

H. HOFMANN (ed.): *Latin Fiction. The Latin Novel in Context*
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The editor of this book is a well-known scholar in the field of the ancient novel, not least because of his contributions, as founder and organiser, to the *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel*, the proceedings of which he edited (and later co-edited with Maaike Zimmerman). This book is the paperback edition of a hardback published originally in 1999. There are no changes or updates in this edition, which finally makes this volume affordable, especially, to students to whom it is going to be extremely useful. The book was conceived, as is stated in the Preface, as a companion volume to *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context* (J. R. Morgan, R. Stoneman (eds.), 1994). It indeed shares with it not only some of the contributors but also its structure and its scope (although *Greek Fiction* starts before the five love romances with an essay on the “Education of Cyrus”); the two volumes share even the same artist, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, on the cover (“The Favourite Poet” in *Greek Fiction*, “Comparison” in *Latin Fiction*).

In the Introduction (pp. 1–19), which is divided into sub-categories, Hofmann provides a general outline of what is covered by the term Latin Novel, discusses the connection of the Latin Novels with the Greek Novels, especially in the frame of Roman Literature in general and the influence exerted on it by Greek Literature, the reasons why there was no specific name for the genre in antiquity, the possible audience, what is included under Latin Fiction in a broad sense and, finally, the history of Latin Fiction.

The book is divided into five parts: the first comprises four essays on Petronius, the second four essays on Apuleius, the third an essay on *The History of Apollonius, King of Tyre*, the fourth three essays on “History and Romance, Saints and Martyrs” and the fifth four essays on the Heritage of Latin Fiction.

Gareth Schmeling (“Petronius and the *Satyrica*”, pp. 23–37) opens the section on Petronius with a general, concise and to-the-point Introduction to the *Satyrica*, again divided into clearly labelled sub-categories dealing with (i) the author, (ii) the manuscripts (including comments relating to the fragmentary nature of the text and the *communis opinio* concerning the transmis-

sion of the text), (iii) a detailed section on the Structure and Content of the work, pointing out clearly to the reader the guesswork involved. Under (iv) Models and Sources and the discussion of connections to the Greek Novel, Schmeling rejects the view that the *Satyrica* is simply a parody of the Novel and explores the connections with other literary genres, especially satire, before putting forward his own interpretation, namely that “Petronius is more occupied in experimenting with previous literary forms and in so doing creating something novel” (p. 30), and explains why this novel should not be cast under the modern term “Menippean Satire”. Part of the reason it has been often described thus is the form of *prosimetrum*, a mixture of prose and verse we find in the *Satyrica*. Schmeling explains the poetry in the *Satyrica* as part of the “experimentation with the novel” (p. 31). Verse is found in all the other novels (except Longus), only not to such an extent. “In so doing [i.e. allotting ‘a much larger role to poetic inserts than do other ancient novelists’] (Petronius) expands the open form of the novel” (ibid). The debate on the form of the *Satyrica* leads to the final section of the article, (v) the genre “novel”. Schmeling adduces not only the Oxford English Dictionary but also the words of novelists such as E. M. Forster to define the genre, and comments on scholars of English Literature such as Watt and Hunter who “exclude all of ancient extended prose narrative fiction from the novel genre” (p. 33). (Schmeling on this point, perhaps curiously, does not mention Doody’s *The True Story of the Novel*, which has rectified this injustice.) The “episodic”, as well as the unfortunately fragmentary, nature of the *Satyrica* is explained by looking at the *Odyssey* and the general genre of *Reiseromanen* (following Sullivan). Schmeling lastly questions the realism of the *Satyrica*, namely whether the novel can be seen as a real portrait of Roman life, to conclude, briefly but convincingly, that what we find in the *Satyrica* is not the real world, but literature.

John Bodel (“The *Cena Trimalchionis*”, pp. 38–51) looks into one of the best known passages from the *Satyrica* and the most extended of all as the text stands at the moment, the *Cena Trimalchionis*, and expands on what Schmeling has already mentioned in the previous essay as the models of the *Cena*, namely Plato’s *Symposium* and Horace’s *Cena Nasidieni* in *Sat.* 2.8. Bodel works through the specific parallels between Petronius and Horace, whom Petronius imitates and elaborates on, and then through the parallels between Petronius and Plato, whom Petronius parodies; Bodel points also to the differences in tone and purpose between Petronius’ text and his models.

