which Trimalchio willingly inflicts on his own slaves. So, despite being *conliberti*, Trimalchio and Hermeros display very different behaviors as freedmen: Hermeros tries to avoid the kind of domineering behavior that Trimalchio seems to relish. It is difficult to say what kind of statement Petronius would be making by this contrast between Trimalchio and Hermeros since one would find it difficult to claim that Petronius ever makes serious social commentary of any sort. Perhaps he uses Hermeros, whose behaviors as a freedman seem understandable, to highlight Trimalchio's hypocrisy in acting as a tyrannical master when he himself used to be in his slaves' position. Hermeros likewise parallels Trimalchio's life when he boasts that he entered the colony as a *puer capillatus* just as Trimalchio, in his mural, is pictured as *capillatus* entering Rome (57.9). Hermeros boasts of this fact just as proudly as Trimalchio depicts it; neither is ashamed of having made their start as a slave, but think of that time fondly. Since Hermeros is quite old, older even than Trimalchio, perhaps, he focuses his attention on the proverbial good old days. His slave status is what defined him (*capillatus* signifying especially an attractive, young male slave) and what still defines him. Neither he nor Trimalchio can move on and forget about the

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40 Schmeling (2011) 239 relates Maiuri's guess of Hermeros' age as at least 70 due to the fact that the basilica built in Puteoli was constructed in the Augustan age.
fact that they were once capillati.

After attacking Ascyltos in the above tirade, Hermeros turns his wrath on Giton, snapping etiam tu rides, cepa cirrata (“are you laughing as well, you curly-topped onion” 58.2)? He also threatens Giton:

curabo, longe tibi sit comula ista besalis et dominus dupundarius. recte, venies
sub dentem: aut ego non me novi, aut non deridebis, licet barbam auream habeas.
(58.6)
I'll see to it that those cheap curls of yours and your twopenny-ha'penny master don't rescue you. Make no mistake, you'll feel my teeth. If I know Hermeros, you'll not go on sneering, even if you grow a golden beard.

The phrase “curly-topped onion” is apparently a term of abuse, but the curly part seems to reflect Giton's actual hair, since later on, when Ascyltos searches for Giton and has a description of him read out, Giton is described as a curly-haired, delicate, and beautiful sixteen year old (97.2). Giton is also probably blonde, judging by the comment about having a golden beard. The mention of the golden beard emphasizes Giton's overall attractiveness, since images of gods (and the emperors that imitated them) often had actual golden beards. The desirability of blonde hair is reinforced later on, when the newly shaven Giton and Encolpius are given wigs.

41 Schmeling (2011) 240.
42 According to Bartman (2001) 4: “Hair's erotic potential is a recurrent theme of literature from the period, whether explicit, as in the poetry of the Latin love elegists, or implicit, as in the advice for styling and coloring proffered by Ovid and others.”
44 Cf. Catul. 64.63 and 98.
and eyebrows by Tryphaena's maid. Without hair and eyebrows, Encolpius is ashamed of his ugliness (108.1), but when Giton is given the new hair and eyebrows, this addition completely restores his former attractiveness: *corymbioque dominae pueri adornat caput. immo supercilia etiam profert de pyxide sciteque iacturae lineamenta secuta totam illi formam suam reddidit* (“... and adorned his head with one of her mistress's wigs of curly hair. She also took from a box some eyebrows, and by expertly following the lines of his shaved hair, she totally restored his handsome features,” 110.1-2). Encolpius is even more overjoyed at his own wig, since the maid *sevocatumque me non minus decoro exornavit capillamento; immo commendatior vultus enituit, quia flavum corybion erat* (“... adorned me with equally fetching locks. In fact my features gleamed more attractively, because the wig was golden-haired,” 110.5). So, throughout the *Satyricon*, Giton appears as the ideal for male beauty, especially because of his curling hair and golden beard.\(^45\) And so, although Hermeros is attacking him for showing disrespect for Trimalchio, perhaps part of Hermeros' motivation is jealousy over Giton's beauty as a *puer capillatus*, beauty that Hermeros claims to have possessed, but which, despite his angry speech, has faded away long ago. We are meant to see the striking contrast between the extremely old, bald Hermeros that is and the young, attractive slave that he used to be and cannot move beyond.

