

PETER HABERMEHL, *Petronius, Satyrica 79-141. Ein philologisch-literarischer Kommentar*. Bd. 2: *Sat. 111-118*, Texte und Kommentare 27.2, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter, 2020, lxxx+320 pp. (489-808), € 109.95, ISBN 978-3-11-019109-7.

There has been a long interval between the publication of the first and the second volume of the commentary by Peter Habermehl (hereafter PH) on the latter half of Petronius' novel (i.e. the chapters subsequent to the *Cena Trimalchionis*). The first volume appeared in 2006 and the author's original intention was to finalise his project in two instalments only, and to skip chapters 119-24.1 (the *Bellum Civile*). By now, however, the commentary has grown considerably: the current volume covers no more than eight chapters (instead of twenty-six, if we do not count Eumolpus' poem), PH has changed his mind about the omission of the *Bellum Civile*<sup>1</sup>, and it is likely that the commentary as a whole will consist of four volumes totalling at least some 1700 pages<sup>2</sup>. Thus we are dealing here with a huge enterprise which, nowadays, is usually tackled by a team of scholars; PH himself (p. IX) refers to the Groningen Apuleius project (1977-2015, nine volumes). If, on the other hand, we are looking for an individual scholar's work of comparable size and character, we may recall the commentary on Tacitus' *Annals* by Erich Koestermann (1963-1968, four volumes), that on Thucydides by Simon Hornblower (1991-2008, three volumes) or that on Livy's Books 6-10 by S.P. Oakley (1997-2005, four volumes).

Characteristically, in the second volume, PH has slowed down his (already slow) pace: the commentary to text ratio here is almost 25:1, whereas in the first volume it was some 12:1<sup>3</sup>. Predictably, there is also some difference in length between individual sections; it comes as no surprise that the most extensive treatment is given to the Widow of Ephesus story (two chapters are accorded no less than 101 pages)<sup>4</sup>. The portion of the *Satyrica* discussed

<sup>1</sup> His commentary on the poem has already been published: P. Habermehl, *Petronius, Satyrica 79-141. Ein philologisch-literarischer Kommentar*. Bd. 3: *Bellum Civile (Sat. 119-124)*, Berlin-Boston 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Apart from introductory matter, where Roman numerals are used, the pagination is continued from one volume to another; the third volume ends on p. 1377.

<sup>3</sup> Since PH limits himself to the commentary (there is no Latin text), I have used Konrad Müller's Teubner edition for these calculations (*Petronii Arbitri Satyricon reliquiae*, Stuttgartiae-Lipsiae 1995). In the third volume, the ratio is even higher (almost 34:1), but this may be due to the character of the text. On the whole, one may compare Walter Kiffl's commentary on Persius (*Aules Persius Flaccus: Satiren*, Heidelberg 1990) where the commentary to text ratio is ca 35:1.

<sup>4</sup> The following chapter (113) is dealt with over 23 pages.

in this volume begins with this story (which is told by Eumolpus to the audience gathered on Lichas' ship); there follows a licentious party on the sea, which features, in particular, Tryphaena and Giton and which is suddenly interrupted by a storm. Encolpius, Giton and Eumolpus manage to survive, but the corpse of Lichas is found on the shore the next day; Encolpius delivers a funeral speech. He and his companions are now in the vicinity of Crotona and they learn about its inhabitants' highly peculiar habits. Eumolpus devises a plan to win the favour of the Crotonians; they head for the town, being lectured *en route* by Eumolpus on the nature of poetry (by means of an introduction to his recitation of the *Bellum Civile*). It is clear even from this brief synopsis that the eight chapters covered in the volume under review provide rich material for analysis and interpretation; apart from the Widow of Ephesus narrative, this is true especially of the description of the storm, of Encolpius' *oratio funebris* lamenting the fragility of things human, and of Eumolpus' *ars poetica*. PH's ample commentary fulfils the expectations posed by the challenging subject-matter to a remarkable degree.

