

ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

VOL. XXI

HELSINKI 1987 HELSINGFORS

INDEX

Christer Bruun	Water for the Castra Praetoria. What were the Severan <i>operamina</i> ?	7
Siegfried Jäkel	Kritische Beobachtungen zum Programm einer Literatur-Pädagogik in Plutarchs Schrift <i>De audiendis poetis</i>	19
Mika Kajava	<i>Varus</i> and <i>Varia</i>	37
Klaus Karttunen	The Country of Fabulous Beasts and Naked Philosophers. India in Classical and Medieval Literature	43
Saara Lilja	Sunbathing in Antiquity	53
Bengt Löfstedt	Zu Bedas Evangelienkommentaren	61
Olivier Masson	Quelques noms grecs récents en -μάτιος	73
Teivas Oksala	T. S. Eliot's Conception of Virgil and Virgilian Scholarship	79
H.K. Riikonen	Petronius and Modern Fiction. Some Comparative Notes	87
Olli Salomies	Weitere republikanische Inschriften.	105
Timo Sironen	Osservazioni sulle grafie per le occlusive aspirate d'origine greca nell'osco	109
Heikki Solin	Analecta epigraphica CXIII—CXX.	119
E.M. Steinby	Il lato orientale del Foro Romano. Proposte di lettura	139
Leena Talvio	Sulla figura della Fortuna nel Sogno del Faraone.	185
Rolf Westman	Unbeachteter epikureischer Bericht bei Plutarch (<i>Qu. conviv.</i> 5, 1).	195
	De novis libris iudicia.	203
	Index librorum in hoc volumine recensorum	243
	Libri nobis missi.	245

Petronius and Modern Fiction

Some Comparative Notes

H.K. RIIKONEN

In the introduction to his work *The Satyricon of Petronius* J.P. Sullivan refers to some statements underestimating Petronius which were made towards the end of the nineteenth century. They were, however, already out-dated opinions. Sullivan quotes D.H. Lawrence, who in a letter dating from 1916 was ready to admit Petronius' ability and achievements as a writer.¹ In the study of the influence of Roman authors upon later European literature it is easy to notice that in the present century the interest in Petronius and his novel has been more extensive than ever before. Along with Lawrence there were many others who, as early as the turn of the century, expressed a lively interest in Petronius.² The importance attached to Nero's *arbiter elegantiae* in literature had in fact begun with Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel *Quo vadis?* (1895), where Petronius has the traits of a fin-de-siècle aesthete.³

After Sienkiewicz it has not, however, been a question only of an interest in Petronius as a personality depicted by Tacitus in his *Annals*. The attention of writers as well as of literary critics has increasingly turned from Petronius' personal characteristics to his novel, to its elements of

¹ Sullivan 1968, 15.

² See e.g. Killeen, *Comp. Lit.* 9 (1957) 194. It is also worth mentioning that Gustave Reynier has in his book on literary realism devoted the first pages to Petronius, Reynier 1912, 1—5.

³ See Corbett 1970, 136—138, and Riikonen 1978, 182—185.

satire and parody, and to its narrative technique.⁴ The *Satyricon* has also proved to be an important work in discussing the nature and limits of realism⁵ and the development of such literary genres as Menippean satire, the picaresque novel and the novel in general.⁶ The impact of Petronius' work on twentieth century culture has been increased by the fact that along with prose writers some film-makers, too, have made their own adaptations. In 1969 Gian Luigi Polidoro together with Ugo Tognazzi produced a film version of the *Satyricon*, but much more famous is of course Federico Fellini's version dating from the same year (*Fellini Satyricon*). The differences between Fellini's film and Petronius' novel are, of course, remarkable, or as Bernard F. Dick puts it: "It (i.e. Rome in Fellini's film) is an archetypal Rome: decadence reduced to tropes and conventions that are general enough to evoke any decadent age but not detailed enough to mirror it with perfect fidelity. For those who saw *Fellini Satyricon* when it was first released, it will always recall the late 1960s. Encolpius and Ascyltus are itinerant students of the first century A.D., yet they behave like dropouts of the sixties: too selfish to be radicals and too unmotivated to be scholars."⁷ Despite the differences there are, however, obvious similarities between Fellini's film and Petronius' novel. Besides the styles, which "mingled as freely in the first century as they did in the 1960s", Dick pays special attention to parody and the use of quotations. Where Petronius parodies Homer's *Odyssey* and other masterpieces of classical literature, Fellini, for his part, parodies e.g. Hollywood Westerns; and while Petronius quotes classics, Fellini in his film employs this device by "quoting film, art, literature, and even himself".⁸

⁴ The interest in Petronius' personality seems, however, unavoidable: Sullivan, who in his study is mostly concerned with the literary aspects and the aesthetic evaluation of the *Satyricon*, even discusses Petronius in Freudian terms. Cf. also Rankin, who tries to compare Proust and Petronius as personalities; see Rankin 1971, 51.