Looking at the aforementioned passages in the *Cena* in general, one can see that they fit nicely into the overall ring-composition of the episode.\(^46\) Especially with respect to the autobiographies of Trimalchio and Hermeros, we have first Trimalchio depicted as a *puer capillatus* entering Rome as well as his first beard in the *pyxis aurea*, then Hermeros' description of himself as a similar *puer capillatus* that became a self-made success, after that we have a

\(^{45}\) Booth (1982) 243 supports the idea of Giton's beard being thin and downy, not a full, masculine beard.

\(^{46}\) See Bodel (1999) 45 for an excellent and detailed chart of the overall organization of the *Cena* episode.
verbal autobiography by Trimalchio in his attack on Fortunata, and finally his praise of a young slave about to celebrate his own *barbatoria*. Does this ring-composition structure tell us anything about the importance of descriptions of hair to the major themes of the *Cena*? It certainly seems like it does. Trimalchio's preoccupation with his former long hair is integrally connected to his preoccupation with his former status as a slave. The long hair and newly forming beard represent the most important time in his life that he, like Hermeros, cannot move beyond. Though Trimalchio is a freedman, he is not really a free man—his slave status is what defined him as a youth and what still defines him in the time of the *Cena*. He is trapped within the living hell of his *Cena*, surrounded on both sides (29.3 and 75.10) by the immutable nature of his former slavery. His bald head emphasizes, through contrast, the dominance of his former state as *capillatus*.

Trimalchio's refrain of *capillatus, capillatus* shouts out to the reader that Trimalchio's status as former slave and current freedman, represented by the condition of his hair, is what defines him. Trimalchio entered Rome to what he depicted as a glorious career in the guise of Mercury, but since Mercury is the ψυχοπομπός who leads souls to the Underworld, Trimalchio's transition from *capillatus* to *libertus* almost seems to be a transition from living to dead. In Roman society, a freedman like Trimalchio, no matter how rich or popular, is forever stuck in a social underworld from which he can never escape.
Hair continues to be an important method for characterization after the Cena, and becomes a major theme in the episode on Lichas' ship. While Trimalchio is left trapped in his Cena, Encolpius and his companions manage to escape in the chaos that ensues when the firefighters storm the house. Encolpius gets into an altercation with Acyyltos and Giton, and is crushed when Giton decides to leave him for Ascyltos. Dejected, Encolpius goes to a picture gallery, and intravit pinacothecam senex canus, exercitati vultus et qui videretur nescio quid magnum promittere (“a grizzled veteran entered the gallery with a look of concentration on his face which offered a hint of greatness,” 83.7). This is Eumolpus, a lecherous old man who will replace Ascyltos in the perpetual revolving ménage a trois that continues throughout the Satyrca.  

His white hair is noted first because it casts him as a heroic type. Encolpius sees himself and others through a heroic lens throughout many parts of the Satyrca, and therefore eagerly casts that mold on Eumolpus, even though Eumolpus soon proves to be a bumbling, doggerel-composing fool. Among Eumolpus' many, many poems, this first one, about the Troiae halosis, includes a description of Laocoon, Neptuno sacer / crinem solutus omne Laocoon replet / clamore vulgus (“Neptune's Laocoon with hair unbound / incites the mob to uproar,” 89.18-20). This description picks up on the literary image of the pious person with dishevelled hair, which idea was mentioned in the Cena and which Petronius will pick up again in Eumolpus' story of the Widow of Ephesus in order to turn her similar image of piety on its head. Petronius includes the description of Laocoon's locks here to show the literary connection he is establishing with Virgil (who, above, frequently uses the image of torn hair as indicative of piety.

