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PETRONIUS  
SATYRICON  
SENECA  
APOCOLOCYNTOSIS



*Translated by*  
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*Revised by*  
E. H. WARMINGTON

# PETRONIUS

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

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藏书章  
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PETRONIUS

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### **Editorial note (1987)**

The changes in this impression are largely confined to typographical corrections. But the following should be added to the bibliography on pages xxviiff; and it should be noted that a forthcoming commentary on Petronius by J. P. Sullivan is announced in Smith (item 1 below, p. xxviii).

Petronius: *Cena Trimalchionis*, ed. Martin S. Smith (with commentary), Oxford, 1975.

Seneca: *Apocolocyntosis*, ed. P. T. Eden (with translation, commentary, and bibliographies), Cambridge, 1984.

Fröhlke, Franz: *Petron: Struktur und Wirklichkeit*, Frankfurt, 1977.

Rose, K. F. C.: *The Date and Author of the Satyricon* (Mnem. Suppl. 16), Leiden, 1971.

Schmeling, G. L. and Stuckey, J. H.: *A Bibliography of Petronius* (Mnem. Suppl. 39), Leiden, 1977.

Walsh, P. G.: *The Roman Novel: The 'Satyricon' of Petronius and the 'Metamorphoses' of Apuleius*, Cambridge, 1970.

G.P.G.

## PREFACE

MORE than a hundred years have passed since Buecheler put the study of the text of Petronius on a good basis; and more than fifty since M. Heseltine made for the Loeb Classical Library his translation which was inevitably based on that text. In the meantime, since 1913, and especially in recent years, Petronian scholarship has much increased, in particular as regards the *Cena Trimalchionis* ("Trimalchio's Dinner") to the comparative neglect of the rest. Yet no very great advance was made on the textual side except on a modest scale by A. Ernout in his editions of *Petronius* (1922, 1931, 1950) in which the most admired achievement is the lively French translation which accompanies the text. However, in 1961 came a really vital step forward in Petronian textual history with the 1st edition of K. Müller; and the most recent half-decade has seen more good work done.

Therefore a new edition of *Petronius* in the Loeb Classical Library such as takes into account the main results of this scholarship was imperative. This made it necessary to revise the Latin text and critical notes of Heseltine's book drastically, to add a new and fuller commentary, and to substitute an introduction which also is new except where it incorporates what Heseltine wrote in 1912-13. Heseltine's translation also has been radically revised, though it remains as a whole his. We give, as Heseltine's book also gave,

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the complete Latin text, the printed dots indicating omissions not by the Loeb Classical Library, as has often been believed, but by the Petronian manuscript tradition, and sometimes omissions postulated by scholars but not indicated in the manuscripts. All hitherto untranslated or "bowdlerized" passages have now been translated. I give Heseltine's Introduction to our original edition of 1913, but shortened and emended a little where it no longer applies.<sup>1</sup> I have also added a summary of the story so far as it survives.

With regard to Dr. W. H. D. Rouse's text and translation of Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*, the need for a fuller commentary was just as pressing as it was in the case of Heseltine's *Petronius*, and such a commentary has now been provided. Revision of the text and critical notes was a matter less vital, but more critical notes have been added, and an up-to-date introduction and bibliography prefixed.

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that Heseltine's attitude towards sexual matters is not to-day's.



## INTRODUCTION TO PETRONIUS

[*This is Heseltine's original introduction, with some editorial changes and footnotes.*]

The author of the *Satyricon* is identified by the large majority of scholars with [Gaius] Petronius, the courtier of Nero. There is a long tradition in support of the identification, and the probability that it is correct appears especially strong in the light of Tacitus's account of the character and death of [Gaius] Petronius in the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the sixteenth book of the *Annals*. Mr. John Jackson has translated the passage as follows: <sup>1</sup>

"Petronius deserves a word in retrospect. He was a man who passed his days in sleep, his nights in the ordinary duties and recreations of life: others had achieved greatness by the sweat of their brows—Petronius idled into fame. Unlike most who walk the road to ruin, he was never regarded as either debauchee or wastrel, but rather as the finished artist in extravagance. In both word and action, he displayed a freedom and a sort of self-abandonment which were welcomed as the indiscretions of an unsophisticated nature. Yet, in his proconsulship of Bithynia, and later as consul elect, he showed himself an energetic and capable administrator. Then came the revulsion: his genuine or affected vices won him

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, XVI, 18. The year was A.D. 66: Tacitus, *Annals*, XVI, 17. For more on Petronius as author see pp. xxxv-vi.



