**Research Perspectives in Classical Poetry: Roman Satire**

Jennifer Ferriss-Hill

University of Miami

j.ferrisshill@miami.edu

**Abstract:** This study surveys the state of scholarship on Roman verse Satire, written in Latin by Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal between the late second century BCE and the early second century CE. Key interpretative approaches are discussed, highlighting the ways in which our understanding of the genre has developed and identifying areas that remain underexplored. The study is aimed at students and scholars in the fields of Classics, History, Literature, and Reception Studies.

**Keywords:** Roman Satire, Lucilius, Horace, Persius, Juvenal

**Table of Contents:**

1. Introduction
2. Satiric Succession
3. *Sermo* and *satura*
4. Seeing other genres in Roman Satire
5. Persona*-*theory
6. Self-referentiality/Metapoetics
7. The afterlife of Roman Satire

**Introduction**

The literary genre of Roman verse Satire is defined as – and defined itself as – the writings of Lucilius (?180–102/1 BCE), Horace (Dec. 8th 65–Nov. 27th 8 BCE), Persius (34–62 CE), and Juvenal (active early 2nd C). Horace is emphatic that Lucilius was the “discoverer” of the genre (*inventor*, *Sat*. 1.10.48) and his *Satires* consistently stake out their place as the second effort in the tradition, Horace explaining that he now writes what Lucilius once wrote (*ego quae nunc, / olim quae scripsit Lucilius*, *Sat*. 1.4.56–7). Similarly, Persius recalls with admiration how “Lucilius sliced up the city” (*secuit Lucilius urbem*) as well as how Horace worms his way into people’s affections to humorously critique their vices (1.114–18). Juvenal, borrowing a metaphor from chariot-racing, declares his intention in his first satire to explain “why he likes to perform maneuvers in this field through which the great scion of Aurunca,” that is, Lucilius, “steered his horses” (*cur tamen hoc potius libeat decurrere campo, / per quem magnus equos Auruncae flexit alumnus*, 1.19–20). Juvenal nods to Horace via his birthplace of Venusia in referring to certain material as “worthy of the Venusian lantern” (*Venusina digna lucerna*, 1.51), while omitting to name or acknowledge Persius. This move underscores that the satirists are creating literary history rather than relating historical fact through three poetic generations. In enumerating who, so to speak, begat whom, each has been participating in crafting and presenting a fastidiously curated lineage of the genre.

The genre of Roman Satire was dedicated to a continual policing of its boundaries and content: who counts as an author of it (and who does not); what the poet’s own place in the pedigree of acceptable authors is; what sort of material may be included, and what not.[[1]](#footnote-1) Accordingly, the rather-too-neat generic genealogies of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal implement a collective, almost collusive, literary *damnatio memoriae* against a number of writers of the genre known from other sources. Juvenal, for example, obscures several satirists whom we know to have been his rough contemporaries, most notably Turnus, who wrote under the emperor Domitian and who was well enough known to be named in a number of contemporary works (e.g., Martial 7.97.8, who praises his “noble little books,” *nobilibus libellis*). Juvenal also continues Horace’s position of ignoring Ennius (239–169 BCE), Pacuvius (220–c.130 BCE), and Varro (116–27 BCE) as satirists, as indeed Persius and Lucilius had done, too: they are acknowledged as writers of other genres but not of satire.[[2]](#footnote-2) This despite the fact that all three—Ennius, Pacuvius, and Varro—had long before written poems that shared the name (*saturae*) and much of the constitutive material of Roman verse Satire.[[3]](#footnote-3) Varro’s *saturae*, written in a combination of prose and verse, are termed Menippean,[[4]](#footnote-4) a designation that took its name from Menippus of Gadara who had written in this humorous, prosimetric form in Greek in probably the first half of the 3rd century BCE.[[5]](#footnote-5) The continued use of the term Menippean today has the effect of marking this type of satire as something other than, and perhaps secondary to, “pure” Latin verse satire. The *Saturae* of Ennius, on the other hand, were written in a variety of meters, including dactylic hexameter. The lack of a total commitment on Ennius’ part to the dactylic hexameter is often assumed as a reason for his excision from the canon of four, but Lucilius himself wrote in a variety of meters before settling on the dactylic hexameter, and he (not Ennius) is credited with having established this as *the* meter of Roman Satire. Although nothing remains of the satires of Pacuvius,[[6]](#footnote-6) the fragments from the *saturae* of both Ennius and Varro reveal an interest in everyday life, in the poet’s social circle, and in critiquing contemporary failings—all of which feature prominently in the material of Roman verse Satire. These efforts, however, along with what we surmise to be numerous works of Latin verse satire no longer extant, became excluded from the canonical four in an act of self-defining that is emblematic of the nature of Roman verse Satire, and perhaps of satire more generally. Fundamental to being a reader (or viewer) of satire is that we are forced to place our trust in the satirist and accept his version of the facts and his opinion of the world as right and true, even as we may begin to suspect that we are the victims of some sleight-of-hand.

One of Roman Satire’s genre-terms for itself was *satura*, meaning “stuffed full.” The term evokes not only miscellany or hodgepodge, but also something crammed and ready to burst—all salient features of the genre. Allied to these qualities is its eclecticism, its willingness and ability to include material from a wide variety of other literary (and not so literary) sources, and to be about any number of things, some high-brow, some low. In the collections of the four satirists may be found poems and passages on eating, walking, spending time with friends, attending to obligations, philosophizing, and critiquing in all manner of ways—the latter being what modern readers perhaps think of most when trying to put their finger on what satire is. Whatever the topic of a given poem might be, however, almost omnipresent is a sense that the satirist has a message. Even when he professes to want to have a rarefied (as in Hor. *Sat*. 1.10.72–90) or virtually non-existent (as at Pers. 1.2–3) readership, we should recall the obvious fact that these poets nevertheless chose to write, and did write, and it seems disingenuous for a writer to claim not to want readers.[[7]](#footnote-7) For all this shared material and spirit, however, the satirical works of Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal are quite distinct from one another. Where Lucilius appears self-assured and acerbic, Horace presents himself as comparatively mild and prone to self-doubt. Persius, meanwhile, expresses disillusion and even anger with his contemporary society, from which he chooses to present himself as closed-off, while Juvenal escalates satiric anger to such a degree that there appears nowhere left to go, for him or for the genre. Thus there is not really one “Roman Satire” so much as the literary output of four separate writers who, one after the next, continued to take pains to present themselves as working in one and the same tradition, from which they excluded others that we might well imagine could and should have been included. This tradition, moreover, has long been understood as fundamentally Italianate. Evident in the satirists’ genealogical claims is an emphasis on place (*urbs, Aurunca, Venusia*), suggestive of the strong ties of Roman Satire to the Italian peninsula and to Rome. The first-century CE rhetorician Quintilian’s statement, *satura quidem tota nostra est* (“satire, at any rate, is entirely our own,” *Inst*. 10.1.93), is frequently trotted out as corroborating evidence for the genre’s autochthony, and while we should take care not to conflate autochthony with purity (that is, the idea that nothing non-Latin or non-Roman is present in Roman Satire), the writings of Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal constitute a uniquely Roman literary genre.

The following is a survey of Roman verse Satire in conjunction with the scholarship on it over the past several decades. I begin with the successor-problem, widely seen as a central undercurrent to the genre, before moving to a discussion of Roman Satire’s two genre-terms for itself, *sermo* and *satura*, showing how the poets use these to activate and draw attention to different aspects of their poetry. Highlighting the genre’s acquisitive impulse and its engagement with all aspects of surrounding society, I survey the numerous other forms of writing that may be discerned in Roman Satire. The fifth and sixth sections explore two modes of reading that have been especially transformative for our understanding of Roman verse Satire: persona-theory and metapoetics or self-referentiality. I end with a discussion of how later teachers and writers engaged with Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, that is, reception studies as they pertain to Roman Satire. Throughout, I engage with scholarly discourse on the genre, highlighting important advances and also noting areas that remain underexplored.

Further reading and references:

There exist a number of introductions and companions to and overviews of Roman Satire and its poets, aimed at a variety of readers. The following are especially recommended, alongside some more focused studies of the authors:

Anderson, William S. 1982. *Essays on Roman Satire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Braund, Susanna, and Josiah Osgood (eds.). 2012. *A Companion to Persius and Juvenal*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Coffey, Michael. 1976. *Roman Satire*. London: Methuen and Co.

Davis, Gregson (ed.). 2010. *A Companion to Horace* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World). Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Fitzpatrick Nichols, Marden. 2013. “Persius.” In Emma Buckley and Martin Dinter (eds.), *A Companion to the Neronian Age* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World): 258–74. Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Fraenkel, Eduard. 1957. *Horace*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Freudenburg, Kirk. 2013. “The Afterlife of Varro in Horace’s *Sermones*: Generic Issue in Roman Satire.” In Theodore D. Papanghelis, Stephen J. Harrison, and Stavros Frangoulidis (eds.), *Generic Interfaces in Latin Literature: Encounters, Interactions and Transformations*: 296–336. Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter.

Freudenburg, Kirk, ed. 2005. *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Günther, Hans-Christian (ed.). 2013. *Brill’s Companion to Horace*. Leiden: Brill.

Harrison, Stephen. 2020. *How to be Content: An Ancient Poet’s Guide for an Age of Excess*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Harrison, Stephen. 2007. *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Manuwald, Gesine (ed.). 2001. *Der Satiriker Lucilius und seine Zeit*. Munich: Beck.

Miller, Paul Allen. 2019. *Horace: Understanding Classics*. London; New York: I. B. Tauris.

Muecke, Frances. 2013. “The Invention of Satire: A Paradigmatic Case?” In Theodore D. Papanghelis, Stephen J. Harrison, and Stavros Frangoulidis (eds.), *Generic Interfaces in Latin Literature: Encounters, Interactions and Transformations*: 283–95. Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter.

Osgood, Josiah. 2012. “Persius and Juvenal as Satiric Successors.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 1–16.

Plaza, Maria (ed.). 2009. *Persius and Juvenal*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Ramage, E. S., D. L. Sigsbee, and S. C. Fredericks. 1974. *Roman Satirists and their Satire: The Fine Art of Criticism in Ancient Rome*. Noyes Press: Park Ridge, NJ.

Rudd, Niall. 1986. *Themes in Roman Satire*. London: Duckworth.

Rudd, Niall. 1966. *The Satires of Horace*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Schmitz, Christine. 2019. *Juvenal* (Studienbücher Antike, Band 16). Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag.

Sullivan, J. P. (ed.). 1963. *Satire: Critical Essays on Roman Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Van Rooy, C. A. 1965. *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Literary Theory*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Wehrle, William Thomas. 1992. *The Satiric Voice: Program, Form and Meaning in Persius and Juvenal*. Hildesheim.

For those interested in reading the poems in Latin, the following editions and commentaries are among the most useful:

Braund, Susanna Morton. 2004. *Juvenal and Persius*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [Loeb Classical Library edition: Latin text with facing English translation]

Braund, Susanna Morton. 1996. *Juvenal: Satires Book 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, P. Michael. 1993. *Horace: Satires 1*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

Clausen, W. V. 1992. *A. Persi Flacci et D. Iuni Iuvenalis Saturae*. Rev. ed. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. [Latin text only]

Courtney, Edward. 1980. *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal*. London: Athlone Press.

Ferguson, John. 1979. *Juvenal: The Satires*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.

Freudenburg, Kirk. 2021. *Horace: Satires 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Freudenburg, Kirk. 2011. *Horace: Satires and Epistles* (Oxford Readings in Classical Studies). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Godwin, John. 2016. *Juvenal: Satires, Book IV, edited with a translation and commentary* (Aris & Phillips classical texts). Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

Gowers, Emily. 2012. *Horace: Satires Book I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harvey, R. A. 1981. *A Commentary on Persius*. Leiden: Brill.

Keane, Catherine C. 2010. *A Roman Verse Satire Reader: Selections from Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal* (BC Latin Readers). Mundelein, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Inc.

Kiessling, Adolf, and Richard Heinze. 1977 (reprinted 1999). *Q. Horatius Flaccus: Satiren*. Zurich: Weidmann.

Kissel, Walter. 1990. *Aules Persius Flaccus: Satiren*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter. [advanced]

Krenkel, Werner. 1970. *Lucilius: Satiren*. Leiden: E. J. Brill. [advanced]

Muecke, Frances. 1993. *Horace: Satires II*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.

Rudd, N., and E. Courtney. 1982. *Juvenal Satires I, III, X*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.

Warmington, E. H. 1938. *Remains of Old Latin: Lucilius, The Twelve Tables*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [Loeb Classical Library edition]

Watson, Lindsay, and Patricia Watson. 2014. *Juvenal: Satire 6*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Satiric Succession**

In order to participate in his chosen genre, each Roman Satirist after Lucilius found himself in the predicament both of having to write something that was recognizable as satire (specifically, in its Lucilian rather than Varronian or Ennian form) and of having to make a distinctive contribution to the genre all his own, so as not to be wholly derivative. Indeed, the Roman verse satirists’ concern with one another is striking given that they lived sufficiently far apart in time that none met or could have met his immediate predecessor or successor. Reflecting their concern, Freudenburg begins his study by noting Horace’s “Lucilius problem;”[[8]](#footnote-8) Reckford ponders what it means for Persius to be “not Horace” (2009: 12); and Braund and Osgood make the notion of successorship the unifying strand of their 2012 *Companion to Persius and Juvenal*, as Osgood describes in the Introduction:

The central premise of this volume is that a good deal of the energy of both Juvenal’s and Persius’ poetry . . . emanates from a complex engagement with the work of their predecessors and the question of what it meant to be a successor to them, or whether that was even possible at all. Persius and Juvenal, in other words, do not just tacitly write more satires, in the tradition of Horace and Lucilius; they each ponder what it would mean to be a Lucilius or Horace for their own time. (2–3)

This editorial decision allows for a volume made up of essays on a variety of intersecting topics, while also continuing the interest in metapoetics and in the Bloomian idea of the anxiety of influence that have been dominant in scholarship on Roman Satire over the past few decades. The decision also communicates that Roman Satire, if not exactly unique in its concern with genre and with the poet’s predecessors, is unusually able to front those concerns, making these concerns into its verses and making its verses out of these concerns. The Roman Satirist’s attitude toward his predecessors is thus marked by tensions: on the one hand, he requires them to have come before him and he expresses respect (if grudgingly at times) for them; on the other, he strives to stress his originality, and even superiority over them. Moreover, spanning as they did a period of around 250 years, each was writing under cultural and socio-political circumstances quite distinct from those of his predecessor(s), and the satirists make much of how their environment guides, even shapes, their poetry.

Horace’s two books of *Satires* were likely published around 35 and 30 BCE, respectively. Writing as he was during the twilight of the Roman Republic (510/509–27 BCE),[[9]](#footnote-9) he is wistful about the freedom of speech (*libertas*) that Lucilius was able to exercise (*Sat*. 1.4.1–7) and that he sees as no longer available to him. *Libertas*, the Roman equivalent to Greek *parrhesia*, “saying everything,” was the defining feature of Lucilian satire for later writers, and it seems always just out of Horace’s grasp, as it would be later for Persius and Juvenal as well. Freedom of speech in Horace functions as the traditional and widespread Roman nostalgia for a more virtuous bygone era given a specific form and one that is easily discernible at the core of Roman Satire in a way that, for example, old-fashioned morals or military valor are not. So for Freudenburg, the narrative of satire is “the tale of an inherited, ‘free-speaking,’ old-Republican enterprise that gets remade radically over time precisely because these authors feel and respond to the increasing pressures of totalitarian oversight” (2001: 4).

Alongside the general erosion of liberty in thought and speech and the larger perceived degradation of Roman society run Horace’s own professed insecurities regarding his social class. Whereas Lucilius, although himself an equestrian, belonged to a family of senatorial status, Horace makes a point of telling us that he himself was the son of a freedman (*Sat*. 1.6). Although he came to attain equestrian standing through the financial security associated with his literary career and stemming in large part from the patronage Maecenas bestowed on him, Horace presents a persona whose newcomer-status deprives him of a feeling of security in his social place and accomplishments. He believes (or would have us believe) that Lucilius enjoyed these, and that they enabled him to speak as freely as Horace describes him as having done. Moreover, having fought on the “wrong,” losing team in the civil war (he was on the side of Julius Caesar’s assassins at the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE when they were defeated by Octavian’s forces), Horace appears keen to rehabilitate and realign himself with the “right” side of loyalists to Octavian. Scholars such as DuQuesnay 1984, Citroni 2000, Dufallo 2015, and especially Weeda 2019, reading the *Satires* strongly in their historical context, have increasingly worked to discern this concern in his poetry books, seeing this as another facet of the Horatian persona’s insecurity and timidity.

While admiring his predecessor on these counts and praising his wittiness and keen powers of perception (*facetus, / emunctae naris*, 4.7–8; cf. 10.3–4), Horace nevertheless repeatedly criticizes Lucilius for being excessively prolific in his writings and so for exercising insufficient care and failing or declining to hone his verses to perfection. Per Horace, Lucilius was “full of faults” (*vitiosus*) and “rough in composing verses” (*durus componere versus*) because he would often produce “two hundred lines an hour” (*in hora saepe ducentos*) “while standing on one leg” (*stans pede in uno*); in short, he was “too lazy to bear the burden of writing—of writing properly, that is” (*piger scribendi ferre laborem, / scribendi recte*, 4.8–13; cf. 10.1–3, 50–71). Horace goes on, however, to reveal the view that people (writers) are necessarily a product of their surroundings:

sed ille,

si foret hoc nostrum fato delapsus in aevum,

detereret sibi multa, recideret omne quod ultra

perfectum traheretur, et in versu faciendo

saepe caput scaberet vivos et roderet unguis. (*Sat*. 1.10.67–71)

But that man, if by some chance he had fallen into this era of ours instead, would erase much of his work, he would prune anything that stretched beyond the point of perfection, and when composing verses he would often scratch his head and bite his nails raw.

This type of highly calibrated back-and-forth, in which we see Horace “resuscitating” Lucilius only to “kill the master and his satire,”[[10]](#footnote-10) is the performance that Roman Satire presents to its readers. In Horace’s *Satires* 1.4 and 1.10 are therefore the beginnings of what runs the length of this genre, in which poets “continually measured their work against the achievements of their great originary master” whose “presence was never far below the surface, especially when they mused (as satirists always seem to enjoy doing) about what satire is supposed to accomplish in the first place, and how best to go about it within the constraints of their own historical and cultural milieux.”[[11]](#footnote-11) Whether Lucilius’ satires were exactly as Horace presents them is difficult to determine, particularly in the matter of his alleged prolixity, for Horace’s portrayal of Lucilius can be seen for what it is: a foil for Horace’s *own* poetic attributes.[[12]](#footnote-12) Since Horace strove for Callimachean brevity and compactness of expression, it is necessary that Lucilius not possess these qualities, to cast them into relief. There is also at least a hint that the Lucilius transported to Horace’s day in *Satires* 1.10.68 is, in fact, Horace himself, and that the hundreds of Lucilian verses are now subject to Horatian pruning and nail-biting to produce this second instantiation of Roman Satire.

The defining characteristic of Lucilian satire for us—though of course it was not for Horace—is, unfortunately, “void and absence”[[13]](#footnote-13) and we are unlikely ever to have Lucilius as Horace had him. Lucilius’ thirty books survive as around 1,400 lines of fragments,[[14]](#footnote-14) and these reveal a concern with identifying and attacking contemporary misbehaviors, food and dining being a particular target; with literary trends and figures; with language; and with the poet’s social circle and their activities. So, Lucilius takes on luxurious living (book 1 satire 2 and book 4 satire 1, itself the model for Persius’ third satire, according to the scholiast); describes banquets and meals (book 5 satire 2, book 8 satire 2, book 20, book 30 satire 2); critiques gluttony and gourmandizing (book 2 and book 13 satire 1); and praises the simple way of life and eating (book 14 satire 1).[[15]](#footnote-15) He details political tensions between wealthy patricians and other Romans (book 6 satire 2); explores human discontent (book 7 satire 2) and greed (book 29 satire 5); attacks the nouveau riche (fr. 549–51); and complains that all classes of citizens go about their business in the Forum with lies and deceit (fr. 1145–51). The first satire of book 27 is distinctive in that it appears to be on a topic not represented in post-Lucilian satire: the fragments describe the emotions of a love-affair in the first person and detail women’s physical characteristics (so also book 29 satire 3, fr. 1039–45, and 1166–67 which praises a woman’s beauty). Two points bear noting here. First, since the fragments survive because they were excerpted and quoted by later authors, what emerges from the fragments as Lucilius’ primary interests and themes may present a skewed impression of what his satires were actually about, these later “untrustworthy hands,” as Goh (2018: 256) calls them, having selected only lines with content expedient for their own purposes.[[16]](#footnote-16) The second point, perhaps more significant, is that it is difficult to argue that a particular theme or reference, when seen repeated across the satirists, functioned in the same ways poetically or socio-critically in Lucilius as it does in Horace, Persius, or Juvenal. Whereas scholarly efforts in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth century concentrated, not unreasonably, on collecting the fragments and attempting to reconstruct the poems, since the later twentieth century the attention has turned more towards *why* Lucilius wrote about what he did, and what this might reveal not merely about daily life in ancient Rome (e.g., that some people may have enjoyed eating peacocks, fr. 761–2),[[17]](#footnote-17) but also about satire in conversation with daily life, satire’s role in society, and what it means to be present at the beginning of a literary tradition, as Lucilius was—the overarching strands of Breed, Keitel, and Wallace’s aptly titled *Lucilius and Satire in Second-Century BC Rome*.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Nevertheless, the sense we develop overall by reading the fragments of Lucilius is of *satura* as both personal to the poet and as satirical in our sense of the word: we feel we get to know Lucilius, his likes and dislikes, the events of Roman daily life, and the poet’s social circle and contemporaries. Book 4 satire 2 describes a gladiatorial bout, for example; book 3, a journey to Sicily that was the model for Horace’s own journey in *Satires* 1.5 to Brundisium; book 5 satire 1 is a letter to a friend who had not visited Lucilius when he was unwell; book 6 describes an encounter Lucilius’ friend Scipio Aemilianus had (this poem is thought to have provided the model for Horace’s *Sat*. 1.9); book 11 contains anecdotes about well-known contemporaries including Scipio (cf. also the figures named in fr. 1134–43); book 12 mentions a brother; fr. 632–5 express the wish that Junius Congus and Laelius Decumus read Lucilius’ verses and that Manius Manilius and Persius not; and book 27 satire 3 discusses, perhaps in conversation with or addressed to a friend, how to bear a misfortune. Above all, Lucilius uses his verses to pin-point human foibles and expose them to scrutiny, even ridicule—*satura* as satirical and, in particular, as a response,[[19]](#footnote-19) framed as a defensive posture on the part of the poet (see especially book 30 satire 5), against the world’s outrages, specifically those of second-century BCE Rome, which looms large as a character in the Lucilian corpus, and whose presence there is increasingly being discerned.

Horace (if we exclude Ennius, Pacuvius, and Varro at the Roman verse satirists’ behest) is unique among the canonical four Roman verse satirists in having also written in other genres. His *Epodes* were published around 30 BCE, like *Satires* 2, and later would come the *Odes* (books 1–3 probably in 23 BCE, book 4 after 17), for which he is best known, and the two books of *Epistles* (*Epistles* 1 perhaps around 20 BCE; *Epistles* 2 is later but hard to date) and the *Ars Poetica* (generally considered Horace’s last work). In the two books of *Satires*, the first comprised of ten poems, the second of eight, may be discerned the same themes that dominate his other poetry books: the passage of time and the brevity of human life (especially prominent in the *Odes*); the dissatisfaction and grasping tendencies of humans (evident also in the *Epistles*); and friendship (a central theme of the *Ars Poetica* as well as of the *Epistles*). All of Horace’s writings are distinguished and defined by his keen eye for human behavior and foibles, and generally (*Epodes* aside) his observations find themselves expressed in a kindly and therapeutic humor and act as a sort of encomium for the beauty of living, even if one can enjoy only simple pleasures (though often these are better) and only for a short time. And yet scholarship that would read the *Odes* and *Satires* against one another, or the *Satires* and *Epodes* (beyond such relatively incidental ways as the presence of Canidia in both, for example),[[20]](#footnote-20) is strikingly scarce.

Work on Horace’s *Satires*, and Roman Satire more generally, has taken one of two forms: studies of individual poems that may or may not seek to connect the poem to larger themes within the book or genre; or studies of the books as wholes, in which apparently outlying poems are largely overlooked. Both approaches have been productive and furthered our understanding of specific satires and of the genre, even as many poems remain incompletely understood and the ways in which one poem leads—or fails to lead—to the next ones continue to puzzle. Nevertheless, these two approaches can implicitly communicate that the point of poetry books, including satirical ones, is to be cohesive, and even that the failure of a poem to “fit” marks it as inferior (an experiment by a youthful, immature poet used to be a favorite explanation for these). This is not to say that such a premise is necessarily incorrect (arguably the point of a book is, precisely, cohesion). Still, scholarship on Roman Satire can often feel in certain ways exceedingly satisfying and spot-on and eye-opening, but in others wholly unsatisfying, as though it has entirely missed the point, or there is some unaddressed elephant in the room—in fact, not unlike the genre itself.

The first (though perhaps the last to be composed) of the ten poems that make up Horace’s *Satires* 1 is addressed to Maecenas, Horace’s patron, and it takes as its subject man’s continual desire for more. Here is introduced the rhetorical shape of the first book: an unbalanced dialogue between an apparently dominant satirist and a series of imagined interlocutors, generally straw-men. Horace establishes telling the truth with a smile (*ridentem dicere verum*, 1.1.24) as the tone of this genial (and markedly Ennian)[[21]](#footnote-21) post-Lucilian satire, as he wryly mocks those who would hoard their wealth (41–44, 70–73) or prefer to drink a cup of water drawn from a great river than from a small stream (52–60), recommending instead that one live within the bounds of nature (*intra / naturae finis viventi*, 50) and observe moderation in all things (*est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines, / quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum*, 106–7)—the Aristotelian golden mean. The central concern of the second poem, which has surfaced already in the first, is extremes of behavior: *dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt* (“when foolish men avoid one set of vices, they run headlong towards the opposite ones”) and *nil medium est* (“there is no middle ground,” 28). Employing a pastiche of Greek New Comedy, Cynic philosophy, and Hellenistic erotic literature, Horace presents adulterers, all of whom suffer in pursuit of their chosen form of pleasure, as the paradigmatic illustration of such foolishness. The third satire, linked to the second by their opening attacks on one Tigellius, a singer, stresses the virtue of mutual forbearance (“why do you look upon your own failings only hazily, as if through eyes smeared with ointment, while you see your friend’s shortcomings with the keenness of an eagle or an Epidaurian snake?,” *cur tua pervideas oculis mala lippus inunctis, / cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum / quam aut aquila aut serpens Epidaurius?*, 25–27), as Horace urges his reader instead to cultivate the habits of the *sapiens*, the Stoic sage.

These first three poems, taking as they do moral and ethical concerns as their subject matter, form a unit, and have long been termed the diatribe satires after the Greek popular philosophical tradition, affiliated with Cynicism, that is seen to underlie, and even to supply, their topic, tone, and dialogic form. Indeed, *sermo*, “conversation/satire,” is one possible translation of the Greek term διατριβή/*diatribe*. While the recognition of *Satires* 1.1-3 as being in the tradition of diatribe is valuable (even though the handy term “diatribe satires” has perhaps occluded further investigation into other generic affiliations these poems might have), it raises the deeper question of why Horace chose to open his poetry book in this way. The trio of opening poems is, especially upon reflection, somewhat tedious and repetitive, and their speaker something of a bore in that he subjects us to a “barrage” of “mishandled” tenets from Epicureanism that threaten “to go on too long and to become just a bit too obvious,” as Freudenburg already saw (2001: 15–17). If we started by assuming that the speaker of Horace’s *Satires* was trustworthy and well-informed, these three poems should upend that assumption and send us off to read the rest of this “odd jumble of a book”[[22]](#footnote-22) in the company of what we now see is an unreliable, flawed guide—not how we perhaps want to think of Horace. This figure’s priority, moreover, is not his reader: he is preoccupied, as Freudenburg explains, with figuring out what satire is when it is being written by someone who is not Lucilius. This way of reading Horace’s *Satires* marks a sea change from prior centuries, in which readers took Horace at his word and, as Reckford 2009: 11 puts it, “succumbed . . . to the illusion that Horace was their friend, that he invited them into his confidence, into his inner circle.”

The fourth satire is, like the tenth, programmatic; that is, Horace devotes it to discussing openly his own poetic program. He begins by conjuring up the great trio of poets of Greek Old Comedy and proceeds to imitate, as Freudenburg saw,[[23]](#footnote-23) the *parabasis* of their plays, that formal component in which the chorus could speak directly to the audience in the voice of or on behalf of the poet:

Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae

atque alii quorum comoedia prisca virorum est,

si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus ac fur,

quod moechus foret aut sicarius aut alioqui

famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.

hinc omnis pendet Lucilius, hosce secutus

mutatis tantum pedibus numerisque. (*Sat*. 1.4.1–7)

The poets Eupolis and Cratinus and Aristophanes and the other men to whom Old Comedy belongs, if anyone was worthy of being noted down on the grounds that he was villainous and a thief, an adulterer or a murderer or infamous in some way, they would brand him with great freedom. From here Lucilius hangs entirely, having followed these men with only feet and rhythm altered.

This ability of satire to provide a commentary on itself and to probe its own nature and limits so explicitly and in such sustained fashion is perhaps its most distinctive feature and the one that sets it apart from other ancient genres, even the comedo-satiric ones. In this poem, as in the tenth one, Horace presents himself grappling with his chosen genre and his place in its lineage: he defends himself against the popular view of the satirist as a petty, malicious critic (4.24–38, 78–79), explaining that he notes others’ misdeeds only to put them to use as a deterrent, rendering himself a responder (cf. 2.1.39–46) and useful to society. Horace denies his writings the title of poetry (4.39–65), characterizing them instead as play (*illudo*, 4.139; *haec ego ludo*, 10.37) and as meant for only a small, select group of discerning readers, not for public recitation (cf. 10.74–91). All of this agonizing and protestation, however, seems at least slightly feigned as a pose if not wholly hollow, and we are left with the impression that Horace is not at all as uncertain and anguished as he would have us believe and, in fact, that he not-so-secretly views his finely honed, carefully composed poetry in the Alexandrian tradition as superior to Lucilius’ slapdash efforts (themselves the result and reflection of the literary and aesthetic preferences of the age in which the earlier poet lived).