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47 Schmeling (2011) 353.

in the *Aeneid*).

Afterwards, Encolpius tracks Giton down again and takes him back to an inn to make love in secret. However, Ascyltos is on their tail and his agent stops by the inn to read out a wanted ad for Giton, who is described: *puer in balneo paulo ante aberravit, annorum circa XVI, crispus, mollis, formosus, nomine Giton* (“A slave has just gone missing at the baths. He is about sixteen years old, curly-haired, effeminate, good-looking. His name is Giton,” 97.2). Again, Petronius emphasizes the link between fine hair (*crispus*, or *capillatus* elsewhere) and appealing looks. The loss of this fine hair, and its implications for Eumolpus, and perhaps Petronius', literary production, becomes the primary subject of interest in the strange events that take place aboard Lichas' ship.

A disruption of Eumolpus' machinations comes suddenly in the form of a sailor with an extremely shaggy beard: *stetitque in limine barbis horrentibus nauta* (“and on the threshold stood a sailor with a shaggy beard,” 99.5). Encolpius, Eumolpus, and Giton board the ship at his behest and begin a sea-journey to Croton. While on board, they realize that they have unfortunately and blindly stumbled into the hands of Lichas and Tryphaena, characters whom they presumably wronged somehow in an early, lost episode. After much debate about how to escape recognition, Encolpius proposes dyeing themselves with Eumolpus' ink (*hoc ergo remedio mutemus colores a capillis usque ad ungues*, “let's use it as a means of changing our colour from head to foot,” 102.13) to pose as Ethiopian slaves, which Giton puts down as a stupid idea, especially since they could not easily change any other features besides skin color (*numquid et crines calamistro convertere? and numquid <et> barbam peregrina ratione figurare? “Can we curl our hair with tongs? ... Or shape our beards to make them look foreign?” 102.15). Eumolpus proposes that they could indeed pose as slaves, but rather than dyeing their
skin, he advises that his barber-slave cut their hair and even their eyebrows, and that Eumolpus use his ink rather to write slave tattoos on their foreheads: mercennarius meus, ut ex novacula conperistis, tonsor est: hic continuo radat utriusque non solum capita sed etiam supercilia (“My slave is a barber, as you gathered from that razor of his. He must at once shave off not just the hair but also the eyebrows of you both,” 103.1). Encolpius and Giton submit to this treatment: processimus capitaque cum supercilliis denuandae tonsori praebimus (“we ... presented our heads and eyebrows to the barber for shaving,” 103.3).

In her monograph *Petronius and the Anatomy of Fiction*, Victoria Rimell sees this scene on board Lichas' ship as a reworking of the scene in the Odyssey where Odysseus and his men must escape from Polyphemus' cave.⁴⁹ There are several direct references to Odysseus and Polyphemus which make this quite plausible, although there is more room for exploration into the actual implications of this, and particularly why hair and the removal of hair are such prominent themes throughout the entire scene. What does hair represent if the removal of hair provides a fit sheet for Eumolpus' composition? Why does Lichas highlight that being bald might excite more pity, while Encolpius obsesses over how disgusting being bald makes him look and how well artificial wigs and eyebrows suit him?⁵⁰ Does Encolpius revile his shaven eyebrows because it is a mark of effeminacy?⁵¹ What is the significance of placing Eumolpus in the position of Odysseus here when Encolpius often claims the position of epic hero for himself? These are the questions we must still consider when working through the passages that follow.

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⁵⁰ Especially in light of what Rimell claims about the baldness reflecting polished poetry; Encolpius' emphasis on the ugliness of being bald takes away from her claim somewhat.

