

JUVENAL AND THE POETICS OF ANONYMITY

The satirist Juvenal remains one of antiquity's greatest question marks. His *Satires* entered the mainstream of the classical tradition with nothing more than an uncertain name and a dubious biography to recommend them. Tom Geue argues that the missing author figure is no mere casualty of time's passage, but a startling, concerted effect of the *Satires* themselves. Scribbling dangerous social critique under a historical maximum of paranoia, Juvenal harnessed this dark energy by wiping all traces of himself – signature, body, biographical snippets, social connections – from his reticent texts. This last major ambassador of a once self-betraying genre took a radical leap into the anonymous. *Juvenal and the Poetics of Anonymity* tracks this mystifying self-concealment over the whole Juvenalian corpus. Through probing close readings, it shows how important the missing author was to this satire, and how that absence echoes and amplifies the neurotic politics of writing under surveillance.

TOM GEUE is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow and Lecturer in Latin at the University of St Andrews, and has published widely on the literature of imperial Rome. He is currently researching a book on anonymous Roman writing, which also considers how readers now and then cope with the power and problem of anonymity.

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Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41634-4 — Juvenal and the Poetics of Anonymity
Tom Geue
Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108416344

DOI: 10.1017/9781108236348

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First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-41634-4 Hardback

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To Andrew and Vania: my loving parents who first taught
me to read and write.

Your first names are written and read (first).

Accursed the man, whom Fate ordains, in spite,
And cruel parents teach, to read and write!
What need of letters? Wherefore should we spell?
Why write our names? A mark will do as well.

Charles Churchill *The Author* 1–4

quid refert, tales uersus qua uoce legantur?

Does it matter, the voice in which such verses get read?

Juvenal *Sat.* 11.182

uana superuacui dicunt chirographa ligni

They say it's a spurious signature on a worthless document

Juvenal *Sat.* 13.137

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The spine of this book has hardened with the help of two continents, three countries, five institutions, and twelve years on and off Juvenal. Above all it has been cracked into shape by the constant shock of both new and old ideas. The people behind them need names.

My Juvenal condition goes back to Emily Matters' contagious pedagogy at North Sydney Boys High School, and the subtle seminars of Frances Muecke and Sarah Lawrence at the University of Sydney. Frances Muecke and Emma Gee were my unbeatable mentors throughout undergraduate Classics. I hope that their double-sided virtues of rigour and open-mindedness have made it into this book, in smattering if not droves.

The first incarnation of this book looked like a PhD thesis at King's College, Cambridge (2009–13), written under the magical supervision of John Henderson and Chris Whitton. At the time, I thought the job of one was to blast me into the sky, the other to yank me back to earth; but in reality both did both with remarkable equipoise. The things they said and wrote to me probably felt like nothing to them, but in reality they changed the wiring of my brain for good, and for better. They also stuck by me throughout a dark patch of un-, casual-, or fixed-term employment. If they had not written eighty-five job references and many more consolatory emails, I, let alone this book, may not have had much spine left to work with.

At the end of the doctoral line, my examiners Kirk Freudenburg and Emily Gowers gave me criticism and direction to set the watch by. Some of their objections I followed; others I resisted; to them all, I have responded as best I could. Their close reading put pressure on the points where it was due, and I hope a better book has come out the other end because of it. More recently, the nominally anonymous (if ultimately guessable) readers for *Cambridge Classical* viii

Acknowledgements

Studies helped me reach a point where I would not embarrass myself too much; the blotches that remain will be reflected in my own red face, and mine alone.

I have spent the last few years traversing an itinerary of UK Classics departments, and I have ended up learning from the best. Pavlos Avlamiis, my colleague at Trinity College, Oxford, was the most generous and intelligent colleague you could hope to land beside at lunch and laugh you through a less familiar archaic labyrinth of a university. Deep thanks also to Gail Trimble for letting me sit at her desk for her year of leave: her shoes were too big for me, but it was nice to try to fill them for a time. Colleagues at Bristol the next year slapped me out of my torpor and got me thinking more ambitiously: for feedback on work, help with applications, and all-round zinging conversation, big thanks to Shane Butler, Lyndsay Coe, Laura Jansen, Kurt Lampe, Adam Lecznar, Genevieve Liveley, and Ellen O’Gorman. I am gushing to have landed more permanently in St Andrews, where conversations with Alice König and Antti Lampinen have helped things move to a climax, and where the academic community is second to none. The students I have taught at all of these places have marked this book more than they know – even, or especially, if Juvenal’s name never came up.