Bodel adds an interesting suggestion on the way in which the Greek novel, through *Metiochus and Parthenope*, in which there is also a philosophical symposium, plays a part in the intertextuality here. The author also points to, but does not discuss, other genres that had an influence on the *Cena*, namely mime and comedy. An interesting question regarding the *Cena* is its relation to reality; after mentioning the views expressed so far on the realism of the story, Bodel convincingly sees Trimalchio as a combination of a set literary type (the “boorish host”) and a representation of a real character (“the successful independent freedman”, p. 42). Then comes a look at Trimalchio’s epitaph (*Sat.* 71) which has been carefully constructed both to portray who Trimalchio was and to parody him, thus presenting a mixture of reality and lack of it. There follow comments on the language and then a most helpful and illustrating section with a diagram on the structure of the *Cena*, “a series of concentric frames” (p. 44); this shows how the episode itself and the structure of the narrative are like a labyrinth. Death features prominently in the *Cena* and Bodel takes us through the allegorical readings of the theme of death in the *Cena* and presents his own allegorical reading based on the mural in the house of Trimalchio. Finally there is an attempt to place the *Cena* in the context of the *Satyrica* and to compare it especially with the other lengthy episode, the scene in Croton.

In the next essay, “The Novella in Petronius” (pp. 52–63), we get an insight into novellas in the *Satyrica*. Graham Anderson identifies “at least five fully-worked novellas” (p. 52) in the text as we have it and deals with them in three separate sub-categories: “The Unbreakable Glass and the Unfaithful Wife” (*Sat.* 51 and 111 ff.), “The Tale of the Pergamene Boy” (*Sat.* 85 ff.) and the tales of Niceros and Trimalchio (*Sat.* 61.6–63.10). The story of the unbreakable glass is first compared with the same incident as found in Dio Cassius (57.21.5 ff.), and Anderson shows how differently it is treated by the two authors. This episode, “all but ignored” (p. 52) and “a curiosity” (p. 54), is paired with the Widow of Ephesus, a “celebrated” (p. 52) passage, “which illustrates the fullest generic expectations we might have of novella” and is “a defining example of a Milesian Tale” (p. 54). Anderson explains how, though this time the story is similar to other versions available, Petronius puts it in a particularly suitable narrative frame. There follows an account of the differences between the treatment of the episode in this novella and its treatment in a fable by the fabulist Phaedrus, in Appendix Perottina 15 (at this stage, if the intended readership of this volume includes un-

dergraduates who have no previous experience of narrative genres, a definition of the term ‘fable’ would have been useful). In the tale of the Pergamene boy, another Milesian tale, Anderson explores the folktale feel of the story. The two stories from the *Cena* are very different in tone from the ones already discussed but are still examples of novella. Anderson uses these novellas to conclude that they show Petronius’ ability to incorporate popular material in the best way for his novel.

Catherine Connors (“Rereading the Arbiter – *Arbitrium* and verse in the *Satyrica* and in ‘Petronius redivivus’” pp. 64–77) starts with Petronius’ nickname “Arbiter” and highlights the legal terminology that can be found throughout the *Satyrica*, and then takes us through the tales, by an unnamed author, found in the medieval *Petronius Redivivus*, all of which are concerned with law, judgement, and punishment. Through the medieval author’s choice of material to borrow from or be inspired by and rework Petronius, Connors sees an arbiter of the Arbiter. In the second part, the verse in the medieval collection is compared with the verse in Petronius. Connections of the *Satyrica* with Menippean Satire are here, too, rejected. The complexity and sophistication of Petronius is illustrated by a close and careful examination of the verse passages: in Petronius, they work on many different levels and are employed for many different purposes, while the verse in the medieval collection simply marks the end of specific episodes. Connors concludes by saying that the medieval collection, whose author was not aware of the characterisation of Petronius as *elegantiae arbiter* by Tacitus in the *Annals* (16.8.2) and therefore read the nickname for its legal connotations only, helps us read and understand Petronius better.

Gerald N. Sandy (“Apuleius’ *Golden Ass* – From Miletus to Egypt” pp. 81–102) starts by providing information on Apuleius as found in, or derived from, his other works, emphasising Apuleius’ ability to converse in both Greek and Latin and pointing to the influences of Greek philosophy on that author. He explains the title *Metamorphoses* and/or *Golden Ass* and explores the models for the work, namely Milesian Tales and the Greek originals. Next, he discusses the choice of passages which have been adopted from the originals, and provides a helpful step-by-step summary of the story, commenting especially on the narratological devices and the skill with which the ass tells the story. Finally, he considers the moral and religious overtones of this novel.

