

NATALIE BREITENSTEIN, *Petronius, Satyrica 1-15. Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, Texte und Kommentare 32, Berlin - New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, pp. XVIII + 238, ISBN 978-3-11-022082-7.

Walter de Gruyter is to be congratulated for its decision to continue publishing substantial commentaries by different scholars on individual sections of Petronius' fragmentary novel. Peter Habermehl's large-scale 'philologisch-literarischer Kommentar' on *Sat.* 79-110 appeared in 2006 (see my review of it in *The Classical Review* 58.1, 2008, 142-4), and earlier this year (2010) de Gruyter published Giulio Vannini's impressive *Petronii Arbitri "Satyricon" 100-115: Edizione critica e commento* (a review of this will shortly appear in *Ancient Narrative*). The book under review here began life as a dissertation submitted in the summer of 2008 at the University of Bern; in its revised form it comprises a mere 10 pages of Introduction, the Latin text (covering about 11 Teubner pages; there is no *apparatus criticus*) with facing translation into German ('Die Übersetzung...bleibt...nahe am lateinischen Original und erhebt keinen literarischen Anspruch', p. 1), and 196 pages of commentary (that is, approximately 18 pages of commentary on each page of Latin text as printed in Müller's 2003 Teubner edition of Petronius). There are also 17 pages of Bibliography and an Index Rerum (but there is no Index of authors cited and passages discussed, a regrettable omission for a commentary as detailed as this).

The first 15 chapters of the extant *Satyrica* consist of four episodes—different in length and style—of Encolpius' life: the scene at the school of rhetoric (1-5), the incident at the brothel (6-8), the quarrel between Encolpius and Ascyltus over Giton (9-11), and the adventure of the stolen tunic (12-15). Before the publication of Breitenstein's volume these chapters had not been discussed as thoroughly as they deserved, nor had there been a comprehensive attempt to juxtapose the different styles of language in which Encolpius describes part of his life. Breitenstein's volume redresses the balance by focussing not only on textual problems and intertextual issues but also on the various registers Petronius employs to convey effectively the atmosphere of each episode and to depict Encolpius' character as he interacts with the other characters in the story: the tone of the narrative in the scene at the school of rhetoric is ornate and elaborate, at the brothel and the inn it is appropriately low and uncouth, and at the marketplace it has a legal flavour which suits the plot-line. Breitenstein teases out these stylistic variations both in entries under individual words or clusters of words in the commentary and by means of mini-essays on language and style which precede each block of the commentary (see 'Sprechen in Metaphern', pp. 24-6; 'Sprache und Metaphern', pp. 72-3; 'Sprache', p. 120; 'Juristenjargon', pp. 160-1). This is a welcome addition to the format of commentaries in the series, and may well compensate for the fact that there is hardly any information of this kind in the disappointingly brief 'Einleitung'.

The Introduction offers no surprises ('Autor und Werk', 'Textüberlieferung', 'Handlung, Ort, Personal', 'Literarische Beschaffenheit der *Satyrice*'), but it is concisely written and cautiously argued. Breitenstein helpfully relates the overall problems of the complex textual transmission of Petronius to chapters 11-15 of the *Satyrice*, and offers a list of words or phrases which previous editors regarded as interpolations (see p. XIV). When printing Petronius' text, however, Breitenstein does not include any indication (either on the left-hand or on the right-hand side of the Latin as arranged on the printed page) of what MSS or families of MSS record which portions of chapters 1-15. This is a pity; had she opted to do this, she would have helped the reader to visualise even more clearly the lacunose state of the text in individual MSS of the *Satyrice*. For Petronius' text she uses Konrad Müller's 2003 Teubner edition, from which she says that she deviates 18 times (for the list of divergent readings—some of them less important than others—see p. 1), and in her commentary she argues in detail and quite convincingly for almost all of the deviations. There are, in fact, two more instances in which Breitenstein's text differs from Müller's text, and which are not included in the list of divergent readings: at 3.2 Breitenstein prints the MSS reading *nimirum*, whereas Müller adopts Leo's conjecture *nil mirum* <si>; and at 10.5 Breitenstein prints the reading of MSS dmrtp *aliud aliquid*, whereas Müller prints the reading of MS l *aliquid aliud*. In five difficult textual cases Breitenstein prints the text in *crucis* (*Sat.* 5 line 16 *vox †onerata†*; 9.8 *†de ruina†*; 14.3 *†lupinosque, quibus†*; 14.8 *†pene†*; 15.2 *†iam pene†*), without favouring or adopting any of the scholarly conjectures she mentions in the relevant part of the commentary; I was pleased to see, on the other hand, that she adopts Bücheler's *vesticontubernium* at 11.4 for the MSS' nonsensical *verti contubernium*. The misprints in the Latin text are few: I noticed only *revertabar* (at 6.4; the same error is irritatingly repeated on p. 99, thus giving the impression that Breitenstein does not know that *revertor* is a third conjugation verb) and *Ascolti* (at 15.7); in the layout of chapter 11 there is no indication of where section 4 begins. Furthermore, the punctuation in Breitenstein's text differs from that in Müller's text in five cases, but these make very little difference to the meaning. Finally, there is a minor typographical disaster on p. 78.

