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## **Classics Ireland**

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## **Notes for Contributors**

Contributions are welcome on all aspects of the language, history, and literature of Greek and Roman antiquity, especially if there is an Irish dimension. Contributions ought to be scholarly, but not technical. All Greek and Latin must be translated. Minimal footnotes are preferred. Articles should not normally exceed 5,000 words and will be independently refereed before formal acceptance for publication. Articles will be published online also, about three years after the paper publication, at: <http://www.classicsireland.com/>. Upon acceptance, a disk version in Microsoft Word format must be submitted. Where appropriate SuperGreek fonts are to be used. Copyright remains with the author. Authors will receive one copy of the journal in which their article appears. Reviews should not normally exceed 1,000 words. Please address all manuscripts and books for review to the editor: Dr. David Woods, Department of Classics, University College Cork, Cork, Ireland (d.woods@ucc.ie).

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K. FREUDENBURG (ed.), **The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. xvi + 352. ISBN 978-0-521-00627-9. STG £20.99 (Pb).

*Maeve O'Brien (NUI Maynooth)*

This is a welcome book about Roman Satire that 'catch all' genre. A full table of satiric goodies is represented in this collection of essays edited by Kirk Freudenburg. The editor capably reviews the topic through a discursive Introduction to a volume that is divided into three parts: Part I: 'Satire as literature', Part II: 'Satire as social discourse', Part III: 'Beyond Rome: Satire in English letters'. John Henderson writes the Conclusion.

This book traverses old ground and reworks old issues in modern parlance. Apart from the Introduction and Conclusion, there are seventeen chapters in all. Useful lists of 'Further reading' are appended to each chapter. There is a table 'Key dates for the study of Roman satire' (pp. 319-321) from c.650BC, the era of the Greek iambic poets, through to Boethius' *Consolatio* in AD524 up to 1749 and Samuel Johnson; a full bibliography and a capacious index ends the book.

Satire is a genre of 'strangeness', and any discussion zooms in on the apparently simple questions what is Roman satire and what does it do? That these questions never yield simple answers is evident in the point Henderson makes about the audience for this *Companion*. One particular audience for this book as he puts it is here for satire, and the other one is here for Rome (p. 310). Keeping that in mind, the reader might well begin at the end rather than at the beginning of this book. The last section Part III: 'Beyond Rome: Satire in English letters', comprises study of English satirists from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. The contributors recognise that these English satirists are not engaging in *aemulatio* primarily, but in some kind of adaptation of Roman verse satire. Such adaptation can reconfigure or must reconfigure contemporary circumstances. The flexibility of the 'medley' nature of Roman satire from which disparate ideas and satiric stances can be adapted to deal with political and literary change in later eras emphasises the really transformative nature of Roman satire. John Donne (1572-1631) emerges as the first English classically trained satirist (Colin

Burrow). The work of John Wilmot (alias the earl of Rochester) and the genius of Dryden's and Pope's redeployment of the discourse of satire to suit their times is dealt with in a close reading of the various texts by Hooley. There is an elegant chapter by Martindale on the Horatian and Juvenalesque in English Letters. In an entertaining and erudite chapter Kennedy adverts to the 'farraginous' in *Ulysses* in his 'frustrating' search for any formal characteristic that will link past to present in 'satire' or the 'satiric'. He plumps for the 'carnavalesque'.

Part I: 'Satire as Literature' traverses familiar ground: Ennius and Lucilius (F. Muecke), Horace's two books of satires (E. Gowers), Seneca (E. O'Gorman), epic allusion (C. Connors), Petronius and satire (V. Rimell), satire and philosophy (R. Mayer), and Julian and Boethius (Relihan). These papers are clearly written and provide excellent food for thought. Part II: 'Satire as Social Discourse' contextualises satire in Roman culture in different ways and offers more delicacies. Satire is a *ludus*, a game, a process, that amounts to a substitution of satiric performance for the real or serious activities of the male élite. This satiric play ensures this segment of society preserves its identity by letting the satirist act like an élite male: 'satire needs its playmates too much to destroy them' says Habinek. Merely playing the aristocratic game in satire ensures victory. Satire realises its function in Roman society where ritualised blame is an instrument of social control and enforcement of social values (F. Graf). The poet reflects on himself as a poet and on his body poetic, so to speak, in satire also. Satire is a marginal genre so the satirist must engage in such reflection that is, in fact, a demonstration of his authority as a poet. The rhetorical education in which Roman satirists are steeped meant that so to speak every book had to be read by its cover. The artistic self-consciousness of the satirist mirrors his anxiety about his role in society. The image of the poet Horace's 'physiopathology as an inadequate artist' (when he compares himself to Lucilius, specifically, his sore eyes, upset stomach, and insomnia) shows that he delineates his own literary and moral values as a poet of satire through references to his body (Barchiesi and Cucchiarelli). Horace in the *Odes* is the inspired bard, but he is less secure in his image of himself in his *Sermones* where the poet has to account for his own self as a citizen of Rome in a way epic poets do not. By contrast, Juvenal avoids

autobiographical specifics about himself and his physical condition. It is precisely because Juvenal sees satire as a high literary enterprise that he shuns the *Musa pedestris* and calls on the objective voice that he knows from the epic tradition. A universal *saeva indignatio* rather than a particular *saeva lippitudo* informs his satire. A sick ear rather than a rheumy eye might be the result of reading the sexual stories in satire, or more especially, the desire to talk about perverted sex that is everywhere in satire: the latter being the ‘why’ of satire rather than the ‘what’, as Gunderson says. The *vir bonus* is dead and gone. The satirist is now a man equipped or afflicted with an over developed superego that needs to engage in orgies of criticism. Satire delights in sexual passivity of passive men, castrated men, and women who decry the pleasure of others. Yet that is what the satirist is now doing himself. A kind of literary bond of sublime pleasure is created between the reader (male) and the (male) author – the biter is bitten. They enjoy their cake precisely for not having eaten it (p. 233). The strangeness of satire still remains and means that to try to define its essence is a difficult task. You may as well ‘Goe, and cache a falling starre’ as Donne says in ‘Song’. Yet the editor and the contributors to this volume while reaching for the star do not underestimate the difficulty of reading Roman satire and this is one of the main strengths of the book. *Lector intende*: this companion will delight you on your journey.

GOLDHILL, S. & OSBORNE, R., **Rethinking Revolutions through Ancient Greece**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp xv + 319. ISBN: 978-0-521-86212-7. STG £50.00 (Hb).

*Carl O’Brien (University College Cork)*

This selection of conference proceedings questions Western Civilisation’s belief in a ‘Greek Revolution’ in philosophy, politics, medicine, art, music, and religion, and investigates the extent to which the Classical period can truly be regarded as ‘revolutionary’, rather than as the result of a more gradual process of continuous development. The primary focus is on politics (chs. 1-2, 7-8) and certain aspects of the history of philosophy (chs. 9-11), though the