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admittance into the narrow circle of Nero's intimates, and he became the Arbiter of Elegance, whose sanction alone divested pleasure of vulgarity and luxury of grossness.

"His success aroused the jealousy of Tigellinus against a possible rival—a professor of voluptuousness better equipped than himself. Playing on the emperor's lust for cruelty, to which all other lusts were secondary, he suborned a slave to turn informer, charged Petronius with his friendship for Scaevinus,<sup>1</sup> deprived him of the opportunity of defence, and threw most of his household into prison.

"At that time, it happened, the court had migrated to Campania; and Petronius had reached Cumae, when his detention was ordered. He disdained to await the lingering issue of hopes and fears; still, he would not take a brusque farewell of life. An incision was made in his veins: they were bound up under his directions, and opened again, while he conversed with his friends—not on the gravest of themes, nor in the key of the dying hero. He listened to no disquisitions on the immortality of the soul or the dogmas of philosophy, but to frivolous song and playful verses. Some of his slaves tasted of his bounty, others of the whip. He sat down to dinner, and then drowsed a little; so that death, if compulsory, should at least be natural. Even in his will, he broke through the routine of suicide, and flattered neither Nero nor Tigellinus nor any other of the mighty: instead, he described<sup>2</sup> the emperor's enormities; added a list of

<sup>1</sup> Flavius Scaevinus, one of the accomplices of Calpurnius Piso's unsuccessful conspiracy of A.D. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Not in any part of the *Satyricon*, so far as we know.

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his catamites, his women, and his innovations in lasciviousness; then sealed the document, sent it to Nero, and broke his signet-ring to prevent it from being used to endanger others."

The reflection arises at once that, given the *Satyricon*, this kind of book postulates this kind of author. The loose tongue, the levity, and the love of style are common to both. If books betray their writers' characteristics, [Gaius] Petronius, as seen by Tacitus, had the imagination and experience needed to depict the adventures of Encolpius.

There is a little evidence, still based on the primary assumption, more exact in its bearing. The *Satyricon* contains a detailed criticism of and a poem directed against the style of a writer who must<sup>1</sup> be Lucan. [Gaius] Petronius was not the man to pass over the poet, epigrammatist, and courtier, in whose epoch and circle he himself shone. He may have deplored Lucan's poetic influence, but he could not neglect it, for Lucan was essentially the singer of his own day. No age was so favourable as that of Nero for the introduction into a supremely scandalous tale of a reasoned and appreciative review of the *Pharsalia*, the outstanding poem of the time.

The criticism of the schools of rhetoric in their effect upon education and language, and the general style of the book in reflective and descriptive passages, point more vaguely to a similar date of composition.

[Gaius] Petronius found in his work a form which allowed a complete expression to the many sides of his active and uncontrolled intellect. Its loose

<sup>1</sup> On this problem see page 380.

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construction is matched by its indifference to any but stylistic reforms; it draws no moral; it is solely and properly occupied in presenting an aspect of things seen by a loiterer at one particular corner of the world. What we possess of it is a fragment, or rather a series of excerpts . . . we know not how representative of the original whole.

Of this the best-known portion, the description of Trimalchio's dinner, was hidden from the modern world until the middle of the seventeenth century, and was first printed in 1664.<sup>1</sup>

It is as difficult to grasp any structural outline in the *Satyricon* as it is in *Tristram Shandy*. Both alternate with flashing rapidity between exhibitions of pedantry, attacks on pedants, and indecency, in which Sterne is the more successful because he is the less obvious.

But Petronius, so far as his plan was not entirely original, was following as model Varro's Menippean satires, and had before him the libel of Seneca on Claudius, the *Apocolocyntosis*. The traditional title<sup>2</sup> of his work, *Satyricon*, is derived from the word *Satura*, a medley, and means that he was free to pass at will from subject to subject, and from prose to verse and back: it is his achievement that the threads of his story, broken as we hold them, yet show something of the colour and variety of life itself. We call his book a novel, and so pay him a compliment which he alone of Roman writers has earned.

Petronius's novel shares with life the quality of moving ceaselessly without knowing why. It differs from most existences in being very seldom dull.

<sup>1</sup> See page xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> But see page xxxvi.

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An anonymous writer of the eighteenth century, making *Observations on the Greek and Roman Classics in a Series of Letters to a Young Nobleman*,<sup>1</sup> is of the opinion that: "You will in no Writer, my dear Lord, meet with so much true delicacy of thought, in none with purer language." This judgment is meant for the age of Smollett and Fielding; but there is no question of the justice of the later remark: "You will be charmed with the ease, and you will be surprised with the variety of his characters."