As noted above, PH does not provide an edition of the text. He has based his commentary on Konrad Müller's Teubner edition (see n. 3 above), but he occasionally departs from Müller and, in this volume, the versions preferred in the commentary are also adopted in the relevant lemmata (in the first volume the lemmata reproduced Müller's text throughout, even though it was impugned in the commentary). The ten instances of these departures are conveniently listed on p. XII; one of them is an emendation put forward by PH himself: *tabulasque testamenti omnibus <occasionibus> renovet* (117.10). There have been numerous attempts to fill the *lacuna* of the *paradosis*; Müller follows Bücheler in reading *omnibus <mensibus>*. PH discusses the issue at length (pp. 751-3) and, remarkably, does not neglect to mention some possible weaknesses of his own proposal (namely that “[b]ei Petron erscheint das Wort [*occasio*] ansonsten stets im Singular, zudem in festen Formeln [...] und zielt meist auf konkrete Situationen”). This conjecture seems quite convincing<sup>5</sup>, something which cannot be said about PH's second proposal (which is only considered, not adopted), namely to read *impotentis* instead of the transmitted (and, admittedly, objectionable) *innocentes* at 116.8 (pp. 721-2). Apart from these two attempts, PH does not make any emendations of his own, but he does discuss textual issues carefully wherever the text has been questioned (which, in the case of the *Satyrica*, means: frequently)

<sup>5</sup> But, on the other hand, I find it still tempting to believe that what was dropped after *omnibus* was a noun relating to a period of time, such as Bücheler's *mensibus*. Note the chiasmic arrangement of the two cola which would be strengthened if such were the case (*omnibus <mensibus>* et sim. being parallel to *quotidie*): *sedeat praeterea quotidie ad rationes* | *tabulasque testamenti omnibus <mensibus> renovet*. For the ABC | CBA structure in Petronius (not discussed by PH), cf. 113.9: *inundavere pectus lacrimae dolore paratae* | *gemitusque suspirio tectus animam paene submovit*.

and he is duly judicious in assessing the advantages and disadvantages of the conjectures put forward by other scholars (see e.g. pp. 541-2, 572-3, 590-1, 672-3, 782).

In the preface to his first volume PH wrote that “[e]in Kommentar zur zweiten Hälfte der *Satyrica* bedarf keiner langen Rechtfertigung”<sup>6</sup>. Since the appearance of that volume (2006), two major commentaries have been published: that by Gareth Schmeling and Aldo Setaioli, covering the novel in its entirety (as extant), and that by Giulio Vannini, covering chapters 100-157. PH frequently refers to these commentaries, but it is patently clear from the manner in which he handles individual passages that what he says is based primarily on his own research and that his predecessors’ work is cited either to corroborate his standpoint or, sometimes, to proffer additional observations; in those cases where there is disagreement between PH and his fellow commentators, he candidly acknowledges this without engaging in unnecessary polemics (thus e.g. pp. 541, 613: “zu Unrecht”, 656, 688). PH’s conscientiousness in presenting the results of research conducted by both these and other scholars is commendable (there is a vast bibliography of 77 pages); moreover, he makes ample use of comments made to him, by means of private communication, by his colleagues, M. Deufert, A. Setaioli and G. Vannini in particular. These comments are quoted, sometimes extensively, even if they approach an issue in question from another perspective than that adopted by the author. His introductory analysis of Encolpius’ funeral speech for Lichas is a good example of this practice: in the last but one paragraph on p. 668 PH gives his final assessment of this passage (“Rhetorisches Pathos und Sonntagsphilosophie ersetzen alle Empathie; Theatralik tritt an die Stelle der Trauer”) and the reader is entitled to think that this brings the discussion to a close; however, there follow two more paragraphs, presenting appraisals of Encolpius’ speech put forward, firstly, by Setaioli (“*in epist.*”) and, secondly, by A. Collignon (from his *Étude sur Pétrone*, Paris 1892), both of which are quoted at length. As a result, the reader is confronted with (to use fashionable terms) the “multifocality” or “polyvalence” of the commentary’s message – which, it may be noted, is quite in agreement with the nature of Petronius’ novel itself, an œuvre notoriously defying a straightforward and clear-cut assessment<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> P. Habermehl, *Petronius, Satyrica 79-141. Ein philologisch-literarischer Kommentar*. Bd. 1: *Bellum Civile (Sat. 79-110)*, Berlin-New York 2006, IX.

<sup>7</sup> G. Schmeling, *A Commentary on the Satyrica of Petronius*. With the Collaboration of A. Setaioli, Oxford 2011; G. Vannini, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon 100-115. Edizione critica e commento*, Berlin-New York 2010. See also, for the novel’s first part, N. Breitenstein, *Petronius, Satyrica 1-15. Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Berlin 2009.