After the three diatribe satires and the fourth programmatic one, *Satires* 1 is rounded out by poems on a variety of subjects and occasions, and indeed Horace’s *Satires* and Roman Satire more generally has been described as consisting of “occasional” poetry—pieces written to commit to posterity a particular supposedly historical, albeit minor, event or moment. *Satires* 1.5 purports to relate an actual journey to Brundisium that Horace undertook in the company of Maecenas, Virgil, and other illustrious friends. Among the satires of Horace that have been the subject of the largest number of individual studies, *Satires* 1.5 has long been recognized as modelled, to one degree or another, on Lucilius’ own journey-poem, *iter Siculum* (“Sicilian journey,” book 3). Horace remarks in passing that Maecenas is on the important business of reconciling friends who have fallen out (28–29), which has been read as suggesting that his patron is to broker a peace treaty between Octavian/Augustus and Mark Anthony. Despite this tantalizing hint that the poem might allow us insight into an important historical moment, however, the date and details of the poem do not quite fit the treaties of 40, 38, or 37 BCE. Gowers (1993a) therefore says that “the poem seems designed to annoy us” (49) and she reads it not in the lengthy tradition of travel-writing but as “an exercise in writing Horatian satire,” in which “the roads not taken . . . are as much part of the picture as those that are.” Horace also uses the poem to “escape from Rome on to the open road” (50) at the midpoint of his first book, which Gowers reads as Roman verse Satire attempting to break free of its natural urban setting. The poem, which is the shortest so far in the book, despite Horace’s apparent concern about its length (104), is characterized by “truncations and curtailments” and ends up at Brundisium, which for the Romans was a starting, not an ending, point—all images and references that Gowers sees as designed to let the reader know that “we are not destined to leave Horace’s satires like the contented dinner-guest in *Satire* 1” (1.1.119).

For Dufallo 2015, *Satires* 1.5 is among those “seemingly ‘apolitical’ poems [that] in fact do important political work” as they simultaneously “publicize the regime’s political authority” alongside “playful demystifications of it.” He even sees Horace suggesting that “the regime understands the value of such a balance in its overall self-presentation” (329). The satire that emerges from a reading grounded in the contemporary socio-political context feels more realistic and melancholy, strains that have also been discerned in Virgil’s *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* through a similar approach.[[24]](#footnote-24) Alongside these readings, Cuchiarelli (2001, 2009, 2009–10) has interpreted *Satires* 1.5 as a riff on Aristophanes’ *Frogs*: the Latin *parabasis* that developed in the course of *Satires* 1.4 gives way in the poem that follows to a scene from the Old Comic play in which our hero slogs through marshes on his extra-urban journey, all while frogs croak in the background (*Sat*. 1.5.1–15; *Frogs* 205–67).[[25]](#footnote-25) The thickness and multifacetedness of a Horatian satire, and above all the poet’s deep and abiding concern with what satire *is*, should be evident by now.

Like *Satires* 1.5, 1.6 and 1.9 are appealing as apparent glimpses into what we can be beguiled into imagining was Horace’s daily life. Horace devotes the sixth poem to his relationship with his patron Maecenas, recalling their introduction at the instigation of Virgil and Varius, and Horace’s ultimate entry into Maecenas’ circle a gestational nine months later (around 37 BCE). Even as Horace insists upon his abashed silence in Maecenas’ presence (*Sat*. 1.6.56–7), he also tries nonchalantly to present Maecenas, Virgil, Varius, and others as his friends. Together with satires 4 and 5, “the autobiographical poems that form the center of Horace’s first book of *Sermones*,” satire 6 serves to emphasize “the centrality of autobiography” to Roman Satire.[[26]](#footnote-26) In 1.9, meanwhile, we see the satirist, pondering verses as he wanders through the Forum, accosted by a bothersome individual apparently in search of an introduction to Maecenas. Henderson problematized this traditional reading of the poem by seeing that 1.9 may be read as “a processual journey which mediates on the key business of changing places.” As I have argued elsewhere, moreover,[[27]](#footnote-27) this poem may also be read as instantiating the dance between satiric predecessor and successor: the pest/bore can be Lucilius who perennially dogs Horace; Horace wants to be free of him yet cannot be so as long as he is writing satire.

Horace seems as absent from poems 7 and 8 as he is present in 4, 5, 6, and 9; or rather, perhaps the poems that make up *Satires* 1 each afford us views at a different facet or type of Horace, even anti-Horaces or “shadows” to accompany these.[[28]](#footnote-28) 1.7 is a short skit (only 35 lines) exploiting the fact that one party in a disagreement is surnamed Rex (“king”), another Brutus (men carrying this moniker had twice been responsible for regicide: that of Tarquinius Superbus, the seventh and final king of Rome, and that of Julius Caesar, with his apparent monarchical aspirations, in 44 BCE). The poem has not been much enjoyed or studied, though Gowers 2002 has suggested that it might be an indirect form of autobiography through its references to Philippi and proscriptions; as such, it would be more integrated into the book as a whole than it has generally been felt to be. Schlegel 1999, on the other hand, sees comment and critique of Lucilius even in 1.7 and integrates the poem into the book that way. *Satires* 1.8, meanwhile, offers up a monologue from a wooden tree-stump, now carved by the capriciousness of a carpenter not into a bench but rather into the likeness of Priapus, god of gardens (and erections), and set up as a scare-crow on the site of the eventual gardens of Maecenas on the Esquiline, still a pauper’s graveyard in the poem. The speaker of the poem has increasingly been read as a version of the poet’s persona, for example, by Sharland 2003, who traces parallels between Priapus and Horace such as the service both perform on behalf of Maecenas. It is also possible to see in Priapus, who is closely allied with Satyrs, a wink at the (false) etymology whereby *satura* was associated with these hairy, lecherous, animalistic creatures.

The relation of poems such as 1.7 and 1.8 to their book of *Satires* remains, in my view, one of the under-answered questions of the genre. Where Juvenal’s book-structures are more overt and have therefore lent themselves more readily to study and interpretation,[[29]](#footnote-29) arcs within the books of Horace, as well as within Persius’ single book, have proven more difficult to discern. Considered another way, why did these poets choose to present what purport to be coherent poetry-books comprised of the particular poems that they did? While scholars have offered convincing readings of individual poems, they have sometimes struggled to explain how they are integral to the collections as a whole, and even where they succeed in explaining a compelling connection or strand that runs the length of a book, they necessarily prioritize one connection or strand over the numerous others with which, as this brief survey shows, it coexists. This is, it should be noted, an interpretive problem that is not confined to satire: following Hellenistic practice, Latin poets turned particularly in the late Republic and Augustan period to the book form, as may be seen across genres and authors from Virgil’s *Georgics* and *Eclogues* to the love elegy of Tibullus and Propertius, and Horace’s *Odes* (lyric).

In Horace’s *Satires* 2, we observe an evolution of the poet’s persona and, with it, his interactions with his interlocutors: there is more dialogue in which the interlocutor proves a worthy adversary, to such a degree that the satirist is repeatedly shown in a negative light and even fails to participate entirely in one poem. *Satires* 2.3 and 2.7 cast Horace in the role of satiric target: he is inconsistent and hypocritical, lustful and greedy, cowardly and vain (2.3.307–13, 2.3.323–5, 2.7.22–35, 2.7.46–7, 102–4), and he makes little effort to conceal his unappealingly short temper (2.3.323–6, 2.7.35; cf. also *Epist*. 1.20.25), even acknowledging the possibility of his own “stupidity” (2.3.305, 2.7.42). He cannot deny his slave Davus’ characterization of him as unable to “bear his own company” (*non horam tecum esse potes*, 2.7.112), “use his leisure well” (*non otia recte / ponere*, 112–13), and settle his own thoughts (*iam vino quaerens, iam somno fallere curam: / frustra*, 114–15). As a result, Zetzel (1980: 71) has spoken of the “inability of [Horace’s] persona,” Freudenburg (1993: 212–23) of his “degradation,”[[30]](#footnote-30) and Gowers (2003: 85) of the “undignified caricature of the speaker” in Horace’s second book of *Satires*.[[31]](#footnote-31) Gowers (1993a: 159) is right to be even more specific in connecting these traits to “Saturnalian abuse.” The third and seventh poems of book 2 are both set during the Saturnalia, the December celebration characterized by festal license and inversion. In both, Horace reveals himself to be irascible and capricious, snapping at Damasippus to shut up and mind his own business (323–24) and threatening to have Davus, who has attempted to illuminate certain inconsistencies in his master’s character and conduct, condemned to back-breaking farm-work for his insolence (117), even though the occasion of the Saturnalia-festival should permit his slave frank speech. For Freudenburg (1993: 212), Horace’s self-abasement in *Satires* 2 is therefore also to be connected with his “sense of satire’s festival origins”—the Saturnalia but also the dramatic festivals of Old Comedy—and Sharland similarly reads 2.7 in light of Bakhtinian carnival.[[32]](#footnote-32)

*Satires* 2 begins with a conversation (which, like every poem in this book, lacks the narratorial voice omnipresent in *Satires* 1) between Horace and one Gaius Trebatius Testa, an eminent jurist. Horace purports to be distraught at the poor reception his first book of *Satires* has met with: some have found the poems of book 1 “too ferocious” (*nimis acer*), even transgressive (*ultra / legem tendere opus*), while others “think that whatever I have written is without sinews entirely” (*sine nervis altera quidquid / composui pars esse putat*) and easy to churn out (2.1.1–4). Horace is, he maintains, at a loss as to how he should proceed, since the purported bind in which he finds himself is an insoluble one: if he makes his satire harsher, those who found him too fierce already will be even more taken aback; if he makes it milder, those who found it lacking ferocity will remain unimpressed. Trebatius, whose function is to provide mock-legal counsel, advises the satirist to abandon this potentially offensive genre altogether, but Horace cannot conceive of such a thing. The second book of *Satires* thus opens with a poem that is, like 1.4 and 1.10, overtly programmatic in its concerns, and serves to reinforce Horace’s satirical persona and his relation to Lucilius (“it gives me joy to place words into verses in the Lucilian manner,” *me pedibus delectate claudere verba / Lucili ritu*, 29–30; “(I am) inferior to Lucilius in wealth and talent,” *infra Lucili censum ingeniumque*, 75) and to toy, once again, with the genre as being ever in danger of transgressing the bounds of the law. For those who know that Trebatius was a fitness fanatic and avid swimmer, moreover, the joke about swimming in the Tiber as the cure for worries/mental unrest comes alive.[[33]](#footnote-33) Above all, the opening words of *Satires* 2.1 function as a guide on how to read *Satires* 2 and how to re-read *Satires* 1. *Qua* guide, however, they are no innocent roadmap or manual, because the instructions themselves that Horace gives us about how we should read him are *themselves* part of his poetic agenda: by reading him in this (instructed) way, we miss reading him in others, and by design.

*Satires* 2, like the first book, can feel as though it struggles to hold itself together at times. The Sabine farm, the very thing Horace says he had long prayed for (*hoc erat in votis*) and that was gifted to him by Maecenas, is discussed in detail in the sixth satire, as Horace contrasts the tiresome *negotium* (“business”) of the city with the literary *otium* (“leisure”) afforded by his country retreat. The poem contains the famous fable of the town-mouse and the country-mouse that has long been among the most-read passages from the *Satires*, but that could benefit from some up-to-date interpretations and attention. The peculiar fifth poem, meanwhile, had been largely overlooked, but has attracted more attention in recent years, for example from Osgood (2012) and Yona (2018a). The poem, which probably owes much to New and Roman Comedy, presents a conversation between Ulysses/Odysseus and Tiresias set in the underworld as a burlesque of the Nekyia in *Odyssey* 11; it shows Tiresias not prophesying that Ulysses will return home to Ithaca, but rather giving a lesson on the art of *captatio*, “inheritance-hunting,”[[34]](#footnote-34) a particularly and peculiarly Roman activity. For Yona, the poem’s emphasis on flattery stands out, and he connects this poem, as he does others (see the reading suggestions at the end of this section), to writings by Philodemus of Gadara on the topic. For Osgood, *Satires* 2.5 reveals how much the Roman Satirists “are obsessed with succession,” as evident both in the topic of inheritance-hunting itself as well as in the fact that Persius and Juvenal would both also later write on the topic. As in *Satires* 1, it is clear that differing individual readings of poems in *Satires* 2 may profitably coexist. The interpretations of Yona and Osgood also show how 2.5 may be seen as integral to the *Satires* as a whole, whether through its tackling of the successor-problem or by being one of numerous points of engagement with the writings of Philodemus.

A major motif in Horace’s second book of *Satires* is food, and Gowers’ *The Loaded Table* has been instrumental in elucidating the poetic and metapoetic uses of food in comedo-satiric writing. Food is prominent throughout 2.2 (an exhortation to old-fashioned, rustic, simple living), 2.3, and 2.6, and two entire poems of the book, 2.4 and 2.8, are devoted to it as well. *Satires* 2.8 begins with Horace asking Fundanius to tell him about a dinner party hosted by one Nasidienus in honor of Maecenas, an occasion from which the poet was absent. So the collection of *Satires* ends with Horace excluded from an event for his patron, whom he opened the collection by addressing (1.1.1). The obviously nouveau riche host holds forth on the optimal provenance and recommended preparation of each dish, and the collapse of a canopy onto the assembled guests is the party’s merciful death-knell: the guests flee having tasted nothing at all and so take their revenge upon the host, who has gone to great expense to prepare an elaborate meal (93–95). In this way the poem, and with it Horace’s entire collection of *Satires*, ends in what scholars have seen as a deliberately less-than-satisfying way: following a feast that fails to fill, the reader is given an ending that does the same, and from which Horace himself is wholly absent, “the uninvited *scurra*, the hungry parasite who experiences the meal vicariously through the comic descriptions of his friend.”[[35]](#footnote-35) Having made our way through over 2,000 lines of fairly challenging verse, we might well expect a decent ending, but there is no *conviva satur*, “satisfied dinner-guest”[[36]](#footnote-36) here. Arguably we should already have grown accustomed to the notion that Horace would deliberately frustrate his reader’s desires and leave us with a concluding poem that raises more questions than it answers. Nevertheless, the scholarly pendulum may have swung too far in favor of seeing uncertainty and instability as the defining characteristics of satire, Horatian and otherwise, since we can easily object that we read these poems because they are meaningful to us in some way, not because their meaning cannot be pinned down at all. Although there can be no neat boundaries, and certainly no neat conclusions, in this genre that builds its very substance from performing a (mock-)tortured omphaloskepsis about its own material, form, limits, and whether it even counts as poetry, *Satires* 2.8 has also been seen as a type of beginning: Horace “promises to move on to something else, a new genre untried by any Roman poet before him,”[[37]](#footnote-37) since for the Romans, the fall of the curtain (the collapsing canopy of lines 54–55) marked the beginning, not the end, of a play.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Despite our lack of certainty as to what exactly the tenor of Lucilian satire would have been—one can only reconstruct so much from fragments—certain clear differences emerge between Lucilius and Horace. The Horatian satirical persona does not enjoy the unfettered freedom of speech that he paints his predecessor as having been able to make use of, and his satire is often described as mild compared to that of Lucilius, who “salted” the city (*sale multo / urbem defricuit*, *Sat*. 1.10.3–4). Yet we should not believe, even if the poet seems to want us to, that Horace really was as he appears in his satirical verses; indeed, the fact that he alone among the satirists also wrote in other genres allows for a salutary comparison of personae.[[39]](#footnote-39) Rather, the quality and tone of Horace’s satire and the form his satirical self takes are two sides of the same coin, and both are the result of considered artistic choices by the poet. Moreover, to speak satirically from a vantage point of apparent weakness facilitates its own kind of strength: through a particular form of *captatio benevolentiae*, readers find themselves better disposed toward this satirist, with all his inadequacies of physique and temperament, than they would be toward one broadcasting arrogance and superiority. Accordingly, they are more likely to prove receptive to his lessons. This “lowly poet,” as Rosen has shown with regard to both ancient comedy and satire, could rise to the top precisely because his lower status invited greater laughter, which therefore brought greater success.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Persius, too, participates in satire’s “self-fashioning”—an act that Reckford (2009: 2) sees as being an integral part of “all satire,” regardless of its language or time-period. Horace, having inherited a free-speaking, Republican satire from Lucilius, made it milder in a conscious aesthetic choice. By contrast, Persius, writing under the emperor Nero, who is alleged to have murdered his mother and fiddled while Rome burned,[[41]](#footnote-41) adopted isolation as his pose. Although “Nero’s existence shadows” Persius’ book, Bartsch is right in following Freudenburg (2001: 45–46) to say that “to look too hard for Nero is to forget that the *Satires* are about *us*” (Bartsch 2015: 9–10). That he cultivated a pose of isolation is the long-established adage about Persius:[[42]](#footnote-42) it is the impression his satire and his satirical persona seek overtly to cultivate and even in the major recent studies it remains fundamental to the scholars’ approaches. Reckford (2009), for example, titles his prologue, “In Search of Persius” to convey how he is “tracking this elusive, especially private author.” Persius rants from the very start about being misunderstood and unappreciated, saying that his readership is to be “either two people or no-one” (*vel duo vel nemo*, 1.3) and that he is forced—borrowing the tale of Midas’ barber—to bury his complaints about the world in his book (1.119–21). As in the myth, however, where the reeds whisper the king’s secret (that Midas has donkey’s ears), “the burial is a sham” and “the book lets out the secret.”[[43]](#footnote-43) After all, people did read and continue to read Persius’ satirical verses, and if they do so out loud, as the ancient Romans did, so much the better in terms of airing the book’s secrets. Although he took up Horace’s hand-wringing about whether his verses count as poetry (see especially the choliambic prologue to the six satires), as a wealthy equestrian from an old Etruscan family Persius could hardly hope to outdo Horace’s professed lack of socio-political standing and the attitude it engendered within him as a satirist in quite the same terms. Persius’ satire, marked by withdrawal, therefore comes across as a curious amalgam of Lucilian confidence and Horatian lack of confidence.

Throughout the first satire, Persius’ target is contemporary literary and moral decline (cf. 1.103–4), as he indignantly splutters against an unidentified (and unidentifiable) mass of writers: they write affected (Graecizing and archaizing) verses, deliver readings of this poetry in a manner intended to stimulate sexually their fawning audience, and pretend to invite honest criticism of their work while in reality desiring only praise. These works exist, naturally, in opposition to Persius’ own; for the first satire, as Bramble’s still-relevant 1974 study compellingly details, is programmatic in the vein of Horace’s *Satires* 1.4, 1.10, and 2.1. The overall theme is one that appears regularly in poetry, and that has the ability to be self-referential and self-reflexive: Terence in his *Hecyra*-prologues laments the poor reception of this play; Horace, perhaps looking back to Aristophanes (*Eq*. 514–17),[[44]](#footnote-44) complains about how difficult satire and comedy are to write (*Epist*. 2.1.168–70, 250–59, *Sat*. 1.10.1–19, 50–76) and that his poetry, particularly in its *studied* simplicity, has been thoroughly misunderstood (*Sat*. 2.1.1–5); and Horace’s *Ars Poetica* may be read as a stark warning to overconfident amateurs with poetic aspirations and minimal training that this path is not for them.[[45]](#footnote-45)

It has long been recognized that Persius’ first satire co-opts and refashions material from Horace’s hexameters, and not only his *Satires*. Bartsch even suggests that Persius’ satires “daringly and deliberately revise the most influential programmatic statement of the Roman literary scene, Horace’s *Ars Poetica*.”[[46]](#footnote-46) In Persius’ second satire may be found nostalgia for the purer religious practices of times past (59–60, 73–5), for the satirist Persius is, like Horace, an old soul (and equally grey-haired, 1.9–11). He has been rightly described as a “young doctrinaire,” an “angry young man,” and a “scorner of the present day”[[47]](#footnote-47)—a deliberately “one-dimensional”[[48]](#footnote-48) self-representation that makes angry yet resigned ranting a hallmark of his satire. Persius’ anger is palpable in his first satire, where he adopts a pose and target somewhat distinct from Horace’s (the specific shortcomings of contemporary literary figures and trends), while the second satire begins with verses that resemble a Horatian ode translated to hexameters (“Count with a finer pebble this day, Macrinus, which with its whiteness means that the years are slipping by for you. Pour a libation to your guardian spirit,” *Hunc, Macrine, diem numera meliore lapillo, / qui tibi labentis apponet candidus annos. / funde merum genio*; compare, e.g., *Odes* 1.4, 1.9, 1.11, which combine the drinking of wine with the uncertainty and brevity of life). The second satire is an excoriation of the way in which prayer is used by some people to demand material benefits for themselves alone, as Persius advocates (again in markedly Horatian terms) for a return to traditional, rustic offerings made in the right spirit.

So Persius’ short book is modelled significantly on the satirical collection of Horace and, with it, that of Lucilius—unavoidable, given his need to make clear that his writings were to be understood as being in the same genre as theirs. Like his predecessors (compare Horace’s *Epistles* and Lucilius’ epistolary satires, e.g., book 5 satire 1), Persius writes a poem in epistolary form: satire 6 is a letter to Bassus at his Sabine retreat. Moreover, Persius’ final poem ends pointedly with the speaker threatening to use up all of his money, rejecting “his heir’s pleas to hoard it intact”[[49]](#footnote-49) as a legacy for him, in what Reckford (2009: 144) has read as “a beautiful last tribute to Horace, an acknowledgement by his prodigal heir of the rich inheritance that he has used so passionately and well.” Thus Persius ends his book by engaging with its fundamental and abiding successor-problem and suggesting that after this, satire has been all used up. In these and other ways, the tension and tightrope-walk between successor and predecessors(s) remains a defining characteristic of Roman verse Satire in the hands of Persius.

Like Horace, too, Persius has one poem that paints him in a rather negative light (satire 3), one poem that is largely handed over to named speakers that are not the poet (satire 4), and an additional poem that is, in the manner of *Satires* 1.4, 1.10, and 2.1, overtly programmatic (5). The third satire begins with late-morning light blazing in through a window to illuminate a still-snoring figure; the student-figure is suffering the aftereffects of drinking late the night before, and may be read to be Persius himself, who spends much of the poem being harangued for his lapse and, pointedly, for his failure to write by a teacher-figure (perhaps an older version of the student himself).[[50]](#footnote-50) The dialogic fourth satire shows Socrates and Alcibiades in conversation:[[51]](#footnote-51) Persius’ own voice is almost wholly absent at the beginning (a surprise after we have heard him speaking so stridently in the first person for the first three satires), though he returns around halfway through the poem to deliver his message: that people are very alert to the failures and successes of others, and that few have put in the work to scrutinize themselves to the same degree—a key feature of Persian satire being that the reader is repeatedly exhorted, “descend into yourself” (Bartsch 2015: 10). The moral underpinnings resemble those of Horace, *Satires* 1.3, while the structure of the poem calls to mind *Satires* 2.5 (a conversation between Tiresias and Ulysses, cast in Roman terms). The fifth satire opens with a striking and grotesque image of the hundred voices, mouths and tongues that poets demand as they produce “flour-balls of robust poetry” (*robusti carminis offas*, 5.5) that are offered up to actors for ingestion/production. With these, Persius contrasts his own slimmer, common fare, in terms that are both Horatian and Callimachean, and he goes on to converse upon the Stoic way of living in imagined dialogue with his Stoic tutor, Lucius Annaeus Cornutus. Bartsch 2015 works to show both how Persius repeats traditional Stoic material while introducing his own developments to it, and how Persius’ use of metaphor, in particular alimentary and bodily metaphor, has been undervalued in its “originality” and as the “framework of his literary project” (10).

A key feature of Persian satire, evident throughout his six satires and the choliambic prologue to the group, is its difficulty and its apparently “deliberate obscurity,”[[52]](#footnote-52) notable even in a literary genre whose linguistic difficulty is often remarked upon. Bartsch (2015: 3) adduces as evidence for Persius’ difficulty the existence of Kissel’s 884-page commentary (1990), necessary to “elucidate less than 700 lines of verse.” Despite this, however, Persius himself stresses the simplicity of his language: he employs “the words of the toga” (*verba togae*, i.e., Roman words, 5.14) and his satirical fare is “plebeian feasting” (*plebeia prandia*, 5.18), phrases that denote everyday, colloquial usage. The difficulty in Persius’ Latin, then, may be seen to lie rather in the combination of such ordinary words through a procedure he describes as *iunctura acris*,[[53]](#footnote-53) “harsh joining” (5.14). For Bartsch (2015: 7), the words are Persius’ declaration of his “dedication to a program of difficult metaphor,” while Reckford (2009: 9) shifts the question from the poet’s linguistic difficulty to a more holistic one: “Let me ask not why Persius is so difficult, but why he is so *demanding*.” Persius’ method of the *iunctura acris*—which itself remakes Horace’s *callida iunctura*, the “clever joining” recommended for making a word seem new (*AP* 47–8), and which therefore performs in the process its own *iunctura acris*—thus produces phrases comprised of words that are in and of themselves easily intelligible but that, when combined, become unprecedented and hard-to-construe. So *oscitat hesternum*, for example, “he yawns a thing of yesterday” (3.59), describes the student-figure’s hangover and the smell he emits in satire 3 as he yawns. Individual words coined by Persius have also occasioned head scratching: *semipaganus* in his choliambic prologue has been understood to mean “half-rustic” (rusticity being either a positive or a negative attribute), “half-citizen,” or “semi-poet,” an amalgam of claims about the affiliation of satire with the countryside and the status of satire as not-quite-poetry.[[54]](#footnote-54) Another coinage, *caprificus* (1.25), “wild/goat fig-tree,” describes how this “sterile” (Bramble 1974: 94) tree bursts forth from the liver or innards in an image that conveys a person bursting with the misplaced desire to show off what he has learned. Persius’ satire treads, by design, the boundary between linguistic inventiveness and unintelligibility,[[55]](#footnote-55) and he incorporates into his verses a number of original or merely exceedingly rare and not traditionally poetic terms such as *obba*, “vessel” (5.148), and *sesquipede*, “a foot and a half” (1.57). Like Horace, who himself followed Lucilius in this regard, Persius also delights in the potential of satire to use lower-register words: where Horace had used *caballus* in place of *equus*, Persius audaciously and irreverently describes Hippocrene (“horse-fountain”), the spring on Mount Helicon sacred to the Muses, as “the horsey spring” (*fonte . . . caballino*, prol. 1).

Juvenal ratchets up Persius’ anger, present in spluttering form but not sustained throughout, to produce a satire that, when we first encounter it, is marked above all by rage––indeed, Keane (2015) has aptly dubbed book 1 “the anger games.” As Nappa (2018: 16–17) puts it, “For Juvenal, there is no moral lapse short of absolute depravity,” and the humor in Juvenal is located in the “melding of absurdity and earnestness,” all conveyed with “feverish energy” to his satirical project. Rather than viewing the reader as someone to be convinced of the rightness of the satirist’s position, Juvenal appears to begin from the premise that anyone reading him by definition agrees with him; or, as Henderson (1995: 101) phrases it, Juvenal “position[s] his reader as always already reaching toward releasing the thoughts which Juvenal ‘looses’ for them.” Juvenal lived under a series of emperors, including the autocratic and authoritarian Domitian, who was eventually assassinated by court officials,[[56]](#footnote-56) and recently Geue has connected the “two dynasties of two [that] collapsed in spectacularly terrifying climaxes (along with some hairy moments on the lead-ups)” since the time of Persius with the “heightened presence of grave danger” to Juvenal’s “neurotic” satire with its “nervy humour” (2017: 36–38).

Although Lucilius is the predecessor to whom Juvenal most explicitly looks back, the Republican *libertas* that Lucilius was able to exercise was not available in its Lucilian form to Juvenal, as it had also not been available to Horace and Persius. Juvenal’s innovative solution to the post-Lucilian problem of diminished freedom of speech is to exist outside time: he concludes his programmatic debut satire by declaring his intention to attack only the dead (1.171), resulting in a satire that is oxymoronically “retrospective.”[[57]](#footnote-57) In sharp contrast to Horace, moreover, who invites us to get to know him, Juvenal tells his reader virtually nothing about himself: he exists as a set of opinions rather than as the flesh-and-blood versions the earlier satirists make a point of presenting of themselves. These qualities form the basis of Geue’s 2017 study, *Juvenal and the Poetics of Anonymity*, in which he argues that Juvenal deliberately adopted an approach of anonymity (even going so far as to dub the author Anon) in an era in which visibility equated to vulnerability. In this, Geue builds upon Uden’s *The Invisible Satirist*, and both show how Juvenal sought, for the first time, to detach satire from the figure of the satirist.

Juvenal’s 16 poems (if he wrote more, they do not survive) were published in groups as five books, and while we cannot say for certain how Lucilius operated, Juvenal certainly makes more intensive use of the book as a means of communicating a program than Horace or Persius did. Scholarship on him has therefore often concentrated on individual books or the relationship among the books,[[58]](#footnote-58) with the first two having received the most attention, although scholarship in recent decades has turned its eye to books three through five.[[59]](#footnote-59) Book 1 contains satires 1 through 5; book 2 consists of the single, almost 700-line satire 6; book 3 has satires 7–9; book 4, satires 10–12; and book 5, satires 13–16.

The first poem begins as the author means to continue in his first book: in a tone of loud, ranting outrage that is his response to having been wronged. The initial assault the poet has suffered, he tells us, is being subjected to readings of others’ writings. This, however, leads to complaints about improper gender roles (an effeminate eunuch takes a wife, a woman hunts a boar, 22–23) and about foreigners, perhaps ex-slaves, amassing great wealth that even grants them equestrian standing (24–29). This litany of assorted affronts builds to the statement that “it is hard *not* to write satire” (*difficile est saturam non scribere*, 30), the idea of the satirist as always responding to external stimuli rearing its head again. In a rare but not very informative glimpse at himself, Juvenal suggests that he would like to stand at the crossroads and fill his capacious notebooks with responses to what he sees (*nonne licet medio ceras implere capaces / quadrivio*, 63–64): a criminal carried on a litter (64–68) and a woman intending to poison her husband (69–72) are presented as offending exempla. Another glimpse at Juvenal himself comes in satire 3 where one Umbricius, whose name suggests “shadow guy” and who sounds remarkably like the satirist, prepares to leave Rome (satires 1 and 2).[[60]](#footnote-60) Juvenal’s approach is not to describe his compositional process or attitude toward writing or himself, then, but rather his rage (1.45), from which his writings in turn spring forth: “if natural ability fails me, my indignation will produce verses” (*si natura negat, facit indignatio versum*, 79). Anger is thus the defining feature of Juvenal’s first book—anger at everything that appears to the satirist not to be consonant with traditional Roman values, the search for which Larmour 2016 has seen as a driving force behind his satire.[[61]](#footnote-61)

In addition to financially and socially successful foreigners, sexually immoral conduct by both men and women, greed and theft, spending to excess (especially on food), and general vice and depravity (the dominant targets of satire 1), Juvenal rails at effeminacy and passive homosexual behavior among men (satire 2); bemoans the difficulty of doing well and getting ahead in life in a Rome rendered unnavigable by the influx of grasping foreigners willing to do whatever is required for social and financial success, not to mention its many hazards and continual noise that prevents sleep for all but the wealthiest (satire 3); presents a well-to-do foreigner, Crispinus, in a poem that excoriates culinary excess (satire 4); and describes a dinner party at which a superior menu and an inferior menu are served in parallel, exemplifying the breakdown of social relations between patrons and clients (satire 5). In short, a collage of material that will be familiar from earlier (as well as later) satire, though the tone is all Juvenal’s own.

