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# JUVENAL AND PERSIUS

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY  
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## NOTE ON SATIRE 8

This poem, the centrepiece of Book Three, is essentially a persuasion addressed to an aristocratic-sounding man, Ponticus, to rely on his own worth and achievements, or rather, a dissuasion from relying on his inheritance, his blue blood, and the achievements of his ancestors. Though Ponticus is not known, his name suggests a descendant of a general who had achieved military success in the Pontic (Black Sea) region. Juvenal poses the central question immediately: "What's the use of pedigrees?" (1). The theme is a commonplace, but Juvenal's treatment unusual: he walks through an imaginary aristocratic atrium, pointing out the contradictions between high ancestry and corrupt morality (1-38), asserting that "the one and only nobility is personal excellence" (20). He then turns to Rubellius Blandus, who is puffed up with self-importance, and demands from him personal rather than inherited excellence (39-70). Returning to Ponticus, he repeats his warning and spells out the kind of conduct he would find acceptable (71-86). He imagines Ponticus as the governor of a wealthy province. He advises him to restrain both his own greed (87-126) and that of his entourage (127-41). Juvenal then shifts to another scandal—the consul Lateranus disgracing himself and his ancestors by driving his chariot himself and frequenting low diners, without incurring crit-

## SATIRE 8

icism from his peers (142-82). He attacks the aristocrats who expose themselves to humiliation by going on stage or participating in gladiatorial combat (183-210). His crowning example of disgrace is the emperor Nero (211-30). After a few more negative examples, the poem draws to a close with a catalogue of people of humble origins who behaved more courageously and patriotically than the aristocrats (231-68). Finally, Juvenal produces the clinching argument in a wonderful *reductio ad absurdum*: there is no point in relying on pedigrees because everyone is ultimately descended from the herdsmen and the criminals in Romulus' asylum (269-75). This new Juvenal is clearly a nihilist with an acute sense of humour.

## SATIRE 8

- Stemmata quid faciunt? quid prodest, Pontice, longo  
 sanguine censeri, pictos ostendere vultus  
 maiorum et stantis in curribus Aemilianos  
 et Curios iam dimidios umeroque minorem  
 5 Corvinum et Galbam auriculis nasoque carentem,  
 quis fructus generis tabula iactare capaci  
 censorem posse ac multa contingere virga  
 fumosos equitum cum dictatore magistros,  
 si coram Lepidis male vivitur? effigies quo  
 10 tot bellatorum, si luditur alea pernox  
 ante Numantinos, si dormire incipis ortu  
 Luciferi, quo signa duces et castra movebant?  
 cur Allobrogicis et magna gaudeat ara

6-8 *del. Guyet, Jachmann* | 7 *om. Φ*

<sup>7</sup> censorem *Harrison*: corvinum *P*: fabricium *Φ*: pontifices  
*Housman* | posse ac *Withof, Housman*: posthac *P*: post haec *GK*

<sup>8</sup> fumosos *PFG*: famosos *Φ*

<sup>1</sup> Mention of Aemiliani evokes Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus (185-129 B.C.), one of the central figures in Roman politics, military affairs, and culture during the second century. The Curii were an ancient patrician family which included Manius Curius Dentatus, conqueror of Pyrrhus (275 B.C.). Marcus Valerius Corvinus received his name from his single com-

## SATIRE 8

What's the use of pedigrees? What's the advantage, Ponticus, of being valued by the length of your bloodline, of displaying the painted portraits of ancestors, Aemiliani standing tall in their chariots, Curii now in halves, a Corvinus minus his shoulders, and a Galba missing his ears and nose?<sup>1</sup> What's to be gained from being able to boast a Censor in your enormous family chart and to make connections through many branches with smoke-grimed Masters of the Cavalry along with a Dictator,<sup>2</sup> if, under the noses of the Lepidi,<sup>3</sup> the life you live is rotten? What's the point of all those statues of warriors, if you gamble the night away in front of Numantini,<sup>4</sup> if you don't go to sleep until Lucifer rises, the moment when those generals started advancing their standards and camps? Why should a Fabius born in

bat with a Gaul (349 B.C.) in which he was helped by a crow (*corvus*). The emperor Galba, from the *gens Sulpicia*, claimed he was descended from Jupiter and Pasiphae.