⁵¹ Williams (2010) 21 cites a speech of Scipio Aemilianus against P. Sulpicius Galus, in which Aemilianus attacks Galus as one qui cotidie unguentatus adversus speculum ornetur, cuius supercilia radantur ... (Gell. 6.12.5)

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Lichas discovers the shaving incident when a sea-sick passenger catches them in the act and he berates them for doing something that might bring them all bad luck:

'audio enim non licere cuiquam mortalium in nave neque unguies neque capillos deponere nisi cum pelago ventus irascitur.' excanduit Lichas hoc sermone turbatus et 'itane' inquit 'capillos aliquis in nave praecidit, et hoc nocte interemesta?' (104.5-105.1)

“I'm told that no person on a ship must cut his nails or hair, except when the wind and the sea are angry.” Lichas was rattled by these words, and flared up. “What?” he said. “Has someone been cutting hair on the ship, and at dead of night?”

Now Encolpius and company must think fast in order to come up with a reason why they would do something so ill-omened as shave their hair on a ship. Lichas has the culprits brought before him for judgment in a sort of mock-trial, with himself as judge and Eumolpus as defense lawyer. Eumolpus tries to craft a hasty excuse, saying that their hair was simply too disgusting to keep and that he wanted to prevent them from concealing the tattoos on their foreheads: sed quia [nocentes] horridos longosq[u]e habebant capillos...simul ut notae quoque litterarum non obumbratae comarum praesidio totae ad oculos legentium acciderent (“But these men had long and disgusting hair ... Besides, I didn't want those letters branded on their faces to be overshadowed by their hair, and so hidden from people's discerning eyes,” 105.2). This phrase seems to add weight to Rimell's reading of this passage as a metaphorical discussion of literature and the author's relationship to it.52 Eumolpus is the author, and Encolpius and Giton are his literary products. The hair and eyebrows are somehow a hindrance to literary production and

must be removed. Here, Petronius has continued the tradition of Ovid where the relationship between the writer and his work is filtered through the relationship of the man and his mistress, although Petronius has sought to surpass that tradition in several ways. For example, the true author of the work is hidden and, while Encolpius is the narrator, Eumolpus takes the role of author here. Secondly, the relationship of writer and mistress is changed to the odd ménage a trois between the old man Eumolpus, Encolpius, and his young frater Giton. He also follows the tradition of poetry as polished and hairless which Callimachus, Catullus, and Horace pursued in their works. However, there seems to be a contradiction in the passage with regard to what is better, baldness or hair. Eumolpus describes the baldness as a positive thing, and yet Encolpius feels too ashamed of his ridiculous depilation that he will not even respond to Lichas, as he tells us: ... praeter spoliati capitis dedecus superciliorum etiam aequalis cum fronte calvities, ut nihil nec facere decret nec dicere (“what with my repulsively cropped head and in addition eyebrows as hairless as my forehead, my ugly appearance made it seem inapposite to make any gesture or to say anything,” 108.1). Schmeling explains this silence as Encolpius being at a loss before a logical, real-world thinker like Lichas, but there seems to be more to the story than this. Eumolpus himself later recites a poem mocking Encolpius' baldness, and it is the artificial wigs and eyebrows that actually make Giton, and later Encolpius, look like their true selves (110.1-2). According to Schmeling, “the shaved head is … not necessarily a sign of shame,” citing an incident in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* 11.30 in which Lucius shaves his head for religious purposes and expresses pride at having done so. Why is it then so shameful for Encolpius?

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53 Rimell (2002) 115. See also the description of poems as smoothed or polished in Catul. 1.1-2: *cui dono lepidum nouum libellum / arida modo pumice expolitum?* Especially relevant here is Horace, whose first book of Epistles is described as a slave shaved and ready for market.
Perhaps, if this is not reading too deeply into the text, Petronius is making a much broader statement about literature than Rimell puts forward. If it is accepted that hair and baldness in this scene are metaphors for literature, then perhaps the shaggy, hoary state of literature is unappealing to Petronius, but the extremely polished school is equally or even more repulsive to him. The ornamentation of this polished style can be done in such a way that it restores, and even improves, the natural beauty of the literature. Perhaps Petronius, like Encolpius, prefers the blonde wig. Seneca makes a similar statement to this from a different angle: in a discussion of the two extremes of literary style, the old, austere, hoary style and the new, fine, ornamented style, Seneca uses a metaphor of two men to show the contrast. Seneca says of the two men, *alter se plus iusto colit, alter plus iusto neglegit; ille et crura, hic ne alas quidem vellit* (“the one cares for himself more than is necessary, the other neglects himself more than is necessary; the first shaves even his legs, the second not even his armpits,” 114.14, my translation). Seneca advocates the mean between the two literary styles: a man should make sure he is well-groomed, not shaggy, but he should not go so far as to become entirely hairless. It seems, perhaps, that Petronius, by working the literary discussion into a less direct format, took this metaphor and brought it to life.