Some recent scholarly efforts have tried to uncover what Juvenal’s apparent misogyny, xenophobia, and general misanthropy might really be about. Umurhan 2018, for example, reading Juvenalian satire in its historical context, connects Juvenal’s anger toward foreigners with the unprecedented immigration and globalization of his day. So in the third satire, pollution flows from the East into Rome (3.62-65):

iam pridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes

et linguam et mores et cum tibicine chordas

obliquas nec non gentilia tympana secum

vexit et ad circum iussas prostare puellas,

A long time ago already the Syrian Orontes flowed down into the Tiber

and brought with it language and customs and slanted chords together

with their pipe-player and national tambourines and young girls taught

to put themselves on offer near the Circus.

One of the most striking images of the second satire, however, is not of Rome as a place that is being corrupted by foreign influence and Eastern customs, but rather as a place that has already been so thoroughly corrupted that it is the source from which degraded behavior flows outwards to more traditional foreign locales (2.159–70). This is, perhaps, the most astute assessment of multiculturalism or transnationalism to be found in Roman Satire, in the sense that cross-cultural communication is never simplistically mono-directional. Recent years and decades have also witnessed the growing recognition within the field of Classics that the cultural contacts of the Mediterranean world extended far beyond Greece and the Roman Empire to encompass the Near East, India, and even China. Searching for material that has contributed to Roman Satire from beyond the Italian peninsula and Greece could prove fertile ground and would also dovetail nicely with the scholarship on bilingualism and multilingualism generally that has proliferated in recent years,[[62]](#footnote-62) and I would expect to see more publications building upon the existing work in this area.

Anger remains a defining feature of the second book, too: satire 6, perhaps modelled on poems in Lucilius’ seventh and eighth books and reprising some material from Horace’s *Satires* 1.2, is a monumental, sustained attack not so much against women, as it is often described, but more specifically against *wives*, as deftly captured in the title of Braund’s 1992 article, “Juvenal—Misogynist or Misogamist?” Braund further argues that the poem takes the form of a “rhetorical set piece” exercise in which Juvenal maintains that, whether adulterous, intellectual, domineering, mannish, unattractive or attractive, all wives are a source of misery. The study of gender may seem to have been rather under-represented in scholarship on Roman Satire, but this reflects the genre’s general disinterest in women: women simply do not inhabit the world of the satirist to any great degree.[[63]](#footnote-63) The study of *sexuality*, however, has proven more fertile ground, and the scholarship on sexual aggression in these poems is substantial.[[64]](#footnote-64) Nevertheless, Henderson 1989 is right to stress that satire’s “assured operation of that logic of negation by which Woman is written out of the human reckoning” (60) is itself a form, a powerful form, of (non-)engagement with women and with gender, through which the satirists are able to craft their “phallogocentric” (71) genre. Along similar lines, for Nappa (2018: 16), “the fact that the satirist is specifically characterized as a man” means that Juvenal “is most outraged when manhood is threatened or when he perceives threats, real or imagined, to manhood as traditionally understood.”[[65]](#footnote-65)

As though the first two books, with their six poems, had burned through Juvenal’s rage and all the possible targets for it, the three later books (poems 7–16) are marked by a different tenor, as the title of Braund’s 1988 monograph, *Beyond Rage*, captures. Keane 2015 similarly argues for emotional range and emotion itself, beyond mere anger, as a “central and programmatic Juvenalian theme” (1), so engaging with the much larger matter of whether satirists (or writers or artists more generally) must themselves feel emotion, or whether their role is to engender an emotional response in the reader/viewer. I would expect to see more scholarly attention in the coming years to emotion in aesthetics, particularly as it intersects with cognitive science approaches to the human experience, which have been on the ascendant across humanities fields.

Juvenal’s seventh satire takes as its topic literary patronage and begins on a hopeful note, praising the emperor for the attention he seems ready to give to poets and stressing that writers must be free from material worries in order to write well; the end of the poem, however, is marked by a tired cynicism about trying to teach rhetoric to the untalented sons of the wealthy. The topic may be seen as setting up the central poem of the third book, satire 8, which pits the high social and financial position into which a person may be born against his moral corruption and, conversely, the talent and effort that may be evinced by those born into lower stations. As Braund (2004: 321) puts it, “this new Juvenal is clearly a nihilist with an acute sense of humour,” for the poem ends, rather epigrammatically, by pointing out that all Romans are equally unpedigreed in their descent from at best shepherds and at worst the ignominious asylum of criminals and runaways set up by Romulus. Juvenal’s greater detachment (the Uden-Geue invisibility and anonymity) and his pose of commenting on Rome more wryly and from a distance (rather than from the imagined crossroads of satire 1) is evident in satire 9 as well, which reprises a theme from earlier poems to portray a patron-client relationship that is broken, now in a novel way: Naevolus is forced to pleasure both his patron and the patron’s wife and has fathered the patron’s child, and his patron adds insult to injury in being stingy with his financial and material support for his client. Although the Juvenalian persona appears to have mellowed in this third book, as Keane (2015: 87) points out, “each poem features a character(s) who reacts to change with indignation, symbolizing the satiric anger that Juvenal once suggested was the genre’s proper mode,” thus setting up a contrast with what is now “the satirist’s own unemotional voice and subtle wit.” The coexistence of these two emotional registers has the advantage of allowing readers to choose which of the two modes of satire they prefer.

Juvenal’s fourth book opens on a theme reminiscent of Horace’s *Satires* 1.1–3 by musing on human discontentment and greed before introducing, and endorsing, Democritus’ response to outrages: the philosopher laughs where another (Heraclitus) might cry. Given the mental and physical infirmities that many suffer particularly as they age, all one can reasonably desire is “a sound mind in a sound body” (*mens sana in corpore sano*, 10.356).[[66]](#footnote-66) Satire 11 continues the Horatian tone of 10 by contrasting what people want (elaborate meals, acquired even by indebting oneself) with what they really need (simple food that is sufficient and appetizing because it is traditional, enjoyed in the right company). Satire 12 gives us a brief glimpse inside Juvenal’s private social world as he prays for the safe return of his friend Catullus from a sea-journey (while also taking the opportunity to criticize the practice of legacy-hunting, as in Horace, *Satires* 2.5). While the fourth book has long been described as “‘laughing,’ ‘tranquil’ satire,” Keane 2015: 117 points up the clash between “the tranquil man and the satirist,” noting that Democritus’ “mocking laughter does not stand for true tranquility.”

Having tried on the Lucilian persona (books 1 and 2) and dabbled in Horatian themes (book 4),[[67]](#footnote-67) Juvenal rounds out his oeuvre with a book (5) on a number of topics that, although consistently engaging with philosophy (Keane 2007), are often viewed as not cohering into a book, an impression strengthened by the incomplete state of the final poem. A mock-consolation to a very angry Calvinus on a loan that has not been repaid, throughout which Juvenal takes pains to remind his addressee that people are by and large not good (satire 13), is followed by a satire describing at great length how parents teach their children the wrong values and practices (14). In both poems, Juvenal speaks as an elder voice of wisdom and experience, a voice that seems natural in this last of his five books, although we should understand that he “purposely assumes the persona of an old man.”[[68]](#footnote-68) The fifteenth satire is quite unlike any of Juvenal’s others, not only in its arresting material, but also in the use of a single vividly drawn extended anecdote to show human beings’ anger and lack of gentleness toward one another: an incident of brutal cannibalism among two Egyptian tribes. Geue, who is interested in reading Juvenal against his “political background” (2017: 9), connects the poem with Egyptomania under Hadrian, contending that “*this* backdrop creates special conditions for *this* special satire,” even as he generally reads “aporia” regarding “*who* Juvenal was and *when* he flourished” as “a disruptive aim of the text itself” (6). Juvenal’s fifth book, and with it his corpus of satires, concludes with a poem on the benefits of the military way of life that breaks off at line 60. While the overall thrust of the poem is hard to pin down from what remains of it, and while the poem’s topic is not a usual one in Roman Satire (for Keane 2007: 31, evidence that “Juvenal never ceased to experiment with new possibilities for his genre”), satire 16 reflects (as all satire does by its nature) issues of contemporary concern and engages again with the expanding, globalized empire that Juvenal inhabited. The non-ending of Juvenal’s oeuvre, reminiscent of Horace’s *Satires* 2.8, may also participate in the tradition of deliberately unfinished works, as has been suggested of Ovid’s *Fasti*, Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, Statius’ *Achilleid*, and others, as Juvenal “aborts his own text to show how limiting – and serious – [the] curbs on speech really were” (Geue 2017: 291–308). So the genre of four, by its own self-definition, closes with a nod to Lucilian *libertas* one final time, *libertas* here taking the form of abrupt silence.

Further reading and references:

The following books, book-chapters, and articles on particular aspects of the satirists and on individual poems, many of them cited here, provide a useful starting-point for further exploration:

Anderson, W. S. 1966. “Persius and the Rejection of Society.” *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Wilhelm-Pieck-Univ. Rostock Gesellch- & sprachwiss. R.* 15: 409–16.

Bartsch, Shadi. 2015. *Persius: A Study in Food, Philosophy, and the Figural*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Bramble, J. C. 1974. *Persius and the Programmatic Satire: A Study in Form and Imagery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Braund, Susanna Morton. 1992. “Juvenal—Misogynist or Misogamist?” *JRS* 82: 71–86.

Braund, Susanna Morton (ed.). 1989. *Satire and Society in Ancient Rome*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press.

Braund, Susanna Morton. 1988. *Beyond Anger: A Study of Juvenal’s Third Book of Satires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Breed, Brian W. 2018. “Lucilius and his Books.” In Breed, Keitel, and Wallace (eds.): 57–78.

Breed, Brian W., Elizabeth Keitel, and Rex Wallace (eds.). 2018. *Lucilius and Satire in Second-Century BC Rome*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Caston, Ruth Rothaus. 1997. “The Fall of the Curtain (Horace *S*. 2.8).” *TAPA* 127: 233–56.

Citroni, Mario. 2000. “The Memory of Philippi in Horace and the Interpretation of Epistle 1.20.23.” *CJ* 96.1: 27–56.

Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 2009–10. “Frogs Songs: Literary Reception of Old Greek Comedy in Rome.” *Ordia Prima* 8–9: 235–55.

Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 2009. “Old Frog Songs: Four Points on the Roman Aristophanes.” *mediAzioni* 6: 1–22.

Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 2001. *La satira e il poeta: Orazio tra Epodi e Sermones*. Pisa: Giardini.

Dessen, C. S. 1968. *Iunctura callidus acri: A Study of Persius’ Satires*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Dufallo, Basil. 2015. “Publicizing political authority in Horace’s *Satires*, Book 1: the sacral and the demystified.” *CP* 110.4: 313–32.

DuQuesnay, I. M. Le M. 1984. “Horace and Maecenas: The Propaganda Value of *Sermones* 1.” In Tony Woodman and David West (eds.), *Poetry and Politics in the Age of Augustus*: 19–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ferriss-Hill, Jennifer L. 2020. “Persius’ Nocturnal Inspiration in the Light of Day.” In James Ker and Antje Wessels (eds.), *The Values of Nighttime in Classical Antiquity: Between Dusk and Dawn* (Penn-Leiden Colloquium on Ancient Values, University of Pennsylvania, June 14–16, 2018): 308–34. Leiden: Brill.

Ferriss-Hill, Jennifer L. 2011. “A Stroll with Lucilius: Horace, *Satires* 1.9 Reconsidered.” *AJP* 132.3: 429–55.

Fiske, George Converse. 1920. *Lucilius and Horace: A Study in the Classical Theory of Imitation*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin.

Fiske, George Converse. 1913. “Lucilius, the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, and Persius,” *HSCP* 24: 1–36.

Flintoff, T. E. S. 1990. “Juvenal’s Fourth Satire.” In Francis Cairns and Malcolm Heath (eds.), *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar*, Sixth Volume: Roman poetry and drama, Greek epic, comedy, rhetoric: 121–37. Leeds: F. Cairns.

Forsyth, Phyllis Young. 1976. “Generational Conflict in Persius.” In Stephen Bertman (ed.), *The Conflict of Generations in Ancient Greece and Rome*: 211–20. Amsterdam: Grüner.

Freudenburg, Kirk. 2001. *Satires of Rome: Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Freudenburg, Kirk. 1993. *The Walking Muse: Horace on the Theory of Satire*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Freudenburg, Kirk, Andrea Cucchiarelli, and Alessandro Barchiesi, eds. 2007. *Musa pedestre: Storia e interpretazione della satira in Roma antica*. Rome: Carocci.

Geue, Tom. 2017. *Juvenal and the Poetics of Anonymity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goh, Ian. 2018. “Peacocks, Pikes and Parasites: Lucilius and the Discourse of Luxury.” In Breed, Keitel, and Wallace (eds.): 255–78.

Gold, Barbara K. 2012. “Juvenal: The Idea of the Book.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 97–112.

Gowers, Emily. 2002. “Blind Eyes and Cut Throats: Amnesia and Silence in Horace *Satires* 1.7.” *CP* 97.2: 145–61.

Gowers, Emily. 1993a. “Horace, *Satires* 1.5: An Inconsequential Journey.” *PCPS* 39: 48–66.

Henderson, John. 1993. “Be Alert (Your Country Needs Lerts): Horace, *Satires* 1.9.” *PCPS* 39: 67–93.

Henderson, John. 1989. “Satire Writes ‘Woman’: Gendersong.” *PCPS* 35: 50–80.

Henderson, John. 1991. “Persius’ Didactic Satire: the Pupil as Teacher.” *Ramus* 20.2: 123–48.

Hooley, Dan. 2012a. “Imperial Satire Reiterated: Late Antiquity through the Twentieth Century.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 337–62.

Hooley, Dan. 1997. *The Knotted Thong: Structures of Mimesis in Persius*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Hooley, Dan. 1984. “*Mutatis Mutandis*: Imitations of Horace in Persius’ First Satire.” *Arethusa* 17.1: 81–95.

Johnson, Timothy S. 2011. *Horace’s Iambic Criticism: Casting Blame (iambikē poiēsis)*. Leiden: Brill.

Jones, Frederick. 2007. *Juvenal and the Satiric Genre*. London: Duckworth.

Keane, Catherine. 2015. *Juvenal and the Satiric Emotions*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Keane, Catherine. 2006. *Figuring Genre in Roman Satire*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Larmour, David. 2016. *The Arena of Satire: Juvenal’s Search for Rome* (Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 52). Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Miller, Paul Allen. 2010. “Persius, Irony, and Truth.” *AJP* 131.2: 233–58.

Morford, Mark. 2001. “*Sum petulanti splene: cachinno*: The Humor of Persius.” *CB* 77.1: 35–49.

Nappa, Christopher. 2018. *Making Men Ridiculous: Juvenal and the Anxieties of the Individual*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Oliensis, Ellen. 1998. *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Plaza, Maria. 2006. *The Function of Humour in Roman Verse Satire: Laughing and Lying*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Powell, J. G. F. 1999. “Stylistic Registers in Juvenal.” In J. N. Adams and R. G. Mayer (eds.), *Aspects of the Language of Latin Poetry*: 311–34. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Powell, J. G. F. 1999. “Persius’ First Satire: A Re-Examination.” In Tony Woodman and Jonathan Powell (eds.), *Author and Audience in Latin Literature*: 150–172. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reckford, Kenneth. J. 2009. *Recognizing Persius*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Relihan, Joel C. 1989. “The Confessions of Persius.” *ICS* 14: 145–67.

Richlin, Amy. 1983. *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor.* New Haven; London: Yale University Press.

Rosen, Ralph. 2012. “Satire in the Republic: From Lucilius to Horace.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 19–40.

Rosen, Ralph. 2007. *Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sharland, Suzanne. 2011. “Ghostly guests and venomous snakes: traces of civil war in Horace, *Satires* 2.8.” *Acta Classica* 54: 79–100.

Sharland, Suzanne. 2005. “Saturnalian satire: proto-carnivalesque reversals and inversions in Horace, *Satire* 2.7.” *Acta Classica*, 48: 103–20.

Sharland, Suzanne. 2003. “Priapus’ Magic Marker: Literary Aspects of Horace, *Satire* 1.8.” *Acta Classica* 46: 97–109.

Schlegel, Catherine. 2010. “Horace and the Satirist’s Mask: Shadowboxing with Lucilius.” In Davis (ed.): 253–70.

Schlegel, Catherine. 2005. *Satire and the Threat of Speech: Horace, Satires, Book 1*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Schlegel, Catherine. 1999. “Horace, *Satires* 1.7: Satire as Conflict Irresolution.” *Arethusa* 32.2: 337–52.

Schmitz, Christine. 2000. *Das Satirische in Juvenals Satiren*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Sommerstein, Alan. 2011. “*Hinc omnis pendet*?: Old Comedy and Roman Satire.” *CW* 105.1: 25–38.

Turpin, William. 1998. “The Epicurean Parasite: Horace, Satires 1.1–3.” *Ramus* 27.2: 127–40.

Tzounakas, Spyridon. 2005. “Persius on his Predecessors: A Re-Examination.” *CQ* 55.2: 559–71.

Uden, James. 2015. *The Invisible Satirist: Juvenal and Second-Century Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Umurhan, Osman. 2018. *Juvenal’s Global Awareness: Circulation, Connectivity, and Empire* (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies). London; New York: Routledge.

​Weeda, Leendert. 2019. *Horace’s Sermones Book 1: Credentials for Maecenas*. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter.

Witke, Charles. 1970. *Latin Satire: The Structure of Persuasion*. Leiden: Brill.

Yona, Sergio. 2018a. “A Manual for Flatterers, a Proof of Candor: Philodemus’ *On Flattery* and Horace’s *Satires* 2.5.” *AJP* 139.4: 605–40.

*S****ermo* and *Satura***

Keane (2002a: 11) has spoken of how “perhaps more than other genres, satire invites readers to scrutinize its name as a key to its nature.” Roman Satire had two terms by which its poets (and their readers) referred to the verses, each describing a distinct though equally salient aspect of the genre. The first of these terms, *sermo*, means “conversation,” and well describes this polyphonous genre and its poet’s engagement with the numerous interlocutors and addressees that populate his verses, with his reader, and with the world at large. It can also encompass the sustained conversation he engages in with his predecessor(s) and the ongoing conversations with the other genres that he draws from for his verses. The scholiast Porphyrio already saw the similarities between Horace’s satirical and epistolary hexameters, describing the former as a conversation (*sermo*) with someone who is present and the latter as a conversation with someone who is absent.[[69]](#footnote-69) Thus, although *sermo* could be and was used broadly to denote any of Horace’s hexameters,[[70]](#footnote-70) Horace nevertheless, following Lucilius’ introduction of the term into the genre, appears to have titled his books of verse satires *Sermones*. Keane (2018: 222) has also noted the “very strong evidence that many of Lucilius’ poems consisted of staged exchanges,” adding that “this form of *sermo* is one of the predominant actions, if not *the* predominant action,” in Lucilius’ books 26–30.

The title of *Sermones* for what we generally refer to as Horace’s *Satires* is apt, for the first poem of the first book opens with the voice of the satirist asking Maecenas, no less, why it is that no man is happy with his lot in life (*Sat*. 1.1.1–3). Further voices quickly intrude when a soldier, merchant, farmer, and lawyer argue, until Jupiter finally interrupts them (*Sat*. 1.1.4–22). So Horace makes evident at the start of his satiric program the interlocutor’s malleability, his only momentary existence, and the curious combination of a strong, convincingly independent voice with a figure that nevertheless remains fully under the poet’s control. Also characteristic is the interlocutor’s general dimness. This is, it should be noted, all very much within the scope of what we would expect from a book called *Sermones*, the “connotations” of which are “far more sociable and unthreatening” than those of *Saturae*, even as it is “itself a way of not saying *Saturae*.”[[71]](#footnote-71) Having thus established at the outset of *Satires* 1.1 that conversation will be the shape of the genre in the hands of this, its second practitioner, Horace continues to make use of the many possibilities afforded by the form throughout his two books: an interlocutor, (mostly) second person, is conjured up wherever necessary to utter commonly held sentiments that are generally anathema to the satirist, who, by the very act of replying, renders satire *sermo*. The presence of such speakers, who exist to make points that could have been made without their presence, gives to Roman Satire its distinctive texture and accounts for much of its feeling of immediacy. Frequently, too, there is an observable blurring of identities between a second person addressed directly and the putative addressee of a poem (who may, as in the case of Maecenas, be illustrious). Horace often exploits the possibilities of this, inviting his readers to laugh at others, at themselves (uncomfortably), and even the illustrious addressee of *Satires* 1.1, as everyone in the world of satire, including the reader, remains perpetually uncertain as to whether they are in on the joke or the butt of it. This is the predicament of reading satire: we can never be quite sure whether we are in the in-group, laughing with the poet at others, or whether we ourselves have become the object of his mockery.

Across the books may be discerned a shift in how Horace uses “conversation” in the making of his *sermo*. Horace’s first book has been called the book of monologue,[[72]](#footnote-72) his second the book of dialogue. *Satires* 2.1 opens with what resembles a stage-dialogue between Horace and the jurist Trebatius on the poor reception his first book of *Satires* has met with; contrast *Satires* 1, which had opened with Horace speaking to Maecenas, though without us ever hearing Maecenas reply. The tradition of philosophical discussion that underlies some of book 2, moreover, is signaled by such means as the opening of *Satires* 2.4, which is a virtual translation of the first lines of Plato’s *Phaedrus*: Socrates’ inquiry, “Dear Phaedrus, from where and to where [are you going]?” (ὦ φίλε Φαῖδρε, ποῖ δὴ καὶ πόθεν;), becomes Horace’s “From where and to where [is] Catius [going]?” (*Unde et quo Catius?*).[[73]](#footnote-73) Throughout *Satires* 2, Horace also has his conversational partner report the words of another individual, who himself reports those of another, and so on, in ever-increasing degrees of “nesting.” In *Satires* 2.3, for example, Horace speaks fewer than 15 of the 326 lines of the poem, leaving the creation of *sermo* and its interlocutors to his own interlocutor, the philosopher Damasippus. In showing himself being taught by increasingly “inept teachers”[[74]](#footnote-74) as the *Satires* progress, Horace manages even to shut himself out of his own poetry: after his virtual omnipresence in *Satires* 1 (he is absent only from 1.7, for even in 1.8 he is, in a sense, the figure/figurine of Priapus), he becomes notably marginalized in *Satires* 2, relegated to begging from his poetic creations a moment of their time (2.4.4–5, 2.8.4–5). *Satires* 1.7 marks the first time Horace entrusts the final lines of a poem to another speaker, a technique that occurs with greater frequency throughout *Satires* 2, culminating in the close of the books of *Sermones* in a voice not the satirist’s own, such that the entire collection ends with us excluded and Horace distant from us. The types of conversations we witness through reading Horace’s satirical poetry thus vary: some are between Horace and his anonymous interlocutor, himself an uneasy mix of addressee, fictional someone/anyone, and reader; others invite us voyeuristically to observe a dialogue between Horace and certain named interlocutors, between two named interlocutors from which Horace himself is excluded, or even, in humorous violation of the genre’s very name and definition, a monologue delivered by a voice other than Horace’s.

Persius begins his first satire by showing definitively that in his hands, too, the genre is to be *sermo* in form (even as his collection seems to have been known by the title *saturae*). While the opening words, “Oh, the cares of men! Oh, how much emptiness there is in things!” (*o curas hominum! o quantum est in rebus inane!*) are uttered by the poet, they do not belong to him, having apparently been taken wholesale from either Lucilius or Lucretius.[[75]](#footnote-75) The poet’s interlocutor scornfully interrupts, “who will read this stuff?” (*quis leget haec?*, 1.2)—words themselves modelled on Horace, *Satires* 1.4.22–23 (*cum mea nemo / scripta legat*, “while no one reads my writings”). Persius, pretending surprise at finding another voice in his poem, is startled and says *min tu istud ais?* (“are you talking to me?”); he then answers the voice’s question, “who will read this stuff?,” with “no one, by Hercules” (*nemo hercule*, 1.2). When that response is met with derision (*nemo?*, “no one?,” 1.2), Persius qualifies it with “either two people or no one” (*vel duo vel nemo*, 1.3), earning himself another derisory reaction: “what a foul and wretched thing” (*turpe et miserabile*, 1.3). Thus Persius presents himself from the outset as being in competition for a mere speaking role in his own satire, threatening to be sidelined by his predecessors, in a way that suggests his book is a continuation to Horace’s *Satires* 2. Rather unlike Horace, though, who is distressed at the prospect of having been misunderstood by some readers, Persius professes himself content with no readers at all, except perhaps two (who may be just Persius and the interlocutor with whom he is shown in conversation), such that he ends up in the paradox of “performing privately.”[[76]](#footnote-76) A second set of critics is then introduced at line 63, as Persius widens his perspective and inquires “what’s the talk among the people?” (*quis populi sermo est?*). Using the loaded term *sermo*, Persius alludes beyond the people’s chatter or conversation to the genre of satire itself. The moment serves to reinforce the degree to which satire is a response to the world around the satirist––in this instance, the people’s reprehensible preference for liquidy, insipid, Graecizing poetry (as against Persius’ own satire).

Throughout Persius’ opening poem the anonymous interlocutor is used in ways broadly familiar from Horace and the preceding tradition. He is a dim everyman, making objections that cannot but be shot down by the angry young satirist. To the interlocutor’s “but what’s the point of learning unless to show off?” (to paraphrase 1.24–25, *quo didicisse, nisi hoc fermentum et quae semel intus / innata est rupto iecore exierit caprificus?*), for example, Persius responds with disbelief and outrage (26–27, 30–40), the set-up complete. The interlocutor may be second person (*inquis*, “you say”) or a disembodied third-person voice that pipes up unexpectedly (e.g., 1.128), even as the reader has forgotten for a moment that voices other than Persius’ inhabit this poem, and we are compelled to wonder what the relation is among all these figures, one addressed as “old geezer” (*vetule*, 22), the specificity of which seems an invitation to identify him with someone known to the poet. The *adversarius* of Persius 1 is a strong, apparently independent presence, whose words need not be introduced by set phrases such as “someone might say,” and who by appearing in the poem at its very beginning is shown to be responsible for the form and content of the work to a great degree. By making his critic into a character in his poem in this way, Persius in fact creates an entire satire out of possible objections to it, as his poetry “stages” the process of its own reading and his verses “engage and participate in their own interpretation . . . emphatically.”[[77]](#footnote-77) At the same time, Persius has fun with this figure at the expense of his reader: just when we had accepted him as an equal partner in the dialogue, or even one who could put the satirist in a defensive and subordinate position, Persius pokes a hole in his existence by saying, “whoever you are, whom I created just now to express the opposite point of view” (*quisquis es, o modo quem ex adverso dicere feci*, 44). Persius thus articulates the unreality of the anonymous interlocutor, “unmasking” him as a “Rhetorical Convention” perhaps to show that he is “a Stoic, a rational thinker.”[[78]](#footnote-78) In doing so, however, he affirms two qualities of this figure: that he is indeed anonymous (*quisquis es*) and that he is an “adversary” who exists to express a point of view opposite to that of the satirist (*ex adverso*).

From such beginnings, one might well wonder where Persius can go—having admitted the fictionality of this creation, can he still make use of the anonymous interlocutor and of the idea of *sermo*, both of which have been so fundamental to Roman Satire prior to him? The effects of Persius’ exposure of this figure as the satirist’s useful strawman are in fact none: after revealing that his interlocutor does not really exist, Persius goes back to employing him as usual for what remains of this first poem and throughout the remaining five poems of his book, where he is omnipresent and apparently no worse off for our knowledge of his unreality. The anonymous interlocutor is, as Rosen and Baines (2002: 111 n. 13) have pointed out, “so much a part of the satiric heritage that Persius can refer to the appearance of his interlocutor as a mere formality, making fun of the convention of the imaginary objector.” Toward the end of satire 1, for example, Persius’ interlocutor opines that now, at last, with the infusion of Greek words (a modern practice abhorrent to Persius), poetry has become elegant and smooth. This point of view enables Persius to embed into his satire a series of apparent quotations from contemporary poetic works (as Persius expands the *sermo* of satire to include snippets from the written works of others) that are vitiated by their conspicuous Graecisms.[[79]](#footnote-79) The interlocutor finds such lines admirable and contrasts them with the “frothy” (*spumosum*) and “woody” (*cortice pingui / ut ramale vetus vegrandi subere coctum*) opening of the *Aeneid*, *Arma virum* (1.92–97). Persius has set himself up to retort in kind:

quidnam igitur tenerum et laxa cervice legendum?

‘torva Mimalloneis inplerunt cornua bombis,

et raptum vitulo caput ablatura superbo

Bassaris et lyncem Maenas flexura corymbis

euhion ingeminat, reparabilis adsonat echo.’ (1.98–102)

What, then, is freshly created and worthy of being read with youthfully languid neck? “They filled their fierce horns with Mimallonean boomings, and Bassaris, about to carry off a head torn from an arrogant calf, and the Maenad, trying to steer a lynx with ivy-withes, shouts ‘euhion!,’ and a reverberating echo sounds it back.”

Such poetry, perhaps exemplified by a quotation from or parody of a work by Nero himself (who thus becomes another sort of voice in the conversation), is rejected by the satirist as insubstantial (*summa delumbe saliva / hoc natat in labris et in udo est*, “this swims on the very tip of our spittle, on our lips’ saliva” 104–5), unmanly (*haec fierent si testiculi vena ulla paterni / viveret in nobis?*, “would this be happening if any of our fathers’ balls still lived in us?,” 103–4), and, above all, not the result of hard work (*nec pluteum caedit nec demorsos sapit unguis*, “this tastes of neither thumping a fist on the table nor of bitten nails,” 106). This final critique resembles those Horace makes against Lucilius, with the result that Persius’ predecessor(s) also intrude(s) into the poem. The interlocutor, in turn, responds by performing “the abiding function of the interlocutor” which is “to warn the poet of the dangers of satire”: [[80]](#footnote-80) he issues his famous warning that Persius should avoid writing satire in order to ensure that he not offend anyone of importance (read: Nero), but Persius remains undeterred, as Horace did in *Satires* 2.1.

Persius’ third and fourth satires both show an older figure advising a younger one; the fifth presents Persius in conversation with his own teacher, Cornutus; and the sixth casts Persius as older mentor to his own heir. Cornutus is presented in a way that makes him reminiscent of Maecenas, in particular through Persius’ reverential attitude toward him coupled with an obvious closeness that parallels that of Horace towards his patron. Persius did not require the support of a patron, as Horace did, and in the absence of such a figure, Cornutus fulfills many of the same literary and conversational functions. Persius addresses his tutor as *dulcis amice* (“sweet friend,” 23) and exclaims, “how great a part of our soul is yours” (*quantaque nostrae / pars tua sit . . . animae*, 22–3), all prefaced by a confidential *secrete loquimur* (“we speak alone,” 21), suggestive of Persius’ dialogue with the interlocutor of the first lines of satire 1 as well as of the general sense of isolation that surrounds the poet. Through Persius’ wish to converse with Cornutus alone and in secret, the reader is made to feel unwelcome, even voyeuristic, but the fiction is as transparent as the one described at 1.119–20.