Hugh H. Mason (“The *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius and its Greek Sources” pp. 103–112) goes into more detail regarding the Greek influences on Apuleius and the connection with the Greek *Loukios ē Onos*, as well as the Greek *Metamorphoseis*. In presenting and evaluating modern discussions of Apuleius and his sources, Mason concludes, in parallel with Anderson on Petronius’ novellas, that the reworking of the episodes is more sophisticated than the original.

Nancy Shumate (“Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* – The inserted tales” pp. 113–125) in her exploration of the “inserted tales” in Apuleius starts by discussing the two Greek texts connected with the *Golden Ass* and shows that most of the inserted tales are not present in the *Onos*; they “represent Apuleian innovation and [are] not derived from any literary source” (p. 116). Shumate believes that even if those stories had been present in the lost *Metamorphoseis*, the evidence from the few corresponding passages points to their being so altered to fit the narrative and the aims of Apuleius that they have to be seen as “virtually original” (p. 116). Shumate convincingly presents the inserted tales, their themes and protagonists, as mirroring, or on some occasions inverting, the theme and the protagonist of the *Golden Ass* at many levels.

Sandy’s second essay (“The Tale of Cupid and Psyche” pp. 126–138) deals with the tale of Cupid and Psyche, which is the best known of the tales in Apuleius. Sandy gives the content of the tale and, viewing inset stories in the same light as Shumate, stresses its importance and relevance both in connection with its immediate context, the story of Charite, and, more importantly, in connection with the wider context, Lucius’ own story. Having identified the story of Cupid and Psyche as a tale original to Apuleius as opposed to borrowed from the Greek sources, Sandy goes through its models, especially folktale, iconography and Plato but also epic, love romance, satire and Alexandrian poetry, and shows how on each occasion Apuleius is one step ahead, so to speak, and more elaborate or sophisticated than the material he might have been inspired by.

Schmeling, in his second essay (pp. 141–152), deals with *The History of Apollonius, King of Tyre*; he addresses briefly problems of authorship and date, argues against a Greek original, and mentions views on whether or not the text is an epitome, and whether it is a pagan or a Christian text. A separate section is devoted to the manuscript tradition. Schmeling also comments on linguistic aspects of the work, concentrating more on the word-plays and

the structure of the text rather than the linguistic deficiencies for which it has been criticised. Discussion of genre and the Greek novel lead to an interesting look at patterns in the *History* and how they work within the story.

The three essays that follow are particularly interesting and useful for the undergraduate reader who wants a rounded picture of Latin fiction, as they deal with far less well-known texts, discussions of which are not readily available in such accessible form. Stefan Merkle (“News from the Past – Dictys and Dares on the Trojan War” pp. 155–166) writes on the Latin translations of Dictys and Dares, taking the reader through the texts and interpretations, while stressing especially linguistic connections with Sallust.

There are five main versions of a Latin History of Alexander. Richard Stoneman (“The Latin Alexander” pp. 167–186) favours an Augustan date for the first century AD history by Quintus Curtius Rufus and explores influences by Livy and Virgil on his work. His examination of the four fourth century writers contains many useful comments on translation into Latin in general, together with discussion of date, authorship and content.

Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich on “Hagiographic Fiction as Entertainment” (pp. 187–212, trans. by R. Stoneman) sets the scene by discussing Christian attitudes to light entertainment and narrative motifs in the Bible, before exploring the textual models that helped shaping Christian Literature. There follow surveys of the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, the Pseudo-Clementines, the *Acta* and *Passiones Martyrum*, the Saints Lives of Jerome, Sulpicius Severus’ *Vita S. Martini* and the *Dialogi* of Gregory the Great. On each occasion Huber-Rebenich emphasises their analogies to the novel (motifs, narrative technique etc.) and how they form a transitional stage in the course of literature.

The final four essays in Part Five, the concluding part of the collection, are concerned with the Heritage, the “Nachleben” of Latin Fiction, starting with Claudio Moreschini (“Towards a History of the Exegesis of Apuleius – The case of the Tale of Cupid and Psyche” pp. 215–228, trans. by C. Stevenson) on interpretations of the story of “Cupid and Psyche” in Apuleius. Moreschini explains how allegorical interpretations of the story began in Late Antiquity (and not earlier with e.g. Plotinus); he explores and takes us through those interpretations in authors like Martianus Capella (perhaps dates would have helped here for a wider audience), Fulgentius in the 6th century, Boccaccio, who is more complete than Fulgentius as he covers the whole novella, and then Renaissance writers till the 16th–17th century.