<sup>2</sup> In the Republic a Dictator was appointed in emergencies; his second in command was called Master of the Cavalry.

<sup>3</sup> An eminent family in the late Republic, part of the *gens Aemilia*, including the consul of 79 B.C. and the triumvir with Antony and Octavian.

<sup>4</sup> Numantinus was the name conferred on Scipio Aemilianus (see 8.3n.) after his capture of Numantia in Spain (133 B.C.).

- natus in Herculeo Fabius lare, si cupidus, si  
 15 vanus et Euganea quantumvis mollior agna,  
 si tenerum attritus Catinensi pumice lumbum  
 squalentis traducit avos emptorque veneni  
 frangenda miseram funestat imagine gentem?  
 20 tota licet veteres exornent undique cerae  
 atria, nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.  
 Paulus vel Cossus vel Drusus moribus esto,  
 hos ante effigies maiorum pone tuorum,  
 praecedant ipsas illi te consule virgas.  
 25 prima mihi debes animi bona. sanctus haberi  
 iustitiaeque tenax factis dictisque mereris?  
 agnosco procerem; salve Gaetulice, seu tu  
 Silanus: quocumque alto de sanguine rarus  
 civis et egregius patriae contingis ovanti,  
 exclamare libet populus quod clamat Osiri  
 30 invento. quis enim generosum dixerit hunc qui  
 indignus genere et praeclaro nomine tantum  
 insignis? nanum cuiusdam Atlanta vocamus,

<sup>17</sup> traducit PSAGUΣ: producit FHLOZ

<sup>27</sup> alto *Richards*: alio PΦ

<sup>5</sup> The ancient family of Fabii claimed descent from Hercules; famous members included Quintus Fabius Maximus who took the name Allobrogicus after he defeated the Gallic tribe of the Allobroges (121 B.C.). The Great Altar of Hercules stood in the cattle market at Rome.

<sup>6</sup> Sheep from this area of Venetia were valued for their fine wool. The name is chosen because it echoes the Greek word *εὐγένεια*, "noble birth."

<sup>7</sup> From Mount Etna.

Hercules' house take delight in Allobrogici and the Great Altar<sup>5</sup> if he's greedy and silly and even soprier than a Euganean lamb,<sup>6</sup> if he disgraces his unkempt ancestors by having his groin rubbed smooth by Catanian pumice,<sup>7</sup> and if his dealing in poison pollutes his wretched clan with his statue that ought to be shattered? Though you adorn your entire atrium with ancient wax portraits in every direction, the one and only nobility is personal excellence. So, be a Paulus or a Cossus or a Drusus<sup>8</sup>—in morality. Rate that ahead of your ancestors' statues, let that go ahead of the rods of office when you're consul. Your first debt to me is quality of soul. Do you deserve a reputation as an upright champion of justice in word and action? Then I acknowledge a true noble. Welcome, Gaetulicus, or you, Silanus:<sup>9</sup> whatever your exalted blood, if you benefit your rejoicing fatherland as a rare and outstanding citizen, I want to cheer like the people do when Osiris has been found.<sup>10</sup> After all, who'd use the label "thoroughbred" of a person unworthy of his breeding and who was distinguished by his glorious name and nothing else? It's our practice to call

<sup>8</sup> Lucius Aemilius Paulus Macedonicus defeated Perseus of Macedon at the battle of Pydna (168 B.C.). Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus Cossus received the title Gaetulicus for his victory over the Gaetuli in North Africa (A.D. 6). Nero Claudius Drusus (38–9 B.C.) fought with his brother, the future emperor Tiberius, in Germany.

<sup>9</sup> For the name Gaetulicus, see 8.21n. The Iunii Silani were a family prominent in the early principate.

