

Completing the Fragmented: Supplements to Petronius' *Satyricon*  
Between Forgery and Reconstruction

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What I would like to do in my lecture today is to look at supplements to Petronius' fragmentarily preserved Roman novel *Satyricon* – supplements that stretch from the late sixteenth up to the early twenty-first century. By doing so, I would like to consider how these supplements oscillate between creative attempts at forgery and scholarly attempts at reconstruction. For starters, I will give a brief overview of the content of the *Satyricon*; then I will add an overview of the (extremely complex) history of transmission of the text, and I will explain how/why the text is so fragmentary; and then, as announced, I would like to look at the different supplements and attempts at reconstruction.

First: content! The *Satyricon* is a prose text, interspersed with several poems of different sorts and varying length in between. Modern scholars normally call the text a novel (I am not going to discuss the question of genre here). As the title of my lecture clearly suggests, the *Satyricon* is only preserved in fragments. The content of the preserved parts of the novel is, very roughly, the following: the *Satyricon* is a text about the journey and the adventures of three young males – two young adults called Encolpius and Ascyltus, and a teenager boy called Giton. All three names are speaking Greek names: Encolpius can be translated, more or less literally, as “On-The-Bosom”, or “In-Crotch”; Ascyltus means “Unwearied”, or “Unshagged-Out”; and Giton means, literally, “Neighbour” – which can also, more colloquially, be understood/translated as e.g. “Mate”. Encolpius is the first-person narrator (or, more precisely, in narratological terms: the homodiegetic narrator) of the novel (that is, he is a protagonist in the narrative, and he is telling what happened in first-person narration, using the past tense). From what can be reconstructed based on the existing fragments, the three male protagonists are on a long trip that appears to have been started off in Massilia (viz., Marseille, in Southern France). The trip then takes them to several places in the bay of Naples, then to a town called Croton in Southern Italy, and eventually towards the East, to Asia Minor. The beginning of the existing fragments shows Encolpius in a heavy argument with Agamemnon, a teacher of rhetoric, at a school of rhetoric somewhere in the bay of Naples (it is not clear how/why they got there). Then they get stranded in a brothel that is owned by a woman called Quartilla, who is also a priestess – a priestess of the god Priapus. The next stop is a dinner party at the house of a man called Trimalchio – the famous *Cena*

*Trimalchionis*! Trimalchio is a freedman (viz., a former slave) who has made a big fortune (viz., he is a *nouveau riche*), and he is hosting a lavish/excessive dinner party, at which the three protagonists participate – a dinner party with lots of fancy food and extravagant games and other funny activities. The *Cena Trimalchionis* is the only long episode in the *Satyricon* which is fully preserved (yet it is not clear how the protagonists actually get there / why they actually are invited at Trimalchio's dinner party, because the link to the preceding scene is missing).

As the speaking names of the three protagonists suggest, there is a strong sexual undertone going through the *Satyricon* – and indeed, when you read the text, you will notice that there is, in fact, much more than just this undertone. Indeed, sex and all sorts of sexual activities are at the very centre of much of the action, and a lot of the interpersonal dynamic between the three protagonists is characterized by sex, changing sex partners and (consequently) jealousy. In short, it is a *ménage à trois*, in the focus of which there is the sexual appetite for Giton that both Encolpius and Ascyltus feel – something which, for obvious reasons, leads to several quarrels and scenes of jealousy. Accordingly, after the *Cena Trimalchionis*, we encounter a scene where Giton chooses Ascyltus as his lover; Encolpius is crushed and left to his own – and then we suddenly find him visiting an art gallery, where he meets an elderly man called Eumolpus. Afterwards the narrative gets even more complicated: Encolpius meets Ascyltus and Giton again; Giton appears to be very unhappy with Ascyltus and 'changes back' to Encolpius; and by the looks of things, in the meantime Eumolpus has had a crush on Giton too. The rest of the narrative, in all its complexity, then comprises a voyage on a ship (including a shipwreck) and a trip on the road to Croton, to Southern Italy.