⁵ Auerbach 1959, 28—52.

⁶ Bakhtin 1983, *passim*; Id. 1984, 113—120.

⁷ Dick 1981, 148. From a classical scholar's point of view Fellini's film has been criticized by Gilbert Highet (1970). It should also be mentioned here that the novel *Quo vadis?* by Sienkiewicz, where Petronius is one of the leading figures, has also been filmed; see Corbett 1970, 138.

⁸ Dick 1981, 150—151.

Along with film, the modern theatre has also made use of Petronius' *Satyricon*. The dramatizations known from the beginning of the eighteenth century⁹ have successors in this century, too.¹⁰ A broadcast version by Louis MacNeice was produced by the BBC in 1948 with Dylan Thomas involved as one of the readers.¹¹

But, of course, the most fruitful has been the comparison between Petronius and the twentieth century novelists. In recent criticism Petronius has been mentioned in connection at least with D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Jack Kerouac, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Marcel Proust, L.F. Céline and Thomas Mann (especially his *Felix Krull*). In some of these cases it is a question of direct influence: the modern writer has read (in Latin or in translation) the *Satyricon* (or at least *The Banquet of Trimalchio*) and has tried to create a modern counterpart to it or to some episode in it. Thus it is now generally known that Scott Fitzgerald while writing his novel *The Great Gatsby* intended to give it the title *Trimalchio at West Egg*.¹² On the other hand, comparisons have been made between the *Satyricon* and modern authors where there is no direct imitation of Petronius' work: examples are Proust and Joyce. As regards the latter, it has been stated that many of Joyce's friends and contemporaries were acquainted with the *Satyricon*, and Joyce knew books containing reference to the *Satyricon*, as has been shown by J.F. Killeen and A.M. Cameron.¹³ On the other hand, as suggested by Richard Brown, Joyce may have noticed how Robert Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* referred to the *Satyricon* as an example of sexual extremes.¹⁴ In addition it should be remembered, that E.W.H. Lecky in his work *History of European Morals*, which was known to Joyce,¹⁵ had also paid attention to the *Satyricon* which he called "one of the most licentious and repulsive

⁹ Corbett 1970, 134.

¹⁰ Porter, TLS May 29 (1981).

¹¹ Dudley 1972, Xif.

¹² MacKendrick, CJ 45 (1950) 307, and Rankin 1971, 80.

¹³ Killeen, Comp.Lit. 9 (1957) 193—203; Cameron, Latomus 29 (1970) 397—425.

¹⁴ Brown 1985, 87; See Burton III (1961), 107, and Petr. 127 (the story of Circe and Polyænus—Encolpius).

¹⁵ Brown 1985, 118—119.

works in Roman literature”.¹⁶ However, there still seems to be no direct evidence of Joyce ever having read Petronius’ novel.

In the following study on the influence of Petronius and his novel on twentieth century fiction, I presuppose a genetic influence, i.e. the author’s direct knowledge of Petronius. Thus we must know from his non-fiction writings or from other biographical sources that he has read Petronius or that there are direct references to Petronius or his novel, e.g. names known from the *Satyricon*. In the following it is not my aim to give any comprehensive account of Petronius’ *Nachleben* in the twentieth century; instead I shall examine Petronius’ influence by giving four examples which have hitherto been neglected in criticism. Three of them are taken from English literature. In addition to them I shall discuss a chapter in the novel *Henkien taistelu* by the Finnish writer Joel Lehtonen.

2.

My first example is Robert Graves’ (1895—1983) short story *Epics Are Out of Fashion* which was originally published in a magazine but which later appeared in Graves’ *Collected Stories* under the heading *Roman Stories*. The story is told by the brother of Lucan’s wife. He speaks of and quotes the discussions between Petronius and Lucan mainly on epic-writing. They can be compared with the fictitious discussions on history-writing between Livius and Asinius Pollio in Graves’ novel *I, Claudius*.

In this story Petronius is a character with some features in common with Sienkiewicz’s Petronius. Graves’ Petronius, like his counterpart in Sienkiewicz’s novel, is a connoisseur of life (“he was such an expert in the art of modern living that the Emperor never dared buy a vase or a statue, or even sample an unfamiliar vintage, without his advice”).¹⁷

In the story Petronius firmly criticizes epic-writing and thinks that epics are out of fashion: “In my opinion / . . . / the modern epic is a form

¹⁶ Lecky 1869, 227; cf. Sullivan 1968, 106.