<sup>10</sup> In Egyptian cult, the discovery and resurrection of the murdered Osiris was marked by the shout, "We have found him! We rejoice!" (Sen. *Apoc.* 13.4).

Aethiopem Cycnum, pravam extortamque puellam  
 35 Europen; canibus pigris scabieque vetusta  
 levibus et siccae lambentibus ora lucernae  
 nomen erit Pardus, Tigris, Leo, si quid adhuc est  
 quod fremat in terris violentius. ergo cavebis  
 et metues ne tu sic Creticus aut Camerinus.

His ego quem monui? tecum mihi sermo, Rubelli  
 40 Blande. tumes alto Drusorum stemmate, tamquam  
 feceris ipse aliquid propter quod nobilis esses,  
 ut te conciperet quae sanguine fulget Iuli,  
 non quae ventoso conducta sub aggere textit.  
 "vos humiles" inquis "volgi pars ultima nostri,  
 45 quorum nemo queat patriam monstrare parentis,  
 ast ego Cecropides." vivas et originis huius  
 gaudia longa feras. tamen ima plebe Quiritem  
 facundum invenies, solet hic defendere causas  
 nobilis indocti; veniet de pube togata  
 50 qui iuris nodos et legum aenigmata solvat;  
 hinc petit Euphraten iuvenis domitique Batavi  
 custodes aquilas armis industrius. at tu

<sup>33</sup> pravam ΦP: parvam ALO

<sup>49</sup> pube Housman: plebe PSAGLU: gente F

<sup>11</sup> Quintus Caecilius Metellus (consul 69 B.C.) received the name Creticus for his conquest of Crete (68–7 B.C.). The Camerini were a branch of the ancient *gens Sulpicia*.

<sup>12</sup> Evidently a son of Julia who in A.D. 33 married Rubellius Blandus. If so, this unknown son was the brother of Rubellius Plautus (Tac. *Ann.* 13.19). Julia was the daughter of Tiberius' son Drusus Caesar, hence *Drusorum*. Henderson raises the possibil-

someone's dwarf "Atlas," his Ethiopian slave "Swan," and his bent and deformed girl "Miss Europe." Lazy dogs bald with chronic mange who lick the edge of a lamp dry will get the name "Leopard" or "Tiger" or "Leo," or whatever in the world has a fiercer roar. So you'd better be careful and watch out that you aren't a Creticus or a Camerinus on the same principle.<sup>11</sup>

Who is it I've been warning like this? It's you I'm talking to, Rubellius Blandus.<sup>12</sup> You are swollen with the exalted pedigree of the Drusi, as if you yourself had done something to make you noble, as if it was down to you that your mother was resplendent with Julian blood instead of being a hired weaver<sup>13</sup> underneath the windy Embankment. "You're proles," you say, "the dregs of the Roman people. Not one of you can name his father's country. But I am descended from Cecrops."<sup>14</sup> Lucky you! I wish you long-lasting joy in your ancestry! But in the lowest rabble, you'll come across a Roman who is eloquent, who will take on defence cases for the uneducated nobleman. From this toga-wearing company will emerge a man who can undo legal knots and riddles of regulations. From here comes the energetic young soldier headed for the Euphrates and for the eagles guarding the defeated Batavi.<sup>15</sup> But you—you're

ity that Rubellius Blandus is a fictitious rhetorical figure (*Figuring Out Roman Nobility*, Exeter 1997, pp. 92–3).

<sup>13</sup> The equivalent modern insult is "washerwoman."

<sup>14</sup> I.e. indigenous Roman nobility: the pompous nobleman uses the Greek term *Cecropides* (descendant of Cecrops, the originary king of Athens) metaphorically.

<sup>15</sup> A reference to two frontier regions of the Roman empire, in the east and the west (the Batavi lived by the Rhine).



nil nisi Cecropides truncoque simillimus Hermae.  
 nullo quippe alio vincis discrimine quam quod  
 55 illi marmoreum caput est, tua vivit imago.