Elizabeth Archibald on “*Apollonius King of Tyre* in the Middle Ages and Renaissance” (pp. 229–237) favours a Greek origin for the work (unlike Schmeling above) and stresses the popularity of the story throughout Europe by the time of Shakespeare. The essay abounds with examples and information on editions, publications, translations and manifestations of how widespread and well-known the story was during that time and offers suggestions to explain that popularity.

Stoneman returns with “The Medieval Alexander” (pp. 238–252), the tradition of which stems from a single manuscript of around 1000 AD. He discusses the significance of the *Historia de Preliis*, a collection of reworkings of Leo the Archpriest’s translation, the chronicles and other texts up until the sections about Alexander in the *Secreta Secretorum* and the *Gesta Romanorum*.

Carver’s concluding chapter (“The Rediscovery of the Latin Novels” pp. 253–268) is a fascinating one: it rounds things off fittingly with the rediscovery of the Latin novels, focusing on the interesting history of the manuscript tradition of Petronius and Apuleius up to the printed editions of the second half of the 1400s.

Most helpfully, most chapters are cross-referenced. Some overlap is present by necessity (e.g. Sandy-Shumate, Shumate-Mason, Sandy-Mason on the Greek original of Apuleius) but the authors are aware of each other and therefore concise at those points, and, if anything, this is one case where repetition does clarify a complicated matter.

It may be appropriate here to add a short note on other books with similar aims and purpose. For a unified historical account spanning from “The formative genres” to “*Nachleben*: the Roman novel and the rebirth of the picaresque”, *The Roman Novel* by P.G. Walsh (first published 1970, reprinted 1995) may have been superseded in some of its aspects, but still has not been replaced as a whole. In Stephen Harrison’s (ed.) *Oxford Readings in the Roman Novel* (1999), a collection of previously published important articles, the 14 contributions focus on Petronius and Apuleius only, making the scope of the book more limited than *Latin Fiction*; this is perhaps more than compensated for, though, by the editor’s extremely useful “Introduction: Twentieth-Century Scholarship on the Roman Novel”, and other essays of a more thematic nature (e.g. R. Beck, H. Petersmann, A. Barchiesi, W. S. Smith, JR). Gareth Schmeling’s 1996 Brill volume, *The Novel in the Ancient World* (x+876 pages; a revised paperback edition, with updated bibliogra-

phy, was published in 2003), on the other hand, on both the Greek and the Latin novel, with copious index, extensive bibliography, 12 maps and more than 30 contributions by 25 authors is altogether more scholarly and contains both the factual information provided in *Latin Fiction* and the theoretical dimension sometimes missing from Hofmann's volume (cf. J. Connolly, *BMCR* 10.05.2000). But the scope is altogether different. On a slightly different note, while the contributions to *Latin Fiction*, unlike the ones in *The Oxford Readings in the Roman Novel*, are all original contributions, they are not necessarily the authors' most thorough or important contributions to their respective subjects (cf. e.g. Schmeling on Petronius and *Apollonius, King of Tyre* and Merkle on Dictys and Dares in Schmeling (ed.), (1996) *The Novel in the Ancient World*; Merkle also in Tatum (ed.) (1994) *The Search for the Ancient Novel*, which goes back, on Dictys, to S. Merkle (1989) *Die Ephemeris belli Troiani des Diktys von Kreta* in "Studien zur klassischen Philologie" (vol. 44); Mason on Apuleius in Harrison (ed.) *Oxford Readings in the Roman Novel*; Sandy on Apuleius in *ANRW* 2.34.2; Bodel in Tatum (ibid)). That is not to say, though, that *Latin Fiction* simply reproduces those earlier articles – for Hofmann's volume, the authors have attempted concise accounts aimed at an undergraduate audience.

Latin Fiction offers a solid introduction for students embarking on the field of Latin Fiction, with information presented in a concise manner with useful bibliographies (which could, perhaps, have been updated to include scholarship since 1999). In short, it is a very useful and approachable book which does for the student exactly what it promises to do in the title: it puts the Latin Novel in Context.