¹⁷ Graves 1965, 135.

that only retired statesmen or young Emperors should attempt.” Echoing Horace’s famous advice, *nonumque prematur in annum*, Petronius recommends Lucan to put his epic “in a drawer for another few years.”¹⁸ Writing an epic could even be dangerous, because it could turn into competition with Nero himself, who also wanted to be regarded as an epic poet. The information given by Suetonius about Nero singing the Fall of Troy¹⁹ has been developed also by Sienkiewicz, in whose novel Petronius in a recitation given by Nero manages to turn his criticism into a charming flattery. In Graves’ story Petronius expresses his warnings to Lucan²⁰ in humorous and ironic phrases:

For the love of Vulcan, light the furnace with that damned papyrus!
Write a rhymed cookery-book instead - I’ll be delighted to help you -
or some more of your amatory epigrams about negresses with
lascivious limbs and hair like the fleece of Zeus’s black Laphystian ram;
or what about a Pindaresque eulogy of the Emperor’s skill as a
charioteer? Anything in the world - but *not* an epic about the Civil
Wars!²¹

Petronius’ advice to Lucan to write a cookery-book is ironic, because in the beginning of the story Nero’s ambitions in the art of cooking have been mentioned in a not altogether favourable light.²²

Lucan defends himself by saying that Petronius, too, had put Nero in a satirical light in the person of Trimalchio, so clearly indeed that nobody could mistake the portrait. The notion that Petronius would have described Nero in the person of Trimalchio, occurs in a way also in Sienkiewicz’s novel where Nero’s entrance and appearance are described by phrases which bring to mind Trimalchio in the *Cena*.²³ This notion has

¹⁸ Graves 1965, 137.

¹⁹ Suet. Nero 38,6. On Nero’s interests in epic poetry, see Griffin 1984, 151—153.

²⁰ Graves’ interest in Lucan is attested by his prose rendering of Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, see Dilke 1972, 107f.

²¹ Graves 1965, 138.

²² Graves 1965, 135.

²³ Riikonen 1978, 47.

not been quite foreign to scholarship either.²⁴ In Graves' story the narrator assumes a mediatory standpoint:

You must understand that Petronius had got away with the Trimalchio satire because he was an artist; careful not to pick on any actual blunder or vulgarity of Nero's that had gone the rounds, but burlesquing the sort of behaviour which / . . . / we called a Neronianism. Nero would never have recognized the *nouveau-riche* Trimalchio as himself; and, obviously, nobody would have dared enlighten him.²⁵

Lucan does not follow Petronius' advice. He is daring enough to read his epic at a banquet with the consequence that rumours reach Nero's ears. The Emperor asks Petronius whether Lucan had been warned. The Arbiter of Elegance succeeds in answering with a flattering phrase: "Yes, Caesar. I explained that it would be ridiculous for him to compete with his master in literature," after which Lucan is forbidden to write any more poetry.²⁶ At the end of the story the narrator refers to later events and to the fate of Lucan and Petronius. He also tells how he himself escaped the anger of the Emperor.

3.

My second example is Anthony Powell's (b. 1905) sequel *A Dance to the Music of Time*. In this great comic picture of the English upper class since the First World War up to the 1960s Powell introduces, among many other representatives of art and literature, the writer X. Trapnel, whose favourite author is Petronius. Powell himself tells us in *Messengers of Day*,

²⁴ Although it may be admitted that there are some resemblances between Trimalchio and Nero and that the whole Satyricon should be read in Neronian context, it would be too far-fetched to maintain that Petronius would have drawn the portrait of Nero in the person of Trimalchio; recent scholarship has given up the rather simple allegorical interpretation of former centuries, see Sullivan 1985, 1669.

²⁵ Graves 1965, 139.

²⁶ Graves 1965, 139.

the second part of his autobiography *To Keep the Ball Rolling*, how he became acquainted with the *Satyricon*. In the chapter *Set Books* Powell characterizes his favourite authors and books, e.g. Joyce's *Ulysses*, Joseph Conrad, Balzac and some Russian authors. At the end of the chapter he mentions the *Satyricon*, the translation of which he read at the end of the 1930s.²⁷ The translation in question was that by William Burnaby dating from 1694.²⁸ It included, as Powell himself states, the "Discovery of Belgrade", which was later revealed as a forgery.²⁹ Powell says that the *Satyricon* can be considered as the first modern novel, and he goes on:

In the picaresque adventures of the *Satyricon*, the pure imaginative vision of the novelist (possibly reinforced by portraits drawn from life) is directed to the world round about the author in a manner that, even at its most grotesque, is never less than convincing; all of it to be easily equated with what is happening today. Petronius, so far as I was concerned, was probably the last writer to help form a taste still open to development.³⁰

Cena Trimalchionis is for Powell a "masterpiece of characterization and racy dialogue".³¹

Powell's sequel *A Dance to the Music of Time* can easily be compared with the *Satyricon* on the same grounds as, say, Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* (on the other hand, Powell's work has often been compared with that of Proust). In the *Dance* as well as in the *Satyricon* it is a question of a lengthy and large scale comic picture of time and society. Special attention has been paid to various sexual perversions; e.g. the theme of voyeurism is common to both of them: in the *Satyricon* e.g. the episode of the boy of Pergamum, in the *Dance* the voyeurism of Kenneth

²⁷ Powell 1978, 120f.

²⁸ On this translation, see Stuckey, RSC 20 (1972) 153.

²⁹ See also Corbett 1970, 133.

³⁰ Powell 1978, 121.

³¹ Powell 1978, 120. In *The Strangers All Are Gone*, the fourth volume of his autobiography, Powell tells about his lecture on novel at Cornell, where he quoted some passages of Petronius in order to illustrate how novels are written, Powell 1982, 103.

Widmerpool. Some features of Trimalchio are to be seen in Sir Marcus Donners as well as in Widmerpool. In both works there is also much talk about religious matters, especially various forms of astrology, occultism and superstition. All these similarities can be explained by their frequency in literature in general and there is no reason to try to trace any direct influence of Petronius on Powell. Sometimes similarities can be seen in details, too. One cannot e.g. help thinking that it is a nice coincidence that in *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, the last volume of the sequel, Leslie Murtlock, called Scorpio after his Zodiac sign, is accused by Bithel of putting Widmerpool to death³² and also of trying to knife Widmerpool during some obscure rites.³³ Scorpio Murtlock would have been a fitting proof for the astrologer who in the *Banquet of Trimalchio* explained that in the sign of Scorpio there are born *Venenarii et percussores*.³⁴

In this connexion it is more interesting to notice that in three of the twelve volumes of the *Dance* there are direct references to Petronius or to the *Satyricon*. Thus in the novel *The Military Philosophers* a certain group of the army is called a court of military Trimalchio, because there is a good deal of swagger. The narrator thinks that because Trimalchio had been “an unusually successful business man” he “might have proved an unusually successful general”.³⁵

More important, however, is the way in which Petronius is referred to in the connexion with the writer X. Trapnel. In *Hearing Secret Harmonies*, the narrator Nicholas Jenkins remembers what Trapnel had said about the art of biography. Trapnel emphasizes that “what is effective is art, not what is ‘true’ ”. The discussion goes on:

‘Like Pilate.’

‘Unfortunately Pilate wasn’t a novelist.’

‘Or even a memoir-writer.’

‘Didn’t Petronius serve as a magistrate in some distant part of the

³² Powell 1975, 265f.

³³ Powell 1975, 168.

³⁴ Petr. 39,11.

³⁵ Powell 1978, 175.

Roman Empire? Think if the case had come up before him. Perhaps Petronius was a different period.’³⁶

In the same connexion the narrator says that Petronius’ *Satyricon* was the only classical work which Trapnel used to quote. In an earlier volume, *Books Do Furnish a Room*, Trapnel had referred to Petronius while speaking of naturalism. From his point of view it is more important what the artistic level of the writer is than the style he represents: “if he [i.e. the writer] isn’t any good, it doesn’t matter whether he writes naturalistically or any other way.” As an example of drawing a character he mentions Trimalchio: “As for politics, who cares which way Trimalchio votes, or that he was a bit temperamental towards his slaves.”³⁷ This becomes understandable in the light of Trapnel’s rhetorical question: “What could be less ‘like’ life than most of the naturalistic novels that appear?”

In Trapnel himself there are some features of a fin-de-siècle decadent, features which were also seen in Petronius (cf. above Petronius in Sienkiewicz’s novel). The total impression was not wholly elegant. Anyway, “the general effect, chiefly caused by the stick [Trapnel had an ivory stick with a little skull at the end of it] was the Eighteen-Nineties, the *décadence*.”³⁸ Trapnel’s extraordinary stick symbolizes his macabre taste for death. When in the last volume of the sequel Trapnel’s biography by Russell Gwinnett is published, it becomes clear that the author of the biography has emphasized this feature: “I called my book *Death’s-Head Swordsman*, because X. Trapnel’s sword-stick symbolized the way he faced the world.”³⁹ It is now generally acknowledged that a far-fetched taste for death is characteristic of the *Cena Trimalchionis*, too.⁴⁰

It is also worth noticing that in Powell’s sequel there is plenty of talk about the kind of literature where Petronian influences are to be seen. After the Second World War Nicholas Jenkins writes a study on Robert

³⁶ Powell 1975, 85f.