But it is perhaps unfair and misleading to say that Breitenstein's Introduction to the volume is too short (pp. IX-XVIII). Each of the five narrative episodes on which she writes a generous amount of commentary (namely, 'In der Rhetorenschule' (*Sat.* 1-4); 'Agamemnons Gedicht' (*Sat.* 5); 'Bordellabenteuer' (*Sat.* 6-8); 'Eifersuchtstreit in der Herberge' (*Sat.* 9-11); and 'Auf dem Markt' (*Sat.* 12-15)) is preceded by a lengthy essay in which Breitenstein discusses the plot, parallels in the story-line, the style of writing, and any other issues that are peculiar to each episode (for instance, ancient views on the reasons for the decline of rhetoric in Imperial Rome, the metre of Agamemnon's poem, and so on): see pp. 21-8, 69-73, 91-3, 117-120, and 153-61. I found it useful to read these essays immediately after I read the Introduction and before I looked at the commentary, because I wanted to understand how Breitenstein viewed Petronius' *Sat.* 1-15 as a whole and how she was going to approach the text in her commentary. Others might

prefer to read these sections in the compartmentalised fashion in which they currently appear in the volume.

The format of the commentary is not as economical as it ought to have been. 'Der lateinische Text wird nach dem Vorbild der Groningen Apuleius-Kommentare Paragraph für Paragraph ausgeschrieben und übersetzt' (p. 19). Why? The authors of the *Groningen Commentaries on Apuleius* in their analysis of the text follow the pattern of 'one paragraph of Latin text + English translation at a time' partly because, when printing the text of Apuleius as an uninterrupted narrative before the bulk of the commentary, they do not offer a translation facing the Latin text. Breitenstein, on the other hand, *does* offer a translation facing the Latin text, and so I do not see why sections of the text *and* of the German translation need to be repeated. For example, if you look at p. 29, it would have been perfectly possible (and indeed preferable) not to print (= repeat) the nine lines of Latin text and German translation at the top of the page ('**num alio genere...**nicht mehr?'), and start the commentary as follows:

Kapitel 1

Enkolp hält eine Rede über den Niedergang der Rhetorik und bezeichnet die Deklamationen als inadäquaten Schulstoff.

§ 1.1. Den Anfang der fragmentarisch überlieferten *Sat.* bildet ... (and so on).

The same method could have been applied to other parts of the commentary and would have saved the publisher some pages (and the world some trees).

The content of the commentary is detailed, erudite, and informative. Its point of view, like that of Habermehl's commentary, is literary and philological, and its aim is two-fold (or, rather, three-fold): 'Erstens erläutert der Kommentar die zum Verständnis des Textes nötigen sprachlichen, stilistischen und sachlichen (Handlung und Realien) Informationen. Zweitens sollen die literarische Machart und Qualität des Textes sowie narratologische Phänomene gebührende Erwähnung finden. Darüber hinaus leistet der Kommentar eine Aufarbeitung der modernen Forschungsliteratur.' (p. 19). In all this Breitenstein succeeds, because she has read very widely and has paid close attention to Petronius' Latin; readers are thus provided with the necessary tools to draw their own conclusions about the reason for (and function of) individual intertextual or intratextual allusions, or about specific textual problems, or about the subtleties of character-portrayal. There is plenty of irony (even sarcasm) here at the expense of Encolpius and Agamemnon, and a lot of (camp) humour in the low-life scenes at the brothel and the heroes' lodgings, but I did not see this surfacing often in the commentary.

Breitenstein has served Petronian scholarship very well with this volume. One hopes that the next instalment in the de Gruyter series of Petronian commentaries will be an in-depth commentary on the indecent and highly problematic episode with Quartilla.

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