Curiously, as though the interlocutor is becoming more robust despite Persius’ deflation of him at 1.44, the fifth satire contains what may be the first instance of a satirical interlocutor managing to effect a change in the poet’s course of action (Trebatius, for one, had failed with Horace). To Persius complaining that poet-priests (*vates*), specifically tragedians, purport to need a hundred throats, mouths, and tongues to sing their songs (5.1–2), the interlocutor, here endowed with the identity of Cornutus, wonders “where are you going with this?” (*quorsum haec?*, 5). Where Persius seems to be going, as Anderson (1966: 409) explains, is to begin employing epic hyperbole in his satire, “for he has a truth to express,” but Cornutus soon dissuades him from this. As at 1.109–10, Persius puts in his interlocutor’s mouth the words to describe the satirist’s own poetry, and so, after explaining what Persius’ satire is not (bombastic tragedy, 5–13; a sentiment repeated by Persius himself at 19–20), the interlocutor finally describes it in positive terms (5.14–16), employing several of what would become known as Persius’ most essential programmatic phrases: the poet employs *verba togae* and is himself *iunctura callidus acri*. In these ways not only do the socially and morally satirical moments of satire come about as responses while the satirist is in “conversation” with the world around him, but the literary critical moments do as well, and in particular those literary critical moments that allow the satirist to discourse upon a topic of great interest and importance to him—the quality and nature of his own satire/*sermo*.

Juvenal’s introductory poem, although in the tradition of Horace’s *Satires* 2.1 and Persius 1, is dominated by this bombastic satirist’s own voice. The opening words—“am I always to be a listener? Shall I never retaliate, I who have been harassed so many times?” (*semper ego auditor tantum? numquamne reponam / vexatus totiens?*, 1–2)—suggest that any interlocutor the poet might have has already spoken, and that now it is Juvenal’s turn to reply, lest “they” (whoever they are) get away with it “unpunished” (*impune. . . impune*, 3–4), whatever exactly “it” might be. Juvenal’s putative reply is what then constitutes the first 150 lines of the poem, as the satirist rails against all manner of evils, never letting any potential interlocutor get a word in edgewise; or perhaps Juvenal himself has now become the anonymous interlocutor.[[81]](#footnote-81) Juvenal’s first satire is thus in a way the opposite of Persius’: if the latter’s poetry comes into existence at the moment of our reading it and exists as a “middle/mediated verbal artifact,”[[82]](#footnote-82) the former’s is decidedly static, presented to us as an ossified *fait accompli* for our consideration rather than as a literary moment in which we feel we are participating and aiding in the construction of meaning. This is in keeping with the programmatic declaration with which the poem ends: in order to avoid incurring the displeasure of anyone important, Juvenal will attack “those whose ashes the Flaminian and Latin Ways cover” (*illos / quorum Flaminia tegitur cinis atque Latina*, 170–71), that is, the dead, resulting in a “cityscape that is populated by corpses, almost a Night of the Living Dead.”[[83]](#footnote-83) The satirist’s trademark “you” is, however, not altogether absent: he is admitted at line 150 (*dicas*, “you may say”) to warn Juvenal of the dangers of satire (this he does for 20 lines, setting up Juvenal’s two-line response with which the poem concludes). But at least in this first poem, which serves to set the tone for what is to come, he is a marginal figure crowded out by the poet’s own continual speaking/shouting, as though he, like the satirist, is being rendered or trying to become invisible.

The quality of Juvenal’s poetry in the third through fifth books is distinct from that of his first two, as discussed above, in which anger is the defining, even overwhelming, tenor.[[84]](#footnote-84) Nevertheless, Juvenal does begin to allow other voices into his poems: some isolated named figures utter objections here and there throughout the second satire; the fourth features a parade of named imperial advisors as speakers; and in the third much of the poem is handed off to Umbricius (who sounds strikingly like Juvenal). The more detached and ironizing tone of satires 7–16 affords the opportunity for more genuine *sermo*, as though Juvenal has finally calmed down enough after books 1 and 2 to be able to hear what others are saying and respond accordingly; this, in turn, as Keane 2015 has noted, affords readers a menu of voices from which to pick the one most to their taste. Democritus appears as Juvenal’s representative in satire 10, much as Umbricius did in 3, speaking now as an evolved version of the poet’s persona. Satires 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 16 are addressed to a Ponticus (“Mr. Black Sea”), a Naevolus (“Mr. Birthmark”), a Persicus (“Mr. Persia”), a Corvinus (“Mr. Crow”), a Calvinus (“Mr. Baldy”), and a Gallicus (“Mr. Gaul” or “Mr. Rooster”), as Juvenal experiments with a “hyperonymous satire” that can stretch and shift to encompass potentially any reader.[[85]](#footnote-85) This structure would seem to allow for the possibility of dialogue between poet and addressee on a given topic; however, such dialogue as there is generally remains rather one-sided (only Naevolus replies to the poet at any length and with any sense that he is a distinct personality), with the result that these poems begin to resemble epistles. Indeed, 11 is framed explicitly as an invitation—a written invitation—to dinner, as Juvenal perhaps made room also for epigram with its invitation poems[[86]](#footnote-86) in his satire. Nevertheless, books 3–5 reveal a heightened interest in the possibilities of “conversation” as material for satire on Juvenal’s part, even if he winks at *sermo* by giving his interlocutors and addressees amusing (if still plausibly Roman) names. The continual “browsing” of addressees/targets, moreover, and Juvenal’s “flitting unexpectedly from one receptacle to the next” “posits a paranoid reader, and fosters a paranoid reading strategy,”[[87]](#footnote-87) as we wonder who Juvenal will set his sights on next—surely not me?

As we turn from *sermo* to consider the other genre-term for Roman Satire, *satura*, the possibilities shift from a studied conversational style with competing voices to the complementary notions of fullness and miscellany. *Satura* is an adjective meaning “stuffed full,” and the use of the moniker in and for Roman Satire is variously derived from and/or associated with a heaped-up plate of first fruits known as a *lanx satura*; a type of sausage stuffed with many things called a *satura*; or a legal bill that stuffed many provisions into one and was therefore termed *satura*.[[88]](#footnote-88) The term *satura*, along with its relative, *satis* (“enough”), is employed by the Roman Satirists with a regularitythat not only reveals the importance of the term as “key to [the] nature” of Roman Satire (Keane 2002a: 11), but also draws attention again and again to its connotations, stressing that characteristic features of the genre are its miscellany and fullness. The point at which *satura* begins to be used formally to denote the genre is murky, but both Ennius and Lucilius called their collections *Saturae*,[[89]](#footnote-89) and Horace, having referred preferentially to his writings as *sermo* in his first book (thus perhaps marking it as the book of conversation)[[90]](#footnote-90) turns more to the term *satura* in his second (2.6.17; cf. 2.3.5) as if to render it the book of mixture and saturation, as well as of gastronomy.[[91]](#footnote-91)

Persius avoids the term *satura* (though as Gowers 1993b: 184–5 reads it, he may be alluding to it in his unsavory picture of the “stuffed sons of Romulus,” *Romulidae saturi*, 1.31, drunkenly discoursing on the latest trends in poetry),[[92]](#footnote-92) and not unexpectedly he appears to have coined an equally evocative substitute or counterpart for it with his *sartago loquendi*, “a frying pan of speaking” (1.80). Describing Persius’ view of what the Latin language has become, although not in an explicitly programmatic context, *sartago* both sounds like *satura* and possesses alimentary connotations akin to it, likewise evoking the mishmash and hodgepodge of satire. Bartsch’s 2015 study of Persius, *Food, Philosophy, and the Figural*, engages extensively with the use of alimentary and culinary metaphor in this author. Characterizing satire as “a sort of *sartago edendi*,” a “frying pan of eating,” Bartsch isolates “digestion” as Persius’ “metaphor for poetic reception.” Her study also makes much of the meaty possibilities of *satura*, evoking the “forcemeat” or sausage of Diomedes’ third food-related etymology. Within this framework, the cannibalistic imagery of satire 5 takes on an enhanced importance as Thyestes, a “sausage casing for his own children, acts as a figure *for* Persianic satire, which is replete with pieces of Horatian satire—stuffed, as it were, with the father, if not the children.”[[93]](#footnote-93) In contrast, Persius’ own writings are offered up as “the most stringent of vegetarian diets” and “nothing less than a cure for the stomach ailments caused by bad poetry.”[[94]](#footnote-94)

Juvenal both uses *satura* straightforwardly in its marked sense and alludes to it through such phrases as *satur est cum dicit Horatius ‘euhoe’* (“Horace is full/satirizing when he says ‘euhoe’,” 7.62; *euhoe* suggests the lyric Horace, *satur* his satirical persona)[[95]](#footnote-95) or *qui saturant urbem* (“they who fill up/create satire in the city,” 8.118). He also coins an additional genre term on the models of *satura* and of Persius’ *sartago*—his famous *farrago* (1.86), a term that is perhaps related to but certainly evokes *far* (“grain”), *farcimen* (the type of sausage mentioned by Diomedes), and *farcio* (“to stuff”). Nevertheless, in being “a mixed crop of inferior grains, etc., grown for animal feed,” with the secondary sense of “a medley, hotchpotch,” *farrago* is strikingly reminiscent of *satura* (though not the same, as Itic 2006 reminds us, since Juvenal is not idly employing a hapax) but notably more “degrading”[[96]](#footnote-96)—both to the genre and to the one that consumes it. I would anticipate a new study of food and its consumption in Juvenal in light of Bartsch’s evocative readings of Persius and her work more generally on metaphor in Juvenal’s predecessor: now that these elements have been teased out from Persius, is it possible to discern Juvenal having teased them out, too, and making his own use of them? In being willing in these ways to deploy the terms *sermo* and *satura* in its production of *sermo/satura*, Roman verse Satire shows itself to be aware of its competing yet potentially complementary etymologies. Of these two terms, moreover, *satura* in particular allows for self-referential contemplation and description of Roman Satire, as discussed in greater detail below in the section on “Self-referentiality/Metapoetics.”

Further reading and references:

Anderson, W. S. 1963. “The Roman Socrates: Horace and his Satires,” in Sullivan 1963 (ed.): 1–37.

Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 2007. 2007. “Come si legge la satira romana?” In Freudenburg, Cucchiarelli, and Barchiesi (eds.): 167–202, 242–4.

Gowers, Emily. 1993b. *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Harrison, Stephen J. 2014. “Author and speaker(s) in Horace’s *Satires* 2.” In Anna Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill (eds.), *The author’s voice in classical and late antiquity*: 153–71. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Itic, Stéphane. 2006. “Les implications poétiques du terme *farrago* dans la première satire de Juvénal.” *REL* 84: 223–38.

Keane, Catherine. 2018. “Conversations about *sermo*.” In Breed, Keitel, and Wallace (eds.) 2018: 217–35.

Keane, Catherine. 2002a. “The Critical Contexts of Satiric Discourse.” *CML* 22.2: 7–31.

Larmour, David H. J. 2007. “Holes in the Body: Sites of Abjection in Juvenal’s Rome.” In David H. J. Larmour and Diana Spencer (eds.), *Sites of Rome: Time, Space, Memory*: 168–210. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moretti, Gabriella. 2001. “Allusioni etimologiche al genus satirico: per una nuova esegesi di Persio, choliambi 6–7 (e una tradizione della satira latina).” *MD* 46: 183–200.

Rosen, Ralph M. and Victoria Baines. 2002. “‘I am Whatever you say I am ...’: Satiric Program in Juvenal and Eminem.” *CML* 22.2: 103–127.

Sharland, Suzanne. 2010. *Horace in Dialogue: Bakhtinian Readings in the Satires*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

**Seeing other genres in Roman Satire**

As much as the Roman Satirists were engaged in a sustained dialogue with their predecessor(s) in the genre, they also interacted with a great many other genres and authors, both earlier and contemporary. Roman Satire bears clear traces of Archilochean iambus (fundamental to Horace’s *Epodes*), philosophical diatribe, Platonic dialogue, and Greek Comedy, both Old and New, not to mention a range of Latin/Italian literary and not-so-literary forms as well. Quintilian’s sentiment, *satura quidem tota nostra est*, should not be misconstrued as meaning that Roman Satire is wholly Roman and bears no relation to or contains no material from ancient Greek literary (and non-literary) forms. Rather, the ways in which Roman Satire as a whole came together from these various parts into a literary genre without a direct Greek counterpart, and how it did so at four separate moments in the hands of its four self-determined authors in a period spanning over 200 years, is what constitutes its unique Romanness. The genre’s voraciousness toward any and all literary material is thus among its most distinctive and defining features. Roman Satire does not merely absorb into itself an enormously diverse range of material, it bears emphasizing; it makes out of such material its own poetic substance through a digestive, regurgitative process that can itself even be the object of description in its verses. This literary voraciousness is allied with its sustained and intense engagement with the surrounding world more broadly: in a sense, other texts are not treated as fodder for satire that is qualitatively different from, for example, the affront to the satirist’s sensibilities mounted by adulterous wives, the tiresome obligations of city life, or excesses in dining. All would seem to come equally under “whatever men do – vows, fear, anger, pleasure, joys, to-ing and fro-ing” (*quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas, / gaudia, discursus*, 1.85–86), which Juvenal says constitutes the “motley feed” (*farrago*) of his little book.

Lucilius’ engagement with literature is evident in such moments as the satire in book 10 on style and oratory; the interest in philosophy in book 15, book 26 satire 4, and book 28 satire 2 (which combines philosophy with food); the apparent playing on the *Odyssey* in book 17; and the presence of tragic material in book 26 satires 3 and 6 (thought to contain tragic parodies). The fifth satire of book 26 shows the intersection between literature, literary criticism, and friendship, as Lucilius advises a friend who is writing an ancient history of Rome dedicated to loved ones (*veterem historiam . . . scribis ad amores tuos*, fr. 700; fr. 701–5 describe Lucilius’ distaste for this project) to apply his efforts (fr. 713, 718) to more recent events (fr. 708–711, 714). Lucilius also attacks specific contemporary literary figures: Accius’ size and appearance (or perhaps the size and appearance of his verses) come under scrutiny in fr. 844 and his innovations in spelling at fr. 366–67, while fr. 879 speaks of “a sad man from some contorted Pacuvian prologue” (*tristis contorto aliquo ex Pacuviano exordio*; book 29 satire 2 attacks further tragedies and comedies as well). Lucilius’ interest in language manifests itself in ways that range from the pronunciation of individual letters (fr. 3–4, 368–72, 389–92) to matters of morphology (the genitive singular of -*ius* nouns in -*i* rather than -*ii*, fr. 375–76; the nominative plural of *puer* as either *puerei* or *pueri*, fr. 377–79). The fragmentary state of Lucilius can make it difficult to pinpoint the nature and aims of his engagement with literature, however (though several of the essays in Manuwald 2001 seek to do so); nor should we assume, likely though it may seem, that these literary references served the same purposes and functioned in the same manners as they do in Horace, Persius, and Juvenal. Breed, Keitel, and Wallace (2018: 30), moreover, give the salutary reminder that since “generic boundaries are in the process of forming,” “the intertextual relationships here are different from what late republican and Augustan canons would lead us to expect,” and we do not get and should not expect, for example, “the clarity of satire performing parody of epic.”

A useful place to begin contemplating the interconnection of Roman verse Satire with other literary genres is its relation to epic and didactic poetry, not because these are the genres most obviously or heavily represented within Roman Satire, but because all were written in the dactylic hexameter. This shared metrical form places these genres in a thought-provoking and not always straightforward relationship with one another and has the effect of rendering Roman Satire, whether it is actively trying to be or not, to some degree fundamentally epic or anti-epic, as well as didactic or anti-didactic. Harrison (2007: 85–86) speaks of how “Latin hexameter satire had from the beginning been conscious of a close (if generally parodic) relationship to traditional heroic or historical epic,” as may be seen in Lucilius’ *Deorum Concilium* (fr. 5–46) which references Ennius,[[97]](#footnote-97) and he sees Horace in *Satires* 1 as “similarly concerned to preserve generic distance from epic while benefiting from the appropriation of epic textures.” Nevertheless it is Lucilius and Juvenal, bookends to the genre, who are arguably the Roman Satirists most overtly interested in the possibilities of epic as foil to and fodder for their poetry.[[98]](#footnote-98) For all of the talk about “mock-epic,” moreover, scholars could be clearer about what they really mean by deploying this term: does it denote mockery of epic themes and characters or of the epic form itself; or does it denote the transfer of traditionally epic material into a different genre; or is it the use of or engagement with epic material for the specific ends and aims of an individual satire?

The chariot-racing metaphor Juvenal employs to describe how he follows in the footsteps of Lucilius as a satirist (1.19–20) and the characterization of Lucilius as a soldier (1.165–67) engage with epic in several such ways. The images elevate both Lucilius and Juvenal and their shared genre in a pompously amusing way and align Juvenal with Lucilius as a writer of satire that can adopt an epic tenor and epic proportions. This allows both to stand in contrast to the slimmed-down satire of Persius and to Horace’s greater interest in the possibilities afforded by the Alexandrian poetic tradition. Juvenal regularly adopts what has been termed a “high” or “grand” style in his first two books, befitting the enormity of his outrage, and his use of this register, associated with epic, has been viewed as his chief stylistic contribution to the genre (Powell 1999). Of course, as Powell points out in his study, since this register is “continually punctured or debased” (333), it is not really grand so much as mock-grand or pretend-grand. Alongside these instances, Juvenal also engages with epic in more head-on fashion when he critiques the recycled themes that he sees as characterizing the genre: “Heracles-epics or Diomedes-epics or the lowing of the labyrinth and the sea struck by the boy and the flying craftsman” (*Heracleas / aut Diomedeas aut mugitum labyrinthi / et mare percussum puero fabrumque volantem*, 1.51–4; cf. 1.162–4).

The shared hexameters of epic and Roman verse Satire enable Horace at *Satires* 2.1.12–15 (cf. *Epist*. 2.1.250–59), on the other hand, to frame his decision to write satire as stemming from a professed inability to write epic, a bind he “proves” by attempting a few verses in epic style. Yet Horace’s “tongue-in-cheek humor” and, with it, the less-than-firm divide between satire and epic become evident: “‘I really cannot write epic verses,’ followed by superb epic verses!”[[99]](#footnote-99) Roman Satire and epic are also contrasted in *Satires* 1.4, another programmatic poem, as Horace, attempting to articulate what constitutes poetry, explains that if you were to rearrange the words in a verse of Lucilius “you would not still find the scattered limbs of a poet” (*non . . . invenias etiam disiecti membra poetae*). He contrasts a line from Ennius, able to incorporate it wholesale into his satire due to their shared meter: if you were to take apart “after foul Discord broke the iron posts and gates of war” (*postquam Discordia taetra / belli ferratos postis portasque refregit*, 59–61), it would still be discernibly poetry (even though, of course, it has been irreversibly altered by being placed into a satire).[[100]](#footnote-100) For Armstrong 1995, *Satires* 1.4.56–62 articulates Horace’s Philodemean understanding that “the thought or the subject in different words is simply not *the same*” and in fact becomes “a different subject or thought” (222). Oberhelman and Armstrong 1995 see Horace’s thought-experiment not as a description of his own Roman Satire, but as a critique of Lucilius: a verse of Horatian Roman Satire, when subjected to the sort of “metathesis” described, would be altered, but it would not become indistinguishable from prose.

In contrast to the epic satire of Juvenal and Lucilius, certainly in outward appearance, the poems of Horace are marked by a studied casualness that belies their carefully honed craftsmanship—a style and philosophy that run the length of his poetic oeuvre. This slender elegance is located, and locates itself, squarely within the tradition of Alexandrian or Hellenistic poetry, which has been seen as highly influential for some later Latin poetry, including that of Horace, and not only his *Satires*. The primary representative of this style is Callimachus, who flourished in the early to mid-third century BCE, and two passages are often quoted as embodying the Callimachean literary aesthetic. The first is the opening of the *Aetia*:

Οἶδ᾿ ὅτ]ι μοι Τελχῖνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀοιδῇ,

νήιδες οἳ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι,

εἵνεκεν οὐχ ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκὲς ἢ βασιλ[η

. . . . . .]ας ἐν πολλαῖς ἤνυσα χιλιάσιν

ἢ . . . . . .]ους ἥρωας, ἔπος δ᾿ ἐπὶ τυτθὸν ἑλ[ίσσω

παῖς ἅτε, τῶν δ᾿ ἐτέων ἡ δεκὰς οὐκ ὀλίγη. (1–6)

I know that the Telchines grumble at my song, foolish men, who are no friends of the Muses, because I have not accomplished one continuous poem either about kings [*lacuna*] in many thousands [sc. of lines] or [*lacuna*] about heroes, but I unfurl a small tale like a child, although the decades of my years are not few.

Rejecting the thundering of Zeus (20) and the braying of asses in favor of the cicada’s high-pitched sound (29–30), Callimachus’ response is that he was told by Apollo to “nourish his sacrificial animal to be as fat as possible, and [make] his Muse slim” (τὸ μὲν θύος ὅττι πάχιστον / θρέψαι, τὴ]. Μοῦσαν δ᾿ . . . λεπταλέην, 23–24) and to drive his chariot on narrower paths and ones unworn by others (25–28). The second passage is from *Epigrams* 30. The poem overall offers wistful praise of the beauty of one Lysanias who belongs to another, but it begins with the famous declaration, “I hate the cyclic poem” (Ἐχθαίρω τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικόν). Callimachus goes on, “and I do not take pleasure in the path that carries many here and there” (οὐδὲ κελεύθῳ / χαίρω τίς πολλοὺς ὧδε καὶ ὧδε φέρει), and his metapoetic sentiments and the predicament of his love for Lysanias coalesce with the words, “I detest all common things” (σικχαίνω πάντα τὰ δημόσια). Callimachus’ programmatic declarations have been the subject of extensive scholarship, both in and of themselves and in relation to their influence on later and especially on Augustan literature;[[101]](#footnote-101) but suffice it to say here that this poetic approach is significantly represented among the writings of Horace (as well as Catullus,[[102]](#footnote-102) Propertius, Virgil, Ovid, and Lucretius, to name just a few more). For Horace’s *Satires*, Callimachus’ *Iambi* are also important, as they are for his *Epodes* as well.[[103]](#footnote-103) A crucial question, however, persists (see Nelis 2012): what does it mean for any individual Roman poet to be Callimachean? If each poet developed his own, nuanced understanding and practice of Callimacheanism, as they surely did, then rather than searching for strict correspondences, we should search (as scholars typically have) for a certain shared spirit and aesthetic values. Above all, we should work to tease out the ways in which later writers make Callimachus their own, innovate upon him, and push at and play with any apparent rules––for both rule-following and rule-breaking lie at the heart of Roman verse Satire.

With his characteristic (if studied) satirical self-effacement, which lies very much within the tradition of Callimachus as well as of Catullus (consider his famous *nugae*, “trifles,” 1.4), Horace refers to his *Satires* as “little verses” (*versiculi*, *Sat*. 1.2.109), “this genre/stuff” (*genus hoc*, *Sat*. 1.4.24, 65), “whatever they are” (*qualiacumque*, *Sat*. 1.10.88), and “these things I play at” (*haec ego ludo*, *Sat*. 1.10.37), describing on one occasion how “whenever I have a little leisure, I play upon my papers” (*ubi quid datur oti, / illudo chartis*, *Sat*. 1.4.139). The terminology may have been inherent to earlier satire as well, as Lucilius fr. 1039 suggests with its pairing of “play” and “conversation/*sermo*” (*ludo ac sermonibus nostris*). Later, too, Persius figures his satirical program as “striking down blame with a free-born/native play” (*ingenuo culpam defigere ludo*, 5.16). As in Catullus, however, smallness or slenderness and the professed triviality of “play” belie the seriousness with which these qualities and approaches are imbued for those who espouse or engage with the Callimachean aesthetic. At the same time, as Zetzel (2002: 40-42) sees, Horace is “eating his cake and having it too,” for the *Satires* are able to be simultaneously “both Callimachean and anti-Callimachean”: they combine “plain-speaking, moral content, and Roman life” and a “deliberate roughness of the metre and the apparent avoidance of the recherché subjects and elegant tone” with “ideals of brevity and clarity” and “exclusivity.” In this way Horace’s satire and perhaps Roman Satire more generally “appear, on at least one level, to ignore, and at times to reject” Callimachean approaches while nevertheless embodying them and displaying “a thorough knowledge of Callimachus’ works.”[[104]](#footnote-104)

Alongside his (faux-)humility, Horace employs two main sets of imagery to characterize his own poetry as Hellenistically slender as against that of others, which is concomitantly bloated (Furius Bibaculus, Lucilius, and so on). Indeed, the contrast that is repeatedly set up by Greek and Roman writers between inspired art born from natural talent and art that is the product of hard work, has rightly been described by Hunter (2009: 29) as “the dominant stylistic dichotomy throughout the ancient critical tradition,” and the foundational 1992 study of O’Sullivan remains indispensable.. The first set of images, which span Horace’s writings, involve water; in particular, spring and rivers, which were widely used for characterizing literary style especially among Hellenistic and Roman poets, as Worman 2015 has surveyed.[[105]](#footnote-105) Despite his deference and respect toward Lucilius and the praise he offers for his predecessor’s elegance and discernment (*facetus, emunctae naris*, *Sat*. 1.4.7–8), Horace nevertheless brands him “full of faults” (*vitiosus*, 9) on the specific count that he wrote too much and too quickly (8–13). The evocative term he introduces at line 11 to encapsulate this is *lutulentus*, the epithet of a river that is “muddy” and would require the removal of much debris (*erat quod tollere velles*) to make its waters flow clear. He reiterates the criticism in *Satires* 1.10 (“and yes, I did say that he flows muddily, often carrying more that ought to be removed than left behind,” *at dixi fluere hunc lutulentum, saepe ferentem / plura quidem tollenda relinquendis*, *Sat*. 1.10.50–1), though in this second instance conceding that Lucilius’ style was merely a reflection of his time (67–71). It is hard to read Horace’s characterization of lutulent Lucilius without thinking of Callimachus’ similarly bogged down Assyrian river (*Ap*. 108–9)[[106]](#footnote-106) or Aristophanes’ unflattering description of Cratinus as a raging torrent (*Eq*. 526–8; cf. Cratinus’ own fr. 198). Horace’s use of the same imagery in his *Odes* to contrast how “Pindar roils and rushes, enormous with his deep mouth” (*fervet inmensusque ruit profundo / Pindarus ore*, *Carm*. 4.2.5–8) or the moment when he wonders why someone would prefer to drink the same amount of water from a great river rather than from a little spring despite the dangers presented by the former (*Sat*. 1.1.54–60) participate in the same iconographic system. Hunink and van den Broek 2010 have even argued for a scatological joke (uncontrolled diarrhea) in *lutulentus*, and while not every reader will be convinced that this is what Horace had in mind, the reading has the merit of being “comical and literary” if taken as an allusion to Catullus’s *cacata charta* (“shit-covered sheets of paper,” 36.1) alongside one to Callimachus. Meanwhile, the lyric Horace delights in his local, rustic Fons Bandusiae, which is “clearer than glass” (*splendidior vitro*, *Carm*. 3.13.1), making to it the promise that “you, too, will become one of the noble springs, since I am describing you” (*fies nobilium tu quoque fontium me dicente*, 13–14), as rusticity, simplicity, and clarity of flow intersect.

The second set of Horatian images that engages with the grand/slender polarity involves food. That “the Greeks and Romans could describe the whole process of creating, presenting, and consuming a literary text in alimentary terms”[[107]](#footnote-107) was recognized as early as Shero 1923, and Gowers’ 1993b study has been instrumental in establishing and expanding the idea. She explains her operating principle that she “shall take it for granted that, when food appears in Roman literature, it always has some connection with the style of the work to which it belongs” (43). Food in Roman Satire, it is clear, is widely used as a metaphor for the genre itself, and this is developed at greater length below in the section headed Self-referentiality/Metapoetics.

The position of Persius in the Callimachean grand/slender schema is harder to locate. On the one hand, the sort of poetry he excoriates in his first satire seems pretentiously and convolutedly Hellenistic: he asks whether he should be worried “that Polydamas and the Trojan women might prefer Labeo to me?” (*ne mihi Polydamas et Troiades Labeonem / praetulerint?*), dismissing such a concern as “nonsense,” *nugae*—the word used disparagingly of the audience’s inferior aesthetic response but also in a way that once again inescapably evokes Catullus. One particularly evocative scene—which Freudenburg (2001: 151–72) has discussed under the apt heading, “Faking it in Nero’s Orgasmatron”—shows a wealthy, bejeweled reciter getting his audience of “burly Tituses to tremble in a manner not morally upright and moan with possessed voice, when the poems enter their loins and the itch in their most intimate of places is scratched” (*tunc neque more probo videas nec voce serena / ingentis trepidare Titos, cum carmina lumbum / intrant et tremulo scalpuntur ubi intima versu*, 19–21). The image is certainly not wholly Callimachean, but neither does it attack the grand, old, epic style. On the other hand, Persius’ own highly-compressed, even telegraphic style can be seen as Callimacheanism taken to a satirical nth degree where it can be simultaneously interrogated yet sincerely employed—not unlike Horace who manages to have his cake and eat it, too.

