

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



ROMAN SATIRE

Edited by Kirk Freudenburg

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EDITED BY
KIRK FREUDENBURG

*Professor and Chair, Department of the Classics, the University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign*



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*Dedicated to all the self-deluded emperors, ideologues, bullies, and buffoons
who make satire possible, pertinent, inevitable.*

It's hard to not write satire. For who is so long-suffering towards this lopsided city, who is so iron-hard that he can hold himself back?

Juvenal, early second century CE

Here . . . the daily panorama of human existence, of private and communal folly . . . is so inordinately gross and preposterous . . . that only the man who was born with a petrified diaphragm can fail to laugh himself to sleep every night.

H. L. Mencken, 1922

If you aren't completely appalled, then you haven't been paying attention.

Election-year bumpersticker, *Everywhere USA*, 2004

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Now that this project, for so long just a rumor, has stepped into full public view, rather proud of its multi-colored jacket and mismatched pair of ISBNs, the book that it has become runs the risk of seeming considerably better adjusted and more “inevitable” than it really was, or ever could be. Pauline Hire proposed the idea of a Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire to me years ago, an idea that I regarded skeptically at the time, as a conundrum and a curiosity, certainly interesting, perhaps even worthwhile, but not terribly likely. Now that it is finished, I remain a skeptic, but fairly pleased with the end-result, glad to have done it, especially since the process of putting this act on paper has put me in touch with a good number of smart colleagues and friends, both old and new, who have caused me to rethink some of my own grand assumptions about what matters crucially to the study of Roman satire.

The standards set by the Cambridge Companion series are high, and a suitably serious attempt was made to meet them by the contributors of this volume. That said, I should make clear from the start that this book intends to serve its one most important purpose not as Roman satire’s last word, but as a stalwart companion to those setting out to explore for themselves the genre’s various regions, its topographical contours, and even its final frontier. Where you end that quest is your own business, and this book certainly does not propose to take you there. At best, it proposes to start you on your way, helpfully, along this line or that, if only to have you jettison it (let us hope inconspicuously) once you have found a route more direct, meaningful, and true. To do just that is good enough for us, and the stuff of a worthy companion. To do more would perhaps be too much, especially for an editor who has no truck with unilateral, empire-building schemes, such as this Companion could have easily become.

I cannot begin to recall in print the names of all who helped conceive, write, edit, and produce this book. But there are some whose impact demands special thanks, however terse. As always, Dan Hooley was much too nice

for his own good. Not only did he write a crucial chapter of the volume – not even the one he wanted to write – but he worked hard to improve the volume’s contents from beginning to end. The same can be said for Erik Gunderson who, though fully capable of keeping himself busy without any help from me, read whatever I asked him to read, sometimes repeatedly, and generously provided not just critical comments, but blisteringly smart insights that he alone has the brains to think up. Watching him, and John Henderson, think satire out of its classical box has been one of the more rewarding aspects of the behind-the-scenes work of this volume. Charles Martindale, a veteran of *Companions* past, was called upon for help of every kind, intellectual, technical, and bibliographical. He has been most patient with me, and gracious in providing help at every stage.

Much of the work for this volume was done during my year as National Endowment for the Humanities Rome Prize Fellow at the American Academy in Rome. Sincere thanks are owed to the Academy, to the College of Humanities at Ohio State University, and to the National Endowment for the Humanities for supporting my cause. Andrea Cucchiarelli, Sergio Casali, and Alessandro Barchiesi all did their best to ease me into *l’altro mondo* of Italian classics. On behalf of my entire family, I extend to them my sincerest thanks. Paulo Brozzi kept me well supplied with books, besides doing his utmost to improve my Italian. Finally, sincerest thanks are due to all the volume’s contributors (thanks for your patience), and to Sinead Moloney and Michael Sharp at Cambridge University Press. By now, Michael, you should know better than to support my dubious cause. Mostly I behaved myself this time. Which isn’t to say that this book is exactly what you had in mind.

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Abbreviations and References

- ANRW Haase, W., and Temporini, H. (1972–) *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Berlin.
- CIL (1863–) *Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin.

