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The hidden author: an interpretation of Petronius' Satyricon.

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About the Book

The Satyricon of Petronius, a comic novel written in the first century A.D., is famous today primarily for its amazing banquet tale, "Trimalchio's Feast." But this episode is only one part of the larger picture of life during Nero's rule presented in the work. In this accessible discussion of Petronius's masterful use of parody, Gian Biagio Conte offers an interpretation of the Satyricon as a whole. He combines the scholarly precision of close reading with a significant, original theoretical model.

At the heart of his interpretation, Conte reveals the technique of the "hidden author" that Petronius employs at the expense of his characters, in particular the teller of the story, Encolpius. By remaining hidden outside the narrative, Petronius invites the reader to smile

at the *folies de grandeur* that occur in a culture of scholars and declaimers. Yet as Conte shows, behind the parody and inexhaustible humor of the *Satyricon* lies an unexpectedly serious lament. For those familiar with the *Satyricon*, as well as for new readers, Conte's book will be a reliable, enjoyable guide to the wonders the *Satyricon* contains.

About the Author

Gian Biagio Conte is Professor of Latin Literature in the Department of Classical Philology at the University of Pisa, Italy, and is author of, among many works, *Latin Literature: A History* (1994).

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