

Eumolpus' *Pergamene Boy*: Pedagogical Considerations

Eumolpus crafts many narratives in Petronius' *Satyrica*, and none is perhaps more difficult to teach than the *Pergamene Boy*. After meeting Encolpius in a *pinacotheca*, Eumolpus impresses his newfound acquaintance with a tale of pederastic seduction, or at least that is how Eumolpus presents it: while serving as a tutor to a Roman youth in Pergamum, Eumolpus exploits his authority and position to coerce sex from the youth. This encounter is difficult to categorize from both an ancient and modern perspective, and teachers of this Milesian Tale may have a difficult time illuminating the complexity of this encounter in the classroom due to the dearth of pedagogically focused scholarship on the particulars of this sexual relationship, an oversight which is particularly frustrating since the *Satyrica* is often taught as part of courses on Roman sexuality. Nikolai Endres' contribution in *From Abortion to Pederasty: Addressing Difficult Topics in the Classics Classroom* (2014), for example, likens the relationship to sexual harassment which is an unsatisfying comparison since this is not a workplace environment. Severy-Hoven's (2011) Latin reader, furthermore, features the story but does little to work through the difficult sexual dynamics of the episode aside from briefly discussing Greek pederasty, and Richlin's contribution in *Petronius: A Handbook* (2009) discusses the comedic structure of the story and its caricature of Platonic love.

This paper will suggest various pedagogical strategies for instructors teaching the *Pergamene Boy* by shifting attention away from the predator and story-teller Eumolpus to the youth. It contends, furthermore, that Eumolpus' behavior more closely resembles child grooming— if a modern comparison is to be made—which brings a new perspective to the youth's participation in this relationship at the culmination of the story.

Bibliography

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