



SATIRES OF ROME

Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal

KIRK FREUDENBURG

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This book sets out to locate Roman satire's most salient possibilities and effects at the center of every Roman reader's cultural and political self-understanding, by describing the genre's numerous shifts in focus and tone over several centuries (from Lucilius to Juvenal) not as mere "generic adjustments" that reflect the personal preferences of its authors, but as separate chapters in a special, generically encoded story of Rome's lost, and much lionized, Republican identity. Freedom exists in performance in ancient Rome: it is a "spoken" entity. As a result, satire's programmatic shifts, from "open," to "understated," to "cryptic," and so on, can never be purely "literary" and "apolitical" in focus and/or tone. In *Satires of Rome*, Professor Freudenburg reads these shifts as the genre's unique way of staging and agonizing over a crisis in Roman identity. Satire's standard "genre question" in this book becomes a question of the Roman self.

KIRK FREUDENBURG is Professor of Greek and Latin at Ohio State University. He received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin and has previously taught at Kent State University. He has published widely on Latin literature and is the author of *The Walking Muse: Horace on the Theory of Satire* (Princeton, 1993). He is currently editing *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire* and Book II of Horace's *Sermones* for the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series.

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*For my parents, Victor and Delores Freudenburg,
with love and appreciation*

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Many have read the book in draft. Others have been subjected to its basic notions in lecture form. Horace had the decency to save his “take a look at my high-powered friends” list for the last lines of his first book (and I’ll bore you with that in chapter 1). But convention dictates that I pre-impress you right here with mine – and make no mistake, these acknowledgments are always about the business of getting you properly impressed. I am especially grateful to audiences at the University of Basel, UCLA, Baylor University, the University of Bristol, the Cambridge Greek and Latin Seminar, and Durham University for their helpful responses to my Juvenal chapter when it was in bud. Tony Woodman, *qui cogere posset*, opened my eyes to many matters of crucial importance during my days “in the tower” at Durham castle, and he has followed up his conversations with helpful written advice. Denis Feeney changed entirely the way I think about Horace with a few deft strokes in my margins. Michael Putnam pushed hard for a better intertextual reckoning of Virgil in my analysis of Horace’s early works. I am most grateful for his insights. Charles Martindale provided comments from start to finish that helped “balance” the book into its several parts. The final product is much better for

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Key dates for the study of Roman verse satire

- ca. 440 – ca. 405 BCE** The floruit of Greek Old Comedy (Eupolis, Cratinus, Aristophanes)
- ca. 404 – ca. 321** Period of Greek Middle Comedy
- ca. 320 – ca. 250** Period of Greek New Comedy (esp. Menander)
- ca. 315** Bion of Borysthenes arrives in Athens; active as lecturer until ca. 245
- ca. 205–184** Plautus writes Greek-style comedies (*fabulae palliatae*) for the Roman stage
- 204–169** Quintus Ennius active in Rome as playwright, writer of panegyric epic, and *Saturae*
- 166–159** Terence writes Greek-style comedies for the Roman stage
- 134–133** Lucilius serves under P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus at the siege of Numantia; thereafter writes 30 books of *Saturae* in Rome ca. 129 – ca. 101
- 81–67** M. Terentius Varro writes 150 books of satires in the manner of Menippus of Gadara (early third century)
- 65** Horace born on 8 December in Venusia
- 42** Horace serves as military tribune under Brutus at the Battle of Philippi
- 37** Pact of Tarentum renews détente between Octavian and Antony
- 35** Horace publishes book 1 of his *Sermones*
- 31** Battle of Actium (2 September). Antony defeated
- 30** Horace publishes book 2 of his *Sermones*
- 27** Octavian named “Augustus” by the Roman Senate

- 23** Horace publishes books 1–3 of his *Carmina*
- 19** Horace publishes book 1 of his *Epistles*
- 8** Horace dies on 27 November
- 14 CE** Death of Augustus, succession of Tiberius
- 14–37** Reign of Tiberius
- 34** Persius (Aules Persius Flaccus) born to rich, Etruscan parents
- 37–41** Reign of Gaius (Caligula)
- 41–54** Reign of Claudius
- 54** Accession of Nero. The deification of Claudius satirized in Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis*
- 59** Death of Agrippina. Nero performs on stage at the *Juvenalia*
- ca. 60–2** Persius active as a writer of *Satires*. The collection is edited and published after his death, late in 62
- 68** Suicide of Nero
- 69** Civil wars. Year of the Four Emperors
- 69–81** Flavian period commences: reigns of Vespasian and Titus
- 81–96** Reign of Domitian. Floruit of Statius and Martial
- 85** Domitian named *ensor perpetuus*
- 93** Death of Agricola. Domitian pursues “Stoic opposition”: the Younger Helvidius, Aurlenus Rusticus, and Herennius Senecio executed
- 96** Domitian murdered in a palace coup, 18 September. Accession of Nerva
- 97** Tacitus suffect consul. Pliny attacks Certus, prosecutor of Helvidius
- 98** Death of Nerva. Accession of Trajan (January). Tacitus publishes his *Agricola*. Pliny and Tacitus prosecute Marius Priscus
- 100** Pliny takes up consulship for September and October; writes his *Panegyricus*
- ca. 99–109** Pliny publishes books 1–9 of his *Letters*
- ca. 100 – ca. 130** Juvenal writes satires in five books
- ca. 105–106** Tacitus collecting material for his *Histories*
- ca. 116** Tacitus publishes first book(s) of the *Annales*