For obvious reasons of time, the summary I have just given you was very truncated. The content of the novel as such is, after all, not the topic of my lecture – the topic is its fragmentary state and the later attempts at supplementing and/or completing the fragments. But, as it hopefully became clear from my summary, at the centre of the *Satyricon* there is a lot of travelling and adventures; there are many unexpected turns of action; and, above all, there is love, sexual appetite, sex, and jealousy. There are repeated allusions to the Roman fertility god Priapus in the surviving fragments of the novel, and therefore scholars have speculated that the narrative incentive of the entire *Satyricon* may have been the wrath of Priapus – in (ironic) analogy to the wrath of Poseidon, which is the incentive of Odysseus' voyage and his adventures in the *Odyssey*. Priapus was a Roman fertility god who was characterized by his enormous penis, as we can see on several wall paintings from Pompeii (see the slides). Priapus was, by the looks of things, a very popular (perhaps 'folkloristic') god in

Rome. As said, some scholars have argued that the *Satyricon* may have been some sort of ‘sexualized’ parody of the *Odyssey*, at the centre of which stood the wrath of Priapus. On page 3 of your handout (item n. 10) you can see such an attempt at reconstructing the plot of the *Satyricon* by Gareth Schmeling. Schmeling speculates that the *Satyricon* may have contained a total of 24 Books, viz., the same number of Books as the *Odyssey* contains, and Schmeling gives us a (very speculative) attempt at reconstructing the entire narrative based on the fragments we have, and based on the analeptic and proleptic allusions in these fragments to what happened before and afterwards. Attractive as this hypothesis is, it is, of course, highly speculative.

Those parts of the *Satyricon* that have been transmitted come from Books 14, 15, and 16 – adding up to a total of 141 chapters. The history of the transmission of the preserved parts/fragments is extremely complex, and I cannot go into too many details here. To make a very complex and very long story very short, I have given you a quote from the preface to J.P. Sullivan’s translation, who sums up the main points very neatly (item n. 1 on your handout):

The surviving text of Petronius is regrettably fragmented and mutilated. Edifying snippets were preserved in *florilegia*; sections, words and phrases are quoted by high-minded authors such as Fulgentius and John of Salisbury, or by metricians and grammarians. But the larger narrative comes down to us in three forms. The *Cena Trimalchionis*, more or less intact, survives for posterity in a single manuscript, the *Traguricensis*. Now in Paris, it was written in 1423, but rediscovered only about 1652 in Trau (now Trogir in Croatia); this is our sole witness to the *H*-tradition. The *L*-Tradition is a collection of longer extracts from the work, which survives in several manuscripts, the most noted being a much-edited copy made by Joseph Scaliger in Leiden in 1571, the *Leidensis (l)*. Finally we have the shorter excerpts (*O*), represented by three early manuscripts from the ninth and twelfth centuries (*B, R, P*) and a number of later manuscripts and early editions. These three sources and the *florilegia* overlap. But the text that results from their amalgamation would be more unsatisfactory than it is were it not for the painstaking work of generations of scholars such as Scaliger, Pithoeus, Heinsius, Jacobs, Bücheler and Müller.

In order to give you an idea of the complexity of the transmission not only in words, but also for the eye, I have given you the stemma of the history of the transmission as it is printed in Schmeling’s overview chapter in the volume *The Novel in the Ancient World* (see the list of references). I have also put the same stemma on your handout (page 4, item n. 11), along with Schmeling’s key to the stemma (page 5, item n. 12). (See also the slides for some pictures for

the sake of illustration: the so-called Codex Bernensis 357, the oldest extant textual witness to parts of the *Satyricon* from the ninth century; the Codex Vaticanus Latinus 119 from the fifteenth century; and the Florentinus Laurentianus, also from the fifteenth century.)

As said, I cannot delve into the textual transmission history in more detail at this point (if you want to know more about the details, I recommend the introduction of Sullivan from which I quoted, or the chapter by Schmeling, or the overview by Michael Reeve in the book *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* [see the list of references]). To sum up, what is important to memorize are four things: first, the transmission history of the *Satyricon* is extremely complex; secondly, the different strands of transmission in parts complement each other, but they still leave numerous gaps in the text; thirdly, there are still many thorny philological problems about the preserved text (*corruptelae*); and, finally, in addition to the part of the novel that can be reconstructed as a more or less coherent narrative, we still have numerous isolated fragments, coming from various sources – their attribution is unclear and scholars have been (and keep) disagreeing about where in text they belong.