³⁷ Powell 1978c, 229.

³⁸ Powell 1978b, 115.

³⁹ Powell 1975, 106.

⁴⁰ See Arrowsmith, *Arion* 5 (1962).

Burton and his *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Burton, for his part, refers many times to Petronius.⁴¹ In fact the popularity gained by Petronius in England during the seventeenth century increased after the publication of Burton's work.⁴² In Powell's own life there is an equivalent to Nicholas Jenkins' biography of Burton: Powell wrote a study on another seventeenth century figure, John Aubrey.

4.

Anthony Burgess' (b. 1917) great novel *The Kingdom of the Wicked* (1985) tells the story of the Christians in the first century Rome. The vivacity of language and narrative has been underlined by the constant mixture of fact and fiction and by the frequent use of anachronisms. The story is based on historical sources, but sometimes the narrator refers to imaginary sources as well.

Petronius also appears in the colourful gallery of historical and fictive personages (in chapter IV). The picture of Nero's Arbiter of Elegance drawn by Burgess is based on Tacitus' short account but it can be read also in the light of Sienkiewicz's novel *Quo vadis?* The figure of Petronius in the novel of the Polish writer bears the traits and habits of a fin-de-siècle decadent, but these features are even more obvious in Burgess' novel. In sharp contrast to Gilbert Highet's view of Petronius as a moralist,⁴³ Burgess creates a picture of a "dirty poet". His Petronius teaches Nero lessons in vicious behaviour. The narrator, a Jewish man named Sadoc, speaks about Petronius' philosophy of beauty:

The basic natural right of all living things is to subsist and to fulfil what is sometimes termed their vital cycle. In Petronius's aesthetic, which became Nero's, this right was denied, and human life was to be regarded by the imperial artist as living wood is regarded by the carpenter — namely, fissile and susceptible of new shapes. It was

⁴¹ Stuckey, RSC 20 (1972) 147f. See also above p. 89, note 14.

⁴² Ibid., 147.

⁴³ See Highet, TAPhA (1941) 176—194. Highet's (and Arrowsmith's) views have been rejected by Sullivan, Sullivan 1968, 107—109, and Sullivan 1985, 1674.

necessary, in cultivating this aesthetic philosophy, to nullify such natural sympathetic responses as make the ordinary unaesthetic man wish to avoid giving pain to others, especially those close to him, and to regard what ordinary humanity calls cruelty as a morally neutral means of procuring new aesthetic transports.⁴⁴

What Petronius does in the realm of literature and imagination, Nero does in actual life. According to Burgess' *Petronius*, total moral freedom is a requisite for high art, and because the Emperor represents such morality, Petronius becomes enthralled by the Emperor's way of living.

As I mentioned above, in a memorable scene in Sienkiewicz's novel *Petronius* wittily transforms his criticism of Nero's epic poem on the burning of Troy into flattery. In Burgess' novel there is an equivalent to this. The court of Nero is performing Plautus' comedy *Miles gloriosus*. The Emperor himself is acting Pyrgopolynices and Petronius is in the role of the parasite Artotrogus. Lines 40—46 of the play where Artotrogus flatteringly enumerates the deeds of Pyrgopolynices are in the novel quoted in Latin. At the end of the play Nero says to Petronius that he had forgotten some lines and that he had to improvise. Petronius' answer is flattering: "So that's what it was. I thought old Plautus had inadvertently let the spirit of poetry in. You must forget more lines, Caesar."⁴⁵

According to an old legend St. Paul and Seneca knew each other. Sienkiewicz has gone a step further letting Petronius and Paul converse with each other.⁴⁶ And a further modification along these lines is Burgess' idea that Petronius and St. Luke knew each other, Petronius being patient of Luke, the physician. Luke tells Paul that Petronius calls him by the name Theophilus. Luke's account of Paul's life is ready but he needs a dedicatee. Paul thinks that the name Theophilus, given to Luke by Petronius, would be suitable.⁴⁷ Sadoc, the narrator of the novel, thinks that Petronius' *Satyricon* is a mockery of Luke's work, which he calls the "Pauliad".⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Burgess 1985, 255f.

⁴⁵ Burgess 1985, 260.

⁴⁶ Riikonen 1978, 183f.

⁴⁷ Burgess 1985, 308.

⁴⁸ Burgess 1985, 255.