To return to the trial in the *Satyrica*: whatever excuses the guilty group makes, Lichas does not buy it, and continues to ask probing questions: *ac primum omnium, si ultro venerunt, cur nudavere crinibus capita* (“First and foremost, if they came aboard deliberately, why did they shave their heads?” 107.8)? He wonders aloud why anyone would shave his head except *nisi forte miserabiliiores calvi solent esse* (“is it perhaps that bald men usually excited greater pity?” 107.15). This statement, which implies that bald men are necessarily pitiable, is a strange

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54 This example was first found in Williams (2010) 142-43.
Baldness, as this paper has shown, is an extremely rich symbol in Petronius’ hands. It reflects slave or freedman status and everything that that implies. It also serves as a metaphor for a particular literary style. Finally, it is a herald of old age and encroaching death. Perhaps Lichas, who, as Schmeling has noted, is a real-world, practical thinker, posits baldness as pitiable because of this last reason. He sees it simply as what it is in the real world, a sign of old age, and disregards the possible literary and cultural shades it could have in Encolpius’ literary world.

Lichas continues his lengthy interrogations with some further insulting questions related to hair: *quid dicis tu, latro? quae [sola] salamandra supercilia tua exussit. cui deo crinem vovisti?* (“You there, what have you to say for yourself, you rascal? Did some salamander scorch your eyebrows? To what god did you dedicate your locks?” 107.15). However, he soon gives over and sentences Encolpius and Giton to their punishments, after which they are finally recognized and the inhabitants of the ship cheer away the ordeal with some wine. After the party becomes more intoxicated, Eumolpus, staggering drunk, composes a poem about hair. Eumolpus, *ipse vino solutus dicta voluit in calvos stigmososque iaculii, donec consumpta frigidissima urbanitate reedit ad carmina sua coepitque capillorum elegiarion dicere* (“but once his sadly laboured wit was exhausted, he returned to his verse-composition, and began to declaim a little poem in elegiacs” 109.8). The perplexing little poem is as follows:

> *'quod solum formae decus est, cecidere capilli,*
> vernantesque comas tristis abegit hiemps.
> *nunc umbra nudata sua iam tempora maerent,*
> *areaque attritis ridet adusta pilis.*
> *o fallax natura deum: quae prima dedisti*
Proud locks, our body's solitary boast, have passed away;
Grim winter has removed spring's foliage green.
Our greying temples, stripped of shade, lament their day;
Our sun-scorched scalps bereft of hair are seen.
The gods beguile with nature's baleful law:
First joys bestowed on youth they first withdraw!

'Sad creature, once your hair did glow,
More beauteous than the sun and moon,
Now your head's smoother than worked bronze,
Or garden mushroom, born in rain.
You flee in fear from giggling girls.
Why has your head's chief glory gone?
To warn you of death's swift descent.'
This poem emphasizes hair as a token of beauty, as has been stressed throughout the Satyricon. Eumolpus then spends most of the poem on mockingly mourning the loss of hair that old age brings. Schmeling notes that this is obviously misplaced since Encolpius and Giton are young and had their hair shaved instead of losing it from balding. E5 Encolpius or the narrator also seems to draw some attention to this with his introductory note that Eumolpus had used up his wit (consumpta frigidissima urbanitate, “once his sadly laboured wit was exhausted,” 109.8) and comment after the poem: plura volebat proferre, credo, et ineptiore praeteritis (“I suspect that he would have liked to spout further lines even more witless than these,” 110.1).