<sup>8</sup> “Wie so vieles in den *Sat.*, ist auch diese Passage durch und durch ambivalent”, observes PH *a propos* of Encolpius’ *oratio funebris* (p. 668).

When dealing with the minutiae of individual passages, phrases or words, there is always a danger of failing to see the forest for the trees. This danger is particularly acute in the case of a commentary on a literary work which has not come down to us in its entirety – and, what is more, a commentary which covers only part of the preserved text. Certainly, PH has a lot to say about Petronius' diction, imagery or *loci communes*, but he also makes a constant effort to take a wider perspective, thus establishing a salutary balance between analysis and synthesis, between what is particular and what is more general (a balance which seems to be reflected in the subtitle of his work: *Ein philologisch-literarischer Kommentar*). Especially valuable in this regard are his introductory discussions of individual passages, namely the Widow of Ephesus (pp. 489-502), the storm (pp. 603-9), Encolpius' funeral speech (pp. 665-9) and Eumolpus' lecture on poetry (pp. 764-70). Of particular interest in the first of them (which deals, among other issues, with the story's place within the main plot of the novel, its intertextual links with the *Aeneid* and its open ending) is PH's analysis of the structure of the narrative, with emphasis put on "Korrespondenzen und Symmetrien, die die Rede der *ancilla* als das heimliche Epizentrum der Novelle identifizieren" (p. 500, with a helpful diagram). However, I suspect that PH makes his case more clear-cut than it really is, because his arrangement totally omits 112.4-5 (which should have been inserted between his items D' and C'), a crucial passage describing the stealing of the corpse of a crucified criminal. Also, I would have liked to hear more about the *Quellenfrage* (namely the relation between Petronius, Phaedrus and Romulus, which is only briefly tackled on p. 489).

One of the main reasons why this commentary is so extensive is PH's predilection for accumulating *loci similes* and other passages adduced to illustrate an issue in question. Thus he gives ten examples of the collocation *diem trahere* (p. 518) and no less than twenty-four of the formula *i(te) nunc (et)* (p. 681); eleven passages in which the (not very odd) idea of wine bringing forth sexual excitement is present (p. 556); twenty-three references, most of them with quotations, for the (also rather self-evident) notion of darkness unexpectedly overspreading the horizon during a storm (p. 610)<sup>9</sup>. Lamentation gestures are mentioned thrice in the Widow of Ephesus narrative (111.2, 111.8 and 111.9); in his commentary to each of these passages, PH dutifully adduces a number of quotations from Roman authors, some of which are given more than once (pp. 509-10, 530 and 539).

Some will find this piling up of references helpful; to others, however, it may seem unnecessary or even irritating. Besides, *l'embarras de richesse*

<sup>9</sup> Contrast a relatively brief footnote in E. Courtney, *A Companion to Petronius*, Oxford 2001, 174, n. 24. Vannini *ad loc.* (*Petronii Arbitri*, 277) lists eleven passages, but only one of them is quoted.

generates problems of its own. Take PH's comment on *tamquam intersit, periturum corpus quae ratio consumat, ignis an fluctus an mora* (from Encolpius' funeral oration, 115.17). Two long paragraphs are filled with parallel passages (pp. 692-3) and the reader may easily overlook a quotation, inconspicuously adduced towards the end of this note, from *De Remediis Fortuitorum* attributed to Seneca: *quid interest, ignis me an fera consumat an tempus, ultima omnium sepultura?* (fr. 5.2 Haase, p. 449) – although it is this sentence which bears the closest resemblance to the passage under consideration and it may well be supposed that Petronius is alluding here to Seneca<sup>10</sup>.

PH scrupulously discusses various aspects of the eight chapters of the *Satyrica* which are covered in this volume. The reader's impression is that virtually nothing has been left untouched; PH's lemmata almost match word for word the Latin text of Petronius (there are only a few omissions). However, I have noticed some issues which have not been raised, although, in my opinion, they deserve a comment (111.2: *prosecuta est* in close proximity to *prosequi* and the question of repeating the same word as an alleged stylistic weakness; do we have other examples of this kind from the *Satyrica*?<sup>11</sup>; 111.4: Petronius' characteristic word-order in which two predicates frame the sentence, being placed at its beginning and end; here, *assidebat* and *renovabat*, see also 111.6, 111.7, 112.6 *et saepius*<sup>12</sup>; 111.5: the placement of *igitur* – it appears 18x in the novel and only twice is it put at the beginning of the sentence, at 25.7 and 114.9; for this matter, see e.g. E. Fraenkel, *JRS* 41, 1951, 193; 112.5: Petronius' use of the perfect forms on *-ere/-erunt*; for this matter, see e.g. E. Löfstedt, *Syntactica. Studien und Beiträge zur historischen Syntax des Lateins*, vol. II, Lund 1933, 295; 115.4: *excandescere* used several times by the novelist in reference to a character's firm reaction followed by his or her utterance in direct speech – as in this passage; thus 53.8, 57.1, 87.10, 100.4 and 105.1).