There is also Petronius' evaluation of Luke's book, along with some thoughts about the development of the Greek language:

Gaius Petronius had been enthusiastic about the strength of the narrative line, the almost Homeric terseness of the phraseology, though he regretted what the Greek language had lost since the time of the great ancients: it had, as the second language of the Empire, become a medium tending to the utilitarian, commercial, political, sentimental. It lacked the old marble and fire.⁴⁹

Petronius flatters the Emperor by saying that it was assumed that some day Caesar himself would be Theophilus: "what man better endowed with the insight to be washed in the pure light of the emergent truth?" Nero trifles with the idea suggested by Petronius, but after all he burns Luke's book (without knowing that there were other copies) and thinks that it "was best to have the *una nox dormienda*" without any future revenge of God.⁵⁰

Burgess' Petronius is also ready to make a spectacle of the martyrdom of the Christians in the arena. Their execution has been arranged according to mythical patterns. They have to die like Icaruses having been forced to jump down from a tower erected in the centre of the arena.⁵¹ The spectacle does not, however, succeed in the way expected and Petronius complains that the God of the Christians lacks the sense of beauty.⁵²

There is also an account of Petronius' death. Present are his new physician, a number of friends and the poet Hortensius who recites verses of Catullus' fifth poem, among them the line *Nox est perpetua una dormienda*, which runs like a leitmotif through Burgess' novel.⁵³

⁴⁹ Burgess 1985, 321.

⁵⁰ Burgess 1985, 321.

⁵¹ According to Suet. Nero 12,5, the Emperor arranged various kind of mythical spectacles, among which also the tale of Icarus was displayed, but they were not connected with the tortures of the Christians. Lecky, who in his work on the history of European morals extensively discusses the persecution of the Christians, has briefly mentioned that Petronius "condemned the shows in a poem of the civil war", Lecky 1869, 303. He seems to have ment the lines 1—18 in Petr. 119.

⁵² Burgess 1985, 323f.

⁵³ Burgess 1985, 332.

Burgess' way of dealing quite freely with historical and imaginary sources and his way of connecting them with later descriptions is very different from the older historical novels on Antiquity. We can say that Burgess represents the historical novel of the postmodernist era in his play with the unlimited possibilities of intertextuality.

5.

Leaving aside Petronius' biography, we find Petronius' influence in many modern versions based on his *Satyricon*. Adaptations of the tale of the Widow of Ephesus have been popular from time to time;⁵⁴ as a modern version we can mention Christopher Fry's play *A Phoenix Too Frequent*.⁵⁵ Another episode of the *Satyricon* which has offered the possibility of writing a modern version is of course the *Cena*. This time I have chosen as my example the great satirical novel *Henkien taistelu* (The Battle of the Spiritual Powers, 1933) by the Finnish writer Joel Lehtonen (1881—1934).⁵⁶ One chapter of the novel bears the title "A kind of Banquet of Trimalchio". *Henkien taistelu* is a modern picaresque novel written partly on the basis of Antonio Guevara's and Le Sage's novels.⁵⁷ In Lehtonen's novel there are plenty of references also to other satirical works, including Aristophanes and Juvenal.

⁵⁴ See Corbett 1970, 121ff.

⁵⁵ Arrowsmith, *Arion* 5 (1966) 328.

⁵⁶ Along with Lehtonen's novel some other Petronian influences are to be seen in Finnish literature. V.A. Koskenniemi, poet and essayist, has written a satirical poem, *Neero laulaa* (Nero sings, 1906). It is a monologue spoken by Petronius, who is blaming courtiers who flatter the Emperor for his singing. On the other hand, Konrad Lehtimäki, an autodidact proletarian author, has described two different death-scenes in his short story *Kuolema* (Death, 1915). In the latter scene the dying man emphasizes that the Romans knew the art of dying unlike the moderns who condemn those who commit suicide; he also asks: "Do you remember Petronius?" The immediate starting-point for both Koskenniemi and Lehtimäki was probably Sienkiewicz's novel.

⁵⁷ On the connections between the Roman novel and the picaresque novel, see Walsh 1970, 224ff., and Scobie 1969, 91—100.