Persius is clear (at least, as clear as he ever is about anything) that one fundamental issue is that everyone fancies themselves a writer: “we write shut in, that one verses, this one prose released from feet” (*scribimus inclusi, numeros ille, hic pede liber*, 13), he explains, suggesting that they do not put in enough effort. He then bemoans that what people produce is too large, that is, verbose and insufficiently honed: “some grandiose thing that one large of lung can pant out” (*grande aliquid quod pulmo animae praelargus anhelet*, 14). In my view, Persius’ engagement with the Callimachean aesthetic has not been sufficiently addressed in the scholarship on this author, though Cucchiarelli 2012 is interested in the connection and represents a start. Others may disagree as to whether Persius’ satires are enriched (to borrow Harrison’s 2007 term) by Hellenistic poetry, but I would reiterate that Callimacheanism is an expansive category that undergoes remaking in the hands of various authors and that, as Zetzel 2002 points out regarding Horace’s *Satires*, authors can simultaneously toy with espousing and critiquing. It bears mentioning, too, that the mere act of writing in deliberately-constructed books is viewed as a Hellenistic one: Catullus and Martial did so, as did Lucilius, Horace, and Juvenal (and Lucretius, Ovid, Propertius, Virgil). Perhaps Persius would more obviously have done so as well had he not died at the age of 29 (“in his thirtieth year,” *anno aetatis XXX*) from “a disease of the stomach” (*vitio stomachi*, *Life of Persius*). We may have swallowed whole the poet’s supposed autobiography (or, more precisely, the biography that developed in the later tradition): “The claim of the *Vita* that Persius died of a stomach ailment must by now seem suspiciously apropos. A fiction derived from the satirist’s obsession with indigestion?,” Bartsch (2015: 30 n. 38) wonders. Another reading also seems possible, however: that Persius’ (real) stomach ailments drove the creation of his wildly imaginative and evocative metaphors around food, its consumption, and its digestion.[[108]](#footnote-108)

Juvenal’s claim to epic throughout his first two books culminates in a claim to tragedy at the end of his sixth satire:

fingimus haec altum satura sumente coturnum

scilicet, et finem egressi legemque priorum

grande Sophocleo carmen bacchamur hiatu,

montibus ignotum Rutulis caeloque Latino?

nos utinam vani. (6.634–8)

Are we, with our satire taking up the tragic buskin, supposedly inventing these

things, and having gone out past the boundary and law of our predecessors are we

raging some great song with a Sophoclean gaping mouth – a song unknown to

Rutulian mountains and the Latin sky? If only.

It is often noted that with this claim, which comes almost as the conclusion to his first two books, Juvenal paints himself as a “tragic” satirist.[[109]](#footnote-109) If taken broadly, however, the words can conjure up drama more generally. Braund (2005: 390) has even said that “to view satire as a kind of drama is perhaps the most illuminating approach available”; another way of thinking about this is to say that “conversation” (*sermo*) is fundamentally dramatic. The presence of Greek and Roman Comedy, in particular, has long been discerned in satire, not least because of the dialogic, even theatrical, nature of much of this poetry: we encounter Ulysses in conversation with Tiresias (Hor. *Sat*. 2.5) and Alcibiades in conversation with Socrates (Pers. 4); we are given characters such as Priapus (Hor. *Sat*. 1.8), Catius (*Sat*. 2.4; also the unnamed gourmand of 2.8), and Umbricius (Juv. 3) delivering monologues; and we find the satirist himself in conversation with a large range of interlocutors and addressees, named and unnamed. In some poems, such as *Satires* 2.3, in which Horace converses with Damasippus, and 2.6, in which he converses with Davus, the absence of a narrator heightens the stage-like quality of the poem (so also 2.5); in others, such as Horace’s *Satires* 1.7 and 1.9, Horace is present as both narrator and participating character in ways that are highly theatrical, too.

The role of drama in Roman Satire extends beyond the structural as well. Horace traces Lucilian satire—and by extension his own—back to Attic Old Comedy at the beginning of *Satires* 1.4, linking Lucilius to the Old Comic poets through their morally corrective function. The two genres have a great deal more than this in common, however. Each features poets who reflect continually on the nature of their own poetry and work to locate it within its generic tradition as well as in relation to other traditions; and who engage, often critically, with every available aspect of the society around them that presents itself for a response: the law, food, city and country life with their sights, sounds, and places, and well-known contemporary figures. Above all, however, the affiliation between the two may be seen in their use of laughter to expose wrongs and in the fact that they do this (however much the later satirists protest that they cannot) *multa cum libertate*, “with great freedom” or, more precisely, “with great freedom of speech.”[[110]](#footnote-110)

Persius (naturally) reconfigures the connection Horace makes between Roman Satire and Old Comedy while also reaffirming its presence, and that of drama generally, in Roman Satire:

audaci quicumque adflate Cratino

iratum Eupolidem praegrandi cum sene palles,

aspice et haec, si forte aliquid decoctius audis.

inde vaporata lector mihi ferveat aure. (1.123–6)

Whoever you are, you who, inspired by bold Cratinus, grow pale at angry Eupolis along with the great old man, look also to these writings, to see if you perhaps hear something even more boiled down. Let my reader, with his ear steamed clean from there, be on the boil for me.

In this later reformulation, it is not a matter of genealogy (*hinc omnis pendet*), but rather that a reader who is familiar with and appreciates Old Comedy may recognize it in still-denser form in the verses of Persius. While *decoctius* unambiguously describes something that is more concentrated, scholars have wondered what, exactly, it is about Old Comedy that undergoes densification in Persius’ hands, becoming a “concentrated essence” of itself.[[111]](#footnote-111) The various explanations can each hold water and coexist productively: Persius’ six satires are Horace’s two books compressed into one third (Gowers 1993b: 140, 180), the genre becoming reduced rather than stuffed (*satura*; Gowers 1994: 131, 133); *decoctius* is Persius’ allusion “explicitly to the value of brevity” of a Horatian, Callimachean sort (Cucchiarelli 2012: 177); and, since “to decoct was . . . a well-known procedure for transforming the alimentary into the medicinal,” Persius’ satire is presented as “Lucretius’ wormwood without the honeyed cup” and, as such, anti-Horatian (Bartsch 2015: 72).[[112]](#footnote-112)

In addition to bringing another form of drama to Roman Satire, the connection with Old Comedy allows Horace to capitalize on the concept of festal license, with its freedom of speech and suspension of regular social norms, since the ancient Athenian dramatic festivals in honor of Dionysus are regarded as precisely such moments of sanctioned civic release. The occasion of *Satires* 2.7, for example, is the Saturnalia and, in keeping with the festival’s traditions, Horace’s slave, Davus (who has been given the name of some slaves in New and Roman Comedy), is granted the festival’s license (termed “the freedom of December,” *libertas Decembri*, 4) to speak his mind, while Horace himself is rendered submissive. Davus finds fault with Horace for his fickleness and hypocrisy, and then proceeds to deliver a lecture on Stoic virtue that he heard from the door-keeper of Crispinus, who we presume overheard and is parroting Crispinus’ own lessons on the topic. The panoply of voices that gang up on Horace, who is himself now relegated to a role not unlike that of the dim interlocutor of *Satires* 1, reduce him to sputtering defensive insults and threats (*pessime*, “scoundrel,” 22; *unde mihi lapidem? . . . unde sagittas?* “where can I get a stone? . . . Where arrows?,” 116; *ocius hinc te / ni rapis, accedes opera agro nona Sabino*, “unless you get lost, and fast, you’ll end up as the ninth field-slave on my Sabine farm,” 117–18). So Horace is shown, with critical self-humor, to be incapable of bearing the freedom of speech that marked the celebratory day. In this way, the often-professed desire for freedom of speech is revealed to be a sham: Horace cannot in fact handle the *libertas* he claims to long for. The Saturnalia festival is present in Roman Satire from the start: Lucilius, drawing attention to the inability of the hexameter to accommodate the word Saturnalia, refers to it periphrastically as “the festival day of the slaves” (*servorum . . . festus dies*, fr. 252–53); Horace sets two poems (2.3 and 2.7) on this occasion; and Paul Allen Miller 2012, considering Persius and Juvenal, has argued for “Imperial Satire as Saturnalia.” Since the Saturnalia festival itself remains foggily understood and understudied,[[113]](#footnote-113) however, it has remained difficult to articulate the precise relations of satire or of a satire to the Saturnalia, and I would expect that further study of satirical Saturnalia-poems, especially in their cultural and historical contexts (and as the festival changed over time), will broaden and deepen our understanding both of the poems (where there must be dozens of winking in-jokes about traditions and happenings that we miss) and of the festival itself.

Greek New Comedy and Roman Comedy allow for a different set of rhetorical and literary possibilities in Roman Satire, as has been studied recently by Delignon 2006, who builds upon the plentiful scholarship in this area. These forms of comedy are characterized by their stock figures[[114]](#footnote-114) and plotlines that involve babies switched at birth (*puerum supponi*), slaves tricking old men (*falli per servom senem*), and acts of “love, hatred, and suspicion” (*amare odisse suspicari*, Ter. *Eun*. 39–40). So in Horace, Davus (*Sat*. 2.7) is a slave-name straight out of Roman Comedy (it appears in Terence’s *Andria*) and, like a Roman Comic slave, Davus outwits Horace, his master. Leach 1971 has shown how such Roman Comic elements in Roman Satire make meaning and her work also has a bearing on persona-theory, the next section in this discussion. Noting how the portrait of Horace and his father in *Satires* 1.4 is “so specific and well drawn . . . that it has had unquestioning acceptance as pure autobiography” (618), she shows how Horace flags his use of comic material in this poem by dubbing his father *pater optimus*, one of the genre’s stock characters, while rendering him a version of Demea from Terence’s *Adelphoe*. Far from being autobiography for its own sake (something we should always be suspicious of when reading satire), the vignette allows Horace to compare and contrast his own satirical morals with those of Terentian comedy and to ally satire and comedy through their shared representation of everyday life in everyday language. Schlegel 2000 expands on Leach’s arguments to show how Lucilius and Maecenas are also father-figures for Horace. For Gowers, meanwhile, the poems about food in Horace’s *Satires* 2 (which anticipate Juvenal 5) have repurposed the new comic and characteristically Plautine stock figure of the cook, known for holding forth on his own artistry (e.g., *Aul*. 398–405, *Men*. 273–4, *Pseud*. 803–88) in a way that makes him “a parallel for, or parody of, the comic author” (1993b: 52).

While Juvenal may not have “any particular interest in comedy” (Cucchiarelli 2012: 168), Horace’s interest in New Comedy may be seen as “re-evoked” alongside that in Old Comedy by Persius, for example in the reappearance of “the slave Davus, the wise counsellor” at 5.161–74, which speaks beyond an interest in New (or Old) Comedy for its own sake and to Persius’ “alignment . . . with Horace.” Pezzini (2018: 162–63) is also right to point out that Roman Comedy was present in Roman Satire beginning with Lucilius in ways that extend beyond such shared material and humorous tone: the specific metrical variety of Lucilian satire, “lines in iambic senarii and trochaic septenarii, with some interspersed hexameters,” is a “formal trait” that “could not help but evoke the *palliatae*” of Plautus and Terence for a contemporary reader. It is not merely that Lucilius and these authors of Latin drama were instrumental in collectively developing their national literature in its earlier days, but further that “Roman comedy exerted a special influence on Lucilius’ early work” in the areas of “prosody and metrical features, morphology, and lexicon.”

Looking beyond the relatively well-defined and extensively studied genres of Old Comedy, New Comedy, and the Roman Comedy of Plautus and Terence, we can discern in Horace’s *Satires* 1.5 a scene (51–70) that makes use of Atellan farce. This Italic comic genre, originally written in Oscan, is now known only from a few hundred fragments and a little over one hundred titles, yet these are sufficient to allow us to see the farcical duel between Sarmentus and Messius in *Satires* 1.5, performed in the poem’s narrative close to the town of Atella, as a take on the genre—even as this episode remains “another of the unsolved problems of the poem.”[[115]](#footnote-115) Looking beyond Atellan farce, Ruffell 2003 shows how in addition to being “engaged in a dialogue with epic and other literary genres (including earlier satire),” the “Roman satirists, not least Horace, were equally engaged in a dialogue with other non-literary or ‘subliterary’ traditions of verse” (35), in particular, invective ones. Surveying the body of popular (rude) verses that were sung about politicians or during triumphal processions and the mass of ancient graffiti, especially from Pompeii, all of anonymous authorship,[[116]](#footnote-116) Ruffell argues that Horace worked to “segregate” satire from such popular invective verse forms. As our corpus and understanding of such verses increases, perhaps it will become possible to read them more as integrated into the fabric of Roman Satire. The alliance of satire with comedy and comic forms of speech (including invective) also bears a relation to Horace’s Callimachean predisposition, for Horace laments that people have undervalued his satire, believing that “verses like mine can be churned out at the rate of a thousand a day” (*similisque meorum / mille die versus deduci posse*, *Sat*. 2.1.3–4). On the contrary, satire is like comedy, which, “because it draws its subject matter from daily life, is thought to require little effort” (*comoedia, ex medio quia res arcessit, habere / sudoris minimum*), but “all the more burdensome because it receives less indulgence for inaccuracies” (*sed habet comoedia tanto / plus oneris quanto veniae minus*, *Epist*. 2.1.168–70).

In both its immediacy—the strong sense that we know the poet, an impression aided by their shared use of the first person—and its incisive invective that tells the truth through laughter (*spoudogeloion*), Roman Satire bears a striking resemblance to Latin epigram, the type of poems written by Catullus and Martial, to name the two most prominent ancient Latin writers of this form.[[117]](#footnote-117) Originating (however remotely) in verse inscriptions engraved on stone, the epigram came to be a short, witty, and highly literary poem. Especially interesting is that in ancient Rome the two genres seem to have grown up together to a notable degree. After several funerary inscriptions written in the archaic Italian Saturnian meter (c. 230/200 BCE, mid-second century), a Scipionic tomb epigram appears after 139 BCE written in elegiac couplets, that is, the meter of epigram. These had been introduced into Latin by Ennius (who, we recall, also introduced the hexameter from Greek and who wrote *saturae* in these same hexameters as well as in other meters). So the elegiac couplet became the meter of Latin epigram as it was of Greek, and this occurred not long before Lucilius is credited with establishing the hexameter as the meter of Roman verse Satire. Varro (who also wrote satires) included epigrams in his *Imagines* (portraits of famous men), and it has been suggested that Lucilius was writing in the form in his books 22–25, which are in elegiac couplets—a series of interconnections that speaks to the potential and reality of cross-pollination between Roman verse Satire and Latin epigram.

Latin literary (rather than inscriptional) epigram is traditionally traced to the arrival at Rome in the late second century BCE (near the end of Lucilius’ lifetime) of several famed Greek epigrammatists whose patrons were Roman aristocrats.[[118]](#footnote-118) Even the earliest extant Latin epigram such as that of Quintus Lutatius Catulus is marked by immediacy (for example, a first-person speaker may address the reader directly), sentimentality, and the ability to crystallize a moment together with all the feelings it engenders into just a few lines of verse. Epigrams of this nature were written by numerous intellectuals and aristocratic men in Cicero’s orbit in the late Republic as a shared learned pastime, including Gaius Licinius Calvus and Gaius Helvius Cinna who are named in Catullus, and it is in the hands of Catullus (who lived probably 84–54 BCE) and his fellow neoteric poets in this same period that epigram becomes established as an important literary form. The Catullan poetry book has traditionally been divided into three parts, with the third part, poems 69–116, comprising the epigrams, written in elegiac couplets.[[119]](#footnote-119)

Named after a reference in Cicero to these “newer [sc. writers]” (οἱ νεώτεροι, *Att*. 7.2.1; also *poetae novi* at *Orat*. 161), this poetic movement/circle (if it was ever anything so formal and delineated) survives in very little beyond Catullus’ book.[[120]](#footnote-120) Moreover, the qualities of his epigram seem to have been the qualities of neoteric poetry more generally as well: the elevation of the details of everyday living and loving into exquisitely crafted and highly literary poetry (even where abusive and crude) that generally eschews being ostentatious about its literary qualities. The result is a collection of short poems on people, events, or ideas that the author would have us believe are important to him personally, and that deserve either praise and commemoration or blame, which can often be strikingly explicit and wounding—all not unlike Roman Satire.[[121]](#footnote-121) For Martial, a contemporary and at least an acquaintance if not a friend of Juvenal, writing in the second half of the first century CE, Catullus was the Latin epigrammatist extraordinaire. Rather like the Roman Satirists, who tightly patrolled their domain of four, Martial names some previous and contemporary epigrammatists (Domitius Marsus, Albinovanus Pedo, Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus) while ignoring others (Valgius Rufus). Although the intervening century and a half between Catullus and Martial is “largely unmappable” (Henriksén 2019: 459), Martial was preceded by a wealth of epigram in Latin[[122]](#footnote-122) as well as in Greek[[123]](#footnote-123) and had much to draw from, and his collection of short-form poetry is expansive both thematically and literally.

Martial’s verses capture moments both public (a new imperial application for poetry, perhaps first traceable to Horace’s lyric *Carmen Saeculare*) and private, as many of his epigrams purport to have been written to accompany a gift, to give thanks for a dinner invitation, or to address a friend on a momentous or sorrowful occasion, concerns that mark the Catullan epigram book as well. Martial’s poems provide an unusually immediate portrait of Roman aristocratic life.[[124]](#footnote-124) From the *Apophoreta*, for example, which like the *Xenia* purport to have been written for anyone in need of a poetic gift-tag to accompany a present, perhaps alluding consciously to the inscriptional/epigraphic background of epigram, we can glean that Romans not only exchanged gifts on the Saturnalia, but that such gifts included works of art, books (particularly editions of Augustan poets), athletic equipment (including balls, strigils and oil-flasks), perfumes and unguents, foods and dishware, and jewelry and clothing. Other poems describe dinners and invitations to dinners; literature, writing, and book-selling; love affairs and explicit sexual acts, frequently wielded as accusations that a person has committed the particular act being described; deceased pets and loved ones; parks, and the sights and sounds of Rome. Epigram also shares with Roman Satire an interest in language and both genres admit of unpoetic, even obscene, words, and share the habit of using the colloquial or “lower” of two terms where other genres of poetry would use the higher one, despite having been written by and for the cultural and intellectual elite of their day.[[125]](#footnote-125)

A native of Bilbilis in Spain, Martial often gives the impression of being an outsider looking in on Roman high society, and while he ridicules its pretensions and hypocrisies, he was also writing from within the society that he critiqued, since the figures he names were his own friends and associates—a stance discernible in the Roman Satirists as well. Martial, again like the satirists, gives the impression of mingling freely with the literati of his day—Lucan (7.21), Seneca (4.40, 7.44, 7.45), Silius Italicus (4.14), Pliny the Younger (10.20), and Juvenal (7.24, 7.91, 12.18)—and, as in Roman Satire, we are left feeling slightly voyeuristic, as though we are peering in on someone else’s private world in which we do not get all of the inside jokes and feel bad about having to admit our outsider status. As has been the case for Catullus’ poetry book,[[126]](#footnote-126) scholarly opinion has varied on the extent to which Martial deliberately arranged the poems in the order in which they are preserved and, as with Catullus, the consensus is increasingly that the arrangement of the poems is both careful and deliberate,[[127]](#footnote-127) with both employing a book design as the Roman Satirists and numerous other Hellenistically inclined poets also did. Above all, Martial’s epigrams are known for the way in which they close with an incisive summary of or twist on the material of the poem, such that the reader is left surprised and delighted and reflecting upon the beginning of the poem in a new way. Martial is even credited with solidifying this as *the* defining feature of epigram. In poem 1.10, for example, the final word recasts everything that had come before:

Gemellus nuptias Maronillae

et cupit et instat et precatur et donat.

adeone pulchra est? immo foedius nil est.

quid ergo in illa petitur et placet? tussit

Gemellus seeks to marry Maronilla, and he desires her and goes

after her and begs and gives gifts. Is she really that beautiful? On

the contrary, nothing is more foul. What, then, is attractive and

pleasing about her? She coughs.

Far from being the devoted lover that he appears in the first two lines, Gemellus wishes to marry Maronilla only because it seems she will not live long; although it is nowhere stated, she must be wealthy and he a gold-digger—a process of deduction set in motion by the single, final word, *tussit*. A fundamental contact point between Roman Satire and epigram, in particular the Latin epigram that Martial is credited with having made epigrammatic, is the tendency of both genres to end poems with a surprising or incisive observation or comment,[[128]](#footnote-128) and to leave key information unspecified such that the reader is forced to work out the joke or more typically jokes, since both genres like to admit of several coexisting readings.

The epigram was not and is not considered among the high genres of ancient poetry, perhaps because of its lingering associations with the learned amateur as well as because of its concern with everyday material—much like the similarly occasional Roman verse Satire. Indeed, Freudenburg was able to write as recently as 2001 that he hoped his monograph, *Threatening Poses*, would “draw the study of Roman satire out from the shadowy margins of Roman literary history” (3). Though formally separate genres, the stories of Roman Satire and epigram weave in and out of one another: not only do the two genres share a number of features and a general Weltanschaung, but they draw material from an overlapping set of pre-existing literary wells. Their authors even refer to one another by name on occasion: Horace names Catullus and Calvus (whom Catullus himself names in poems 14, 53, and 96) at *Satires* 1.10.19,[[129]](#footnote-129) and Martial and Juvenal were contemporaries, and the former names the latter in his verses.[[130]](#footnote-130) Both genres were also of considerable interest to readers and writers in late antiquity, the early modern period, and beyond. Despite this, the affinities among Roman Satire and Latin epigram have remained understudied, and I would suggest that there is room for investigation of the epigrammatists as satirists or of Roman Satire as a sort of long-form, perhaps even epic, epigram.

Other assorted genres and forms that find themselves ingested into and digested by Roman Satire include Priapea, Platonic dialogue, and philosophy and the philosophical tradition more broadly—even as the relationship between philosophy and satire could be characterized, however provocatively, as “Sleeping with the Enemy.”[[131]](#footnote-131) Priapea, best represented by the collection termed *Carmina Priapea*, are poems to or about or spoken by the phallic divinity Priapus and are considered a form of epigram since they, too, are typically written in elegiac couplets. A monologue spoken by a tree-trunk carved into a statue of Priapus, Horace’s *Satires* 1.8 is squarely in the tradition of Priapea, which finds itself reflected also in certain poems of Catullus (e.g., 16: *pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo, / Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi*). The most explicitly sexual and scatological of Horace’s satires, 1.8 has much in common with certain of the *Epodes* (especially 5 and 17)—so iambus, too, the genre pioneered by Archilochus and Hipponax (and fundamental also to Catullus and Martial), found a place in Roman verse Satire. Horace’s engagement with Priapea, however, may be read as typically self-effacing, as Sharland 2003 shows: where Priapus threatened to punish transgressors with rape, Horace’s statue merely farts, scaring off the witches that had been prowling the area for bones and herbs.

The Roman Satirists’ attitude toward philosophy, with the exception of Persius, whose Stoicism has gone unquestioned, has long been described as eclectic.[[132]](#footnote-132) They appear to choose elements at will from Stoicism, Epicureanism, even Cynicism (consider Horace’s diatribe satires),[[133]](#footnote-133) and as they do with all manner of things around them, the Roman Satirists take in, repurpose, and refashion philosophical material and references to suit their literary and other ends. Juvenal’s “anger games” (Keane 2015) in his early books reveal a consistent interest in Seneca’s *De Ira* (“On Anger”) but he muses on this from a greater distance in his later books as he develops a sympathy also with certain other Stoic and also Epicurean ways of thinking, as the discussions of Bartsch 2012 and Keane 2015 (chapters 4 and 5) bring to light. Juvenal perhaps selects not so much philosophical schools or even tenets, however, as he does registers for speaking.

In the case of Horace, it is notable that the most Stoic of all of his *Satires* is spoken almost in its entirety by one of his interlocutors (Damasippus, quoting Stertinius, *Sat*. 2.3); that is, even where Horace’s poetry appears most engaged with Stoicism, the engagement does not come from the person of the poet himself but has rather been outputted to others. Rather than being viewed as eclectic in his approach to philosophy, moreover, Horace has increasingly been understood as being interested, above all, in Epicureanism. In particular, the importance to Horace’s literary and aesthetic program of the Epicureanism espoused by Philodemus, who was in close contact with numerous poets of Maecenas’ “circle,” has been recognized in recent years especially through the work of Armstrong and Yona. Armstrong 1995 suggests that Horace, whether he had ever met Philodemus personally or not, was among those Latin poets who received from Philodemus an “atomist poetics” (224) whereby “style and content are reciprocals, ἴδια, of each other” (219). As a result, the sort of “metathesis” suggested at *Satires* 1.4.56-62 becomes an impossibility. In 2010 and 2014, Armstrong turns his attention from Horace’s Epicurean understanding of poetry to his Epicurean view of friendship as presented in the *Satires* and *Epistles*, and he reads the *Satires* as a “claim of Epicurean *contubernalitas*” intended to compliment Virgil, Varius, and Tucca upon Horace’s entry into Maecenas’ circle.[[134]](#footnote-134) Yona’s work builds on that of Armstrong: he elucidates individual poems through Horace’s Epicureanism, reading *Satires* 1.4 in light of Philodemus’ *On Choices and Avoidances* (2015), *Satires* 1.1 and 2.2 against his *On Wealth* and *On Property Management* (2018b, 2017), and *Satires* 2.5 with *On Flattery* in mind (2018a).

Persius presents himself explicitly and confidently as a student of the Stoic Cornutus: “you took me up at a tender age in your Socratic embrace, Cornutus” (*teneros tu suscipis annos / Socratico, Cornute, sinu*, 5.36–37; see also poem 5 more generally). Yet Persius’ monomaniacal devotion to a single philosophical school does not simplify the relationship of his satire to philosophy: it is unusual for satire not to have a “complex”[[135]](#footnote-135) view of philosophy, and the ways in which Persius adapted Stoicism to his own poetic needs and used his poetry to make contributions to Stoicism is increasingly being teased out, notably by Bartsch 2015. Reckford (2009: 9) puts it plainly: “To call Persius a Stoic poet is misleading. His poetry, though infused with Stoic concepts and values, is not didactic.” The relationship of Roman Satire to philosophy has remained underexplored in this key aspect: since the Roman verse satirists were plainly not and did not need to be philosophers in any formal sense (for all that Persius is termed the “philosopher-satirist”), how did incorporating particular philosophical viewpoints and ideas into their satire contribute to their literary or other aims?[[136]](#footnote-136) What, in short, is all of this philosophy *doing* in the substance of Roman Satire (beyond the obvious answer that the satirists were interested in moralizing discourse and did so through specific lenses, now one, now another)? In the case of Persius, who is vocal about his Stoic worldview, more headway has been made: Bartsch (2014: 245), for example, is explicit that her focus “is less about *whether* Persius is concerned to say something about Roman Stoicism, than *how* and *why* he says it in the context of his satirical framework.” She then suggests that the fourth satire is a “revision” of Stoic dialectic in which “the elements that Persius . . . found most troubling about the Platonic model of philosophical education” are left out such that the focus becomes “introspection” (267–68; similar is Reckford 2009: 9, who speaks of Persius’ focus on “getting things together” in terms of one’s inner life).

In *Satires* 2.3, Horace’s interlocutor, Damasippus, wonders about the books the poet has packed to take to the country with him: “What was the point of cramming in Plato with Menander, Eupolis with Archilochus, and taking away with you such great companions?” (*quorsum pertinuit stipare Platona Menandro? / Eupolin, Archilochum, comites educere tantos?*, 11–12). The list reads like a “who’s who” of Roman Satire’s most fertile sources (though given the dig at him by Damasippus, one wonders how much time Horace will really spend reading these “great companions” from the comfort and pleasures of his country retreat): New/Roman Comedy (Menander), Old Comedy (Eupolis), Iambus (Archilochus), and philosophy and the dialogic form (Plato), with another measure of Old Comedy thrown in for good measure (if the reference to Plato admits of also being construed as a reference to Plato Comicus). A distinctive hallmark and defining feature of Roman verse Satire is the acquisitive impulse it demonstrates towards every aspect of the world around it, including literature; Gowers (1995: 32) has memorably called the genre “a swirling mixture of the effluent of all the others.” Roman Satire looks outwards aggressively, engaging with its surrounding society, and brings into itself whatever it thinks may be of value in its making of satire. The material, literary and otherwise, that is subjected to the genre’s omnivorousness does not remain fossilized once it is present within the genre, however: it is reconfigured and reinvented in ways that not only result in the totality of satire, a new form (*satura quidem tota nostra est*), but that can also make the original material itself appear new to the reader. Despite this, after actively exercising its eye and grasp for what lies outside it, Roman verse Satire is often paradoxically inward looking and contemplative, especially of itself, its nature, and its material.

Further reading and references

Acosta-Hughes, Benjamin. 2019. “Callimachus on the Death of a Friend: A Short Study of Callimachean Epigram.” In Henriksén (ed.): 319–35.

Acosta-Hughes, Benjamin, and Susan A. Stephens. 2012. *Callimachus in Context: from Plato to the Augustan Poets*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Acosta-Hughes, Benjamin, Luigi Lehnus, and Susan A. Stephens (eds.). 2011. *Brill's Companion to Callimachus*. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Armstrong, David. 2014. “Horace’s Epicurean Voice in the *Satires*.” In Myrto Garani and David Konstan (eds.), *The Philosophizing Muse: The Influence of Greek philosophy on Roman Poetry*: 91–127. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publ.

Armstrong, David. 2010. “The Biographical and Social Foundations of Horace’s Poetic Voice.” In Davis (ed.): 7–33.

Armstrong, David. 1995. “The Impossibility of Metathesis: Philodemus and Lucretius on Form and Content in Poetry.” In Dirk Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*: 210–32. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barchiesi, Alessandro. 2005. “The Search for the Perfect Book: A PS to the New Posidippus.” In Kathryn Gutzwiller (ed.), *The New Posidippus: A Hellenistic Poetry Book*: 320–42. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barchiesi, Alessandro. 2001. “Horace and Iambos: The Poet as Literary Historian.” In Alberto Cavarzere, Antonio Aloni, and Alessandro Barchiesi (eds.), *Iambic Ideas: Essays on a Poetic Tradition from Archaic Greece to the Late Roman Empire*: 141–64. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Bartsch, Shadi. 2014. “Persius’ Fourth *Satire*: Socrates and the Failure of Pedagogy.” In Garani and Konstan (eds.): 245–68.

Bartsch, Shadi. 2012. “Persius, Juvenal, and Stoicism.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.) 2012: 217–38.

Braund, Susanna Morton. 2005. “The Masks of Satire.” In Paul Allen Miller (ed.), *Latin Verse Satire: An Anthology and Reader*: 390–97. London: Bristol Classical Press.

Cody, J. V. 1976. *Horace and Callimachean Aesthetics*. Brussels: Latomus, Revue d’études latines.

Colton, Robert E. 1991. *Juvenal’s Use of Martial’s Epigrams: A Study of Literary Influence*. Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert.

Cortés Tovar, Rosario. 2019. “Epigram and Satire.” In Henriksén (ed.): 163–77.

Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 2012. “*Venusina lucerna*: Horace, Callimachus, and Imperial Satire.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 165–89.

Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 2009–10. “Frogs Songs: Literary Reception of Old Greek Comedy in Rome.” *Ordia Prima* 8–9: 235–55.

Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 2009. “Old Frog Songs: Four Points on the Roman Aristophanes.” *mediAzioni* 6: 1–22.

De Brasi, Diego. 2018. “Socrates and Alcibiades as ‘Satiric Heroes’: The Socrates of Persius.” In Alessandro Stavru and Christopher Moore (eds.), *Socrates and the Socratic Dialogue*: 727–43. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

Delignon, Benedicte. 2006. *Les Satires d’Horace et la comédie gréco-latine: une poétique de l’ambiguïté*. Leuven: Peeters.

Ferriss-Hill, Jennifer L. 2015. *Roman Satire and the Old Comic Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garani, Myrto, and David Konstan (eds.). 2014. *The Philosophizing Muse: The Influence of Greek philosophy on Roman Poetry*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publ.