Dic mihi, Teucrorum proles, animalia muta  
 quis generosa putet nisi fortia? nempe volucrem  
 sic laudamus equum, facili cui plurima palma  
 fervet et exultat rauco victoria Circo;

60 nobilis hic, quocumque venit de gramine, cuius  
 clara fuga ante alios et primus in aequore pulvis.  
 sed venale pecus Coryphaei posteritas et  
 Hirpini, si rara iugo Victoria sedit.

nil ibi maiorum respectus, gratia nulla  
 65 umbrarum; dominos pretiis mutare iubentur  
 exiguis, trito et ducunt epiraedia collo  
 segnipedes dignique molam versare nepotes.  
 ergo ut miremur te, non tua, privum aliquid da  
 quod possim titulis incidere praeter honores  
 70 quos illis damus ac dedimus, quibus omnia debes.

Haec satis ad iuvenem quem nobis fama superbum  
 tradit et inflatum plenumque Nerone propinquo.  
 rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa  
 fortuna. sed te censeri laude tuorum,

75 Pontice, noluerim sic ut nihil ipse futurae  
 laudis agas. miserum est aliorum incumbere famae,

<sup>66</sup> trito et *Goth.* 2.52, *Laur.* 34.34: et trito *PSang.*: trito *AGU.*:  
 tritoque  $\Phi$       <sup>68</sup> privum *Salmasius*: primum *codd.*

<sup>16</sup> Herms were statues of the god Hermes which stood outside  
 Athenian houses. A mutilated Herm lacked nose and phallus.

<sup>17</sup> Mock-epic. Cf. *Trojugenas* at 1.100 and *Troiades* at Persius  
 1.4n.

nothing but "descended from Cecrops," the spitting image  
 of a mutilated Herm.<sup>16</sup> In fact, you have the advantage in  
 only one respect: his head is made of marble but your im-  
 age is alive.

Tell me, o descendant of Trojans:<sup>17</sup> in the case of dumb  
 animals, who would think them "thoroughbred" unless  
 they are strong? That's the reason we praise the speedy  
 racehorse: his countless wins—first place comes easily—  
 bring a seething, riotous reception in the hoarse Circus.  
 The "noble" horse is the one which, whatever his pasture,  
 speeds clear of the rest and which has the leading dust  
 cloud on the flat. By contrast, the ones sired by Cory-  
 phaeus and Hirpinus<sup>18</sup> are "livestock for sale," if it's but  
 rarely that victory lands on their harness. There is no  
 respect for ancestors there, no regard for their ghosts.  
 Slow-footed descendants, fit for nothing except to turn the  
 millstone, are made to swap owners for minimal prices and  
 pull carts with their worn necks. So, if I'm to be impressed  
 by you and not your heritage, offer me something per-  
 sonal, something I can inscribe in your record of achieve-  
 ment, apart from those titles which we gave (and continue  
 to give) to those men to whom you owe everything.

I've said enough to the young man who, so tradition  
 reports, was proud and pompous and full of his close con-  
 nection with Nero. It's pretty rare that you'll find consider-  
 ateness in people of that class. But I wouldn't want you,  
 Ponticus, to be valued for the praise given to your family  
 and to do nothing yourself to earn praise in the future. It's  
 terrible to rely on the reputation of other people. There's a

<sup>18</sup> Famous successful horses in chariot teams.

- ne conlapsa ruant subductis tecta columnis:  
stratus humi palmes viduas desiderat ulmos.  
esto bonus miles, tutor bonus, arbiter idem  
80 integer. ambiguae si quando citabere testis  
incertaeque rei, Phalaris licet imperet ut sis  
falsus et admoto dictet periuria tauro,  
summum crede nefas animam praeferre pudori  
et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.  
85 dignus morte perit, cenet licet ostrea centum  
Gaurana et Cosmi toto mergatur aeno.