Eumolpus' weak witticisms are interrupted by a solution to Encolpius' and Giton's baldness: false wigs and eyebrows courtesy of Tryphaena and her maid. The solution is narrated as follows:

ancilla Tryphaenae Gitona in partem navis inferiorem ducit corymbioque dominae
pueri adornat caput. immo supercilia etiam profert de pyxide sciteque tacturae
lineamenta secuta totam illi formam suam reddidit. agnovit Tryphaena verum
Gitona, lacrimisque turbata tunc primum bona fide puero basium dedit. ego etiam
si repositum in pristinum decorem puerum gaudebam, abscondebam tamen
frequentius vultum intellegebamque me non tralaticia deformitate esse insignitum,
quem alloquio dignum ne Lichas quidem crederet. sed huic tristitiae eadem illa
succurrit ancilla, sevocatumque me non minus decoro exornavit capillamento;
immo commendatior vultus enituit, qui flavum corymbion erat. (110.1-5)

But now one of Tryphaena's maids took Giton below deck, and adorned his head with one of her mistress's wigs of curly hair. She also took from a box some eyebrows, and by expertly following the lines of his shaved hair, she totally restored his handsome features. Tryphaena acknowledged her own true Giton; she was overwhelmed with tears, and for the first time kissed the lad with real affection. For my part, I was delighted to see the boy restored to his former beauty, but I repeatedly covered up my own face in the realization that I was so conspicuously hideous that Lichas did not consider me worth even addressing. But that same maid lifted my melancholy, for she summoned me away, and adorned me with equally fetching locks. In fact my features gleamed more attractively, because the wig was golden-haired.

Parts of this passage have been discussed previously in their relation to Trimalchio. We also see a continuation in Encolpius' self-loathing for his ugliness, especially as it relates to his interactions with Lichas. Before, Encolpius felt unable to speak to Lichas because of his appearance, here Lichas becomes the one refusing to address Encolpius, again because of his supposed hideousness. As a metaphor for literary style, being bare of any ornamentation would make this work seem naked and ugly, and this is intolerable for the narrator. It strips away pretensions to epic, and directly threatens the Satyrica’s game that is being played with all previous authors, works, and genres. Encolpius’ embarrassment, due to being shaven bare for all to see, abates only when decorated artfully with wig and eyebrows, and he is able to return from real life into his epic delusions. Lichas’ death after the ship is destroyed also aids him by removing the only character thus far with real sense.

