

PETRONIUS: CENA TRIMALCHIONIS

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WILLIAM E. WATERS

**PETRONIUS: CENA
TRIMALCHIONIS**

The Students' Series of Latin Classics

PETRONIUS

CENA TRIMALCHIONIS

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

BY

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PREFACE

THIS edition of the dinner scene at Trimalchio's house, an episode in the *Satirae* of Petronius, is based upon the text as established by Bücheler. I have occasionally departed from his readings, but only, as a rule, where he himself was in doubt, and other conjectural readings could be made with equal or greater plausibility. In the preparation of my commentary I have been under special obligation not only to Friedländer's edition of the *Cena Trimalchionis*, and the reviews of the same, particularly in the *Berliner Philologische Wochenschrift* and the *Classical Review*, but also to the valuable contributions on the language of Petronius in the *Archiv für Lateinische Lexicographie*, to Heraeus for his comparisons with the *Corpus Glossariorum*, and to Otto for the comparative study of numerous *redensarten* peculiar to Petronius. I am also indebted to professors in the Latin departments of Columbia University for very valuable suggestions and assistance in the preparation of the commentary, as well as in the reading of a considerable portion of the proof. I must express my special obligation to Professor Peck

for his helpful criticisms, and to Professor Lodge for the kindness he has shown in permitting me the full and free use of his large library at all times.

The *Cena Trimalchionis* is fairly entitled to a place of prominence in the study of Roman life and literature. It reveals an important side of life in the early years of our era, in all its naturalness and with perfect truthfulness, and is to that extent of the same value as the plays of Plautus or the Letters of Cicero. The name of Petronius has been anathema to a large number of Latin scholars, but in the *Cena* his *puritas* is no longer *impurissima*, and what he discloses there concerning the language, life, and customs of a very influential portion of Italian society in the closing years of the Republic and at the dawn of the Empire makes pleasant and valuable reading, especially as it supplements information gathered from inscriptions, or from Comedy and the poets and prose writers of the period of Petronius, or from the discoveries which have been and are still being continually made in the excavations at Pompeii.

By far the greater portion of the text of the *Cena* rests upon one manuscript alone, the Codex Tragurien-sis (H). In this edition that portion is set in Roman type. Where the text rests, however, upon this same manuscript and the apographon of Scaliger, called the Codex Leidensis (L), Italics have been employed. The portion set in black-faced type rests upon other manuscripts in addition to these two. I believe that the

employment of different fonts to indicate the difference in manuscript authority has an advantage over the perpendiculars used by Bücheler and Friedländer.

W. E. W.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY,
April, 1902.

INTRODUCTION.

I. PETRONIUS IN RELATION TO EARLIER WRITERS OF HISTORY AND ROMANCE.

A story well told can find its ready hearers; of none can this probably be said with greater truth than of the tale of exciting and varied adventure which fills the *Odyssey*, and was heard by the listening Greek with silent wonder and pride as the rhapsodist chanted and recited from the great poem at the city or national festivals. The less mythical but extremely romantic and entertaining histories of Herodotus, who had himself wandered quite as widely as the Ithacan, had a similar charm.¹ And though the age of Pericles saw in one historian, Thucydides, an unswerving regard for truth and critical accuracy, yet for the Greeks, history, especially that of foreign nations and remote countries, remained substantially the province for more or less of romantic and rhetorical treatment. Ktesias and Xenophon had filled the minds of their countrymen with curious tales concerning Persia; and Athenian orators, expatiating at festivals and on memorial days upon the past glories of Greece, were turning records of events

¹ Compare, for example, the story told of the emotion which Thucydides betrayed while listening, on a certain occasion, to the Father of History himself. (Marcellinus, 54, in Westermann's *Biog. Graec.*, p. 198; see Suidas, under *ὀργάνω*.)

into tales of romance, much after the fashion of modern orators. Deinon¹ of Colophon, author of a compendious account of Persia, which has been lost, was probably one of these many historians whose style was rhetorical and whose purpose was entertainment. To his son, Clitarchus, this account may have served as a model; for his talent as an historian of forcible descriptive powers is praised, rather than his regard for truth and accuracy.² We have it upon the authority of Cicero³ that this Clitarchus was an author who was read with special pleasure by the Roman historian Cornelius Sisenna, and exerted considerable influence upon him. As to the nature of this influence, there is reason for believing that Clitarchus,⁴ whom Alexander the Great had taken with him on his Persian campaign for the purpose of recording its history, was a writer not only rhetorical in his style, but strongly inclined to romancing; that

¹ Deinon's history of Persia extended to the year 340 B.C., the date of the conquest of Egypt by Artaxerxes III.

² Quint. x. 1, 74: Clitarchi probatur ingenium, fides infamatur.

³ Cicero, *De legibus*, i. 2: "Sisenna eius amicus omnes adhuc nostros scriptores, nisi qui forte nondum ediderunt, de quibus existimare non possumus, facile superavit. Is tamen neque orator in numero vestro unquam est habitus et in historia puerile quiddam consecatur, ut unum Clitarchum neque praeterea quemquam de Graecis legisse videatur, eum tamen velle dumtaxat imitari; quem si adsequi posset, aliquantum ab optumo tamen abesset."

Compare Cicero's criticism of Sisenna, *Brutus*, 228.

⁴ Clitarchus was a native of Megara; he attended Alexander on his invasion of the Persian Empire, and was the author of a *History*, in twelve books, terminating with the battle of Ipsus. He also wrote a history of Persia, covering the period before and after Xerxes. As to his historical accuracy, cf. Cicero, *Brutus*, 42: "Concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historiis, ut aliquid dicere possint argutius; ut enim tu nunc de Coriolano, sic Clitarchus, sic Stratocles de Themistocle finxit."