



Lucian's Dialogues Namely the Dialogues of the Gods, of the Seagods, Gods, and of the Dead: Zeus the Tragedian, the Ferry-Boat, Translated With Notes and a Preliminary Memoir (Classic Reprint)

Howard Williams

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Excerpt from Lucian's Dialogues Namely the Dialogues of the Gods, of the Seagods, Gods, and of the Dead: Zeus the Tragedian, the Ferry-Boat, Translated With Notes and a Preliminary Memoir

For the few ascertained facts in the life of the greatest prose satirist and most brilliant wit of Greek and Latin antiquity, we are indebted, almost wholly, to scattered and incidental allusions in his own various writings.

Like his immediate predecessor, Menippus the satirist; the illustrious Neo-Platonist, Porphyry, in the third; and the orator, Libanius, in the fourth century, Lucian was Syrian by birth. He was born at Samosata - its heap of ruins still retains the old name almost unchanged - on the Euphrates, not far distant from Edessa, and the chief city of the district of Kommagene, in the extreme northeast of Syria, about the year 120 A.D. Tradition protracts the term of his existence to the age of ninety, or even of one hundred years. He thus lived through the reigns of Hadrian, the two Antonines, and Commodus, and (at all events) the earlier part of the reign of Severus - altogether the happiest period of the Roman Empire, and one of the most interesting ages in the world's history. Of his earlier life, the brief record supplied in his incomplete autobiographical sketch, the Dream, so often has been repeated, that it is not necessary to do more than to refer to it here.

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