However, before Petronius kills off Lichas in the imminent storm, Eumolpus gives us
another of his gems, this time a story, in order to keep the party spirit high aboard ship. He gives us the story of the widow of Ephesus, which, though short and including only two references to hair (specifically the widow’s own), is informative. Eumolpus announces that his story describes a modern instance of women’s fickleness, and is not from an old tragedy or historical event. In the story, the newly widowed Ephesian woman remains at her dead husband’s crypt, making a spectacle of her grief and starving herself to death. This woman exceeded the mourning of others, as Eumolpus says, non contenta vulgari more funus passis prosequi crinibus (“she was not satisfied merely to escort the body to burial, as most mourners do, with hair flowing free,” 111.2). The phrase passis crinibus, or similar, is an especially common one in epic and other genres for religious or mourning contexts. Consequently, as we see in the freedman Ganymede’s speech in the Cena Trimalchionis, where he bewails these corrupted modern times and speaks longingly of the past, when grain was cheap, profit in the colony was high, and the weather was fine, especially because antea stolatae ibant nudis pedibus in clivum, passis capillis, mentibus puris, et Iovem aquam exorabant (“at one time the women wore long dresses, and walked barefoot up the hill with their hair unbound and their clothes washed dazzling white, praying to Jupiter for rain,” 44.18). Thus passis crinibus or passis capillis (“with flowing hair”) is used almost as an epithet for the moral period of the distant, mythical past. Petronius takes this long-held literary convention and plays with it, using it in contexts that directly conflict with the original ideas. In the case of Ganymede, he does express longing for the better times of yesterday, but almost entirely with respect to money. He complains about the increase in the price of bread, aediles who hoard money instead of spending it on the public, the lack of rain, etc., as if there were a moral decline taking place in the colony rather than a monetary one. Petronius uses the description of the praying women with the phrase passis capillis in this
section to highlight his perversion of the normal literary complaint about declining morals. His tactics in the story of the widow of Ephesus are similar. The widow weeps piously over her husband’s grave with flowing locks in the traditional way, making a great show of her fidelity and duty. When faced by the patrolling soldier who offers her food to break her fast, she makes an even more extreme show\(^\text{56}\) of traditional female behavior: *at illa ignota consolatione percussa laceravit vehementius pectus ruptosq \textit{ue crines super corpus iacentis imposuit* (“But the woman in her affliction had no thought for consolation. She tore at her breast more fiercely than before; she pulled out her hair, and laid it on the prostrate corpse,” 111.9). This extreme and thoroughly Roman mourning contrasts with the location of the story, being in a Greek Anatolian city, and in fact in a city, Ephesus, that would call to the reader’s mind an association with Milesian tales.\(^\text{57}\)

The widow’s mourning and rent hair, emblematic of female piety throughout Roman literature, also contrast with the widow’s actual fickleness, which fact Eumolpus emphasizes from the very introduction of the story. She quickly succumbs to the soldier’s temptations to eat and enters into an affair with him soon after. As a final outrage, she saves her new lover by hanging her husband’s corpse on a cross, whereas only a little while before she was willing to die for him.

Schmeling also notices this reversal, and notes that Petronius casts the widow as a Dido figure: “Eumolpus reverses the order in Virgil, who has Dido tear her hair after her affair with Aeneas and then kill herself.”\(^\text{58}\) Thus in both the main action of the ship scene and in Eumolpus’ literary entertainments, hair is used to draw on earlier literary traditions and to show Petronius’ perversion of norms and overturning of expectations.

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\(^\text{56}\) Schmeling (2011) 430 notes that “now that the matrona once again has an audience, she again lets her grief show” and cites a similar sentiment in Sen. \textit{Ep}. 99.16-17.

\(^\text{57}\) Schmeling (2011) 428.

\(^\text{58}\) Schmeling (2011) 430.
After surviving the wreck of Lichas’ ship, Encolpius and company reunite and make their way to what they learn is the city of Croton, a place where “literary studies have no prestige, and eloquence no standing” (*in hac enim urbe non litterarum studia celebrantur, non eloquentia locum habet* 116.6), inhabited by legacy hunters and their prey. As they make their way to the city, Eumolpus attempts to entertain his companions with his lengthy poem on civil war. Early in the poem long hair is listed as one of the luxuries pursued by the sinful men of the age. Towards the end of the poem the gods abandon the field. Eumolpus describes Justice as having loose hair:

*hic comes it submissa Fides et crine soluto / Iustitia ac maerens lacera Concordia palla*  
(“Submissive Faith as her companion went, / and Justice, hair unbound; Concord in tears / had torn her garment,” 124.252-53). The good female deities behave as the women of history and myth do in mourning contexts with loose hair and torn clothing. The odd thing about this passage is that an evil goddess of the Underworld, Discordia, similarly loosened hair as Justice does, described verbatim as *crine soluto* (other options for the sake of *variatio* could have been *passis capillis* or *passis crinibus*):

*intremuere tubae ac sciss o Discordia crine / extulit ad superos Stygium caput* (124.271-2). According to Schmeling, this description of Discord contrasts with her snake hair only a line later: *stabant aerate scabra rubigine dentes, / tabo lingua fluens, obsessa draconibus ora* (“her brazen fangs were foul with rusty scales; / her tongue was dripping with disease, her face / beset with snakes,” 124.274-75).