Gowers, Emily. 1994. “Persius and the Decoction of Nero.” In Jás Elsner and Jamie Masters (eds.), *Reflections of Nero: Culture, History, and Representation*: 131–50. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Harrison, S. J. 2007. *Generic Enrichment in Vergil and Horace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Henriksén, Christer (ed.). 2019. *A Companion to Ancient Epigram* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World). Hoboken: Wiley.

Highet, Gilbert. 1951. “Juvenal’s Bookcase.” *AJP* 72.4: 369–94.

Hinds, S. 1998. *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hunink, Vincent, and Dennis van den Broek. 2010. “*Stans pede in uno* (Horace *S*. 1.4.10).” *Mnemosyne* 63: 272–5.

Hunter, Richard. 2009. *Critical Moments in Classical Literature: Studies in the Ancient View of Literature and its Uses*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hunter, Richard L. 2006. *The Shadow of Callimachus: Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome* (Roman literature and its contexts). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, Timothy S. 2011. *Horace’s Iambic Criticism: Casting Blame (iambikē poiēsis)*. Leiden: Brill.

Keane, Catherine. 2007. “Philosophy into Satire: The Program of Juvenal’s Fifth Book.” *AJP* 128.1: 127–57.

Leach, Eleanor Winsor. 1971. “Horace’s Pater Optimus and Terence’s Demea: Autobiographical Fiction and Comedy in *Sermo* 1.4.” *AJP* 92.4: 616–32.

Mayer, Roland. 2005. “Sleeping with the Enemy: Satire and Philosophy.” In Freudenburg (ed.): 146–59.

Miller, Paul Allen. 2012. “Imperial Satire as Saturnalia.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 312–33.

Miller, Paul Allen. 1998. “The Bodily Grotesque in Roman Satire: Images of Sterility.” In S.M. Braund and B. K. Gold (eds.), *Vile Bodies: Roman Satire and Corporeal Discourse* (*Arethusa* 31.3): 257–83. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Morford, Mark. 2002. *The Roman Philosophers: From the Time of Cato the Censor to the Death of Marcus Aurelius*. London: Routledge.

Müller, Carl Werner. 1992. “Aristophanes und Horaz: Zu einem Verlaufsschema von Selbstbehauptung und Selbstgewißheit zweier Klassiker.” *Hermes* 120.2: 129–141.

Nelis, Damien P. 2012. “Callimachus in Verona: Catullus and Alexandrian poetry.” In Ian M. Le M. Du Quesnay and Tony Woodman (eds.), *Catullus: Poems, Books, Readers*: 1–28. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Newman, J. K. 1990. *Roman Catullus and the Modification of the Alexandrian Sensibility*. Hildesheim: Weidmann.

Oberhelman, Steven, and David Armstrong. 1995. “Satire as Poetry and the Impossibility of Metathesis in Horace’s *Satires*.” In Dirk Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*: 233–54. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

O’Sullivan, Neil. 1992. *Alcidamas, Aristophanes and the Beginnings of Stylistic Theory*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Pezzini, Giuseppe. 2018. “The Early Lucilius and the Language of the Roman *palliata*.” In Breed, Keitel, and Wallace (eds.): 162–83.

Piwonka, Mario Puelma. 1949. *Lucilius und Kallimachos: zur Geschichte einer Gattung der hellenistisch-römischen Poesie*. Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann.

Powell, J. G. F. 1999. “Stylistic Registers in Juvenal.” In J. N. Adams and R. G. Mayer (eds.), *Aspects of the Language of Latin Poetry*: 311–34. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Putnam, M. C. J. 2006. *Poetic Interplay: Catullus and Horace*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ruffell, I. A. 2003. “Beyond Satire: Horace, Popular Invective and the Segregation of Literature.” *JRS* 93: 35–65.

Schlegel, Catherine. 2000. “Horace and His Fathers: *Satires* 1.4 and 1.6.” *AJP* 121.1: 93–119.

Scodel, Ruth. 1987. “Horace, Lucilius, and Callimachean Polemic.” *HSCP* 91: 199–215.

Shero, L. R. 1923. “The *Cena* in Roman Satire.” *CP* 18.2: 126–43.

Smith, Warren S. 1989. “Heroic Models for the Sordid Present: Juvenal’s View of Tragedy.” *ANRW* II.33.1: 811–23.

Thomas, Richard F. 1993. “Callimachus Back in Rome.” In M. A. Harder, R. F. Regtuit, and G. C. Wakker (eds.), *Callimachus*: 197–215. Groningen: Forsten.

Thomas, Richard F. 1983. “Callimachus, the Victoria Berenices, and Roman poetry.” *CQ* 33.1: 92–113.

Thomas, Richard F. 1979. “New Comedy, Callimachus, and Roman Poetry.” *HSCP* 83: 179–206.

Townend, G. B. 1973. “The Literary Substrata to Juvenal’s Satires.” *JRS* 63: 148–61.

Wimmel, Walter. 1960. *Kallimachos in Rom: die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (*Hermes* Einzelschriften 16). Wiesbaden: F. Steiner.

Winkler, Martin M. 1989. “The Function of Epic in Juvenal’s Satires.” In Carl Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* V (*Latomus* 206): 414–43. Brussels: Latomus, revue d’études latines.

Worman, Nancy. 2015. *Landscape and the Spaces of Metaphor in Ancient Literary Theory and Criticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Yona, Sergio. 2018c. *Epicurean Ethics in Horace: The Psychology of Satire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yona, Sergio. 2018b. “An Epicurean ‘Measure of Wealth’ in Horace, *Satires* 1.1.” *ClAnt* 37.2: 351–78.

Yona, Sergio. 2017. “Horace, Ofellus and Philodemus of Gadara in *Sermones* 2.2.” *Mnemosyne* ser. 4, 70.4: 613-30.

Yona, Sergio. 2015. “Some Epicurean Aspects of Horace’s Upbringing in *Satires* 1.4.” *CP* 110: 227–51.

Young, Elizabeth Marie. 2015. *Translation as Muse: Poetic Translation in Catullus’s Rome*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.

Zetzel, James E. G. 2002. “Dreaming About Quirinus: Horace’s *Satires* and the development of Augustan poetry.” In Tony Woodman and Denis Feeney (eds.), *Traditions & Contexts in the Poetry of Horace*: 38–52. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Persona*-*theory**

There has perhaps been no approach to Roman Satire more transformational than the distinguishing of the poet’s *persona*—his literal “mask”—from his historical self. Geue (2017: 3), for example, has described it as nothing less than a “revolution . . . for Anglophone scholarship on Juvenal.” The introduction of persona-theory to the study of Roman Satire is often credited to W. S. Anderson, who in the 1950s applied it to Juvenal and then Horace (see Nappa 2018: 3), and Zetzel 1980 was foundational on the Horatian persona early on (see more recently Oliensis 1998 and McNeill 2001), Braund 1988 on the Juvenalian one. The reason why reading satire, in particular, in such terms is so revelatory is that the poet appears to present to the reader a transparent and wholly faithful version of himself: the poems are infused with the author’s presence, and supposedly autobiographical information abounds. We are bombarded (if less so in the case of Juvenal) with anecdotes and tidbits about the poet’s daily life, from mundane errands to preferred foods and friends, and we are continually and insistently invited to get to know him, as though the version of him presented in his verses were the real him. Such rich detail is, however, a hallmark, even a requirement, of the genre.[[137]](#footnote-137) By recognizing that the poet as he appears in his verses is a persona, one that has been deliberately crafted in accordance with larger literary designs, we become able to read the details supplied as signifying something other than historical reality and accordingly are positioned to read into these poems more deeply and in multiple ways. This is not to suggest that this sort of deep or alternative reading is the only way of reading Roman Satire, and persona­-theory naturally has its limits and its many detractors. Moreover, the authors of ancient satire have delighted generations of readers precisely on account of their immediate and captivating tone, in which the reader feels that the poet is talking to them and them alone. Harry Eyres’ book, written for a non-specialist audience and focusing on Horace’s *Odes*, captures the appeal succinctly in his title: *Horace and Me: Life Lessons from an Ancient Poet* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2013).

Horace’s nostalgia for the unfettered *libertas* in its purest, Republican form that he would have us believe Lucilius enjoyed can be connected both to the fact that Horace was writing in the twilight of the Republic, if not its death-throes, and that he was of lower social status. “Born from a freedman father” (*libertino patre natum*, 6.6, 45, 46), as he tells us three times in *Satires* 1.6, he simply cannot speak as freely as Lucilius was able to, and he thanks his patron repeatedly for seeing past his relatively humble beginnings. While Horace certainly appears to have required the financial support of a patron in a way that Lucilius did not, *libertino patre natum* belies the considerable success—financial, literary, and social—that he was on the cusp of attaining with his *Satires*. This growing reputation would be cemented by his selection in 17 BCE as the poet who would compose the hymn, *Carmen Saeculare*, to be performed at the *ludi saeculares*, Secular Games held every 100 or 110 years to celebrate the new age—in this instance and most pointedly, the new *Augustan* age. *Libertino patre natum*, moreover, is at least as much a declaration of generic allegiance to Bion of Borysthenes as it is autobiographical fact, for it virtually translates the latter’s fragment 1, ἐμοῦ ὁ πατὴρ μὲν ἦν ἀπελεύθερος.[[138]](#footnote-138) The Cynic philosopher, though not a household name even among Classicists, is a fairly natural reference point for Horace in his *Satires*, since he wrote diatribes. Finally, by positioning himself as a freedman’s son, whatever the historical veracity of this claim, Horace becomes paradoxically *more* able to speak (see Rosen 2000: 35), albeit with a freedom that is different in quality and in force from that of Lucilius. Speaking from a lowered vantage-point (but not too low) was evidently optimal: a notable proportion of Republican poets were of the equestrian standing that Horace, too, eventually attained. [[139]](#footnote-139) Horace’s famous humility is thus increasingly seen as an expedient ruse, and we should recall that equestrians were not middle-class, but occupied the second tier, after the senators, of the aristocratic ruling class.

Just as the Horace of the *Satires* has increasingly been read as the persona (or better, series or set of personae) that the poet chooses to present to his reader, so the contemporaries he names and describes in his verses have as well. Rather than seeing the *Satires* as a valuable source on what Maecenas, Virgil, Varius, and numerous other well-known figures were really like, we would do well to read them, too, as representations that the poet has crafted for reasons related to his literary program. One such reason is that Horace enjoys toying with his reader: thus throughout *Satires* 1.5, we feel that we are on the verge of being let in on some detail of the “important diplomatic mission”[[140]](#footnote-140) on which Horace has accompanied Maecenas, but are instead told that Virgil and Horace went to lie down for a nap while others played ball (1.5.48–49). This detail about Virgil, too, leaves us unsatisfied with respect to what we would like to know about Horace’s great contemporary and apparent friend.

In the particular case of Horace, much of what earlier readers found unpalatable in the *Satires* is their indelicacy, especially as this pertains to the poet himself. Priapus’ monologue may be one thing (*Sat*. 1.8) but to have to listen to the poet’s descriptions of his own bodily failings is quite another: a stomach upset (*Sat*. 1.5.7–8), an infected eye (30–31, 49), and a wet dream (82–85). On the one hand, satire includes such material because it can: as a self-consciously “low” genre that will choose the colloquial term (*caballus*) over the literary one (*equus*) and as one that defines itself as able to include anything it wishes, the bodily grotesque has a place in the genre, and Bakhtinian readings in Roman Satire have been fruitful.[[141]](#footnote-141) Persona-theory allows the reader who is made uncomfortable by the prospect that Horace is revealing deeply personal details about his bodily state and functions to reframe this unpalatable information as things that might have happened to the sort of person the poet is presenting himself to be, rather than as things that actually happened to the historical Horace. Scholars have also argued convincingly for the literary functions of bodily ailments: Horace’s bleary-eyed condition in *Satires* 1.5, for example, may represent the refusal of satire to look at the political aspects and import of the journey and to gratify the reader’s curiosity about that.[[142]](#footnote-142) For a certain type of reader, this might redeem the poem in question, rendering it more poetic (we are being supplied with this information for some other, higher, literary purpose); for another sort of reader, that Horace might reveal such information about himself makes him all the more immediate, a real person and not a poetic construct, and the poem becomes more enjoyable to read.

Juvenal has perhaps benefitted the most among the Roman Satirists from the application of persona-theory to his verses. His voice is so loud and strident and the objects of his loudly-conveyed hatred so extensive (not to mention offensive to our current sensibilities) that being excused from needing to believe that these are the opinions of the satirist himself can come as a relief. Persona-theory allows us a way of reading, even enjoying, Juvenal’s misogynistic, xenophobic, homophobic, and transphobic screeds without feeling as though we are endorsing such views or are complicit in them by reading the work of an author who actually holds any such opinions (but perhaps any such distance is too convenient and should come under greater scrutiny). As Nappa (2018: 4) notes, because this approach allows a reader to understand that a poem is “saying something not merely beyond the obvious but, in fact, the opposite of it,” Juvenal can paradoxically emerge “as a fairly liberal modern Western man who opposes sexism, racism, and imperialism,” which is “quite as unlikely to be true of the historical Juvenal as the positions adopted by earlier scholars.” A related, understudied area is the use of humor in Roman Satire.[[143]](#footnote-143) The difficulty lies in the fact that objects of laughter in ancient society are often quite different from those of our society today: we do not laugh at scenes of slaves being whipped or otherwise maltreated, at people’s physical deformities or misfortunes, or at threats of rape and jokes that have been deemed beyond the pale, yet we imagine that ancient readers and audiences did so heartily. This realization produces an uncomfortable disconnect that has long been familiar to scholars of Classics: we feel from reading their writings that the Greeks and Romans were just like us, since they seem to have had many of the same hopes and aspirations for living as do, but in certain important respects they were not like us at all (whether this matters, and whether we should revise our opinion of writers including those under discussion here as a result, has been debated, and increasingly so). Accordingly, while humor-theory seems underused in the study of Roman Satire, it is not clear what sort of humor-theory would allow us sincere and unrestrained access to these texts in the ways that an ancient reader (we imagine) experienced them (or whether that should even be a goal at all). That is, do we need to be excused through the application of persona-theory from laughing (if we do) at Juvenal’s xenophobia, misogamy, or transphobia? Cognitive science has not yet arrived to Roman Satire, but this study of the mind and its approaches has the potential to allow new interpretations at the intersections of linguistic, anthropological, sociological, literary, and humor-based approaches and thus to expand our access to ancient satiro-comic texts.

In the case of Juvenal, persona-theory is furthermore convenient because we know so little of the historical Juvenal: he tells us virtually nothing about himself (see Geue 2017 on the effects of this “authorial absence,” 9), which comes as something of a shock given the quantity of purportedly autobiographical information we have grown accustomed to from Lucilius, Horace, and even Persius. Geue (2017: 3) has been right to note the “fruitless circularity of drawing insight into the life *from* the poetry and reflecting this life back *onto* the poetry” that long marked Juvenalian scholarship. Persona-theory also allows the progression in Juvenal’s tone across his books to be viewed in a new light: it is not that he (in the sense of any real self) mellowed with age or burned through all of his rage and found himself depleted, but rather that he could adopt new personae and outlooks at punctuating moments such as the beginning of a new book. We should, however, take care not to impose on Juvenal a five-book arc, carefully plotted out in advance and executed over the period of decades, where it is far more plausible that his voice and interests evolved over such a time period.[[144]](#footnote-144) Put simply, did the “angry” Juvenal, as he was writing books 1 and 2, realize that his anger would run out or run into an aesthetic wall and aim all along to write three more books in more moderate and nuanced tones? Unlikely. Likewise, in Horace and Persius, apparent inconsistencies in the poet’s viewpoint, words, or actions can be “explained without creating a narrative of personal growth on the part of the poet or simply asserting without argument that neither persons nor poems are required to be consistent” (Nappa 2018: 3). For Reckford (2009: 5), Persius is “too self-ironic . . . or perhaps too honest, to let us forget that we are dealing with an authorial persona” and he rightly notes that “the more naïve he appears, the more suspicious we should be.” In the case of Horace, on the other hand, we must decide whether “we are still taken in by that simple, confiding persona; or if not, then we grow so suspicious of the ironic Horace that we look for hidden agendas everywhere” (36).

In these ways persona-theory has afforded another way of engaging with Lucilius, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, one that opens up an array of readings beyond the literal and that are frequently metapoetic. Although persona-theory has been around for decades, it has not run its course: Bartsch (2015: 9) identifies the persona of Persius as among the issues on which “there is much interesting work to be done.” Yet persona-theory is hardly the panacea for Roman Satire. As noted above regarding Juvenal, it allows a pose offensive to our sensibilities to be read ironically as meaning the opposite in a way that is quite unlikely to be what the poet had in mind. Tennant’s (2001, 2002) objections to reading Juvenal’s verses through a persona raise a separate objection: it seems unlikely that Juvenal, the historical person, did not have opinions about and grievances with the society around him, and that these opinions and grievances would not find themselves expressed in his verses.[[145]](#footnote-145) The work of Uden and Geue has found a way of countering such an objection: while persona is useful, “stopping with it as the end-all-be-all of Juvenal” is a problem; rather, “if we must have more Juvenalian personae, at least they may be allowed to say something about the world from which they sprang” (Geue 2017: 10). Likewise, Gowers 2003: 57 says of Horace that “while it is impossible to return to the age of innocent faith in the details of Horace’s life-story, and while the current emphasis on ‘persona’ is a very necessary corrective . . . there is some danger in all this of losing sight of the historical figure Horace and his connections with a particular period, the uncertain time of the second Triumvirate.” She concludes, “there *was* a life-story to be told, an image to be fashioned, a position to be defended, even if these were tailored to generic and rhetorical demands.” While acknowledging the usefulness of persona-theory and the new interpretational avenues it has opened up, meanwhile, Iddeng 2000: 127 notes that “there is no reason to take for granted that the speaker was defined once and for all as an unalterable dramatic character, especially not an untrustworthy figure in opposition to the author.” In addition, it would seem to run counter to ancient ways of reading, if we consider the laboriously compiled *Lives* in which scholars sought to collate whatever information they could about ancient authors.[[146]](#footnote-146) Nevertheless, it is quite likely that practicing poets, the satirists among them, were highly attuned to one another’s use of personae. Sidwell’s[[147]](#footnote-147) comment on Old Comedy may be instructive in the present context: “is it funny to say untrue things about people who are otherwise unknown?” On balance, it seems more likely that if a contemporary reader, at least, was to engage with a satirist’s or epigrammatist’s verses, these would contain material that was of interest and familiar to both him and the poet. As always, however, when reading verses of Roman Satire or those of Catullus and Martial we would do well to ask at every turn *why* we are being told a particular piece of information. It is unlikely to be because that is what really happened on some day in Rome in the first or second centuries BCE or CE.

Further reading and references:

In addition to Anderson 1963, Braund 1988, Freudenburg 2013, Keane 2015, Uden 2015, Geue 2017, and Nappa 2018, already mentioned, see the following for a range of viewpoints on poetic personae, persona-theory, and the body in Roman Satire and epigram:

Braund, Susanna Morton, and Barbara K. Gold (eds.). 1998. *Vile Bodies: Roman Satire and Corporeal Discourse* (*Arethusa* 31.3). Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Cucchiarelli, Andrea. 2001. *La satira e il poeta: Orazio tra Epodi e Sermones*. Pisa: Giardini.

Cowan, Robert. 2014. “Fingering Cestos: Martial’s Catullus’ Callimachus.” In Antony Augoustakis (ed.), *Flavian poetry and its Greek Past* (Mnemosyne Supplement 366): 345–71. Leiden; Boston: Brill.

D’Alessandro Behr, Francesca. 2009. “Open Bodies and Closed Minds? Persius’ *Saturae* in the Light of Bakhtin and Voloshinov.” In Plaza (ed.): 222–54.

Freeman, Rod. 2010. “‘Bleary eyes and drooping ears’: images of the body and self-representation in Horace *Sermones* Book One.” *BICS* 131.2: 233–58.

Goh, Ian. 2015. “The Campanian Case of Gaius Lucilius: Downtrodden Satire from Suessa Aurunca.” *ICS* 40.1: 91–120.

Gowers, Emily. 2003. “Fragments of Autobiography in Horace *Satires* 1.” *ClAnt* 22.1: 55–91.

Hass, K. 2007. *Lucilius und der Beginn der Persönlichkeitsdichtung in Rom*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Henderson, John. 1995. “Pump up the Volume: Juvenal, *Satires* 1.1–21.” *PCPS* 41: 101–37.

Iddeng, J. 2000. “Juvenal, Satire, and the Persona Theory: Some Critical Remarks.” *SO* 75: 107–29.

Keane, Catherine. 2002b. “Juvenal’s Cave-Woman and the Programmatics of Satire.” *CB* 78.1: 5–20.

McCarthy, Kathleen. 2019. *I, the poet: first-person form in Horace, Catullus, and Propertius*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press.

McNeill, Randall L. B. 2001. *Horace: Image, Identity, Audience*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Miller, Paul Allen. 2007. “The Penetrating I: Lucilius on the Body as a Site of Truth.” In Anne Tomiche and Pierre Zoberman (eds.), *Littérature et identités sexuelles*: 91–104. Paris: SFLGC.

Tennant, Peter. 2002. “Beyond the Rhetoric (Part 2): Juvenal and the Roman Élite in Satires 4–6.” *SyllClass* 13: 154–79.

Tennant, Peter. 2001. “Beyond the Rhetoric (Part 1): Juvenal and the Roman Élite in Satires 1–3.” *SyllClass* 12: 169–207.

Tennant, Peter. 2000. “Poets and Poverty: The Case of Martial.” *Acta Classica* 43: 139–56.

Winkler, Martin M. 1983. *The Persona in Three Satires of Juvenal*. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag.

Wray, David. 2001. *Catullus and the Poetics of Roman Manhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zetzel, J. E. G. 1980. “Horace’s *Liber Sermonum*: The Structure of Ambiguity.” *Arethusa* 13.1: 59–77.

**Self-referentiality/Metapoetics**

A second approach that has been fundamental to moving forward the scholarly dialogue on Roman Satire is the reading into these verses of discourse on themselves, that is, self-referentiality or metapoetics. This approach, which has been among the dominant ones across Greco-Roman literature since the 1990s (Geue 2017: 21 even dubs the “nineties and noughties” the “*Aetas Metapoetica*”), intersects in the case of Roman Satire with persona-theory, with the poet’s self-representation, and with the genre’s voraciousness towards other forms of literature. By this form of reading, when the poet describes something apparently unrelated to his writing, he may be understood to be reflecting upon his own writings, even as they are in the process of being written. As discussed above, for example, when rivers and springs appear in ancient poetry they may be read as a reflection upon the poet’s own style (or that of others): some write in raging torrents or bogged down with debris, others in a fine, clear trickle. The germ of this approach for Roman Satire may in many instances be traced back to the genre-term *satura*. In addition to highlighting the genre’s interest in food, which itself also frequently serves a metaliterary purpose, the term *satura*, denoting mixture, miscellany, and fullness, communicates the nature of Roman Satire as a dense mishmash of disparate themes, styles, events, and literary influences and borrowings. The poet’s overt interest in his own writings through the possibilities of *satura* invites the reader to consider whether this interest may be present and evinced elsewhere as well, even in places that might appear to have little relation to writing (but as scholars seek ever more metaliterary nuances in Roman Satire, we would always do well to consider how far is too far). Curiously, Roman Satire, like epigram, perhaps due to the perception of them as “minor” literary genres (certainly compared with epic and tragedy), was the subject of very little theorizing in antiquity. While we possess treatises on Homer, tragedians, the nature of poetry, and many more, on Roman Satire there is very little from antiquity beyond the descriptions found in Quintilian—a gap that is, however, somewhat filled by the extensive discursiveness of Roman Satire upon itself.

Little can be said with certainty about Lucilius’ exploitation of the metapoetic potential inherent in *satura*. Nevertheless, a number of fragments reveal evidence of fastidiousness or competitiveness in the preparation of foods (e.g., 215, 357–58, 465–66, 601–3, 1055–57, 1222–24) that could allude to Lucilius’ cooking up of a well-seasoned and fussed over satiric dish. Fr. 200–7 combines cooking and *sermo* (conversation/satire) in a highly suggestive manner: “with [sc. the food] well cooked and presented, with good conversation/satire and, if you want to know, freely [sc. spoken]” (*bene cocto et / condito, sermone bono et, si quaeris, libenter*). Horace, perhaps with such fragments in mind, connects his predecessor’s poetic compositional activities with eating: “he used to love to write two hundred verses before eating, another two hundred after dining” (*amet scripsisse ducentos / ante cibum versus, totidem cenatus*, *Sat*. 1.10.60–1). Although the genre’s interest in food is thus unlikely to be Horace’s invention, the alimentary associations inherent in the term *satura* begin to be brought to light especially in Horace’s *Satires* 2.4 and 2.8, whose respective gourmands pontificate on the fine art of cookery in ways that have resonances for the genre itself. In the former, Catius recites from memory *praecepta* (2.4.11) he has heard from an anonymous expert (*celabitur auctor*), while in the latter, Fundanius describes to Horace a banquet at which our poet was not present, reporting some of the host’s utterances and guests’ conversation in direct speech, as he, like us, is made to listen patiently to another’s monologue. Both poems consist largely of pedantically recounted lists, as Catius and Fundanius rattle off the requisite growing conditions, characteristics, provenance, preparation, and presentation of a variety of foods. Both also relate (oddly similar) recipes for sauces: Fundanius a mysterious *duplex ius* (2.8.63–9) made from sweet olive oil, unmixed wine, brine from a Byzantine jar, chopped herbs, Corycian saffron, and the pressings of a Venafran olive, while Catius (2.4.45–53) specifies that its ingredients must be Venafran olive oil from the first pressing, garum made from the juices of Iberian fish, five-year-old Italian wine cooked with white pepper, vinegar from Methymnaean grapes, green rocket, and pickled elecampane, with the coda that a certain Curtillus also adds unwashed sea urchins for brine. Fundanius’ words fail him as he attempts to describe the strangeness of it all (*longe dissimilem noto celantia sucum*, 28; *ingustata*, 30) while Catius further gives instructions for how a diner, already feeling ill from the volume and strangeness of the foods before him, may renew his appetite and stuff yet more into his distended belly (*Sat*. 2.4.27–9, 58–62). The guests of *Satires* 2.8 are faced with a Lucanian boar (6), garnished beyond edibility, loin of flounder and turbot (28–9), the torn-off arms of hares (89), the liver of a white goose fattened on figs (88), blackbirds with charred breasts (90–1), pigeons without rumps (91), and a pregnant eel (40–4), the narrator adding that these foods might even have been enjoyable were it not for the host’s insistence on enumerating their pedigree and preparation (2.8.92–3) and Fundanius’ on regurgitating the same. The level of detail throughout *Satires* 2.4 and 2.8 has both delighted and puzzled readers and has increasingly been seen as instantiating *satura* itself, as Horace stuffs an alimentary medley into this genre that refers to itself by a term for alimentary medleys (whether sausage or plateful).

We seem to be invited to mock the lectures of Catius and Fundanius, but the attention to detail that they demonstrate is generally a positive characteristic in the Horatian schema. Conversely, “the sloppy cooks chastised by Catius’ master” may be seen as “transformations of Lucilius, the disorganized creator of messy *saturae*.”[[148]](#footnote-148) Throughout his verses, as Gowers (1993b: 132–3) has pointed out, Horace uses terms such as *dulcis*, *acerbus*, *amarus*, *sapiens*, *putidus*, *integer*, *vitiatus*, *bonus*, and *malus* both literally of food and metaphorically of literary merits, shortcomings, or tastes. When Catius describes his coming monologue, in style and substance, as *res tenuis, tenui sermone peractas* (9), moreover, he employs not only the marked term *sermo* but also *tenuis*, Horace’s Callimachean buzzword for his poetry. While the source of Catius’ information is kept secret (*celabitur auctor*, “the author will remain concealed,” 11), it is well read as Horace himself: the claims of culinary primacy (“I will be found to have been the first to serve this [sc. grapes] with apples, I first the sediments of wine and fish-sauce, I first white pepper with black salt” *hanc ego cum malis, ego faecem primus et allec, / primus et invenior piper album cum sale nigro*, 73–74; cf. 2.8.51–52) stand alongside the claims of poetic primacy Horace makes in his *Epistles* and *Odes*,[[149]](#footnote-149) opening the possibility that these moments in the *Satires* may also be read in metapoetic terms. For Horace himself, an ideal compactness of expression (*pauca locutus*, 1.6.56) is mirrored by similarly idealized eating habits: “I dined lightly” (*pransus non avide*, 1.6.127). He even offers up an impossible image that combines rusticity, humility, and old fashioned Roman values, describing how he goes home to “a dish of leek and chickpea and oilcake” (*porri et ciceris . . . laganique catinum*) where “a white stone slab supports two cups and a ladle; a cheap salt shell is there too, and an oil flask with a shallow bowl, plain Campanian earthenware” (*lapis albus / pocula cum cyatho duo sustinet; astat echinus / vilis, cum patera guttus, Campana supellex*, *Sat*. 1.6.114–18; cf. *Sat*. 1.3.13–15). Every detail oozes moral superiority, with Horace depicting the ethically ideal lifestyle as characterized by moderation so extreme it can hardly offer much pleasure. But the lines also evoke *satura*—a genre that revels in its self-image of being earthy, humble, and profoundly Italian. An oxymoron is always and inevitably at work in Horace’s effort to Alexandrianize Roman Satire, however, for if *satura* aspires to be *tenuis* in the Callimachean way, what results is a “slim fat dish.”[[150]](#footnote-150)

Persius takes substantial advantage of the potential inherent in *satura*, applying alimentary and culinary metaphors for (negatively) literary critical and (positively) self-referential ends, as in the phrase *sartago loquendi*. If Horace already attempted to put *satura* on a diet to render it slim *a la* Callimachus, Persius takes the idea to a further extreme as he invites his reader (specifically, the reader acquainted with Old Comedy, a genre joyfully full of food) to find *aliquid* *decoctius*, “something even more boiled down,” in his verses. This decoction is both literal and metaphorical: Horace’s 18 poems and 2,003 lines become a prologue (14 lines) and six satires, ranging from 52 to 191 lines each; and Persius’ satire is infamously compressed, dense, and challenging. But above all, the statement signals Persius’ intention to continue making use of the alimentary connotations of *satura* in a variety of ways (even if the fullness of his satire is condensed in form rather than ready to burst). Such imagery may be used to disparage others’ poetic efforts: early in his first poem he asks his interlocutor in an accusatory tone, *colligis escas?*, “do you compose tidbits?,” and derides contemporary poetry as *rancidulum*, “a rancid little thing” (1.33). The most remarkable concentration of alimentary metaphors for literary critical and metapoetic ends, however, is found at the beginning of Persius’ fifth satire. Persius opens by speaking of the tendency of poet-priests to demand in the service of their magnum opus a hundred voices, mouths, and tongues—body parts as essential for eating as they are for poetic recitation. The theme gathers speed as Cornutus, his interlocutor, taking up the opening oral imagery, mockingly suggests that Persius with his grandiose opening is offering up “flour-balls of robust poetry” (5.5). He proposes as topics for this other type of poetry the stories of Procne or Thyestes, both of which involve the cooking and consumption of parts of murdered humans, and in saying that the “tasteless” (*insulso*, 9) tragic actor Glycon must dine upon such indelectable morsels, Cornutus disturbingly renders him a cannibal. Suggesting that Persius leave such banquets at Mycenae (5.17), Cornutus continues the culinary metaphor in stating that the satirist should focus his energies instead upon the “common meals” (*plebeia prandia*, 18) of his own genre. Thus “Persius’ most distasteful images are the very ones that most recall the origins of *satura*,” as “satire that was once easy and convivial is condensed into indigestible language, poetry that expects no guests, a recipe whose instructions are inscrutable.”[[151]](#footnote-151)

If Persius condensed Horatian satire into a thick, boiled-down brew, Juvenal blows it up to Lucilian proportions once more, writing sixteen poems, one of them the gargantuan sixth satire. As is fitting for this most prolix of the satirists since Lucilius, a single poem, the fourth, is devoted to the largest turbot ever found. Having reached such grotesque proportions, it is unable to fit onto any existing plate (4.72; cf. 131–2) in what may be read as a humorous oversaturation of the *lanx satura*. Similarly, Juvenal’s banquet poem (satire 5) describes two menus, one lavish and one miserly, such that the reader feels they are experiencing the substandard secondary menu and have been left to salivate over the superior, parallel dishes Virro receives. If a satirist’s meals reflect his poetry, Juvenal’s fifth satire is “suggestive of the poet’s cruelty to us” (Freudenburg 2001: 272), for the feast we are served is ultimately unsatisfying (though in a manner quite different from Horace’s *Satires* 2.8, where the guests chose not to eat) and even the narrator is left hungry (*ieiuna fames*, 5.10). Freudenburg (2001: 276) continues: “dare we let this book, now that it is over, count as ‘satire,’ the full, rich feast, so as to leave contented, and full? Or do we admit that we are still hungry, and not at all pleased, enraged at what Juvenal has fobbed off on us in the course(s) of this sham-epic book and deigned to name ‘satire’?” Promised an oversized feast in Juvenal’s expansion of the Horatian model to show the genre bursting its bounds, the reader may feel resentment at being left unsatisfied, and deliberately so, as Juvenal continues satire’s potential to deploy food to metapoetic ends in a manner his own.