One of the central characters in Lehtonen's novel, Mr Sorsimo, the owner of a brewery, is a counterpart to the devils in Guevara's and Le Sage's novels. He leads a forest officer called Kleophas Leanteri Petrinpoika Sampila (cf. Cleophas Léandro Perez Zambullo in Le Sage's novel *Le Diable boiteux*) from place to place and shows him the manners of the bourgeois and the nouveaux-riches. He complains that Kleophas has not read *The Banquet of Trimalchio*, but he promises that the feast, to which he will take Kleophas, will give the latter some idea of the dinner-party given by Trimalchio. The role of the modern equivalent to Trimalchio is played by Mr Jalo J. Kyykoski, who started to become rich during the First World War through the illegal trade in alcohol.⁵⁸ During the war Kyykoski also speculated by buying cheap cloth and iron and then selling them at a profit of one million marks. Later on he became a successful dealer in cement (cf. the affairs of Gatsby in Scott Fitzgerald's novel). Like Petronius' Trimalchio, who had become a *sevir Augustalis*,⁵⁹ Kyykoski, too, has assumed a public duty: he has become a member of local government council.⁶⁰

An equivalent to Fortunata, Trimalchio's wife, in Lehtonen's satire is Mrs Teila. Fortunata is of humble origin: "*et modo, modo quid fuit? — ignoscet mihi genius tuus — noluisse de manu illius panem accipere*".⁶¹ Respectively, Mrs Teila was a servant maid and later on a dressmaker, not to mention that she had been "bloody enthusiastic about lovers".⁶² Fortunata is skilled in the cordax-dance, but the drunken Teila falls in a foxtrot. Teila however succeeds in amending her fault in the eyes of the participants by "falling backwards and showing her red silkdrawers".⁶³ The musical arrangements in Trimalchio's banquet⁶⁴ are replaced by a jazz-band in Lehtonen's novel. On the other hand, the theme of food,

⁵⁸ Later on in Lehtonen's novel Kyykoski is compared with Artemon in a poem by Anacreon.

⁵⁹ Petr. 30,2.

⁶⁰ Lehtonen 1966, 163.

⁶¹ Petr. 37,3.

⁶² Lehtonen 1966, 166.

⁶³ Lehtonen 1966, 173.

⁶⁴ See MacKendrick, CJ (1950) 308.

which is so important in Petronius' *Cena*, is not emphasized in Lehtonen's novel, although the participants of Kyykoski's dinner-party consume plenty of "steak, wine, soup, coffee, liquor, brandy". Common to Mr and Mrs Kyykoski as well as to Trimalchio and Fortunata are also various sorts of boasting, rudeness and passion for gaudy colours.

The guests around Trimalchio see in contemporary society many kinds of drawbacks: e.g. Ganymedes thinks that the development of the price of grain is for the worse and that agriculture is in a state of paralysis.⁶⁵ Kyykoski, for his part, is ready to blame workers and communists. Many kinds of complaints are heard at Kyykoski's party.⁶⁶

An obvious connexion between Petronius *Satyricon* and Lehtonen's *Henkien taistelu* is the interest in a certain kind of nostalgia de la boue common to both of these works.⁶⁷ This aspect culminates in Lehtonen's banquet-scene when the host receives a chocolate box containing dog's excrement, sent by a person who had not been invited to the party.⁶⁸ The uninvited person, Mr Kipri Iili, Kyykoski's relative, is a clerk. He arranges his own party, which resembles the Banquet of Trimalchio even more than that of Kyykoski. Iili's party is reckless like the medieval *Cena Cypriani*. It is not a coincidence that Kipri Iili, whose surname is associated with the Finnish word for leech (*iilimato*), has a Christian name that is a shortened form of Cyprianus.

6.

Some general conclusions can be drawn from the above-mentioned examples. (1) The interest in Petronius' personality has remained lively. It has been possible to write a piquant portrait of him (with resemblances to Sienkiewicz's *Petronius*), as in Graves' short story, or to model a modern writer after Petronius (cf. X. Trapnel in Powell's sequel who has at least

⁶⁵ Petr. 44,11—18.

⁶⁶ Lehtonen 1966, 173.

⁶⁷ On this aspect in the *Satyricon*, see Sullivan 1968, 101.

⁶⁸ Lehtonen 1966, 174.

