

Petronius Sat. 111.9

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At illa ignota consolatione percussa laceravit vehementius pectus. So the reading of the manuscripts. The text is understood or emended in two (or three) different ways.

Some take the words *ignota consolatione* to mean “consolation proffered by a stranger”¹. W. S. Watt considers this impossible², and emends *ignota* to *ignoti*, giving the same sense in straightforward Latin³. But even so the text remains problematic. While Müller and Ehlers think *consolatione percussa laceravit* makes good sense (“Der Trost des Unbekannten erschütterte sie nur, so dass sie ...”), Watt thinks it makes no sense at all and adds *non* before *percussa*.

The Loeb edition of Petronius⁴ retains the reading of the manuscripts and translates, “But she took no notice [?] of his sympathy, struck and tore her breast more violently than ever.” This makes eminently good sense. Taking *percussa* as a middle looking toward *pectus* is fine and indeed may be an echo of the *Aeneid*⁵. The problem, of course, is that *ignota* cannot mean “took no notice” (as the translators themselves recognize). The solution is a simple emendation that produces exactly the desired sense. For *ignota*, read *igno<ra>ta*⁶. This is scarcely more than an easy haplography⁷.

1 E.g. W. Ehlers in K. Müller/W. Ehlers, *Petronius: Satyrice* (Munich 1965) 245.

2 As does R. G. M. Nisbet at *JRS* 52 (1962) 231 (“*ignota* is nonsense”).

3 *C&M* 37 (1986) 181.

4 M. Heseltine/E. H. Warmington, *Petronius* (Cambridge, Mass. 1975) 271–273.

5 4.589, where, as here, *pectus percussa* is followed by the woman’s tearing her hair out.

6 For *ignorare* = “take no notice, disregard, ignore”, see e.g. *Pl. Am.* 1047; *Trin.* 264; *Cic. Brut.* 68; *Verg. Aen.* 5.849.

7 I am indebted to Prof. G. M. Browne for discussing this textual problem with me.