These characters are one and all the product of a period in history when the primary aim of the ripest civilization in the world was money-making. It was this aim which drew Trimalchio from his unknown birthplace in Asia Minor to the glitter and luxury and unnatural passion of a South Italian town. He differs from the minor personages who crowd his dining-room only in the enormous success with which he has plied the arts of prostitution, seduction, flattery, and fraud. The persons in whom the action of the novel centres, Encolpius,<sup>2</sup> the mouthpiece of the author, Ascyltos, and Giton, are there by the kindness of Agamemnon, a parasite teacher of the rhetoric which ate swiftly into the heart of Latin language and thought. Giton lives by his charms, Ascyltos is hardly more than a foil to Encolpius, a quarrelsome and lecherous butt.

That part of the novel which deals with Trimalchio's dinner introduces a crowd of characters, and

<sup>1</sup> Published in London, 1753.

<sup>2</sup> Encolpius: "Embracer" or "Lapman"; Ascyltos: "Unscathed" or "Scot-Free"; Giton: (literally neighbour) "Bymyside." All are as if Greek names.



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gives the most vivid picture extant in classical literature of the life of the small town. The pulsating energy of greed is felt in it everywhere. Men become millionaires with American rapidity, and enjoy that condition as hazardously in Cumae as in Wall Street. The shoulders of one who wallows in Trimalchio's cushions are still sore with carrying firewood for sale; another, perhaps the first undertaker who made a fortune out of extravagant funerals, a gourmet and spendthrift, sits there composing lies to baffle his hungry creditors. Trimalchio towers above them by reason of his more stable fortunes and his colossal impudence. He can afford to delegate the conduct of his business, to grow a little negligent, even—for his accounts are six months in arrear—to care for the life of the spirit.

He believes, of course, in astrology; he sings excerpts out of tune from the last musical play, and takes phrases from the lips of the comic star whom Nero delights to honour. He has two <sup>1</sup> libraries, one of Greek, one of Latin books, and mythology courses through his brain in incorrigible confusion.

His fellow townsmen and guests, whom he insults, do not aspire to these heights. Dama, Seleucus, and Phileros are rich merely in the common coin of everyday talk, in the proverbial wisdom which seems to gather strength and brightness from being constantly exchanged. "A hot drink is as good as an overcoat"—"Flies have their virtues, we are nothing but bubbles"—"An old love pinches like a crab"—"It is easy when everything goes fair and square." In

<sup>1</sup> The MS. says three, and may be right; he may be drunk when he boasts of them.

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these phrases and their like Latin literature speaks to us for once in the tones we know in England through Justice Shallow or Joseph Poorgrass. Nearly all warm themselves with this fatuous talk of riches and drink and deaths, but one man, Ganymede, a shrewd Asiatic immigrant like Trimalchio himself, blows cold on their sentimentality with his searching talk of bread-prices in Cumae, rising pitilessly through drought and the operation of a ring of bakers in league with officials. He tells us in brilliant phrases of the starving poor, of the decay of religion, of lost pride in using good flour. Then Echion, an old-clothes dealer, overwhelms him with a flood of suburban chatter about games, and children, and chickens, and the material blessings of education. But Ganymede is the sole character of Petronius's novel who brings to light the reverse side of Trimalchio's splendour. A system of local government which showers honours upon vulgarity, and allows Trimalchio his bath, his improved sanitation, his host of servants, his house with so many doors that no guest may go in and out by the same one, is invariably true to type in leaving poor men to die in the street. The very existence of poverty becomes dim for Trimalchio, half unreal, so that he can jest at Agamemnon for taking as the theme of a set speech the eternal quarrel of rich and poor.

Between rich and poor in Cumae the one link is commerce in vice.[?] Trimalchio finds Fortunata the chorus-girl standing for sale in the open market, and calls her up to be the partner of his sterile and unmeaning prodigality.<sup>1</sup> She has learnt all the painful

<sup>1</sup> She was a slave, not necessarily for "vice".

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lessons of the slums; she will not <sup>1</sup> grace Trimalchio's table until dinner is over, and she has seen the plate safely collected from his guests, and the broken meats apportioned to his slaves; she knows the sting of jealousy, and the solace of intoxication or tears; normally she rules him, as Petruchio ruled Katharina, with loud assertion and tempest of words. The only other woman present at the dinner, Scintilla, the wife of Trimalchio's friend Habinnas, a monumental mason, is more drunken and unseemly, and leaves behind her a less sharp taste of character.