All these homes hooked me into friendships with some truly incredible classicists. Some of them are so incredible that they stopped being classicists. For implanting ideas, doling out wisdom, and listening hard to my tortured Australian speech, let me thank Tobias Allendorf, Anna Bonnell-Freidin, Siobhan Chomse, Barbara Del Giovane Yuddi Gershon, Elena Giusti, Ian Goh, Jared Hudson, Ailsa Hunt, Claire Jackson, Lucy Jackson, Aaron Kachuck, Adam Lecznar, Harvey Lederman, James McNamara, Fran Middleton, Lizzie Mitchell, Hannah Silverblank, Martin Stöckinger, Barney Taylor, Maya Feile Tomes, and Laura Viidebaum. Special gratitude goes to Ian, Aaron and Maya, whose proofreading care did more than nurse my thesis back to life. To Elena, Fran, and Maya: thanks for making King’s Classics the electrifying hotbed of ideas I had projected it to be. James Uden has been the kindest and gentlest of trailblazers. Even after I found out, careering towards the final year of my

Acknowledgements

PhD, that he had said much that needed saying on this topic much better than I could, he has never been the least bit policing or possessive of a territory that will always have his name all over it. I treasured the marvels of his thesis, book, and person, every step of the way.

Books are built from the lives of others. Many bumps into remarkable people are captured here, however difficult to detect. My Sydney crew continues to astonish, challenge, rile, politicize, support, and love in a way I can never hope to recreate. Saul Bert, Andrew Brooks, Robert d'Apice, Jet Geaghan, Liam Grealy, Duncan Hilder, Serin Kasif, Shona Macleod, Sean Murphy, Ivan Muniz Reed, Miro Sandev, Camilla Wagstaff, Marty Wiczorek: thanks for opening worlds. Giulietta Amato and Georgia Sholl are the newest world's-best mums to the freshest member of my extended family: little Theodora Isabel Amato, we will see you live up to your Byzantine regent of a name yet. My time in the UK has brought in a haul of quirkery that could fill novels, all of which had a hand in helping me write this non-fiction too: Louise Benson, Sophie Buchanan, Carlos Cueva, Ben Etherington, Natalie Fullwood, Yuddi Gershon, Josie Gill, Lisi Giselbrecht, Sam Goff, Emma Jones, Aris Komporozos-Athanasίου, Lotte Kühlbrandt, Sophie Mallett, Michal Murawski, Miguel Santa Clara, Ellie Stedall, Laura Rosella Schluderer, Volker Schlue, Katrina Zaat. I would like to be more like all of you.

My parents Andrew Geue and Vania Pittioni got pole position above, but let me thank them again here for feeding my body and soul. They urged me always to work for love not money, even if their own love had to be transferred into my bank account when the conversion was not quite working in my favour. The boundless love of and for Francesca Bellei keeps teaching me things I did not know.

For most of the last twelve years, I have kept afloat on the financial buoys of the University of Sydney, King's College Cambridge, the Cambridge Faculty of Classics, the Cambridge Australia Trust, and the British Academy. I am deeply grateful to these bodies, and at the same time painfully aware that there is no such thing as clean money. I have grown in places and benefited

Acknowledgements

from clusters of wealth built, directly or indirectly, on bleak histories of exploitation, slavery, and genocide; histories stretching into a university system which rewards its bosses with bigger bonuses, and its labour with greater precarity. Our most pressing job is to stop them repeating themselves.

ABBREVIATIONS, EDITIONS AND COMMENTARIES

- CIL 1863–. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
 HA Magie, D. 1921–32. *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
 OCT Oxford Classical Text
 OLD Glare, P. G. W. 1982. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

I follow Clausen's *OCT* edition of Juvenal (1992) throughout except where otherwise noted. I also make regular reference to the following editions and commentaries:

- Bracci, F. 2014. *La satira 11 di Giovenale: introduzione, traduzione e commento*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter.
 Braund, S. 1984. 'Juvenal, Satires 8 and 9: Introduction and Commentary', Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
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- Knoche, U. 1950. *D. Iunius Iuuenalis: Saturae*. Munich: M. Huever.
- Martyn, J. R. C. 1987. *Juvenal: Saturae*. Amsterdam: Hakkert.
- Mayor, J. E. B. 1900. *Thirteen Satires of Juvenal, I-II*. London: Macmillan.
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978-1-108-41634-4 — Juvenal and the Poetics of Anonymity
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