

THE CAESARS

INTRODUCTION

THE *Caesars*, otherwise entitled in the MSS. Symposium or Kronia (Latin Saturnalia) was written at Constantinople in 361 and was probably addressed to Sallust, to whom Julian had sent his lost work the Kronia.¹ The interlocutor in the proemium² is almost certainly Sallust.

“Caesar” was in Julian’s time a Roman Emperor’s most splendid title, and was regularly used by the barbarians when they referred to the Emperor. The idea and the working out of the satire is Lucianic and there are echoes here and there of Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Dead*, but Julian is neither so witty nor so frivolous as Lucian. In speaking of the gods he allows himself a licence which is appropriate to the festival, but would otherwise seem inconsistent with the admonitions addressed to priests in the *Fragment of a Letter*. His conception of the State and of the ideal ruler is Greek rather than Roman.

¹ cf. *Oration 4*. 157 c.

² 306 A.

ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟΝ Η ΚΡΟΝΙΑ

Ἐπειδὴ δίδωσιν ὁ θεὸς παίζειν· ἔστι γὰρ Κρόνια· γελοίου δὲ οὐδὲν οὐδὲ τερπνὸν οἶδα ἐγὼ, τὸ μὴ καταγέλαστα φράσαι φροντίδος ἔοικεν εἶναι ἄξιον, ὧ φιλότης.

Εἶτα τίς οὕτω παχὺς ἐστὶ καὶ ἀρχαῖος, ὧ Καῖσαρ, ὥστε καὶ παίζειν πεφροντισμένα; ἐγὼ ὦμην τὴν παιδιὰν ἀνεσίν τε εἶναι ψυχῆς καὶ ἀπαλλαγὴν τῶν φροντίδων.

Ὅρθῶς γε σὺ τοῦτο ὑπολαμβάνων, ἐμοὶ δὲ Β οὐ ταύτη ἔοικεν ἀπαντᾶν τὸ χρῆμα. πέφυκα γὰρ οὐδαμῶς ἐπιτήδειος οὔτε σκώπτειν οὔτε παρωδεῖν οὔτε γελοιάζειν. ἐπεὶ δὲ χρὴ τῷ νόμῳ πείθεσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ, βούλει σοι ἐν παιδιᾷς μέρει μῦθον διεξέλθω πολλὰ ἴσως ἔχοντα ἀκοῆς ἄξια;

Λέγοις ἂν καὶ μάλα ἀσμένῳ, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς C οὐκ ἀτιμάζω τοὺς μύθους οὐδὲ παντάπασιν ἐξελαύνω τοὺς ὀρθῶς ἔχοντας, ἀκόλουθά σοί τε καὶ φίλῳ τῷ σῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τῷ κοινῷ, Πλάτωνι διανοούμενος, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτῷ πολλὰ ἐν μύθοις ἐσπούδασται.

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“IT is the season of the Kronia,¹ during which the god allows us to make merry. But, my dear friend, as I have no talent for amusing or entertaining I must methinks take pains not to talk mere nonsense.”

“But, Caesar, can there be anyone so dull and stupid as to take pains over his jesting? I always thought that such pleasantries were a relaxation of the mind and a relief from pains and cares.”

“Yes, and no doubt your view is correct, but that is not how the matter strikes me. For by nature I have no turn for raillery, or parody, or raising a laugh. But since I must obey the ordinance of the god of the festival, should you like me to relate to you by way of entertainment a myth in which there is perhaps much that is worth hearing?”

“I shall listen with great pleasure, for I too am not one to despise myths, and I am far from rejecting those that have the right tendency; indeed I am of the same opinion as you and your admired, or rather the universally admired, Plato. He also often conveyed a serious lesson in his myths.”

¹ Better known by its Latin name Saturnalia. Saturn is the Greek Kronos.

THE SATIRES OF JULIAN

Λέγεις ναὶ μὰ Δία ταῦτα ἀληθῆ.

