

before the passing of sentence, and that the trial, as likely as not, ended in judicial murder.¹

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A FURTHER NOTE ON TRIMALCHIO'S ZODIAC DISH

MUCH else was done by Rose and Sullivan² in their possibly conclusive attempt to restore sense to the rebus passage,³ but the reading *super scorpionem locustam* was Gaselee's,⁴ as Rose and Sullivan clearly acknowledge. This seems unluckily to have escaped B. Baldwin,⁵ otherwise he would have noticed that Gaselee also fancied in his correction an allusion to the poisoner Locusta. For those who may have difficulty in obtaining Gaselee's collotype reproduction, I quote the relevant part: 'But what have lobsters to do with poisoners? Is it permissible to see a more or less open reference to Locusta, the queen of all poisoners? If so, we have here another little piece of evidence which will help us to date the *Satyricon*.'

This suggestion is still of course attractive, and highly entertaining to the modern punster, but it must be remembered that the lobster need no more be poisonous than the African fig gluttonous: the requirement of the rebus would be met by the scorpion's venomous sting.

If in fact there is a pun on Locusta, it may indeed provide another little piece of evidence and one more small argument for ascription, not to mention a correct reading in the text; but surely it is too unreliable, as a supposition, to help us also both to explain Eumolpus' glumness at the fare (he did not make a gloomy comment) and to put the dinner deaths of Claudius and Britannicus in context.

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² K. F. C. Rose and J. P. Sullivan, 'Trimalchio's Zodiac Dish', *CQ* n.s. xviii (1968), 180-4.

³ *Sat.* 35. 1-5.

⁴ S. Gaselee, *A Collotype Reproduction of . . . the Traguriensis . . .* (Cambridge, 1915), 17-18.

⁵ B. Baldwin, 'A Note on Trimalchio's Zodiac Dish', *CQ* n.s. xx (1970), 364.