Trimalchio's dinner breaks up with a false alarm of fire, and the infamous heroes of the story give Agamemnon the slip. Trimalchio vanishes, and with his loss the story becomes fragmentary once more, and declines in interest almost as much as in decency. Its attraction lies in the verse and criticism put into the mouth of Eumolpus,<sup>2</sup> a debased poet whom Encolpius meets in a picture gallery. With him the adventures of the trio continue. There is a lodging-house brawl, a voyage where they find themselves in the hands of old enemies, the ship's captain Lichas, whose wife Hedyle they appear to have led astray, and Tryphaena, a peripatetic courtesan who takes the Mediterranean coast for her province, and has some unexplained claim on Giton's affections. They settle these disputes only to be involved in a shipwreck and cast ashore at Croton, where they grow fat on their

<sup>1</sup> More precisely, in ch. 37 she bustles about the dining-room; in 47 her husband speaks to her; in 52 she whispers to him; in 54 she rushes in with doctors when he is hurt; in 67 she joins the party when called; and in 74 she quarrels with him.

<sup>2</sup> "Goodbard," or "Singwell."



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pretension to be men of fortune, and disappear from sight, Encolpius after a . . . series of vain encounters with a woman named Circe, and Eumolpus after a scene where he bequeaths his body to be eaten by his heirs.

Coherence (*in the tradition*) almost fails long before the end; the episode in which Encolpius kills a goose, the sacred bird of Priapus, gives a hint, but no more, that the wrath of Priapus was <sup>1</sup> the thread on which the whole *Satyricon* was strung. But the life of the later portions of the novel lies in the critical and poetical fragments scattered through it. These show Petronius at his best as a lord of language, a great critic, an intelligent enthusiast for the traditions of classical poetry and oratory. The love of style which was stronger in him even than his interest in manners doubly enriches his work. It brings ready to his pen the proverbs with their misleading hints of modernity,<sup>2</sup> the debased syntax and abuse of gender, which fell from common lips daily, but is reproduced (*in Petronius*) alone in its fullness <sup>3</sup>; and side by side with these mirrored vulgarisms the gravity of the attack on professional rhetoric with which the novel begins, and the weight of the teacher's defence, that the parent will have education set to a tune of his own

<sup>1</sup> So E. Klebs, in *Philol.*, XLVII, 1889, 629 ff.; not so O. Schissil v. Fleschenberg, in *Wiener Studien*, XXXIII, 1911, 264 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See especially c. 41 to 46, 57 to 59.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. *apoculamus* (c. 62), *duxissem?* (c. 57), *plovebat* (c. 44), *percolopabant* (c. 44), the nouns *agaga* (c. 69), *babaecalis* (c. 37), *bacalusias* (c. 41), *barcalae* (c. 67), *burdubasta* (c. 45), *gingilipho* (c. 73), and such expressions as *caelus hic* (c. 39), *malus Fatus* (c. 42), *olim oliorum(?)* (c. 43) *nummorum nummos* (c. 37), and the Graecisms *saplutus* and *topanta* (c. 37).

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calling; Eumolpus's brilliant exposition of the supremacy of the poet's task over that of the rhetorician or historian; the curious, violent, epic fragment by which he upholds his doctrine.

Petronius employed a pause in literary invention and production in assimilating and expressing a view upon the makers<sup>1</sup> of poems, prose, pictures, philosophies, and statues, who preceded him, and thereby deepened his interpretation of contemporary life. His cynicism, his continual backward look at the splendours and severities of earlier art and other morals are the inevitable outcome of this self-education.

By far the most genuine and pathetic expressions of his weariness are the poems which one is glad to be able to attribute to him. The best of them speak of quiet country and seaside, of love deeper than desire and founded on the durable grace of mind as well as the loveliness of the flesh, of simplicity and escape from Court.<sup>2</sup>

He knew the antidote to the fevered life which burnt him up. His book is befouled with obscenity, and, like obscenity itself, is ceasing by degrees to be part of a gentleman's education. But he will always be read as a critic; he tells admirable stories of were-wolves and faithless widows<sup>3</sup>; he is one of

<sup>1</sup> e.g. c. 1 to 5, 55, 83, 88, 118.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Poems 2, 8, 11, 13-15, 22, and 25; of the love-poems, 25 and 26, but above all 16 and 27, which show (if they can be by him) a side of Petronius entirely hidden in the *Satyricon*.

<sup>3</sup> In c. 61-62 through Niceros, in c. 63 through Trimalchio, and in c. 111-113 through Eumolpus (the famous and cosmopolitan tale of the Widow of Ephesus).