- Expectata diu tandem provincia cum te  
rectorem accipiet, pone irae frena modumque,  
pone et avaritiae, miserere inopum sociorum:  
90 ossa vides regum vacuis exucta medullis.  
respice quid moneant leges, quid curia mandet,  
praemia quanta bonos maneat, quam fulmine iusto  
et Capito et Tutor ruerint damnante senatu,  
piratae Cilicum. sed quid damnatio confert?  
95 praeconem, Chaerippe, tuis circumspice pannis,  
cum Pansa eripiat quidquid tibi Natta reliquit,  
iamque tace; furor est post omnia perdere naulum.

Non idem gemitus olim neque vulnus erat par  
damnorum sociis florentibus et modo victis.

<sup>90</sup> regum Φ: rerum PFGHU

<sup>93</sup> tutor ΦΣ: numitor PSMico

<sup>19</sup> A Sicilian tyrant famous for torturing his victims in a bull made of bronze.

<sup>20</sup> Oysters from the Lucrine lake, a special delicacy. Cosmus was a famous perfume-producer. <sup>21</sup> The wealthy client-kings of the East whose kingdoms became Roman provinces.

risk of the roof collapsing in ruins when the columns are removed. When it's trailing on the ground, the vine-shoot misses the elm it was married to. Be a good soldier, a good guardian, an incorruptible judge, too. If you're summoned as a witness in some tricky, murky case, even if Phalaris<sup>19</sup> commands you to commit perjury and dictates his lies with his Torture-Bull close by, think it the worst evil to put survival ahead of honour and for sake of life to lose the reasons for living. The person who deserves death is already dead, even though he eats a hundred Gauran oysters for dinner and bathes in a bronze tubful of Cosmus' perfume.<sup>20</sup>

When you finally enter your long-awaited province as its Governor, bridle and limit your anger and your greed, too, have some sympathy for the impoverished provincials. What you see are the bones of the kings<sup>21</sup> sucked dry, with their marrows empty. Keep an eye on the provisions of the laws, the Senate's instructions, the enormous rewards which await good governors, the entirely justified thunderbolt of senatorial condemnation which caused the destruction of Capito and Tutor, for plundering the Cilicians.<sup>22</sup> But what good came from that condemnation? Look around for someone to auction off your rags, Chaerippus, seeing that Pansa is stealing everything that Natta left you, and then shut up! On top of it all, you'd be mad to lose your fare.

In the old days, when the provincials were still flourishing and just recently defeated, they didn't groan like this, and the pain of their losses wasn't the same. In those

<sup>22</sup> Capito was condemned for extortion in Cilicia; Tutor is unknown to us. The Cilicians were famed as robbers, so this is a paradox.

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- 100 plena domus tunc omnis, et ingens stabat acervos  
nummorum, Spartana chlamys, conchylia Coa,  
et cum Parrhasii tabulis signisque Myronis  
Phidiacum vivebat ebur, nec non Polycliti  
multus ubique labor, rarae sine Mentore mensae.  
105 inde Dolabella †atque hinc† Antonius, inde  
sacrilegus Verres referebant navibus altis  
occulta spolia et plures de pace triumphos.  
nunc sociis iuga pauca boum, grex parvus equarum,  
et pater armenti capto eripietur agello,  
110 ipsi deinde Lares, si quod spectabile signum.  
[si quis in aedicula deus unicus; haec etenim sunt  
pro summis, nam sunt haec maxima. despicias tu]  
forsitan inbellis Rhodios unctamque Corinthon  
despicias. merito quid resinata iuventus  
115 cruraque totius facient tibi levia gentis?  
horrida vitanda est Hispania, Gallicus axis  
Illyricumque latus; parce et messoribus illis  
qui saturant Urbem Circo scenaeque vacantem;  
quanta autem inde feres tam dirae praemia culpa,  
120 cum tenuis nuper Marius discinxerit Afros?  
curandum in primis ne magna iniuria fiat

105 Dolabella Φ: Dolabellae *Rupertii*: dolo bellans *Eden* |  
<audax> Antonius *Knoche*: <rapax> Antonius *Nisbet*: <astuque>  
Antonius *Eden*: praedoque Antonius *Braund* | hinc atque hinc  
*Weidner* 111-12 *del. Manso*