The high entertainment factor of the *Satyricon*, the mesmerizing character of its narrative (a narrative that ultimately defies any clear-cut generic categorization), and the fragmentary state of the textual transmission: all this has led to numerous speculations about the content of the lost passages. One of them we have already seen: Gareth Schmeling's assumption that the *Satyricon* must have been a novel in 24 Books that followed the structure of the *Odyssey*, and his attempt at a reconstruction of the content. All this is, of course, basically just educated guesswork. Furthermore, the fragmentary *Satyricon* has also inspired scholars, translators and writers to fill the gaps and to complete the fragments. In item n. 2 of your handout, I have given you a comprehensive overview of all known supplements to the *Satyricon* between the years 1585 and 2005 (the overview follows a research article by Thomas Tschögele from 2016 [see the list of references]). I will now go through this list and comment on each piece.

The first print of the *Satyricon* was published in Milan in 1482 – yet at that time only the so-called *O*-texts were known, which contained the shorter excerpts represented by three early manuscripts from the ninth and twelfth centuries. Later, more comprehensive editions came out in 1565, 1575, and 1577 (see the slides with an overview over the early prints and translations, taken from the German Wikipedia). I am not going to talk about these editions and translations here; the point here is just to give you an idea of what was already known and available when in 1585, an edition with supplements was published for the first time. As you can see on your handout, the French scholar Jean Richard published an edition of the *Satyricon*

*con* in 1585 that he had complemented with thirty-four short supplements. None of these supplements were longer than ten words each, and they were marked with a special sign that indicated their provenance. In 1629, then, another edition was published in Frankfurt by the Spanish scholar José Antonio González de Salas, who used Richard's supplements and supplemented those with several of his own. Here too, it was clearly noted in the commentary that the supplements came from the editor. The supplements of these two scholars were reprinted in several editions of the *Satyricon* later, including that of François Nodot (about whom we will speak in a moment).

The next item on the list is a free Italian translation with omissions and supplements by the Italian clergyman Domenico Regi. This work was published in Naples in 1678 under a pseudonym with the title *Successi di Eumolpione, portati nella nostra lingua da Ciriaco Basilico*. As just said, this was not actually an edition with supplements like the previous ones, but, rather, a free translation in which parts of the original texts were omitted; parts were translated as they are transmitted; and yet other parts were added. I quote from Tschögele's article who summarizes Regi's technique as follows (item n. 3 on your handout):

Regi's handling of Petronius' original text oscillates between largely faithful translations [...], translations with shortenings and further changes [...], and free new creations [...]. The latter are prevalent particularly in the later chapters. There are drastic deletions in passages that were perceived as objectionable. (Here I need to point out that the German word Tschögele uses is the word "anstößig". "Anstößig" means "objectionable" from the perspective of sexual morals; in other words: Regi – being a clergyman – deleted those passages that were sexually explicit!)

It is, ultimately, difficult to determine what we should call Regi's version of the *Satyricon*. Should we call it a translation – a translation with omissions, adaptations and supplements? Or should we regard it as a piece of creative (re-)writing in its own right – a recreation/re-working/free adaptation? Unfortunately Regi's version of the *Satyricon* was never reprinted, although it would be an interesting object of study, since it represents the earliest version of a creative rewriting of the *Satyricon* – a tradition that was taken up again in the twentieth century, as we will see later.

After Regi's creative rewriting, we can find two further French translations with supplements. First, there is the translation by Pierre Linage de Vauciennes, which was published before 1681. Unfortunately, this translation has been lost, and we only know about it from other sources. According to Thomas Tschögele, it is not clear whether Linage wrote Latin supplements to the Petronian texts, or whether he only made additions in the French transla-

tion in order to enable a smoother transition between the various unconnected fragments for the non-scholarly reader. Secondly, there is an anonymous French translation of the *Satyricon*, now in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, which contains a number of supplements, too. Like the earliest supplements from the sixteenth centuries, these supplements are also marked with a special sign that indicate their provenance from the translator and thus make it clear that they are not meant to be thought of as genuinely Petronian.