Τίς δὲ καὶ ποταπὸς ὁ μῦθος;

Οὐ τῶν παλαιῶν τις, ὁποῖους Αἴσωπος ἐποίη- 307
σεν, ἀλλ' εἶτε πλάσμα λέγοις Ἐρμού· πεπυ-
σμένος γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐκείθεν σοι φράσω· εἶτε καὶ
τάληθές οὕτως ἔχει εἶτε μίξις τίς ἐστιν ἀμφοῖν,
αὐτό, φασί,¹ δείξει τὸ πρᾶγμα.

Τουτὶ μὲν οὖν ἤδη μυθικῶς ἅμα καὶ ῥητορικῶς
ἐξείργασταί σοι τὸ προοίμιον· ἀλλὰ μοι τὸν
λόγον αὐτόν, ὁποῖός ποτέ ἐστιν, ἤδη διέξελθε.

Μανθάνοις ἄν.

Θύων ὁ Ῥωμύλος τὰ Κρόνια πάντα ἐκάλει B
τοὺς θεοὺς, καὶ δὴ καὶ αὐτοὺς² τοὺς καίσαρας.
κλῖναι δὲ ἐτύγχανον παρεσκευασμένοι τοῖς μὲν
θεοῖς ἄνω κατ' αὐτό, φασίν, οὐρανοῦ τὸ μετέωρον,

Οὐλυμπόνδ', ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλές αἰεὶ.

λέγεται γὰρ μεθ' Ἡρακλῆα παρελθεῖν ἐκείσε
καὶ ὁ Κυρίνος, ᾧ δὴ χρῆ καλεῖν αὐτὸν ὀνόματι,
τῇ θείᾳ πειθομένους φήμη. τοῖς μὲν οὖν θεοῖς
ἐκείσε παρεσκευάστο τὸ συμπόσιον· ὑπ' αὐτὴν δὲ C
τὴν σελήνην ἐπὶ μετεώρου τοῦ ἀέρος ἐδέδοκτο
τοὺς καίσαρας δειπνεῖν. ἀνείχε δὲ αὐτοὺς ἢ τε
τῶν σωμάτων κουφότης, ἅπερ ἐτύγχανον ἠμφιε-
σμένοι, καὶ ἡ περιφορὰ τῆς σελήνης. κλῖναι μὲν
οὖν ἔκειντο τέτταρες, εὐτρεπεῖς τοῖς μεγίστοις
θεοῖς. ἐβένου μὲν ἦν ἡ τοῦ Κρόνου στιλβούσης
καὶ πολλὴν ἐν τῷ μέλανι καὶ θείαν αὐγὴν κρυ-
πτούσης, ὥστε οὐδεὶς οἶός τε ἦν ἀντιβλέπειν.

¹ φασί Cobet, lacuna V., Hertlein, ἐπιδείξει MSS.

² αὐτοὺς Hertlein suspects to be an interpolation.

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“By Zeus, that is true indeed!”

“But what is your myth and of what type?”

“Not one of those old-fashioned ones such as Aesop¹ wrote. But whether you should call mine an invention of Hermes—for it was from him I learned what I am going to tell you—or whether it is really true or a mixture of truth and fiction, the upshot, as the saying is, will decide.”

“This is indeed a fine preface that you have composed, just the thing for a myth, not to say an oration! But now pray tell me the tale itself, whatever its type may be.”

“Attend.”

At the festival of the Kronia Romulus gave a banquet, and invited not only all the gods, but the Emperors as well. For the gods couches had been prepared on high, at the very apex, so to speak, of the sky,² on “Olympus where they say is the seat of the gods, unshaken for ever.”³ For we are told that after Heracles, Quirinus also ascended thither, since we must give Romulus the name of Quirinus in obedience to the divine will.⁴ For the gods then the banquet had been made ready there. But just below the moon in the upper air he had decided to entertain the Emperors. The lightness of the bodies with which they had been invested, and also the revolution of the moon sustained them. Four couches were there made ready for the superior gods. That of Kronos was made of gleaming ebony, which concealed in its blackness a lustre so intense and divine that no one

¹ *i.e.* not a fable with a moral nor an animal fable.

² Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 247 B.

³ *Odyssey* 6. 42.

⁴ Cf. *Oration* 4. 149 B, 154 D.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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