

Poem in Petronius' Satyricon

Post by "Don" of September 9, 2024 at 10:38 PM

Nice find, [Bryan](#) ! Thanks for sharing.

And I agree, [Cassius](#) , those two share some common themes.

I tried to compare the Latin of the two, but Petronius doesn't seem (to my untrained eye) to have cribbed from Lucretius (Lucretius Born c. 99 BC - Died c. 55 BC (aged c. 44); Petronius Born c. 27 AD - Died c. 66 AD (aged c. 38-39)), although I'm sure Petronius knew Lucretius's poem. Maybe it was a Zeitgeist thing with the images that Petronius uses? Or maybe he was riffing on De Rerum Natura to show off his erudition? Here is the beginning of each poem/section:

[Lucretius](#)

Et quo quisque fere studio devinctus adhaeret
aut quibus in rebus multum sumus ante morati
atque in ea ratione fuit contenta magis mens,
in somnis eadem plerumque videmur obire:
causidici causas agere et componere leges,
induperatores pugnare ac proelia obire,
nautae contractum cum ventis degere bellum,
nos agere hoc autem et naturam quaerere rerum
semper et inventam patriis exponere chartis.

[Petronius](#)

Somnia quae mentes ludunt volitantibus umbris,
non delubra deum nec ab aethere numina mittunt,
sed sibi quisque facit. Nam cum prostrata sopore
urget membra quies et mens sine pondere ludit,
quidquid luce fuit tenebris agit.