The first supplement to the *Satyricon* which one could classify as a forgery (in a fraudulent sense) is that by François Nodot. Nodot's supplement is the most famous of all Petronian supplements to this day – and probably also the most interesting that has ever been produced, so I need to spend a bit more time on that. Interestingly, François Nodot was not a Latinist – he was not even a scholar in any field, but he was a mercenary soldier. In October 1690, François Nodot wrote to the secretary of the *Académie Française* to announce a most remarkable discovery: he claimed that a French officer, a certain Monsieur DuPin, who allegedly had been present at the sack of Belgrade in 1688, had found a manuscript of Petronius' *Satyricon* which contained supplements to the known text. Nodot's claim was initially accepted, and the representatives of the *Académie Française* believed the supplements to be genuinely Petronian. Consequently, Nodot published them in a journal in 1691, and thus they became available to a broader audience. Subsequently they were included in several editions of the *Satyricon* in 1693 and 1694. However, in a review of one of those editions, a reviewer raised suspicions about the authenticity of the newly found fragments, and thus the debate about the so-called “Belgrade Petronius” was initiated. The debate was carried on for a few years, but scholars these days assume that by around 1700, the general scholarly consensus had shifted in the direction that hardly anyone believed in the authenticity of the “Belgrade Petronius” any longer. Nevertheless, in 1700, Nodot wrote a defense of his supplements and argued for their authenticity in a treatise with the title *La Contre-Critique de Pétrone*. And so it happened that the discussion about the “Belgrade Petronius” was kept alive and that therefore the additions were still printed in several editions of the eighteenth century. Interestingly, the last edition of Nodot's Latin text stems from ca. 1800, but Nodot's fragments kept being included in several translations of the *Satyricon* in the nineteenth and early twentieth century: as Thomas Tschögele points out, six bilingual editions of the *Satyricon*, published between 1803 and 1934, still printed the additions of the “Belgrade Petronius”, whereof at least one did not earmark the additions of Nodot (viz., at least one translator obviously either believed in their authenticity, or for one or the other reason he did not think it necessary to point his readers' attention to what was genuine and what was spurious). More

recently, Nodot's additions were also included in newer translations of the *Satyricon*, for example in the German translation by Harry C. Schnur, put between squared brackets (later, Schnur produced his own Latin supplement as well – as we will see).

The history of the publication of the “Belgrade Petronius” and the debate about its authenticity (and the arguments presented in favour or against it): all this would be a topic for a lecture on its own. The most comprehensive study on the topic is an article by Christian Laes from 1998, which includes a modern edition of Nodot's Latin supplements along with a comprehensive scholarly commentary (unfortunately a translation was not included). It is highly interesting and illuminating to read Laes' article and his comments because we can see how Nodot's contemporaries and his critics reacted to the supplement, and with which arguments they argued in favour or against their authenticity. And it is equally interesting to see what Laes himself has to say from the perspective of a philologist from our own time. Here I first quote an excerpt from Laes' article in order to give you an idea about the direction in which the arguments of Nodot's critics were going (item n. 4 on your handout):

The first man to comment on these new fragments was Henri Basnage de Beauval, who announced the edition of Rotterdam in the revue *Histoire des Savans* (November 1692). He already criticized the great number of gallicisms and grammatical errors in the text, as well as the elements in the plot that refer to seventeenth-century France rather than to Rome in the first century, like the passage “nos enim ad earum ornamentum matutinum quotidie urbanissime assidebamus” [...] which he considers to be an allusion to the French court-ladies making their toilet. Basnage rightly supposes that the new fragments were made by a Petronius-admirer in order to make the plot of the *Satyricon* more easy to be understood, but does not at all condemn this enterprise, since it increases the joy of reading.

The comments and the judgment by this contemporary reviewer are illuminating for several reasons. One point is the nature of his criticism, which obviously did not only include grammar and style, but also related to the content of Nodot's supplements, and to their cultural framework. Another important aspect is that the reviewer, despite all the points he raised against the authenticity of the “Belgrade Petronius”, obviously still appreciated the supplements. So, eventually, we can find the oscillation between an attempt at forgery on the one hand and a scholarly (or creative) attempt at completion (or reconstruction) on the other hand also mirrored on the side of reception. As much as Nodot's supplements stand between forgery and creativity, as much the reviewer reacts to them correspondingly.

Coming back to Nodot's 'mistakes', there were, as said, both linguistic/stylistic and cultural 'mistakes'. That being said, we must acknowledge that it is, of course, always difficult to determine whether an unexpected usage of a word, an unexpected turn of phrase, or an unknown habit or custom really should be viewed as a piece of evidence that speaks against authenticity. After all, Petronius is an author who masters the unknown and the unexpected like probably no one else – both linguistically, stylistically, and content-wise. However, one 'cultural mistake' that has become famous (because it is very obvious) is the following, from a supplement that Nodot inserted in chapter 15 of the *Satyricon* (item n. 5 on your handout):

Startled by this voice, I went outside in order to find out what was the matter. I went down and learnt that the praetor's usher, who was in charge of making sure that the names of foreigners were recorded in the public registers, had seen two new arrivals entering the house whose names had not been enrolled in the lists yet, and that therefore he had asked them about their home country and their occupation.