Roman Satire’s ability to reflect upon itself in this fashion seems enabled by, and bound up with, the strong authorial presence, the alluringly autobiographical “I” by whom we feel we are continually being addressed. While this interest is shared by other Greek and Latin comic genres, such as Old Comedy (the *parabases*) and epigram, the *degree* to which metapoetics and self-referentiality are concerns of Roman Satire is one of its distinctive hallmarks. Reading metapoetically and discerning “easter eggs”[[152]](#footnote-152) that the poet has left for the finding can be (and is for this particular reader) immensely satisfying, not least when you think you may have discerned something that no one else has for some 2,000 years. Increasingly, however, metapoetic readers are under pressure, as they should be, to explain why such readings matter or what they accomplish beyond merely existing. For Bartsch (2015: 10–11), metaphors may allow us to find “the points where the edifice of the *Satires*, if pressed, collapses upon itself” such that Persius “offers up the possibility of reading the *Satires* in order to get to a place where we can dismiss bodies and boils, sweet pleasures and sex, earthly disease and death, and rejoin the Stoic view of the world from its famously detached Archimedean point.”[[153]](#footnote-153) Bartsch’s perspective illuminates what is perhaps the central problem of trying to explicate any genre that participates in the *spoudogeloion*: that there is a scholarly pendulum that oscillates between arguing on the one hand that the point is laughter or the art itself, and on the other that it is the cloaking of the poet’s truth beneath his artful presentation of it (or, the *tertium quid* after Philodemus, that the two are inseparable and that everything depends on the interplay between them). While being unable to predict or foresee how scholarship could move beyond this bind and offer a wholly innovative reading of the aims and outcomes of Roman Satire’s metapoetics (if I were able to do so, I would write such a study myself), I suspect that answering the larger “so what” question of metapoetry, as of issues in Roman Satire more generally, will continue to be central to future scholarship.

Further reading and references:

Mette, Hans Joachim. 1961. “‘Genus tenue’ und ‘mensa tenuis’ bei Horaz.” *MH* 18: 136–9.

Zietsman, J. C. 2004. “Persius on Poetic (In)Digestion.” *Akroterion* 49: 73–88.

**The afterlife of Roman Satire**

While the reader may surmise from the above survey that Roman verse Satire ceased to exist upon the death of Juvenal, we know that poets continued to write in the genre (or claim or consider themselves as doing so) well into the fourth and fifth centuries CE. Such writers, however, never attained the prominence and ongoing popularity that the four canonical Roman verse satirists enjoyed; put another way, none of these writers ever convinced the tradition that he was the fifth in the lineage, having excised some number of others. At the same time as Roman verse Satire, however defined, continued to be actively written, the authors under study here became school-texts. They were considered well suited for this purpose not only because of their Latinity and grammatical and literary value (in the case of Horace, for example, his *Satires* were metrically and linguistically more straightforward than his *Odes*), but also for their moral lessons, which were thought to render them appropriate and valuable for study by young men of all ages.[[154]](#footnote-154) Any questionable content could be, and was, simply expurgated or ignored,[[155]](#footnote-155) and through this method the poems of Catullus and Martial’s epigrams were also made available and routinely studied as part of the school curriculum (though they were not as central as Roman Satire to education in the Middle Ages or Early Modern Period). Finally, the writers of Roman verse Satire became popular objects for translation and imitation, especially for Anglo-French writers beginning in the medieval period, through at least the nineteenth century, when they continued to have a prominent place in the school curriculum for young boys especially in England.

The study of late antique literature and of the reception of Classical literature has burgeoned in Classics in the past two decades, as reception studies has established itself as a notable and respected subfield within (and beyond) the discipline. Those interested in learning more about Classical reception have had their task eased considerably by the monumental five-volume *Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature* that was published between 2012 and 2019, as well as by the co-authored work of Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter, *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475*. Another good starting-point for interested readers are the final chapters of companions or handbooks, which are now typically dedicated to studies in reception, for example, Money 2007, Gillespie 2012, Hooley 2012a, Braund 2015, and the concluding essays in Freudenburg’s 2005 *Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire*. Alongside these, one would also like to see more book-length, in-depth literary studies such as that of Moul 2010. The literature on the reception of Roman Satire into English and other European languages, already robust, continues to grow, not least because time is ever moving on, meaning that the corpus of works that are ‘receptive’ of Classical ones itself continues to grow.

While nothing remains of late antique verse satire itself (in fact, no hexameter Latin satire from the late second century through the sixth century, as Sogno 2012: 363 points out), we possess mentions of such verses that compare them favorably with Lucilius and with Juvenal (and Turnus, a contemporary whom Juvenal pointedly ignored). The fourth century writer Ausonius describes how his pupil Tetradius “outdoes the rough Camenae [i.e., Muses] of Suessa [sc. Aurunca]” (*rudes Camenas qui Suessae praevenis*, *Letters* 11.9–10),” that is, Lucilius. Similarly, “neither Turnus nor Juvenal will be more powerful than [Lucillus’] satire, which plays with the wounding Camenae” (*huius vulnificis satira ludente Camenis / nec Turnus potior nec Iuvenalis erit*, *De reditu suo* 1.603–4), wrote Rutulius Namatius in the early fifth century CE of one Lucillus, father of the governor of Tuscia and Umbria in 416 CE.[[156]](#footnote-156) Regardless of the actual merit of these verses, as Sogno (2012: 364) points out, “Ausonius’ and Rutilius’ remarks emphasize the continuity and vitality of the genre.” It should also come as no surprise that a heightened interest in Juvenal in the late fourth century coincided with a time of increasing troubles for the Western Roman Empire—satire often does best when it can look back to a better time when free speech (*libertas*) was freer.

Late antique satire also developed a new form: prose satire written by Christian apologists, the coexistence of which with verse satire Sogno (2012: 364) sees as “emblematic . . . of the blending of genres and blurring of boundaries between genres that constitute the most characteristic and defining features of late antique literature.” Tertullian was one of the foremost writers of this new form of satire and his writings, while not in the hexameters that had come to define Roman Satire, remained steeped in the tradition and in Classical learning. The letters of St. Jerome have also been characterized as satirical, and Sogno (2015: 384) suggests that Jerome expanded and made more explicit Persius’ medical imagery such that the satirist himself became a doctor, administering satire to society’s ills, an image that persisted into the English Renaissance. Above all, satire’s mordant social critique was well-suited to the moral aims of early Christian writers, and so it is that late antiquity oversaw and was the crucible for a “transformation” (Sogno 2012) of satire from pagan to Christian, and from verse to prose or a combination of the two. Christian prose satire also intersects with Menippean satire, the satire written in a combination of prose and verse mentioned briefly above as outside the scope of this study. This form had continued from the time of Varro through the works of Seneca (his *Apocolocyntosis* satirizes the deification of the emperor Claudius as a “Pumpkinification”) and Petronius (whose *Satyrica* combines Menippean satire and the novel) and was represented in late antiquity most notably by the *Caesars* of the emperor Julian, in which he attacked his predecessors, in Greek. Although not considered formally related to Roman verse Satire, the satirical writings in Greek of the prolific Lucian of Samosate in the second century CE also deserve mention here, both for their natural connection with Menippean satire as well as for how they and the other works noted here reveal satire (if not Roman verse Satire, formally) to have been a highly organic mode of expression that cannily and tenaciously underwent adaptation and modification in the hands of different artists for different times and places—*libertas* will out.

Alongside this continued survival and evolution of Roman verse Satire and satire more generally, the Classical writers of these genres became objects of study, as Tarrant 2007 surveys. Horace became a school text very early, within a generation of two of his death. Juvenal was able to make a crack about “boys standing around” (*stabant pueri*) with “a totally faded [copy of] Horace” (*totus decolor esset / Flaccus*) and “a Virgil covered in black soot”(*haereret nigro fuligo Maroni*, 7.225–27)—a scenario that lives out the poet’s nightmare of “being recited in cheap schools” (*vilibus in ludis dictari*, *Sat*. 1.10.74–75). If not historical fact, at the least Juvenal’s pointed, mean-spirited joke with *Satires* 1.10.74–75 in mind indicates the plausibility of this scenario. In contrast, Juvenal’s own works appear to have been little read for a century or two after his death, while Persius’ remained popular.[[157]](#footnote-157) Following the fall of the (western) Roman Empire, “Nearly all classical Latin authors went through a period of hibernation between the mid-sixth century, when the copying of classical texts slowed to a halt, and their rediscovery at some point during the Middle Ages.”[[158]](#footnote-158) Our Roman verse satirists emerged unscathed from this “hibernation” with the exception of Lucilius, whom we believe to have been known since late antiquity only in fragmentary form. As Europe emerged from this period, which has traditionally been called the Dark Ages (though the term is no longer favored), “Horace and the Latin satirical poets Persius and Juvenal, as well as the epigrammatist Martial, were much read in medieval classrooms,”[[159]](#footnote-159) as they were also into the early modern period alongside Terence, Virgil, Ovid, Sallust, Lucan, and Statius. While the most elementary teaching was accomplished by means of the *Liber catonianus*, which contained the *Disticha catonis* along with some other standard selections, “for the most advanced reader, Horace, Virgil, Persius, and Juvenal seem never to have lost their lustre.”[[160]](#footnote-160) Hooley (2012a: 339) notes also the role of anthologization in the “agenda of instruction” for which satire was co-opted.[[161]](#footnote-161) From Juvenal, for example, has come *quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* (“who will watch the watchmen?,” 6. 347–8); Persius’ Latin lends itself less easily to pithy excerptation, while in the case of Horace, his *Odes* are favored for this purpose (most famously *carpe diem*, “seize the day,” *Carm*. 1.11.8). Yet even as the satirists were among the most well-known Classical texts for medieval readers, Copeland (2016a: 9–10) wonders at the fact that these authors “left little if any direct marks on medieval vernacular literature” and that “literary reception of the Latin satirists in English must await the early Tudor period and the experimentations of Skelton, Wyatt, and Surrey.”[[162]](#footnote-162)

Roman Satire enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in England beginning in the sixteenth century, and throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries numerous writers and poets produced imitations in prose and verse (and many translations, too) of ancient Roman verse Satires. At the close of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, “classicism—knowledge of Graeco-Roman antiquity (per se, rather than as an ecclesiastical adjunct) and the use of such knowledge for recreation of the secular-civic sphere—changed from being a specialism of the schools and a few prince-pleasers to being a central component of English literary culture.”[[163]](#footnote-163) Carlson aligns the literary careers of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey and John Skelton (both in the orbit, for better or worse, of Henry VIII) with this change, and Skelton’s particular interest within “classicism” seems to have been in the satire of Lucilius, whom he names. Recognizing that Skelton would have known Lucilius from what were already only fragments and the “partial, not disinterested” descriptions of him to be found in Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, he connects Skelton’s “lavish invective propensities” with Lucilius’ own “verbal *libertas*” (542–44). This poet, like each Roman verse satirist before him, spoke with the “voices” of his predecessors “to his own present circumstance” and in doing so invented “an indigenous English satire,”[[164]](#footnote-164) though this “English Lucilius” found himself with few admirers or imitators and (not unlike Roman verse Satire) “excluded from the high-cultural polite canon” (552). Gillespie (2012: 386), remarking that the Roman Satirists did not have “much impact on writing in English before the later sixteenth century,” suggests that the sudden flourishing of interest in the possibilities afforded by Roman Satire can be connected with urbanization: “not until they find themselves in what can be imagined as comparable urban centers do European poets start thinking concertedly about how their own circumstances resemble, and how their own voices can harmonize with, those of the ancient satirists.” Illustrating the same interplay, Martindale (2005: 297) wonders, “will satirical verse in the twenty-first century find need of the sharpness of a classical tradition to ignite itself against?”

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw a “sudden efflorescence” of “classically rooted epigram and satire in the English literary repertoire.”[[165]](#footnote-165) As Braund 2015, following Peter 1956, explains, ancient satire gave way in the early Middle Ages to the mode (rather than genre) of “Christian complaint” which, in turn, gave way to classically based satire once again in the hands of authors such as Joseph Hall, John Marston, and Edward (Everard) Guilpin, as well as John Donne.[[166]](#footnote-166) While for Braund Donne is separate from the other three English satirists named here, in that she sees him as “much more independent of the Roman Satirists” (362), Gillespie note that of these “major followers of Persius and Juvenal, only Donne is today a “household name” (401). Two points bear noting here: first, that Braund locates a “frenzy of productivity” by these authors in the years 1598–1601, coinciding with and culminating in (and perhaps further stimulated by) an Order of Conflagration issued by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London through which they proposed to, and in fact did, burn works of epigram and satire.[[167]](#footnote-167) And second, that these authors were engaging with Latin texts of epigram and satire that had yet to be fully translated into English (unlike drama, which had become more popularly accessible and known);[[168]](#footnote-168) that is, these “cognoscenti” were “educated men writing for educated men, often precocious and competitive young men” (348–49). They took Persius and Juvenal as their models, seeing in these two Roman verse satirists a wellspring for their own “aggression and obscurity,” and Braund identifies “the sheer physical violence that is threatened” (and which calls to mind the iambic tradition that informed Latin satire as well as epigram) as one of “the most shocking features of Elizabethan satire.”[[169]](#footnote-169) Sustained engagement with Horace in the Elizabethan period is seen in the works of Ben Jonson, who evidently felt a special affinity with Horace, as McGann describes: “when at the age of twenty-eight, in 1601, Ben Jonson staged *Poetaster*, he had passed through experiences reflecting Horace’s life at many points,” including their relative lack of social advantages yet excellent education and their military service.[[170]](#footnote-170) Jonson also translated the *Ars Poetica* into English and wrote *Epigrammes* (“Martial’s genre”) that are notable for their “Horatianism.”[[171]](#footnote-171)

As these first writers of Roman verse Satire in English, so to speak, ushered in the seventeenth century, the Roman verse satirists began to “appear with unprecedented frequency in English literature” in the period 1660–1780s.[[172]](#footnote-172) While acknowledging that “eighteenth-century English Literature was, of course, much more than an Age of Satire,” Hopkins and Martindale (2012: 21–22) add, “but that it *was* a great age of English satire is undeniable and among its models in this respect the Roman satirists naturally featured prominently.” In this period, satire came to be viewed as existing in two distinct and opposing flavors, a debate or divide traceable back to Scaliger in 1561:[[173]](#footnote-173) the Horatian, characterized by a gentle, mild tone with correction as its goal; and the Juvenalian, marked by harshness, even nastiness, the main aim of which was skewering vices (rather than correcting therapeutically). Lucilius does not feature in the schema (after John Skelton’s initial interest in him), while Persius mostly exists as allied with the Juvenalian side (though it is increasingly recognized that some writers were interested in Persius himself, even as later the French predilection for Persius would apparently mark him as out-of-bounds for English readers and writers).[[174]](#footnote-174) Hooley (2012a: 350) lists “Wyatt, Denham, Cowley, Garth, Young, Walsh, Granville, Congreve, Wycherley, Addison” as leading representatives of the Horatian style, while “Rochester, Boileau (earlier), Swift, and of course Pope” contributed “substantially to Horatian translation and imitation even while writing in a tenor that smacked more of Juvenal than Horace.”[[175]](#footnote-175) The Juvenalian mode was championed by Samuel Johnson, Lord Byron, and Jonathan Swift.[[176]](#footnote-176) While these writers would have been familiar with both, some were naturally “attracted to the abrasiveness of Juvenal rather than the suavity of Horace” while others found that they were able to express whatever they wanted to express in more Horatian tones.[[177]](#footnote-177) Nevertheless, as Gillespie reminds us, for all that there seemed to be a polarity between Juvenal (and Persius) on the one hand and Horace on the other, these divisions and definitions could be “unstable” (392) and in addition some writers, such as John Donne, enjoyed both registers.

Dryden’s treatise in this period on Roman verse Satire (*Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire*, 1692–93) and his translations of Persius and Juvenal would be foundational for other writers,[[178]](#footnote-178) even while he handled and remade Horace (Hammond 1993). So Dryden, too, found himself “grappling with the Horace versus Juvenal dichotomy,”[[179]](#footnote-179) at one time calling Horace’s *Satires* “incomparably beyond Juvenal’s” and at another, later date saying that Juvenal “gives me as much pleasure as I can bear.”[[180]](#footnote-180) Contemporary readers would likely have seen Dryden “experimenting with classical satire’s legacy, sorting out its manners and place in the hotly contested literary and social politics” of the period.[[181]](#footnote-181) In France, meanwhile, Nicolas Boileau was especially influential in the reception of Roman verse Satire: he wrote adaptations of the satires of Horace and Juvenal (*Satires*) and also an imitation of Horace’s *Ars Poetica* (*L’Art Poetique*). Still at issue in the scholarship on satirical reception beginning with the medieval period are the fine distinctions between translation, adaptation, imitation, and inspiration: what had long been described as (loose) “translations” have increasingly come to be viewed as “imitations/adaptations” (Pope even called his work *Imitations of Horace*),[[182]](#footnote-182) with the focus increasingly on how these later writers tried to be Juvenal or Horace for their own time, just as Juvenal had tried to be Lucilius for his, and Persius Horace, and Horace himself an Augustan Lucilius.[[183]](#footnote-183) It is noteworthy how many of these authors were also interested in being Martial for their own time,[[184]](#footnote-184) as we see again the natural affinity and association of satire with epigram.

In the nineteenth century, interest in Horace’s *Odes* surpassed that in his *Satires* (Byron, for example, was interested in the *Odes* but also in Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, as evident in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* as well as in his *Hints from Horace*), and in general attention seems to have shifted from Latin authors to “Homer and the Greeks.”[[185]](#footnote-185) If other genres supplanted satire, however, now that the age of satire was over, Roman verse Satire nevertheless remained (or perhaps regained its place) in the English schoolroom. “English” in particular because of “British literary culture’s strong and distinctive tradition of ‘Englishing’ the Latin satirists” and because “J.E.B. Mayor’s edition of [Juvenal’s] thirteen poems conclusively asserted Britain’s ownership of the author who, along with Horace, had inspired its native tradition in verse satire.”[[186]](#footnote-186) A major concern in this period and into the twentieth century, as Nisbet 2012 explores, is how to present Roman verse Satire to contemporary readers in each time and place; with this in view, Nisbet provides an excellent entry point into the field of translation studies as these pertain to Roman Satire. Whether in the form of translation or commentary, an abiding concern was to render the material suitable, and this was accomplished through omission of inappropriate poems and lines (in editions with facing Latin and English, the offending Latin words could simply be left untranslated) and through a “vocabulary of obfuscation” that was “highly conservative” and in which dictionaries themselves also participated.[[187]](#footnote-187) If Juvenal, especially, had to be rendered suitable through such machinations, then why was he considered suitable reading in the first place, some might wonder? As in the late antique and medieval classroom, Roman verse Satire continued to be valued as a source of moral lessons—even if those moral lessons were in their original form considered too immoral for public consumption.[[188]](#footnote-188)

Roman verse Satire has been successful (in the sense that it has not vanished into obscurity) because it has been able to be read by people who may not have much knowledge of its original socio-historical contexts: we can get a lot out of Horace, for example, even if we are ignorant of exactly who certain named contemporaries in his verses were. This allows readers in each time and place to find their thoughts and hopes reflected in these poems and to experience perhaps a pleasant surprise and warmth at a shared humanity from the realization that someone else had the same thoughts and hopes two thousand years ago. This potential for atemporality, however, has also resulted in a tendency *not* to read these poems as located in and the products of a particular time and place. Moreover, even a single satirist’s poems are each slightly different in their time and place of production, though recent scholarship has seen this form of reading better represented.[[189]](#footnote-189)

Roman verse Satire has also benefitted from the enduring appeal of satire itself, in a wide variety of formal manifestations. Roman verse Satire was merely one form in which satirical impulses were expressed in Latin from the late second century BCE to the early second century CE: consider, for example, comedy, epigram, the writings of the neoteric poets, and even graffiti. Similarly Winkler (2012: 513), beginning from the premise that “Satire, understood both in the Romans’ own sense and in our looser sense, is alive and well,” shows how “Persius and Juvenal can still appeal to us because they anticipate certain aspects of modern media phenomena.” Roman verse Satire is “highly visual” in its vignettes of ancient Rome, for example, and therefore this “poetic satire approaches the pictorial satire” with which we are most familiar today—satirical cartoons and television “news” shows and series.[[190]](#footnote-190) Another shared feature is “grotesque exaggeration” that “borders on the surrealistic,” and here Roman verse Satire can come into contact with surrealist cinema of the twentieth century, the point being that modern satirists need not have any direct knowledge of Roman verse Satire for there to be a shared *esprit*.[[191]](#footnote-191) Winkler (2012: 523) also notes the continued possibilities of the persona: describing Michael Moore, the filmmaker of *Bowling for Columbia* (2002), *Fahrenheit 911* (2004), and *Sicko* (2007) as “America’s most prominent and most controversial satirist,” Winkler notes his “carefully cultivated” appearance whereby through being “vastly overweight and dresse[d] like a slob in worn-out blue jeans, a T-shirt or plaid shirt whose tails are hanging out over the back of his pants, or a cheap windbreaker” and a “ubiquitous baseball cap” he radiates “folksiness.” Likewise, satirical late-night talk show hosts in the United States,[[192]](#footnote-192) perhaps most notably Stephen Colbert with his parodic conservative persona in *The Colbert Report*, make use of the possibilities of the persona all while seeming (as the satirical personae generally do) to present a genuine version of themselves whom we are invited to get to know. Hooley (2012a: 361) similarly concludes, “the taste for satire, as mode or disposition, is far from languishing in this later day, but, rather, fully present in the polemical deformations of our time’s aggressive political, religious, sectarian contestations.” In his view, moreover, “Juvenal and Persius speak as incisively, disquietingly, and ambiguously to readers now as ever.” I would add that Horace and Lucilius do, too.

Whether consciously or not, satirical succession endures. Roman verse Satire, formally defined, may have ended with the death of Juvenal, but satire continues in other forms. Satirists still wrestle, if not explicitly with what it means to be Lucilius or Horace or Persius or Juvenal for their time, then with what it means to be a *satirist* for their time. Finally, each time we return to Roman verse Satire, we do so altered by our encounters with other satire, because “no reading of classical satire is complete without a reading of its imitators.”[[193]](#footnote-193) Reckford (2009: 13) explains of Persius that “you cannot step into the same text twice,” because one reads Persius differently after having read Lucilius, or Horace, or Juvenal, and because the reader themselves is continually “in flux.” For Reckford this is the most appealing quality of Persius, but it is a quality of satire more generally, and perhaps of all enduring art. These poems have delighted through being able to be read in different ways by different readers, or in different ways by the same reader at different times. What Goethe said of Horace’s *Ars Poetica* is also applicable to his *Satires*, and to Roman Satire overall: “This problematic work strikes one reader in a different way from another, and as different again every ten years” (“Dieses problematische Werk wird dem einen anders vorkommen als dem andern, und jedem alle zehn Jahre auch wieder anders”).

Further readings:

Braund, Susanna. 2015. “Complaint, Epigram, and Satire.” In Patrick Cheney and Philip Hardie (eds.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 2: *1558–1660*: 345–72. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burrow, Colin. 2005. “Roman satire in the sixteenth century.” In Freudenburg (ed.): 243–60.

Carlson, David R. 2016. “John Skelton.” In Rita Copeland (ed.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 1: *800–1558*: 541–59. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cheney, Patrick, and Philip Hardie (eds.). 2015. *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 2: *1558–1660*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Copeland, Rita (ed.). 2016. *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 1: *800–1558*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Copeland, Rita. 2016a. “Introduction.” In Rita Copeland (ed.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 1: *800–1558*: 1–20. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Copeland, Rita. 2016b. “The Curricular Classics in the Middle Ages.” In Rita Copeland (ed.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 1: *800–1558*: 21–33. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Copeland, Rita. 2016c. “The Trivium and the Classics.” In Rita Copeland (ed.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 1: *800–1558*, 53–76. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Copeland, Rita, and Ineke Sluiter. 2009. *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300–1475*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gillespie, Stuart. 2012. “Imperial Satire in the English Renaissance.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 386–408.

Hammond, Paul. 1993. “Figures of Horace in Dryden’s Literary Criticism.” In Charles Martindale and David Hopkins (eds.), *Horace Made New*: 127–47. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haynes, Kenneth (ed.). 2019. *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 5: *After 1880*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hooley, Dan. 2012b. “Roman Satire and Epigram: Horace, Juvenal, and Martial.” In David Hopkins and Charles Martindale (eds.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 3: *1660–1790*: 217–54. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hooley, Dan. 2005. “Alluding to satire: Rochester, Dryden, and others.” In Freudenburg (ed.): 261–83.

Hopkins, David, and Charles Martindale (eds.). 2012. *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 3: *1660–1790*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johnston, Freya. 2012. “Samuel Johnson’s Classicism.” In David Hopkins and Charles Martindale (eds.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 3: *1660–1790*: 615–46. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kennedy, Duncan. 2005. “The ‘presence’ of Roman satire: modern receptions and their interpretative implications.” In Freudenburg (ed.): 299–308.

Martindale, Charles. 2005. “The Horatian and the Juvenalesque in English Letters.” In Freudenburg (ed.): 284–98.

Mason, Tom. 2012. “Dryden’s Classicism.” In David Hopkins and Charles Martindale (eds.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 3: *1660–1790*: 91–131. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McGann, Michael. 2007. “The Reception of Horace in the Renaissance.” In Stephen Harrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*: 305–17. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Money, David. 2007. “The Reception of Horace in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.” In Stephen Harrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*: 318–33. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moul, Victoria. 2015. “Horace (with a Contribution by Charles Martindale).” In Patrick Cheney and Philip Hardie (eds.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 2: *1558–1660*: 539–56. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moul, Victoria. 2010. *Jonson, Horace and the Classical Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moul, Victoria. 2009. “The Poet’s Voice: Allusive Dialogue in Ben Jonson’s Horatian Poetry.” In L.B.T. Houghton and Maria Wyke (eds.), *Perceptions of Horace: A Roman Poet and His Readers*: 219–38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nisbet, Gideon. 2012. “Revoicing Imperial Satire.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 486–512.

Osgood, Josiah, and Susanna Braund. 2012. “Imperial Satire Theorized: Dryden’s *Discourse of Satire*.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 409–35.

Peter, John. 1956. *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Reynolds, L. D. (ed.). 1983. *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Reynolds, L. D., and N. G. Wilson. 2014. *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek & Latin Literature* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Reynolds, Suzanne. 1996. *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric, and the Classical Text*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richlin, Amy. 2012. “School Texts of Persius and Juvenal.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 465–85.

Rudd, N. 2009. “Theme and Variation: Horace in Pope’s Correspondence.” In L.B.T. Houghton and Maria Wyke (eds.), *Perceptions of Horace: A Roman Poet and His Readers*: 239–55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sogno, Cristiana. 2012. “Persius, Juvenal, and the Transformation of Satire in Late Antiquity.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 363–85.

Sowerby, Robin. 2012. “Horatianism.” In David Hopkins and Charles Martindale (eds.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 3: *1660–1790*: 255–85. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tarrant, R. J. 2007. “Horace and Roman Literary History.” In Stephen Harrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Horace*: 63–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vance, Norman. 2015. “Classical Authors, 1790–1880.” In Norman Vance and Jennifer Wallace (eds.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 4: *1790–1880*: 29–55. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vance, Norman, and Jennifer Wallace (eds.). 2015. *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. 4: *1790–1880*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vollmann, Benedikt Konrad. 1996. “Erziehung zur Humanität: Horaz und die Satire des 11. Jahrhunderts.” In Helmut Krasser and Ernst A. Schmidt (eds.), *Zeitgenosse Horaz: Der Dichter und seiner Leser seit zwei Jahrtausenden*: 36–51. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Willoughby, James. 2016. “The Transmission and Circulation of Classical Literature.” In Rita Copeland (ed.), *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*, Vol. I: *800-1558*: 95–120. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Winkler, Martin M. 2012. “Persius and Juvenal in the Media Age.” In Braund and Osgood (eds.): 513–43.