Finally, I would allow myself to make a number of remarks on specific passages as discussed by PH. They will be given here in the same order as the passages are treated in the book; I have refrained from dividing them into separate categories.

111.3 (p. 516): "... geling es Tlepolemus, Charite zum Essen zu bewegen" (cf. Apul. *Met.* 8.7.3). For "Tlepolemus" read "Thrasyllus"; Tlepolemus is Charite's deceased husband. Thus *saepius* (pp. 536, 547, 563).

<sup>10</sup> See Courtney, *A Companion*, 176 n. 26. PH sometimes uses underlining to call the reader's attention to some very similar passages (pp. 530, 551, 670 etc.), but this may not be enough to highlight a specific parallel. There is no underlining in his note on *tamquam intersit*.

<sup>11</sup> PH notices the repetition while discussing Bücheler's emendation *secuta* (p. 511), but he does not deal with the question.

<sup>12</sup> See also n. 5 above.

111.3 (p. 517): *femina* and *mulier*. To Axelson add J.N. Adams, “Latin Words for ‘Woman’ and ‘Wife’”, *Glotta* 50, 1972, 234–55 (the same reference is missing at 113.7, p. 587).

111.5 (p. 522): the narrative function of *cum inversum*. A comparison with Sall. *Cat.* 10.1 would have been interesting.

111.10 (p. 543): the *vinulentia* of St. Monica (St. Augustine’s mother). But the episode recounted in *Conf.* 9.8.18 refers to her early youth, so it poorly suits the theme discussed here, namely “das gerne heraufbeschworene Bild von der Trunksucht gerade älterer Frauen”.

112.2 (p. 558): “Die Qualitäten der beiden [*scil.* der *matrona* und des *miles*] bilden zwei wohlabgestimmte Paare: wie sie ihm *pulcherrima* erscheint, so der Soldat ihr *nec deformis*”. We may compare Verg. *Aen.* 1.496: *forma pulcherrima Dido* (she is being watched by Aeneas) and 4.141: *ipse ante alios pulcherrimus omnis* (as focalised, we may assume, by Dido). This adds to the intertextual links with the *Aeneid*, effectively discussed by PH.

113.6 (p. 586): among many references adduced in order to explain *obliquis [...] oculis [...] spectabam* one is curiously missing, Lucan. 1.55.

114 (introduction, p. 604): “Der Nord beutelt sein Schiff; andere zerschellen oder sinken” (on the storm in Verg. *Aen.* 1). But, in fact, only one Trojan ship was destroyed by the storm (see *Aen.* 1.584–5).

114 (introduction, p. 605): to bibliographical references cited in n. 7 add M. Matthews, *Caesar and the Storm. A Commentary on Lucan De Bello Civili, Book 5 lines 476-721*, Frankfurt/M. 2008.

114.1 (p. 609): while commenting upon *dum haec taliaque iactamus*, PH notes a link with Verg. *Aen.* 1.102: *talia iactanti stridens Aquilone procella* etc. Additionally, *iactamus* here seems to ironically anticipate the description of the storm which immediately follows; for *iactare* used in reference to a sea storm (mainly in the passive voice), see e.g. Nep. *Att.* 6.2; Liv. 37.12.12; Sen. *Dial.* 6.10.6; Lucan. 9.331; Sil. 4.716.

114.3 (p. 617): before “Cic. *Att.* 7,2,1” add “*poeta incertus ap.*”.