As Schnur notes in the commentary to this passage (item n. 6 on your handout), here "Nodot gave himself away, for there was no compulsory registration in Roman hostels". This was, as Schnur further says, a contemporary "French, but surely not a Roman custom".

In addition to such 'cultural mistakes', there were also grammatical and stylistic peculiarities that made scholars suspicious. The best overview over these is given in the commentary by Christian Laes. Obviously I cannot go into details here, therefore I quote from Laes' conclusion (item n. 7 on your handout):

The most important weakness of the Nodotian fragments is, beyond doubt, its use of the Latin language. Whilst reading the text, one is struck by the many errors that occur in a text which is not extensive at all. In these 'errors' are included constructions and words which were apparently unknown to Petronius (late Latin or even medieval Latin words), but also clear grammatical faults (not seldom Gallicisms).

The "Belgrade Petronius" was without doubt the greatest 'turn up for the book' in the history of 'Petronian supplements' and 'Petronian forgery', and Nodot's fragments kept being included in serious scholarly editions of the *Satyricon* up to around the year 1800. Therefore it is not surprising that it took more than one century before Nodot's tradition was revived and imitated. In 1800, the Spanish scholar and author José Marchena y Ruiz de Cueto published a *Fragmentum Petronii*: an edition of the Quartilla episode with a French translation and a supplement that was advertised as a new finding pretty much like Nodot's supplements were 110 years before and that therefore can be called a 'forgery' in the actual sense of the word. The



history about the circumstances of the findings that José Marchena invented was conspicuously similar to that of the “Belgrade Petronius”. In the preface, he claimed that the new findings came from a manuscript from the abbey of St Gallen in Switzerland. He wrote that they came from a manuscript that had come into his possession after Napoleon had invaded the Old Swiss Confederation in 1798 and had besieged the abbey of St Gallen, and that the manuscript turned out to be a palimpsest that contained the supposedly new fragments – which he, José Marchena, had been able to retrieve. However, contrary to what Marchena probably had been hoping for, his publication did not cause much of a stir – much unlike Nodot’s supplements more than a century ago. Yet, as Tschögele points out, there was one reviewer who thought the new findings to be genuine – so some success he had at least.

To summarize, we can say that the period between, roughly, 1600 and 1800 was for the most part characterized by two types of supplements to the *Satyricon*: some of them (Jean Richard, José Antonio González de Salas, the anonymous Paris Manuscript, and maybe also Linage) functioned as scholarly motivated additions, the goal of which was to make the transition between unconnected fragments read more smoothly. In these cases, the motivation behind must have been a desire to add what Petronius might have written himself. These types of supplements thus come close to the philological practice of supplementing fragmentarily preserved texts with what seems a scholarly sound/possible/probable addition. (This practice of addition/supplementation is still practiced today – particularly e.g. in epigraphy and papyrology.) On the other hand, two of the supplements from the period between 1600 and 1800 (François Nodot and José Marchena) can justifiably be classified as forgeries in the actual sense of the word because they were produced in order to make their audience believe that they were genuinely Petronian.

After José Marchena’s publication in 1800, the production of supplements of both sorts ceased to be continued. Neither supplements in a scholarly sense (viz., in the sense of attempts at reconstruction) nor forgeries in the actual sense of the word were produced any longer. In turn, in the twentieth century there was an upswing in creative rewritings, adaptations and continuations – a practice that had its unique predecessor in Domenico Regi’s free Italian translation from 1678. In 1943, Ugo Dèttore published an Italian translation with supplements which he explicitly announced as such. Strikingly, in his preface he explicitly refers back to Nodot’s supplements and justifies his own supplement by saying that he did not think Nodot’s additions were of particular high quality. What is interesting to see here is that Dèttore on the one hand explicitly inscribes himself onto the forgery tradition of Nodot, but that

on the other hand, he equally explicitly rejects it – and that, in addition to this, he obviously does not follow Nodot’s fraudulent tradition, but Regi’s creative tradition.