23 The top Greek artists of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.  
Phidias' "ivories" are statues in ivory and gold; Mentor was a  
silversmith. 24 Two infamous provincial governors con-  
demned of extortion in the late Republic.

days, their houses were bulging: there were huge piles of  
money, purple Spartan wraps and Coan silks, paintings  
by Parrhasius and statues by Myron along with ivories  
by Phidias—very lifelike—with works of Polyclitus every-  
where and hardly a table without a piece by Mentor.<sup>23</sup>  
From there, Dolabella, \* \* \* Antonius,<sup>24</sup> from there that  
villain Verres<sup>25</sup> kept bringing home secret loot in their tall  
ships—more triumphs in peacetime than in war. These  
days, when a little farmstead is seized, the provincials have  
only a few yoke of oxen and a tiny herd of mares, but these  
will be kidnapped, even the stallion of the herd, along  
with the household gods themselves, if there are any de-  
cent statues.<sup>26</sup> You may perhaps despise the unsoldierly  
Rhodians and perfumed Corinth—and quite rightly so:  
what harm will you suffer from a whole race of smooth-  
skinned young men with depilated legs? It's hairy Spain  
you need to avoid, and the Gallic region, and the Illyrian  
coast. Keep clear, too, of those harvesters<sup>27</sup> who glut  
Rome, when she is at leisure for the races and the stage  
shows. But anyway, how big are the rewards that you'll get  
from such a horrendous crime, seeing that Marius<sup>28</sup> re-  
cently stripped the impoverished Africans bare? The most  
important thing is not to give deep offence to people who

<sup>25</sup> Attacked by Cicero for his depredations as propraetor of  
Sicily, 73–70 B.C.

<sup>26</sup> Lines 111–12: "if there is a single god left in his little shrine.  
That's because these make up the top choice, these are now the  
maximum available."

<sup>27</sup> Africans: huge quantities of grain were imported from Af-  
rica to Rome, hence "glut."

<sup>28</sup> Cf. 1.49n.

fortibus et miseris. tollas licet omne quod usquam est  
auri atque argenti, scutum gladiumque relinques.

[et iaculum et galeam; spoliatis arma supersunt.]

125 quod modo proposui, non est sententia, verum est;  
credite me vobis folium recitare Sibyllae.

Si tibi sancta cohors comitum, si nemo tribunal  
vendit acersecomes, si nullum in coniuge crimen

130 nec per conventus et cuncta per oppida curvis  
unguibus ire parat nummos raptura Celaeno,  
tum licet a Pico numeres genus, altaque si te  
nomina delectant omnem Titanida pugnam  
inter maiores ipsumque Promethea ponas.

[de quocumque voles proavom tibi sumito libro.]

135 quod si praecipitem rapit ambitio atque libido,  
si frangis virgas sociorum in sanguine, si te  
delectant hebetes lasso lictore secures,  
incipit ipsorum contra te stare parentum  
nobilitas claramque facem praeferre pudendis.  
140 omne animi vitium tanto conspectius in se  
crimen habet, quanto maior qui peccat habetur.

Quo mihi te solitum falsas signare tabellas  
in templis quae fecit avus statuamque parentis  
ante triumphalem? quo, si nocturnus adulter

145 tempora Santonico velas adoperta cucullo?  
praeter maiorum cineres atque ossa voluci  
carpento rapitur pinguis Lateranus et ipse,

123-4 scutum . . . galeam *del. Hermann*

124 *del. Lachmann* 134 *del. Ribbeck*

<sup>29</sup> A female prophet whose predictions were written on palm leaves. <sup>30</sup> A Harpy.

are brave as well as unhappy. Although you remove every last piece of their gold and silver, you'll still leave them shield and sword. What I've just set down is no rhetorical cliché—it's the truth. Believe me, I'm reciting to you a Leaf of the Sibyl.<sup>29</sup>