114.6 (p. 626): *et illum quidem vociferantem in mare ventus excussit* (which is followed by *Tryphaenam autem*: in contrast to Lichas, she managed to survive the storm). According to PH, “*Quidem* unterstreicht *vociferantem*: ‘mitten im Wort’”. It is more likely that *quidem/autem* is used to mark the difference between the fate of Lichas and that of Tryphaena; cf. 96.4: *et ille quidem flens consedit in lecto. Ego autem...*; 115.20: *et Licham quidem rogos inimicis collatus manibus adolebat. Eumolpus autem...*

114.11 (p. 641): Sen. *Dial.* 4.36.6 should not be cited in the context of the motif of friends (spouses, lovers etc.) dying together, with one of them falling on the corpse of the other (cf. Nisus and Euryalus). The Senecan passage deals with people who, induced by anger, kill those whom they love – and who regret their action afterwards. Seneca most probably had in mind the story



of Alexander and Cleitus; cf. *Dial.* 5.17.1, *Ep.* 83.19 (*transfodit* appears in both these passages; cf. *transfoderunt* at *Dial.* 4.36.6).

114.12 (p. 647): *patior ego vinculum extremum*. Here PH quotes from Vannini *ad loc.* (*Petronii Arbitri*, 288): “Si referisce alla *zona*, ma allude metaforicamente al *vinculum amoris*”. The use of *patior* in this particular context suggests that Petronius refers (also) to a lover’s passive role in a homosexual union (cf. 9.6, 25.3, *Tac. Ann.* 11.36.4). If this is right, the reference would, of course, be ironical, because in their relationship it is Giton rather than Encolpius who plays the passive role.

115.3 (p. 656): before “39–42” add “1,1” (the quotation here is from *Ov. Trist.* 1.1 and not, as was the case earlier, from *Trist.* 1.11).

115.4 (p. 659): *laborat carmen in fine*. Perhaps *laborat* alludes, on the one hand, to the *labor limae* of *Hor. AP* 291 and, on the other, to the toils of childbirth (for *laborare* in this context, see *Hor. Carm.* 3.22.2, *Ov. Am.* 2.13.9, *Cels. Med.* 5.25.14). The notion of books as the children of their authors is frequently attested, in Latin literature most movingly in *Ov. Trist.* 1.7 (for the composition of a literary work represented as childbirth see *Ar. Nub.* 530–2). See further A.T. Zanker, *Greek and Latin Expressions of Meaning. The Classical Origins of a Modern Metaphor*, München 2016, 123–45. (It is tempting to see in *poetam mugientem* of 115.5 a reference to screaming during childbirth. Admittedly, this particular aspect of *mugire* is not attested, but see *ThLL* 8.1560.47–63 *de vocibus eorum, qui dolore vel affectu laborant.*)

115.8 (p. 671): “Für diese Ironie gibt es kaum Parallelen” (on *maris fidem*). Possibly the phrase is used in order to evoke the motif of the sea giving back what has been entrusted to it (cf. *Hor. Carm.* 1.3.5–8), in this case the (dead) body of Lichas. For this imagery see 83.10.1: *qui pelago credit, magno se faenore tollit*.

115.9 (p. 673): “Und die Paarung *filius aut pater* zitiere Ceyx’ letzte Gedanken...”. The thoughts are not those of Ceyx, but of his anonymous fellow-traveller; Ceyx appears slightly later (*Ov. Met.* 11.544).

116.1 (p. 705): “Aeneas und die Seinen”. On his way to Carthage Aeneas is accompanied by only one of his men, Achates.

116.3 (pp. 709–10): Encolpius and his friends inquire about their whereabouts. “Im Hintergrund sehen wir eine archetypische Situation des Epos: den ortsfremden Neuankömmling fernab der Heimat”. The novelist models his narrative here mainly on Vergil’s *Aeneid* 1: his *explorare* corresponds to the poet’s *explorare* (*Aen.* 1.307), and so on. It may be asked why they have waited so long to learn that they are in the neighbourhood of Crotona. Before they met a *vilicus* (116.2), they might have asked the fishermen who had helped them after the shipwreck (114.4 and 115.6). It would have been natural to make such inquiries then. But it seems that

Petronius' primary aim is to adapt his narrative to his intertextual model; internal plausibility becomes of secondary importance.

117.8 (p. 745): the spelling of *faenus/fenus* and *faenero/fenero* should have been unified. (The same applies to *vesanus* on p. 803 and *vaesana* on p. 804.)

To conclude: there should be no doubt that the book's merits by far outweigh its flaws (which are mostly minor ones). We are looking forward to the publication of the final volume of Professor Habermehl's impressive commentary. It has already become a major reference tool for students of this fascinating and elusive author, Petronius Arbiter.

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