The first English translation with supplements is that by Paul Gillette from 1965. In his preface, he explicitly mentions the forgeries by Nodot and Marchena. However, here too, a look at his version reveals that he actually (implicitly) inscribes himself onto the tradition of Domenico Regi too, since Gillette’s version of the *Satyricon* is, as Tschögele puts it, an amalgamation of the preserved text and his own inventions (item n. 8 on your handout):

Indeed [Gillette] allows himself to total freedom when it comes to rewriting the preserved text and to amalgamate it with his own inventions. A clear differentiation between authentic and spurious passages is therefore not always possible.

The next on the list is Harry C. Schnur, a German/American classical philologist whom I already mentioned. Schnur published a German translation of the *Satyricon* in 1968, in which he incorporated Nodot’s supplements between squared brackets. In an article from 1972, Schnur wrote about scholarly attempts at reconstructing the plot of the *Satyricon* as follows (item n. 9 on your handout):

Reconstruction of the entire plot of the Satiricon, like conjecturing “what songs the sirens sang,” is a pleasant and innocuous pastime. [...] [W]e must never, never forget that we have before us not merely a torso, but fragments of a torso. To postulate plot and leitmotif of an episodic picaresque novel on that basis is futile and otiose. Take a few chapters from *Gil Blas* or *Simplicius Simplicissimus* and just try to guess what comes before or after. Do we have any certainty that the first-person narrative did not, as in the *Odyssey*, [have] a third-person narrative *frame*?

With this remark, Schnur took a stand against scholars like Gareth Schmeling (and others) who tried to reconstruct the plot of the entire *Satyricon* (item n. 10 on your handout). However, Schnur later took his own claim seriously – in the sense that he made the reconstruction of the *Satyricon* his “pleasant and innocuous pastime”. He started writing a comprehensive Latin supplement to Petronius with the title *Encolpi casus*, a Latin novel in its own right, where he did not just try to fill the gaps between the existing fragments, but where he started from scratch, beginning with the birth of Encolpius. Schnur’s supplement is therefore without doubt the most creative of all creative rewritings that exist because he never made any attempt at guessing what could have been standing in the gaps between the preserved fragments, but because he just took the *Satyricon* as a starting point for his own creative composition. Ironically, Schnur died before he could finish his supplement – indeed he did not even get so far as

to make the connection to the preserved fragments of the *Satyricon*. Schnur's Latin text was first edited and published in 1992, but it has never been translated in any modern language.

Instead, two different English supplements were published more recently: that by Ellery David Nest in 2004, and that by Andrew Dalby in 2005. The supplement by the former is a humorous and self-ironic continuation of Regi's and Schnur's tradition, yet at the same time it also ties up with the tradition of Nodot. The name Ellery David Nest is a pseudonym, and in the preface to his version, Nest invents a discovery story similar to that of Nodot, claiming that he had found the manuscript in a fictitious place called "Morazla" in Bosnia after the end of the Bosnian War in 1995. Nest also claims to be a Professor at a University that does not actually exist – which, again, makes it clear that he does not just continue the creative tradition of Regi and Schnur, but that he also has found a way how to ironize the 'serious' forgery tradition of Nodot and how to incorporate the Nodot tradition into the 'playful' creative tradition.

The latest addition to the row of Petronian supplements is that by Andrew Dalby. Dalby is a British classicist who wrote an English epilogue to the *Cena Trimalchionis*. What is unique/special about this supplement is that it is no longer written from the perspective of Encolpius, the first-person narrator of the *Satyricon*, but that the narratorial perspective has been changed: the narrator is now Agamemnon, the teacher of rhetoric with whom Encolpius is engaged in an argument at the beginning of the preserved text of the *Satyricon*.

In conclusion, we can say that while the period between 1600 and 1800 mainly saw two different types of supplements – the scholarly motivated additions/transitions and the forgeries – the twentieth century took up and developed further the tradition of the creative reworking: a tradition that has its unique root in the late seventeenth century with Domenico Regi's version of the *Satyricon*. In a climate that we might call 'postmodern', the creative rewritings of the twentieth century largely defy the idea that the missing gaps in the *Satyricon* could ever be supplemented; instead they resort to creative rewritings. At the same time, some of these twentieth-century creative rewritings ironize the tradition of 'serious' supplementation as much as they ironize the tradition of fraudulent forgeries – by ironically tying up with them. Irony, it seems, is a postmodernist way of acknowledging that the *Satyricon* of Petronius will always remain what it is now: a fragment.