Towards the end of Cena Trimalchionis, Encolpius, Giton, and Ascytus decide not to follow their fellow dinner guests into the bath, but to escape from the dinner (Sat. 72.5-10). As they reach the door under Giton’s guidance, a chained barking dog unexpectedly welcomes them. Ascytus is terrified of the creature and ends up falling into the swimming pool, and Encolpius, trying to save him, finds himself in the same situation shortly after. The atriensis turns up and saves the two adventurers, while Giton calms the dog down.

Our primary interest here lies in the interpretation of the canis catenarius (Sat. 72.7). As I hope to show, we here have yet another scene of Petronius’ Satyrica where an ostensibly clear passage turns out not to be clear at all when it is interpreted carefully in the context of a number of factors that have just come into play, or will emerge only at a later stage of the plot.1 I shall aim to draw a full picture by including some factors that have been widely neglected in the discussion of the dog, for example Encolpius’ mythomaniac2 tendency, as well as putting those factors already suggested into context. The aim of my paper is to read the given passage against the background of Vergil’s Aeneid 6 and Encolpius’ tendency to style himself as a mythical hero. My claim, then, is that the dog might not necessarily be what it appears to be at first sight, i.e. a real flesh-and-blood dog, just as the entire scene of the heroes trying to escape from dinner, falling into the pond, getting caught by the doorman, and finally escaping is not as straightforward as one may think. Though due to several

---

1 Cf. Schwazer 2016 for a similar case for the function of Mercury at Sat. 29.5.
2 Cf. Conte 1996.
factors and circumstances we cannot know with certainty, it is reasonable to suggest that the \textit{canis catenarius} at \textit{Sat.} 72 is perhaps nothing more than the protagonist's own imagination that brings a part of Trimalchio's wall-painting of a dog (\textit{Sat.} 29.1) to life.\footnote{3}

Generally speaking, there are several possible candidates that may be identified as the dog at \textit{Sat.} 72, since dogs are mentioned several times throughout the \textit{Cena}.\footnote{4} Of these mentions, we might well leave out the pack of hunting dogs (\textit{Sat.} 40) from our discussion, as they are no more than the key figures of one of Trimalchio's staged scenes,\footnote{5} as well as Fortunata's insult (\textit{Sat.} 74.9) for its metaphorical use of the term and the two verbal mentions of dogs in the freedmen's speeches (\textit{Sat.} 43.8, 57.6).\footnote{6} Similarly, the puppy Margarita is too tame to scare off the adventurers to such a degree and, thus, appears equally irrelevant for our reading of \textit{Sat.} 72.

On these grounds, having excluded all potential candidates but one, our identification of the \textit{canis catenarius} (\textit{Sat.} 72.7) as Scylax (\textit{Sat.} 64.7-10) might well appear the most obvious and plausible choice. In fact, scholars so far have almost unanimously, and in most cases without hesitation or doubt, advocated this identification.\footnote{7} They assume that the \textit{praesidium domus familiaeque} (\textit{Sat.} 64.7) behaves as is to be expected from a dog, i.e. he barks at unknown people in his home and thus fulfils his duty of safeguarding the house. Funnily enough, by extension of this interpretation, in this instance Scylax would be keeping people in the house and not out of it. After all, Encolpius and his friends are attempting to escape, not to break in. To underpin their hypothesis, scholars have drawn attention to the similar descriptions of both dogs (64.7 \textit{canis catena vinctus}; 72.7 \textit{canis catenarius}) and their barking (64.9 \textit{taeterrimo latratu}, 64.10 \textit{tumultus}; 72.7 \textit{tanto tumultu}, 72.9 \textit{latranti}).

---

\footnote{ceterum ego dum omnia stupeo, paene resupinatus crura mea fregi. ad sinistram enim intrantibus non longe ab ostiarii cella canis ingens, catena vinctus, in pariete erat pictus superque quadrata littera scriptum 'cave canem' et collegae quidem mei riserunt (\textit{Sat.} 29.1-2, text: Müller 2003).}

\footnote{The dog cannot be an unknown creature, as in that case we would expect the narrator Encolpius to comment on it further, even if only briefly.}

\footnote{Just like the dogs, the freedman’s pig that appears in this scene (\textit{Sat.} 40-41) also leaves the ‘stage’ right after and does not return at a later time.}

\footnote{\textit{Sat.} 43.8: one of Phileros’ acquaintances did not leave even dogs untouched in his house; \textit{Sat.} 57.6: the freedman now feeds twenty stomachs and a dog; \textit{Sat.} 74.9: Fortunata insults her husband Trimalchio by calling him \textit{canis}.}

\footnote{See, for instance, Courtney 2001, 116 and Schmeling 2011, 304-305. Smith 1975 does not comment on the dog at \textit{Sat.} 72, while Gianotti 2013, 462 summarises in neutral terms the opinion of Hendry 1994; 1996 diverging from Baldwin 1995.}