some features in common with Petronius). (2) In great comic or satirical novels describing society there are often people and situations that resemble Trimalchio and his dinner-party. We should of course not exaggerate the influence of Petronius on such works, because the features in question are common material and common devices of satirical literature in general. It is interesting, however, that Trimalchio and his banquet have sometimes been explicitly mentioned in such works, as if the narrator wanted to remind the reader of Petronius' classic description of swaggering, luxury and bad taste. (3) Twentieth-century prosaists have been constantly fascinated by the old idea that Petronius intended a satirical picture of Nero in the figure of Trimalchio or at least they have hinted at this possibility (Burgess, Graves). (4) In the case of Burgess, the liberty taken as regards sources is obvious. Petronius, we have seen, also figures in a postmodernist rôle.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arrowsmith 1966: William Arrowsmith, *Luxury and Death in the Satyricon*, *Arion* 5 (1966) 304—331.
- Auerbach 1959: Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur*², Bern 1959.
- Bakhtin 1981: M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M.M. Bakhtin. Ed. by Michael Holquist, transl. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, Austin 1981.
- Bakhtin 1984: Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ed. and transl. by Caryl Emerson. Introduction by Wayne C. Booth (*Theory and History of Literature*, 8), Manchester 1984.
- Brown 1985: Richard Brown, *James Joyce and Sexuality*, Cambridge 1985.
- Burgess 1985: Anthony Burgess, *The Kingdom of the Wicked*, London 1985.
- Burton 1961: Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, vol. III, London 1961.
- Cameron 1970: A.M. Cameron, *Myth and Meaning in Petronius: Some Modern Comparisons*, *Latomus* 29 (1970) 397—425.
- Corbett 1970: Philip B. Corbett, *Petronius* (Twayne's World Authors Series 97), New York 1970.
- Dick 1981: Bernard F. Dick, *Adaptation as Archaeology. Fellini Satyricon (1969) from the "novel" by Petronius*, in *Modern European Filmmakers and the Art of Adaptation*, ed. by Andrew S. Horton and Joan Magretta, New York 1981, 145—157.

- Dilke 1972: O.A.W. Dilke, *Lucan and English Literature*, in *Neronians and Flavians*, ed. by D.R. Dudley, London 1972, 83—112.
- Dudley 1972: D.R. Dudley (ed.), *Neronians and Flavians. Silver Latin I. (Greek and Latin Studies. Classical Literature and its Influence)*, London 1972.
- Graves 1965: Robert Graves, *Collected Short Stories*, London 1965.
- Griffin 1984: Miriam T. Griffin, *Nero. The End of a Dynasty*, London 1984.
- Hight 1941: Gilbert Hight, *Petronius the Moralist*, *TAPhA* 72 (1941) 176—194.
- Hight 1970: Gilbert Hight, *Whose Satyricon — Petronius's or Fellini's?*, *Horizon* 12 (1970) 42—47.
- Killeen 1957: J.F. Killeen, *James Joyce's Roman Prototype*, *Comp. Lit.* 9 (1957) 193—203.
- Lecky 1869: William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*², vol. I, London 1869.
- Lehtonen 1966: Joel Lehtonen, *Henkien taistelu I—II. Kertomus tunnetuista kansalaisistamme*², Helsinki 1966—1967.
- MacKendrick 1950: Paul L. MacKendrick, *The Great Gatsby and Trimalchio*, *CJ* 45 (1950) 307—314.
- Porter 1981: Peter Porter, *Mounting a Classic*. *The Times Literary Supplement* May 29, 1981.
- Powell 1975: Anthony Powell, *Hearing Secret Harmonies. A Novel*, Boston—Toronto 1975.
- Powell 1978a: Anthony Powell, *Messengers of Day. To Keep the Ball Rolling*, vol. II, London 1978.
- Powell 1978b: Anthony Powell, *The Military Philosophers. A Novel*, Glasgow 1978.
- Powell 1978c: Anthony Powell, *Books Do Furnish a Room. A Novel*, Glasgow 1978.
- Powell 1982: Anthony Powell, *The Strangers All Are Gone. To Keep the Ball Rolling*, vol. IV, London 1982.
- Rankin 1971: H.D. Rankin, *Petronius the Artist. Essays on the Satyricon and its Author*, The Hague 1971.
- Reynier 1912: Gustave Reynier, *Les origines du roman réaliste*, Paris 1912.
- Riikonen 1978: Hannu Riikonen, *Die Antike im historischen Roman des 19. Jahrhunderts. Eine literatur- und kulturgeschichtliche Untersuchung (Comm.Hum.Litt. 59)*, Helsinki 1978.
- Scobie 1969: Alexander Scobie, *Aspects of the Ancient Romance and its Heritage. Essays on Apuleius, Petronius, and the Greek Romances (Beitr.z.klass.Philol. 30)*, Meisenheim am Glan 1969.
- Stuckey 1972: J.H. Stuckey, *Petronius the Ancient. His reputation and influence in seventeenth century England*, *Riv.stud.class.*20 (1972) 145—153.
- Sullivan 1968: J.P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius. A Literary Study*, London 1968.
- Sullivan 1985: J.P. Sullivan, *Petronius' 'Satyricon' and its Neronian Context. ANRW II: 32.3*, Berlin—New York 1985, 1666—1686.
- Walsh 1970: P.G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel. The "Satyricon" of Petronius and the "Metamorphoses" of Apuleius*, Cambridge 1970.