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Von der Ahe Library Undergraduate Research Award

The Petronius project would certainly not have been possible without the Von der Ahe library's abundant resources. The first obstacle I faced was finding a suitable Latin text to work from: Petronius is not one of the most widely read Latin authors, and a sound edition of his work can be hard to come by. Petronius' work survived in only one pitifully incomplete manuscript, and much of the text is dubious or corrupt: disagreement over the lost or damaged sections of Petronius' text is fierce. Since so much reconstruction must be done simply to make the text readable, putting together an edition of Petronius is infinitely more difficult than, say, an edition of Virgil: a Virgilian editor can compare countless manuscripts of the complete work and produce a version extremely close to what the author intended; a Petronian editor, on the other hand, has the near impossible task of reconstructing meaning from a single fragmentary and badly damaged scrap of manuscript. So many emendations must be made to the text that the reader is at the mercy of the editor, and a mediocre edition of Petronius would have been ruinous to my paper. Therefore I counted myself extraordinarily blessed to discover that the library possessed a copy of a 1922 printing of Franz Bücheler's magnificent edition, which set the standard for all subsequent studies in Petronius. Immediately I checked out this treasure, which was rightly labeled, "CLASSIC EDITION—HANDLE WITH CARE," and set to work.

The library's print and electronic resources were indispensable at every step of the research. I began by browsing through the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, the *Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, and Gian Biagio Conte's *Latin Literature: A History*. When I had decided to focus on Petronius' narrative structure, the online sources proved invaluable.

Through the library website I was able to view all of Victoria Rimell's *Petronius and the Anatomy of Fiction* online: I could even search the text for a word or phrase. Effortless access to such a detailed study of Petronius' narrative technique was exactly what I needed. The e-book was enormously useful, and it was in Rimell's references that I first discovered most of the articles I would cite in the essay. Turning to JSTOR, I looked them up: Gerald N. Sandy's essay on interpolated narratives in Petronius and Henry Barrett Hickley's study of their historical use provided the background that enabled me to trace the development of this technique from Homer to Petronius. The library's excellent selection of Homeric studies provided material for my discussion of repetition and "type-scenes" in Homer (Bruce Loudon's *The Scepter and the Spear*, which deals exclusively with Homeric repetition, was notably helpful). Through the Cambridge Collections online database I found the *Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire*, which provided an astonishingly informed analysis of the novel in antiquity and led me to P. G. Walsh's *The Roman Novel*.

I was nearing the end of my research when the lack of one elusive source threatened to derail the entire project. After demonstrating how Petronius made use of Homeric narrative techniques, my essay was to culminate in a comparison of the structure of the *Satyricon* to a labyrinth. But I lacked an authoritative definition of a literary labyrinth, and I knew what book I needed—the seminal work on literary labyrinths, and the only one, as far as I know, to conduct a thorough study of their use in Roman literature: Penelope Reed Doob's *The Idea of the Labyrinth: from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages*. I had run up against the title in my research, and Dr. Adams had strongly suggested that I consult it—but I could not find the book anywhere. It was not available on the internet, and I checked every branch of the Los Angeles public library: none had the book. The deadline was approaching and I was growing desperate (I even

considered asking a friend in New York to track it down at the New York Research Library and have it shipped to me overnight), when I first learned about Link Plus. Expecting little, I tried a Link Plus search: miraculously, several Link Plus libraries had a copy. I placed a request and it arrived two days later, in time to read it and incorporate Doob's synthesis of labyrinthine criteria into the end of my paper. LMU students are very fortunate to have the Von der Ahe library, and this paper owes its existence to the library's copious resources and services.