117 Death of Trajan. Accession of Hadrian

late second century Hellenius Acro writes commentary on Horace

early third century Pomponius Porphyrio writes commentary on Horace

Glossary of key names and technical terms

Actium a bay in northwest Greece where Octavian defeated Antony in 31 BCE

adsentator “flatterer”

Bion Cynic street-preacher (a proto-“satirist”) of the late fourth/early third century BCE

Bona Dea lit. “Good Goddess,” an Italian deity whose annual rites in Rome were presided over exclusively by women

Callimachean exhibiting the “refined” and “scholarly” tastes of Callimachus, Alexandrian poet of the third century BCE

carmen maledicum “hostile song”

cena a formal, evening dinner-party in Rome

ensor an elected Roman magistrate in charge of public morals, the keeping of citizen-lists, and regulating membership of the Senate

choliambic the “limping iambic” meter of Hipponax (late sixth century BCE)

Chrysippus third-century-BCE head of the Stoa and ardent shaper and defender of Stoic orthodoxy

consul the title of Rome’s chief civil and military magistrates during the Republic. Two consuls were elected annually

conuiuia “dinner-guest”

crux (pl. **cruces**) a difficult, “tortured” passage (lit. a “cross”) that defies interpretation

Cynic an aggressively anti-social, primitivist (lit. “dog-like”) beggar-philosopher in the tradition of Diogenes (fourth century BCE)

deductum carmen a “finely-spun song” in the manner of Callimachus

descriptio a highly contrived “scene-painting” in words, designed to arouse pity and/or indignation

diatribe an informal “street-sermon” in the manner of Bion (above)

equus “horseman,” a member of the “equestrian order,” the status group immediately below the “senatorial order”

farrago “horse-feed,” Juvenal’s metaphor for (his own) low-grade satire

fautores Lucili “fans/patrons of Lucilius,” critics of Horace in book 1 of his *Sermones*

finis “end/limit,” a watchword of Epicurean moderation

genus a term meaning literary “genre” as well as social “class”

hexameter the six-foot (monostichic) metrical scheme of epic and formal verse satire

homoioteleuton ending consecutive words with similar “rhyming” sounds

iambic the basic short–long meter (in numerous schemes) of Greek and Roman iambic poetry (e.g. Archilochus, Lucilius), tragedy, and comedy

incessus the formal, parade-like “entrance” of a Roman aristocrat into the city

indignatio rage that stems from a lack of due honor (a sense of being “undeservedly” abused)

iunctura a figurative expression that derives from the “joining” of mismatched words and/or ideas

katabasis an epic hero’s “descent” into the underworld

lanx satura a “plate stuffed full” to overflowing, satire’s most prominent symbol in the ancient world

libertas “freedom / freedom of speech”

Lucilianus modus the “Lucilian manner” of acerbic and uncompromised free speech

Maecenas from the early 30s to 23 BCE he was Octavian's right-hand man in Rome, famous for his generous patronage of Virgil, Horace, and Propertius

modus "limit/measure," a favorite watchword of Horace's political and stylistic discretion

neoteric in the manner of Rome's "new poets" (especially Calvus and Catullus)

nota the censor's "mark" branding bad morals and removing one from the Senate

Octavian adopted son of Julius Caesar, later named Augustus by the Roman Senate

Old Comedy the openly political, fantastical comedies of Aristophanes, Eupolis, and Cratinus (Athens, fifth century BCE)

Palatine Rome's augural hill, site of a temple to Apollo and the emperor's private homes (whence English "palace")

parabasis in an Old Comic play, an interlude where the play's lead actors "step aside," allowing the chorus to address the audience on matters of topical (often literary-critical) import

parasite in Greek and Roman New Comedy, a hungry, bankrupt nobleman who wheedles and connives to satisfy his high-class tastes

Parnassus Apollo's holy mountain in north-central Greece, famous for the shrine of Delphi on its south slope

patella "small plate," a symbol of satire opposed to the larger *lanx* (above)

praescriptio a written "preface" defining the scope of a lawsuit

praeteritio a rhetorical device that touches on certain persons and/or topics by promising to leave them unmentioned

praetor one of several Roman magistrates in charge of the city's legal and financial affairs and the administration of the courts

princeps senatus a leading figure (lit. "first man") in the Roman Senate

recusatio a poet's stylized "refusal" to sing of a great man's (especially military) achievements in epic song

- sapiens** the ideal “wise man” of the Stoics
- satis** adverb meaning “enough,” attached to “satire” by a false etymology
- satür** the root word (lit. “stuffed full,” cf. *lanx* above) behind most ancient etymologies of “satire”
- scholiasts** ancient grammarians, both Greek and Latin, who wrote commentaries (often in the margins of texts) on the works of “classical” authors
- Second Triumvirate** the coalition of “three men” (Octavian, Antony, Lepidus) that ruled Rome from 43 to 36 BCE, subsequently giving way to a temporary détente between Antony and Octavian (36–31 BCE)
- semipaganus** “half-rustic,” a key term in Persius’ self-description
- sermo** “talk.” Horace uses the pl. *sermones* (“talks”) of his satires
- soros** the Stoic “grain-pile” paradox that poses the puzzle: “When does a pile become a pile?”
- subscriptio** the formal, written specification of crimes in an indictment
- telos** “end/goal” (pl. *tele*)
- triuivium** a bustling intersection of three roads in downtown Rome
- ubertas** stylistic “richness”
- umbra** lit. “shadow,” an uninvited tag-along guest at a Roman banquet
- Vestal Virgin** one of six virgin priestesses of Vesta, goddess of the Roman hearth, in charge of tending the goddess’s “undying fire” in the Roman Forum
- Vita** a poet’s biography attached as a preface to ancient commentaries