The group finally enters Croton with the conclusion of Eumolpus’ poem and spends some time enjoying the favors and services bestowed on the residents, who think Eumolpus is a wealthy, senile target for inheritances. After a lacuna, Encolpius, posturing as Odysseus Polyaenus, is apparently in conversation with Circe’s maid, who is trying to procure him as a lover for her mistress. The maid notes that Encolpius’ appearance seems to be asking for these
kinds of advances: _quo enim spectant flexae pectine comae, quo facies medicamine attrita et oculorum quoque mollis petulantia, quo incessus arte compositus et ne vestigia quidem pedum extra mensuram aberrantia, nisi quod formam prostituis ut vendas_ (“What other motive have you in your curling your hair with the comb, plastering your face with make-up, giving that melting come-hither look with your eyes, walking with that carefully composed tread so that not a step is out of place, except to advertise that handsome body of your for sale,” 126.2)? This surprisingly full description of Encolpius shows that he is quite effeminate to the extent that he invites sexual advances. His hair, which has presumably grown back after the shaving incident, is artfully curled with a comb, perhaps trying to look like a _capillatus_ himself. When he is brought to meet Circe at a secret location, he gives a lengthy description of her beauty, apparently quite overcome by her appearance: _crines ingenio suo flexi per totos se umeros effuderant, frons minima et quae radices capillorum retro flexerat, supercilia usque ad malarum scripturam currentia_ … (“her hair fell in natural waves all over her shoulders; from her narrow forehead her hairline receded in curls; her eyebrows extended to the edge of her cheekbones, and almost met close to her eyes,” 126.15). Schmeling notes that Encolpius’ description of Circe’s beauty seems like a description of the statue of a goddess, as if nature (Circe, a real woman) were imitating art (descriptions or images of goddesses and mythical women). Thus Petronius uses Circe’s beautiful hair and eyebrows as part of Encolpius’ pseudo-epic delusional world.

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60 For a more extreme example, bordering on obsession, see Lucius’ description of Photis’ hair in Apuleius’ _Metamorphoses_, as studied in Englert (1973).

61 Schmeling (2011) 479.

62 Encolpius does not always believe he is in an epic scenario. In the _Cena_, as Cameron (1969) shows, he is in the middle of Plato’s _Symposium_.

39
Because of his pretensions to playing the role of Odysseus in his love affair with this modern Circe, Encolpius describes her as a goddess, often sprinkles the conversation and his narrative with poems, and models his actions on epic characters. Petronius seems to enjoy building up such scenes in order to bring Encolpius’ delusions crashing down in as dramatic a way as possible. In this particular scene, the persecution of Priapus prevents the would-be lover from the enjoyment of the epic tryst he was expecting.
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to shed light on the way that Petronius works in the *Satyr
ca* by using a single illustrative detail, descriptions of hair. Throughout the extant portions of this work, Petronius models his descriptions of hair on descriptions that are literary norms of his predecessors and those of Roman society. Thus Trimalchios delights in the long hair of his young love interests, Eumolpus employs his young companions’ heads as parchment for his compositions, and Encolpius dons himself and everyone he encounters with the flowing hair of epic. However, as we have seen, everywhere Petronius makes a reference to hair, he is always playing a game with it and seeking to subvert it. Trimalchio talks as if he had the long hair of a youthful *deliciae* when in reality he is an old, balding, probably fat freedman. Eumolpus is literally scratching marks on his friends’ shaven heads instead of writing poetry that discusses its style through metaphorical descriptions of hair. And Encolpius, poor guy, always bumbles into farce when he dreams that he is a new Homeric hero. In the *Satyrica*, nothing is as it seems, and nothing goes as expected.  

63 For a similar sentiment, see Cameron (1969) 369-370.
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