GLK	Keil, H. (1857–80) <i>Grammatici Latini</i> . Leipzig.
OCD	Hornblower, S., and Spawforth, A. (3rd edn., 1996) <i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . Oxford.
OLD	Glare, P. G. W. (1968–82) <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford.
RE	(1893–1980) <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Leipzig.
ROL	Warmington, E. H. (1935–40) <i>Remains of Old Latin</i> , 4 vols. Cambridge, MA/London.
Sk.	Skutsch, O. (1985) <i>The Annals of Q. Ennius</i> . Oxford.
SVF	von Arnim, H. (1903–24) <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> . Leipzig.
TLL	(1900–) <i>Thesaurus linguae Latinae</i> . Leipzig.
W	Warmington, E. H. (1938, repr. with corrections 1979) <i>Remains of Old Latin III. Lucilius, the Twelve Tables</i> . Cambridge, MA/London.

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KIRK FREUDENBURG

Introduction: Roman satire

Origins: Lucilius

Near the beginning of the tenth book of his *Institutes*, midway through a list of readings recommended for the orator in training, Quintilian, Rome's most prolific theorist of rhetoric after Cicero, takes a tendentious step towards satire's terrain by claiming that this particular genre can be accounted "totally ours."¹ The claim is tendentious because extreme, and true only in a highly qualified sense. For ancient critics had long since sought to establish the genre's Greek pedigree by tracing its development past its most obvious early practitioners in Republican Rome (Ennius and Lucilius, both of whom wrote in the second century BCE) all the way to fifth-century Athens. Claims of satire's Greek provenience, although they could easily be stretched to an opposite extreme, are defensible and seem to have at least some narrow basis in fact.

Horace, writing more than one hundred years before Quintilian, was aware of both extremes. Perhaps to goad those in his audience who adamantly defended the idea that satire sprouted entirely from Roman soil, but perhaps also to mimic those who wanted to believe that any good thing in Roman literature just had to come from the Greeks, Horace went so far as to assert that Lucilius did not a whit more to invent satire than to rework the meters of Greek Old Comedy ("having changed *only* their meters and rhythms," *mutatis tantum pedibus numerisque*, *Sermones* 1.4.7). Referring to Aristophanes, Eupolis, and Cratinus, the three canonical comedians of fifth-century Athens, Horace says "Lucilius relies on them *entirely*" (*hinc omnis pendet Lucilius*, *Sermones* 1.4.6).² So much for satire's being at all "ours," let alone "totally" so.

¹ For Quintilian on satire, see *Institutes* 10.1.93–5. The difficulties surrounding the claim *satura quidem tota nostra est* are neatly summarized by Hendrickson (1927).

² These sentiments have long been regarded by commentators as suspiciously overdone; see, for example, Rudd (1966) 89. I suspect that such patent exaggerations sample and send up the hard-line views of certain of Horace's critics; see Freudenburg (2001) 18–19. That such

Actually, when Quintilian makes his famous claim, just a few years before the publication of Juvenal's first book, he does not say *satura tota nostra est* ("satire is totally ours"), although he is often quoted that way. He says *satura quidem tota nostra est* ("satire *at least if nothing else* is totally ours"). His particularizing and emphatic *quidem* matters, for it is emotionally charged; a way of breathing a sigh of relief, midway inside a long list of Roman generic enterprises, all modeled after Greek precedents, themselves reviewed earlier in the same book, and saying "here, for once, and just this once, we Romans have something, *at least this one thing* that we can claim as our own and *not* derived from the Greeks." That is the fuller tale told by Quintilian's not-so-innocent *quidem*. It announces that we are now inside a pleasant myth, *tota nostra est*, one that was taken very seriously in some sectors, it seems, already a century and a half before in Horace's day. And clearly there were critics in Quintilian's day, too, who took the basic gist of this assertion a good deal more seriously than he himself did. For before he can make any significant headway into his discussion of satire's best practitioners and habits at *Institutes* 10.1.93 Quintilian must first dispute the rankings of certain critics who, still in his own day, stubbornly maintained (he is annoyed with them) that Lucilius was not just Rome's first writer of satire, and a very fine one at that, but Rome's greatest writer of all time, in all genres – not Ennius, not Horace, not Virgil: Lucilius!