1. See especially Osgood 2012 and Muecke 2013 on how this process makes and made Roman Satire. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For both Persius (1.77) and Lucilius (fr. 879), Pacuvius exists only as a tragedian. The sole surviving reference to Ennius in Lucilius is to his *Annales* (fr. 406); Persius names Ennius and quotes a single line, also from the *Annales* (6.9–11). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Sander M. Goldberg, “Lucilius and the *poetae seniores*,” in Breed, Keitel, and Wallace (eds.) 2018: 39–56 and Freudenburg 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Already Cicero (*Acad*. 1.8) recognized Varro’s writings as being in the tradition of Menippus and the designation has stuck. On the genre, see further J. C. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press; 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. On the ancient division of satire into two types see further Freudenburg 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Everard Flintoff, “The Satires of Marcus Pacuvius,” *Latomus* 49.3 (1990): 575–90, on what his satirical verses may have been like. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Compare Oberhelman and Armstrong’s 1995: 240 observation that for all of Horace’s hand-wringing about whether satire counts as poetry, “he *is* a poet, he *is* writing poetry.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Freudenburg 2001: 2. Schlegel 2010 and Rosen 2012 are useful overviews of the same. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The end of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire is traditionally dated to 27 BCE, the year in which Octavian was granted the honorific title Augustus, which came as the culmination of several years during which he was consolidating his power. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Hooley 2012a: 337. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Rosen 2012: 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. E.g., Anderson 1963, Ruffell 2003. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Breed, Keitel, and Wallace 2018: 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The numbering of the fragments used here is that of the Warmington 1938 Loeb edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See further Goh 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. An example: Nonius Marcellus, a major source of Lucilian fragments, produced a twenty-book encyclopedic dictionary called *De compendiosa doctrina*. Nonius’ interest in the masculine gender of *messis*, “harvest,” usually feminine, resulted in the preservation of fr. 759: “better than with a not-large harvest, not-good vintages,” *potius quam non magno messe, non proba vindemia*. We should not infer from this fragment, however, that harvesting was a topic well represented in Lucilius’ satires. Moreover, we cannot say with certainty why Lucilius wrote this line or what it meant in its original context. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. So for Goh, the peacock fragment may be connected with sumptuary laws. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Reading Lucilius in his contemporary context is also the focus of Manuwald’s 2001 collection of essays. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This aspect of satire is explored well by Ralph M. Rosen and Victoria Baines in their 2002 article. They show, moreover, how what the satirist claims is a response is often rather a pre-emptive reply to expected or imagined criticisms or affronts. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Maxwell Teitel Paule, *Canidia, Rome’s First Witch* (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Goldberg 2018 sees the Horatian persona and tone as curiously closer to that of Ennius than of Lucilius. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Freudenburg 2001: 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Freudenburg 2001: 17; see also Ferriss-Hill 2015: 9–10. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Most famously set in motion by W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible: A Study of Vergil’s Aeneid* (Berkeley: University of California Press; 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. See also Sommerstein 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Freudenburg 2021: 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ferriss-Hill 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Henderson 1993; Lucilius is perhaps the most notable anti-Horace throughout. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Gold 2012 is an overview precisely of how Juvenal “compose[d] in the larger unit of books rather than individual poems” (100), in particular through the repetition and expansion of certain themes throughout the books. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. In the introduction to his new commentary, Freudenburg (2021: 7–10) likewise names “self-irony” as a key characteristic of the book. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. On Horace becoming increasingly marginalized, see also see Harrison 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. This way of understanding the ancient Athenian dramatic festivals and the Saturnalia is often rooted in Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and His World*. Miller 2012: 315 is helpful on the ancient Athenian dramatic festivals, the Roman Saturnalia, and medieval and early modern European traditions as “cognate” even as none can be fully assimilated to any other. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Freudenburg 2021: 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Osgood 2012: 5–10 is right to stress that *captatio* should be understood not as “legacy-hunting” (a legacy being a legitimately and willingly given gift) but rather as “inheritance-hunting,” i.e., that an inheritance with no natural heir existed and that unscrupulous individuals were known to try to seek these out. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Freudenburg 1993: 232–33. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Cf. Freudenburg 1993: 235, Gowers 1993: 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Freudenburg 1993: 235; at 2021: 317, Freudenburg explains following Oliensis 1998: 77 and Sharland 2011: 95 n. 55 how the closing lines may be connected to the death of Cleopatra—a grounding of the poem in its historical context such as Dufallo notes has been on the ascendant. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. See Caston 1997. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The contributions of persona-theory to the study of Roman Satire are discussed further below. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ralph M. Rosen, “Cratinus’ *Pytine* and the Construction of the Comic Self,” in D. Harvey and J. Wilkins (eds.), *The Rivals of Aristophanes: Studies in Athenian Old Comedy*: 23–39 (London: Duckworth and the Classical Press of Wales, 2000); p. 35; and more generally Rosen 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Suetonius, *Nero* 34, 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. See, e.g., Anderson 1966. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Bramble 1974: 136–7. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. See Ferriss-Hill 2015: 72–80. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See Jennifer Ferriss-Hill, *Horace’s Ars Poetica: Family, Friendship, and the Art of Living* (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Bartsch 2015: 4. See also Fiske 1913. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Witke 1970: 79, Dessen 1968: 38, Witke 1970: 81, respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Forsyth 1976: 220. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Catherine Keane, “Life in the Text: The Corpus of Persius’ Satires,” in Braund and Osgood (2012): 79–96; 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. See Ferriss-Hill 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. See recently De Brasi 2018 on this poem and its representation of Socrates. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Reckford 2009: 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. See Dessen’s 1968 study, which takes its title from the phrase. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. On the term see, e.g., William T. Wehrle, “Persius *Semipaganus*,” *Scholia* n. s. 1 (1992): 55–65; Spyridon Tzounakas, “*Rusticitas* versus *Urbanitas* in the Literary Programmes of Tibullus and Persius,” *Mnemosyne* 59.1 (2006): 111–28. Persius’ choice of the choliambic meter for his prologue is curious in that he prefaces a book of satires in a meter that belongs not to satire; however, the choliamb (limping iambic or scazon) is a meter of iambic poetry. The metrical choice therefore announces an allegiance to Greek iambic (invective) poetry, as well as to Catullus who had previously used the meter in Latin (e.g., poem 8). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Bartsch 2015: 3 speaks of “a small body of almost unreadable poetry.” [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. On his life and rule see Brian W. Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (London and New York: Routledge; 1992); on his assassination, Suetonius, *Vita Domitii* 14–17. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Highet 1951: 372, 391. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Gold 2012 is useful on Juvenal’s method of writing in books. On Lucilius as a possible pioneer of the book-form, see Breed 2018: 60, who says, “As a unit for organizing the text, the book takes on new importance at Rome with Lucilius.” [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. E.g., Braund 1988, Keane 2007. The difference in tone between books 1–2 and 3–5 occasioned a belief, no longer accepted, that there were “two different writers of satire named Juvenal” and that only poems 1–6 were by the “real” one (Gold 2012: 97, who cites as evidence Otto Ribbeck’s 1865 study, *Der echte und der unechte Juvenal*). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. The attention to Umbricius has been extensive: V. Estevez, “Umbricius and Aeneas: A Reading of Juvenal III” *Maia* 48.3 (1996): 281–300; Gregory A. Staley, “Juvenal’s Third Satire: Umbricius’ Rome, Vergil’s Troy,” *MAAR* 45 (2000): 85–98; Victoria Baines, “Umbricius’ *bellum civile*: Juvenal, *Satire* 3,” *G&R* 2nd ser. 50.2 (2003): 220–37; A. Nice, “The Persona of Umbricius and Divination in Juvenal, *Satires* Three and Six,” *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 11 (2003): 401–18. See also Fredericks 1974: 147–48, Winkler 1983: 221, Wehrle 1992: 65, Iddeng 2000: 122, Tennant 2001: 192, 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Similar is Gold 2012: 100: “Every idea in Juvenal’s five books ultimately defines *Romanitas* by exemplifying an aspect of it or by occupying the position of its opposite.” [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Foundational are James N. Adams, Mark Janse, and Simon C. R. Swain (eds.), *Bilingualism in ancient society: language contact and the written text* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press; 2002) and James N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press; 2003). See now also Alex Mullen, “Latin and other languages: societal and individual bilingualism,” in James Clackson (ed.), *A companion to the Latin language* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World) (Chichester/Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell; 2011): 527–48; Alex Mullen and Patrick James (eds.), *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman worlds* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press; 2012). More focused studies may be found in Anna Chahoud, “The Roman satirist speaks Greek,” *Classics Ireland* 11 (2004): 1–46; Attilio Mastrocinque, “Bilinguismo e cultura augustea,” in Attilio Mastrocinque and Andrea Tessier (eds.), *Paignion: piccola Festschrift per Francesco Donadi* (Trieste: EUT; 2016) 31–42. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. E.g., Nappa 2018: 1: “For Juvenal, the circumstances of women are relevant inasmuch as they form part of the world of men.” While Gold 2012: 106 sees women “everywhere you look in Juvenal’s Satires,” she, too, points out that they are there “almost always cast in a negative light and made the object of our gaze or of another character’s gaze.” [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Beginning in earnest with Richlin 1983, whose study is evocatively titled *The Garden of Priapus*. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Cf. also Gold 2012: 100: “the way that deviant gender roles and the use of bodies define the behavior of the Roman citizen” is “one of Juvenal’s primary fascinations – perhaps his greatest obsession.” Fascinatingly, Juvenal’s obscenity would later be excused as manliness, while similar obscenity in Persius was depraved because of the latter’s supposed lack of manliness (Nisbet 2012: 498–99). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Although the phrase is possibly spurious (see Richard Tarrant, *Texts, Editors, and Readers: Methods and problems in Latin textual criticism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2016]; p. 99), it nevertheless serves to capture the point of satire 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. L. I. Lindo, “The Evolution of Juvenal’s Later Satires,” *CP* 69 (1974): 17–27, traces how Juvenal becomes increasingly Horatian as his satires progress. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Keane 2015: 168. Compare the way in which Horace’s *Satires* and *Epodes*, which were written at the beginning of his poetic career, give the impression of being the work of a younger poet, while the *Epistles* and *Ars Poetica*, written last, are seen as more mature. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. *Ad* Hor. *Sat*. 1.1, *Epist*. 1.1.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Rudd 1966: 154–8 argues that ancient scholars such as Suetonius, Quintilian, and the scholiasts, considered these works related, even interchangeable, and that Horace himself employed the terms *satura* and *sermo* somewhat freely to denote both sets of books. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Freudenburg 2021: 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Nevertheless, “While most of the *Satires* of the first book are formally presented as monologues, right from the beginning of *Sat*. 1.1 the main speaker also shares the page with a number of other voices” (Sharland 2010: 55). On the differences in Horace’s persona and his use of conversation/dialogue between *Satires* 1 and 2, see also Anderson 1963. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. The connection is flagged, as Horace often does, with an explicit reference to Plato two lines later. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Alessandro Barchiesi and Andrea Cucchiarelli, “Satire and the Poet: the Body as Self-Referential Symbol,” in Freudenburg (ed.) 2005: 207–23; p. 215; cf. also Anderson 1963: 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. The scholiast attributes *quis leget haec?* to Lucilius. Some have understood this to mean the entirety of the second line, while others have argued that the scholiast meant Lucretius, who repeatedly uses the phrase *(in) rebus inane*. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. “Performing Privately” is the title of Reckford’s (2009) first chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Henderson 1991: 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Reckford 2009: 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. E.g., *Berecyntius Attis*, “Berecyntian Attis”; *qui caeruleum dirimebat Nerea delphin*, “the dolphin who was cleaving sky-blue Nereus.” [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Rosen and Baines 2002: 111 n. 13, referring to Horace’s *Satires* 2.1, Persius 1, and Juvenal 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. An intriguing suggestion from an (anonymous) outside reader of this volume. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Dan Hooley, “Persius in the Middle,” in Stratis Kyriakidis and Francesco De Martino (eds.), *Middles in Latin Poetry*: 217–43 (Bari: Levante, 2004); p. 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Larmour 2007: 191. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. On the aggressiveness of Juvenal’s treatment of his satiric targets, see e.g. Keane 2015, especially Chapter 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Geue 2017: 121–22. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. E.g., Martial 5.78, 10.48, 11.52; cf. also Catullus 13. See further Lowell Edmunds, “The Latin Invitation-Poem: What Is It? Where Did It Come from?,” *AJP* 103.2 (1982): 184–88. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Geue 2017: 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. These three etymologies may be found in the fourth-century CE grammarian Diomedes, *Ars Grammatica* 3.30. His fourth explanation associates *satura* with Satyrs—a false etymology that has at various times nevertheless enjoyed a degree of popularity (in fact, an etymology need not be true for writers to make use of it), e.g., during the Renaissance (see further Oscar James Campbell, *Comicall Satyre and Shakespeare’s Troilus and Cressida* [San Marino, CA: Adcraft Press; 1938]: 27–35). [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Whether this rises to the level of a title proper, however, rather than a description of the contents, has been considerably debated. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. *Sermo* is used at *Sat*. 1.3.65, 1.4.42, 48 (twice; see Gowers 2012: 165), 1.7.7, and 1.10.11 and 23, and in book 2 at 2.2.2, 2.3.4, 2.4.9, 2.5.98, and 2.6.71, and is frequently self-referential, if not explicitly so in every instance. Although *satura* does not appear in *Satires* 1, it is alluded to in such phrases as *uti conviva satur* (“like a satisfied dinner-guest,” 1.1.119) and *iam satis est* (1.1.120; Freudenburg 2001: 32: “‘enough now,’ or better yet, ‘it’s satire now’”). Similarly, at *Epist*. 2.2.60 the phrase *Bioneis sermonibus et sale nigro* (“with conversations like Bion’s and with black salt”) seems to look back to the *Satires*, as *sermones . . . repentis per humum* (“conversations that creep along the earth”) does at *Epist*. 2.1.250–1. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Gowers 1993b: 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Cf. also Ferriss-Hill 2015: 104 n. 230. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Bartsch 2015: 61-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Bartsch 2015: 61-63. It is interesting to compare Aristophanes, *Frogs* 939–44, where Euripides describes how he slimmed down the bloated tragedy he had inherited from Aeschylus by treating her with “versicles and vigorous walks and white beets” (ἐπυλλίοις καὶ περιπάτοις καὶ τευτλίοισι λευκοῖς) and the “juice of chatterings pressed from books” (χυλὸν . . . στωμυλμάτων ἀπὸ βιβλίων ἀπηθῶν). [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Cf. Moretti 2001: 193–4, Barchiesi and Cucchiarelli 2005: 222, and Cucchiarelli 2007: 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Gowers 1993b: 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Describing the contribution of Goldberg to their volume, Breed, Keitel, and Wallace 2018: 30 explain in their Introduction that “Lucilian connections to Ennius’ *Saturae* and to his ‘high’ poetry, namely the epic *Annales* and his tragedies, are deep, deeper than Horace would imply.” [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. On how the satirists all employ the genre’s epic potential but in different ways, see Catherine Connors, “Epic Allusion in Roman Satire,” in Freudenburg (ed.) 2005: 123–45. On epic in Lucilius, see Johannes Christes, “Lucilius und das Epos,” in Manuwald (ed.) 2001: 51–61. On epic in Juvenal, Jones 2007, especially chapter 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Oberhelman and Armstrong 1995: 234, n4. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Similar is *Sat*. 2.5.41, where Horace is thought to be quoting a line from Furius Bibaculus’ epic on the Gallic wars, in which he has humorously altered a single word so that instead of reading “Jupiter strews the wintry Alps with hoary snow” (*Iuppiter hibernas cana nive conspuit Alpes*) the line describes how “Furius,” “stuffed with fat tripe” (*pingui tentus omaso*) “strews the wintry Alps with hoary snow” (*Furius hibernas cana nive conspuet Alpis*). In this interaction, too, epic exists to provide a contrast to Horace’s own Roman Satire: “While the bloated Alpine man [sc. Furius Bibaculus] slaughters Memnon and splits the muddy head of the Rhine, I play at these things,” i.e., I write satire (*turgidus Alpinus iugulat dum Memnona dumque / diffindit Rheni luteum caput, haec ego ludo*, *Sat*. 1.10.36–7). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Already with Wimmel 1960. On Horace’s engagement with Callimachus, see Cody 1976, Thomas 1979, 1983, 1993, Scodel 1987, Hunter 2006 (whose study goes considerably beyond Horace). On Callimachus himself, see D. L. Clayman, “Callimachus’ *Iambi* and *Aitia*,” *ZPE* 74 (1988): 277–86; M. A. Harder, R. F. Regtuit, and G. C. Wakker (eds.), *Callimachus* (Groningen: Forsten; 1993); Alan Cameron, *Callimachus and his Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1995); Benjamin Acosta-Hughes, *Polyeideia: The Iambi of Callimachus and the Archaic Iambic Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press; 2002); Annette Harder, *Callimachus: Aetia: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. See, e.g., Nelis 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. See Freudenburg 1993: 52–108. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. In fact, at *Sat*. 1.10.16–21 where he names Calvus and Catullus, Horace is using “a very Callimachean technique, the oblique use of a poetic source to attack itself, to attack the influence of none other than Callimachus” over the neoterics, Zetzel 2002: 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. See further her 213–21. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Harrison 2007: 78: “The muddy flow here, as scholars have often remarked, directly adapts the well‐known literary polemic of the end of Callimachus’ Hymn to Apollo.” [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Gowers 1993b: 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Bartsch 2015 sees Persius as interested in what happens when “the stomach—the human body’s warehouse for all it took in—broke down in one way or another” (43) and compellingly reads the image of his satire as a “decoction” (*decocta*) in light of the ancient medical understanding of the digestive process as a form of cooking (41–52). [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. See Keane 2006: 13–41 on the history of this. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Ferriss-Hill 2015 is a study of how Roman Satire can be read as Old Comedy remade for Rome. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Sommerstein 2011: 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. The contrast is with Hor. *Sat*. 1.1.24–26, where he suggests that the lessons of his satires will be akin to those in which teachers give little boys treats as they learn their letters. On Pers. 1.123–25, see further also Reckford 2009: 49–51, Ferriss-Hill 2015: 18–19, 162–63. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Miller 2012, for example, needs to begin by establishing “what we know about the Saturnalia and how it is portrayed in the satiric and invective literature of the period” (316; he proceeds to do so at 317-23). See also Miller 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. The poet needs to “write [the character of] a running slave, [and] make good married women, bad prostitutes, a gluttonous parasite, a boastful soldier” (*currentem servom scribere, / bonas matronas facere, meretrices malas, / parasitum edacem, gloriosum militem*), as Terence puts it in the prologue to his *Eunuchus*, 36–8. Sweeping similarly widely across the genre, Horace describes “how Plautus plays the parts of a young man in love, an attentive father, a trickster pimp” and “what a great Dossennus he is among the hungry parasites” (*Plautus / quo pacto partis tutetur amantis ephebi, / ut patris attenti, lenonis ut insidiosi, / quantus sit Dossennus edacibus in parasitis*), *Epist*. 2.1.170–73. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Gowers 1993a: 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Or perhaps better, collective authorship. As Ruffell points out, “The rubric of ‘popular verses’ . . . hides a potential array of contexts of performers and performance, audience and reception” (58). [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. On Roman Satire and epigram as “proximate” genres see Cortés Tovar 2019, who discusses also other literary forms that participate in the *spoudogeloion*. The two are also combined in Patricia A. Johnston’s “Epigrams and Satire in Latin Poetry” in the online *Oxford Bibliographies*. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. See further Alfredo Mario Morelli, “The Beginnings of Roman Epigram and Its Relationship with Hellenistic Poetry,” in Henriksén (ed.) 2019: 425–39. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. On Catullus’ epigrams, see further Niklas Holzberg, “Catullus as Epigrammatist,” in Henriksén (ed.) (2019): 441–57. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. On the term “neoteric” and the poets to whom it is applied, see: R. O. A. M. Lyne, “The Neoteric Poets,” *CQ* n.s. 28.1 (1978): 167–187; and David Wray, “Ovid’s Catullus and the neoteric moment in Roman poetry,” in Peter E. Knox (ed.), *A companion to Ovid* (Oxford: Blackwell; 2009): 252–264. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. See further Mario Citroni’s chapter, “What is an Epigram? Defining a Genre,” in Henriksén 2019: 21–42. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. In addition to Catullus and his predecessors and the epigrammatists named by Martial (a few fragments survive of Domitius Marsus, who wrote in the Augustan period, and nine epigrams in the *Greek Anthology* may be by Gaetulicus, consul in 26 CE), there are the poems of the *Appendix Vergiliana* (15 epigrams that make up the *Catalepton*, some of them perhaps by Virgil) and the *Carmina Priapea*, a collection of 80 poems, in meters including elegiac couplets, dated to between the Augustan period and 100 CE. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. See Gideon Nisbet, *Greek Epigram in the Roman Empire: Martial’s Forgotten Rivals*, Oxford University Press, 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. See recently William J. Dominik, “Epigram and occasional poetry: social life and values in Martial’s *Epigrams* and Statius’ *Silvae*,” in Andrew Zissos (ed.), *A companion to the Flavian age of imperial Rome* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World): 412–433 (Chichester; Malden, Ma.: John Wiley; 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Horace, for example, uses *caballus* rather than *equus* at *Sat*. 1.6.59 and *bucca* rather than *os*, 1.1.21, as Martial does as well. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. On the history of whether it was Catullus himself who arranged the poems in the order in which we have them, sometimes even termed *die Catullfrage*, see Marilyn B. Skinner, “Authorial Arrangement of the Collection: Debate Past and Present,” in Marilyn B. Skinner, (ed.), *A Companion to Catullus* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World), Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.; 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. See, e.g., Sven Lorenz, “Waterscape with Black and White: Epigrams, Cycles, and Webs in Martial’s *Epigrammaton liber quartus*,” *AJP* 125.2 (2004): 255–78. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Examples from Roman Satire include Horace’s *Satires* 1.1.120–21, 1.5.100–104, and 1.9.77–78, and Juvenal 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. The Furius (Bibaculus) named and shamed at Hor. *Sat*. 1.10.36–7 and 2.5.41 may be the same Furius attacked on and off by Catullus (11, 16, 23, 26). [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. He is “my Juvenal” with whom Martial does not want to quarrel in 7.24; praised as “eloquent” (*facunde*, 7.91.1), he is the recipient of a Saturnalia gift of home-grown nuts from Martial, with the added coda of a dirty joke; and Martial portrays him in 12.18 as wandering through the Subura (taken to mean that he participates in morning greetings to patrons, but also alluding to this as a place he mentions in his verses), while Martial enjoys and slightly gloats about his retirement back in Spain. See further Putnam 2006, Cortés Tovar 2019: 174–76 (who notes that while Juvenal does not, in turn, name Martial, Martial is nevertheless present in Juvenal’s verses). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. The title of Mayer’s chapter in Freudenburg 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. So, e.g., W. S. Maguinness, “The Eclecticism of Horace,” *Hermathena* 27.52 (1938): 27–46. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. The apparent mishmash of philosophical ideas and priorities also reflects a very real overlap among the different schools, as Armstrong 2014 makes clear. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Armstrong 2014: 99. On Epicurean friendship in the *Epistles*, see also David Armstrong, “Horace’s *Epistles* 1 and Philodemus,” in David Armstrong et al. (eds.), *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans* (Austin: University of Texas Press; 2004): 267–98; and on the same in the *Ars Poetica*, Ferriss-Hill 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Bartsch 2015: 3; she explains, “the reception of Persius’ corpus has also been complicated by the procrustean philosophy which it has made its bed.” [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Some of the essays in Garani and Konstan 2014 now venture into this territory, though their focus is on Latin literature more broadly rather than on Roman Satire. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Indeed, Catullus cautions against precisely this association: “From my little verses, because they are delicate, you thought me less than virtuous. But while a pious poet ought to be chaste, his little verses don’t need to be” (*me ex versiculis meis putastis, / quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum. / nam castum esse decet pium poetam / ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est*, 16.3–6). Martial takes up Catullus’ formulation early in his first book of epigrams in a poem addressed to Caesar: “our page is frisky, our lifestyle honorable” (*lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba*, 1.4.8). [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Freudenburg 1993: 5, 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Peter White, “*Amicitia* and the Profession of Poetry in Early Imperial Rome,” *JRS* 68 (1978): 74–92; pp. 88–90. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Gowers 1993a: 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. See especially the work of Paul Allen Miller, e.g., 2008, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. See Gowers 1993a, Freeman 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Among the few publications explicitly on this topic are Maria Plaza, *The Function of Humour in Roman Verse Satire: Laughing and Lying* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2006); Heather Vincent, “Roman Satire and the General Theory of Verbal Humor,” in Carmen Valero-Garcés (ed.), *Dimensions of Humour: Explorations in Linguistics, Literature, Cultural Studies and Translation* (València: Universitat de València; 2010): 417–50. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Cf. Gold 2012: 99: “Juvenal composed not one unified work but five separate books of Satires.” [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. See also Goh 2015 on Lucilian satire as the product of late second century BCE Suessa Aurunca. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. I am grateful to the anonymous reader for this observation. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Keith Sidwell, “Poetic Rivalry and the Caricature of Comic Poets: Cratinus’ *Pytine* and Aristophanes’ *Wasps*,” in Alan Griffiths (ed.), *Stage Directions: Essays in Ancient Drama in honour of E. W. Handley*: 56–80 (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1995); pp. 60–1. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Gowers 1993b: 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. “I first showed Parian iambs to Latium” (*Parios ego primus iambos / ostendi Latio*, *Epist*. 1.19.23–4); “the first to have brought Aeolian song to Italian measures” (*princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos / deduxisse modos*, *Carm*. 3.30.13–14). [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Gowers 1993b: 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Gowers 1993b: 184, 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. An easter egg refers to a detail in a film or other visual production that has been put there for careful viewers to find and which alludes to previous productions by the same company or artist(s) or gives clues to the coming plot. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. By way of reference point, Worman’s (2015: 7) aim in her study of the metapoetic gardens, rivers, and paths of Greek literature is to explicate, for the first time, “the means by which certain inhabited landscapes become central to ancient literary practices that range from programmatic and critical gestures in poetry to more fully developed stylistic theories in rhetoric” and “recogniz[ing] the enduring impact of this widespread orientation.” [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Reynolds 1996: 13–14. On the central role of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal in the educational curriculum, see further Copeland 2016a, 2016b, 2016c. Richlin 2012 is a useful survey of Persius and Juvenal as school texts, and she rightly notes that it was useful to invoke their “moral value” as a way of excusing their obscenity. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. See Richlin 2012 on this practice with respect to Persius and Juvenal, and also Nisbet 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. These passages are noted and their import discussed by Sogno 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Hooley 2012a. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Tarrant 2007: 285, though “Horace’s dormancy was relatively brief.” On the decline of Classical literature until its revival, which began in the eighth century, see further Reynolds 1983: xiv–xxvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Copeland 2016a: 9; see also Vollmann 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Willoughby 2016: 97; on the *Liber catonianus* see also Copeland 2016b: 23–28. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Though we should be ever mindful of Reckford’s assessment that such precepts “wither like branches cut from trees” when they are removed from “their living contexts” (Kenneth Reckford, *Horace* [New York: Twayne; 1969]: 11). [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Copeland (n. 17) recommends the following readings on the satirists in the Middle Ages: Eva M. Sanford, “Juvenal,” in *Catalogus translationum* 1 (ed. Kristeller, 1960): 175–238; Dorothy Robathan *et al*., “Persius,” in *Catalogus translationum* 3 (ed. F. Edward Krantz, 1976): 201–312; Karsten Friis-Jensen, “The Reception of Horace in the Middle Ages,” in Stephen Harrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Horace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2007): 291–304. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Carlson 2016: 542. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. On some satirical efforts in Italian from the 1520s and 1530s, see Gillespie 2012: 386. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Braund 2015: 345. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Alongside satire, Braund 2015 also discusses in detail the appropriation of Latin epigram by such authors as the Reverend Thomas Bastard, John Weever, and Sir John Davies. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. See also Gillespie 2012: 391. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Gillespie 2012: 386–87 notes that in the final decades of the sixteenth century, translations/editions were mostly “continental.” [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Braund 2015: 356, 358; see also Gillespie 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. McGann 2007: 313; cf. Money 2007: 318 and Rudd 2009: 239–40, and further Moul 2009 and 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Braund 2015: 364, who recommends further Moul 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Hooley 2012b: 217. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Braund 2015: 367–68 n. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. See Gillespie 2012: 387 on the interest in Persius himself and Nisbet 2012: 498 on how the French preference for Persius “damned [him] by association and made him ethically problematic as a prospect for translation into English.” [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. See also Hooley 2012b: 222–23 on Rochester as both Horatian and Juvenalian, and 230–36 on Pope being increasingly viewed as similarly complex/dualistic. Sowerby 2012 is useful on Horatianism, including beyond the *Satires*, and he notes that during the Restoration, “nearly every practising poet made a friend of Horace, dipped into his works, found common ground in a familiar theme, and produced a version” (266). Gillespie 2012: 392–94 treats Wyatt. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. See further Gillespie 2012 and Hooley 2012. On Johnson’s classicism, see further Johnston 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Gillespie 2012: 387. See also Martindale 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. See further Braund and Osgood 2012, who term this work “the most important critical account ever given of Roman satire in English” (410). [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Braund 2015: 367–68 n. 2, who further recommends Martindale 2005 and Osgood and Braund 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. At Mason 2012: 108; see more generally Mason 107–13 on Dryden’s classicism as it relates to satire, especially Juvenal, and also Hooley 2012b: 217–22, 226–28. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Hooley 2005: 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Cf. Gillespie 2012: 402. In the Elizabethan period, “even those works which went under the name of translations were far freer handlings than would be accorded that description today.” Gillespie is very useful on further reading suggestions, including catalogues of translations and adaptations. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Cf., e.g., Hooley 2012b: 238–39, who describes Samuel Johnson’s *London*, an “imitation” of Juvenal’s third satire that showed Umbricius leaving Rome, as “a politically pointed adaptation of Juvenal, like Pope’s of Horace, which answers the issues of the day.” [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. See, e.g., Hooley 2012b. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Vance 2015: 48–50, 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Nisbet 2012: 486, 492. Juvenal was often published as a school-text edition of 13 because poems 2, 6, and 9 were not included due to their morally dubious language and content. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Nisbet (2012: 509) gives the example of *paedico* which was rendered “to practise unnatural vice” and now tends to be more frankly translated as “to sodomize.” [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. Cf. Nisbet 2012: 486–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. Tom Geue’s comment on the *Ars Poetica* comes to mind: he marvels at how the poem has long been read in a vacuum, saying, “Any other poem written in the thick of the ‘Augustan Age’ would have accreted a thousand political readings round its core by now” (“Editing the Opposition: Horace’s *Ars Politica*,” *MD* 72 [“New Approaches to Horace’s Ars Poetica,” 2014]: 143–72; p. 144). [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Winkler 2012: 515. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Winkler 2012: 521–22. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. Kennedy 2005 briefly compares Juvenal against *Spitting Image* (300) and Roman verse Satire more generally with numerous twentieth century satirical products. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. Burrow 2005: 259. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)