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# The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire

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### The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire

Satire as a distinct genre of writing was first developed by the Romans in the second century BCE. Regarded by them as uniquely “their own,” satire held a special place in the Roman imagination as the one genre that could address the problems of city life from the perspective of a “real Roman.” In this Cambridge Companion an international team of scholars provides a stimulating introduction to Roman satire’s core practitioners and practices, placing them within the contexts of Greco-Roman literary and political history. Besides addressing basic questions of authors, content, and form, the volume looks to the question of what satire “does” within the world of Greco-Roman social exchanges, and goes on to treat the genre’s further development, reception, and translation in Elizabethan England and beyond. Included are studies of the prosimetric, “Menippean” satires that would become the models for Rabelais, Erasmus, More, and (narrative satire’s crowning jewel) Swift.

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THE CAMBRIDGE  
COMPANION TO  
ROMAN SATIRE

EDITED BY  
KIRK FREUDENBURG

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at Urbana-Champaign*



Cambridge University Press  
 0521006279 - The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire  
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[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo  
 Cambridge University Press  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
 Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521803595](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521803595)

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First published 2005

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

The Cambridge companion to Roman satire / edited by Kirk Freudenburg.

p. cm. – (Cambridge companions to literature)

Includes bibliographical references (p. ) and index.

ISBN 0-521-80359-5 – ISBN 0-521-00627-9 (pbk.)

1. Satire, Latin – History and criticism. 2. Rome – In literature. I. Freudenburg,  
 Kirk, 1961– II. Series.

PA6095.C36 2005

877'.010932376 – dc22 2004057024

ISBN 978 0 521 80359 5 hardback

ISBN 0 521 00627 9 paperback

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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

CONTENTS

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| <i>Notes on contributors</i>   | page ix |
| <i>Acknowledgments</i>   | xiii    |
| <i>Notes on editions and abbreviations</i>                                 | xv      |
| <br>Introduction: Roman satire   | <br>I   |
| KIRK FREUDENBURG   |         |
| <br><b>Part I: Satire as literature</b>                                    |         |
| <br>1 Rome’s first “satirists”: themes and genre in Ennius<br>and Lucilius | <br>33  |
| FRANCES MUECKE   |         |
| <br>2 The restless companion: Horace, <i>Satires</i> 1 and 2               | <br>48  |
| EMILY GOWERS   |         |
| <br>3 Speaking from silence: the Stoic paradoxes of Persius                | <br>62  |
| ANDREA CUCCHIARELLI  |         |
| <br>4 The poor man’s feast: Juvenal  | <br>81  |
| VICTORIA RIMELL  |         |
| <br>5 Citation and authority in Seneca’s <i>Apocolocyntosis</i>            | <br>95  |
| ELLEN O’GORMAN   |         |
| <br>6 Late arrivals: Julian and Boethius                                   | <br>109 |
| JOEL RELIHAN   |         |
| <br>7 Epic allusion in Roman satire  | <br>123 |
| CATHERINE CONNORS  |         |
| <br>8 Sleeping with the enemy: satire and philosophy                       | <br>146 |
| ROLAND MAYER   |         |
|  | <br>vii |

CONTENTS

|  |   |     |
|--|---|-----|
| 9  | The satiric maze: Petronius, satire, and the novel                                      | 160 |
|  | VICTORIA RIMELL   |     |
| Part II: Satire as social discourse              |   |     |
| 10   | Satire as aristocratic play   | 177 |
|  | THOMAS HABINEK  |     |
| 11   | Satire in a ritual context  | 192 |
|  | FRITZ GRAF  |     |
| 12   | Satire and the poet: the body as self-referential symbol                                | 207 |
|  | ALESSANDRO BARCHIESI AND ANDREA CUCCHIARELLI  |     |
| 13   | The libidinal rhetoric of satire  | 224 |
|  | ERIK GUNDERSON  |     |
| Part III: Beyond Rome: satire in English letters |   |     |
| 14   | Roman satire in the sixteenth century   | 243 |
|  | COLIN BURROW  |     |
| 15   | Alluding to satire: Rochester, Dryden, and others                                       | 261 |
|  | DAN HOOLEY  |     |
| 16   | The Horatian and the Juvenalesque in English letters                                    | 284 |
|  | CHARLES MARTINDALE  |     |
| 17   | The “presence” of Roman satire: modern receptions and their interpretative implications | 299 |
|  | DUNCAN KENNEDY  |     |
| Conclusion                                       |   |     |
|  | The turnaround: a volume retrospect on Roman satires                                    | 309 |
|  | JOHN HENDERSON  |     |
|  | <i>Key dates for the study of Roman satire</i>  | 319 |
|  | <i>Bibliography</i>   | 323 |
|  | <i>Index</i>  | 342 |

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*The Knotted Thong: Structures of Mimesis in Persius* (1997), *Roman Satire* (forthcoming), and a number of articles on Roman poetry, classical reception, and translation studies.

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[More information](#)

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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

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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.

Cambridge University Press  
0521006279 - The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire  
Edited by Kirk Freudenburg  
Frontmatter  
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|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 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. |