Failing to make Quintilian's list in the late first century CE is Quintus Ennius (239–169 BCE), the poet usually accounted Rome's first writer of satire. Best known to us as the author of the *Annales*, Rome's finest national epic before the *Aeneid*, he is well represented in a number of genres where he merits mention by Quintilian as an author worthy of study.³ The great majority of these poetic enterprises Ennius modeled directly after Greek precedents. But in among his lesser-known efforts there have survived a few scant remains of a four-book collection of poems that he entitled *saturae*. That title, the plural form of Latin *satura* (with each book apparently comprising one *satura*), is unknown before Ennius, and has been the subject of much debate.⁴ Apparently it derives from the Latin adjective *satur*, meaning "chock-full."

exaggerations could actually rate as respectable theory in certain sectors (especially, it seems, among Greek scholars working in Rome) can be seen from the comments of Porphyrio and Pseudacron *ad Sermones* 1.10.66, where both claim that satire lacks a Greek precedent only in the sense that no Greek had written it in hexameter verse. Both scholiasts are quick to point out that Roman satire's hexameter scheme is itself a Greek metrical invention.

³ Quintilian ranks Ennius among Rome's best writers of epic at *Inst.* 10.1.88. His tragedies do not make Quintilian's preferred list, but they are cited for critical comment (sometimes positively) on several occasions.

⁴ For various possibilities, see Knoche (1975) 7–16.

It seems, then, that Ennius used the term to designate his poems as things chock-full of this and that (“miscellanies”), for what little remains of them (a mere thirty-one lines of verse) suggests that they have far more in common with collections of Hellenistic occasional poems, such as Posidippus’ grab-bag of epigrams known as *Soros*, “The Pile,” or Ennius’ own *Hedyphagetica*, “Delicatessen,” than they do with the later poems of Lucilius and Horace that go by the same name.⁵ For this reason it is perhaps best not to refer to them as “satires” at all. That is their title, but not really their genre. Satire, in that sense, “our” sense, had yet to be invented.

Quintilian knew of the existence of these pre-Lucilian “satires.”⁶ But he carefully sidesteps mentioning them in his review of satire by claiming that “Lucilius was the first to achieve distinction” in satire. Not, in other words, the first to write satire, but the first to do it well. This is in keeping with Horace, who had named Lucilius his chief predecessor in the genre (*Sermones* 1.4 *passim*), even calling him satire’s *inuentor* “discoverer/innovator” (*Sermones* 1.10.48), and “the one who first dared to compose poems in this manner” (*Sermones* 2.1.62–3), even though he, too, was certainly aware that, in addition to Lucilius, “certain others” (*quibusdam aliis*, *Sermones* 1.10.47) had preceded him in satire.⁷ Like Quintilian, he does not think they merit mentioning by name. For Horace, Ennius is an epic poet, linked to satire as a frequent target, never as a writer of satires.

Later scholars, such as Porphyrio in the second century and Diomedes in the fourth, are less reticent about Ennius’ role in the history of Roman satire.⁸ Although they make explicit room for Ennius (and for his nephew Pacuvius, also a writer of *saturae* in the Ennian manner, not a line of which survives) in their studies of satire, they are always quick to draw a hard and

⁵ Gratwick (1982) lays out the Hellenistic background of Ennius’ four *Saturae*. See also Muecke in this volume.

⁶ He cites Ennius *in satira* at *Inst.* 9.2.36.

⁷ Horace, *S.* 1.10.66 makes reference to an author of purely indigenous Latin poems. Though the reference is best taken as generic (“an author”) rather than specific (definitely not Ennius, see Fedeli (1994) 524–5), the description of these poems as *Graecis intacti* lets us hear what is at stake in the world of contemporary satire criticism. The phrase is politically loaded, implying not just that the poetry in question was “untried” by the Greeks, but that it was “unspoilt/untaunted” by them. I suspect that in the phrase *Graecis intacti* the poet adopts a momentary, “deviant” point of focalization. In essence he is quoting his critics (without the benefit of quotation marks) to send up one of their favorite ideas, that of the pure Roman essence that precedes, and is undone by, the Greek. On deviant focalizers generally, see Fowler (2000) 40–63.

⁸ Porphyrio mentions both Ennius and Pacuvius among the “certain others” who preceded Horace in the writing of satire at Horace, *S.* 1.10.47, and he names Ennius with Lucilius and Varro as writers of *saturae* in his introduction to *Epistles* 1.3.