If your diplomatic entourage behaves honourably, if no long-haired lad sells your verdicts, if your wife is above reproach, not poised to race through the district courts and every town snatching loot with curving talons like Celaeno,<sup>30</sup> then I'll let you count your breeding from Picus,<sup>31</sup> and, if it's exalted names that please you, I'll let you include the entire Titan battle line and Prometheus himself among your ancestors.<sup>32</sup> But if you are whirled along by ambition and lust, if you break your lashes in provincials' blood, if you get a kick out of blunted axes and exhausted lictors,<sup>33</sup> then the nobility of your ancestors themselves starts to work against you and to hold a bright torch over things you should be ashamed of. Every fault of character lays itself open to criticism—and the higher the wrongdoer's status, the more glaring the criticism.

What good is it to me that you make a habit of sealing forged wills in the temples built by your grandfather and in front of your father's triumphal statue? Or if you creep out for adulterous liaisons at night with your head covered by a Gallic hood? Fat Lateranus<sup>34</sup> hurtles past the ashes and

<sup>31</sup> Lit. "Woodpecker," an early mythical king of Latium.

<sup>32</sup> Line 134: "Take your great-grand-daddy from whatever book you like." <sup>33</sup> Attendants of magistrates such as provincial governors; here the lictors serve as executioners.

<sup>34</sup> Perhaps Plautius Lateranus, consul designate in A.D. 65 under Nero.

- ipse rotam adstringit sufflamine mulio consul,  
 nocte quidem, sed Luna videt, sed sidera testes  
 150 intendunt oculos. finitum tempus honoris  
 cum fuerit, clara Lateranus luce flagellum  
 sumet et occursum numquam trepidabit amici  
 iam senis ac virga prior adnuet atque maniplos  
 solvet et infundet iumentis hordea lassis.  
 155 interea, dum lanatas robumque iuvenum  
 more Numae caedit, Iovis ante altaria iurat  
 solam Eponam et facies olida ad praesepia pictas.  
 sed cum pervigiles placet instaurare popinas,  
 obviu adsiduo Syrophoenix udus amomo  
 160 currit, Idymaeae Syrophoenix incola portae,  
 hospitii adfectu dominum regemque salutatur,  
 et cum venali Cyane succincta lagona.  
 Defensor culpa dicet mihi "fecimus et nos  
 haec iuvenes." esto, desisti nempe nec ultra  
 165 fovisti errorem. breve sit quod turpiter audes,  
 quaedam cum prima resecuntur crimina barba.  
 indulge veniam pueris: Lateranus ad illos  
 thermarum calices inscriptaque lintea vadit  
 maturus bello, Armeniae Syriaeque tuendis  
 170 finibus et Rheno atque Histro. [praestare Neronem

148 sufflamine mulio GUSang.: sufflamine multo Laur.34.40:  
 multo sufflamine P 159 adsiduo codd.: Assyrio Dorleans |  
 udus Φ: unctus A 161 salutatur PΦ: salutans Leo  
 170 finibus Markland: omnibus codd.  
 170-1 praestare . . . aetas del. Nisbet

35 The goddess of muleteers.

bones of his ancestors in his speeding vehicle and personally, personally, applies the brake to the wheel—a muleteer consul! Granted, he does this at night—but the Moon sees it, and the stars are witnesses, watching intently. When his period of office is completed, Lateranus will pick up his whip in broad daylight. He'll never worry about meeting a now elderly friend—in fact, he'll greet him first with his lash. He'll even undo the bales of hay and shake out the barley for his tired animals. In the meantime, though he sacrifices woolly ewes and ruddy oxen according to Numa's rite, at Jupiter's altar he swears only by Epona<sup>35</sup> and the pictures painted on the stinking stables. Then when he decides to renew his all-night ritual in the diner, the Syrian Jew runs to meet him, the Syrian Jew, inhabitant of the Idymaeian Gate,<sup>36</sup> dripping with nonstop perfume, greeting him with a host's welcome as "My master" and "My lord," accompanied by Cyane,<sup>37</sup> with her skirt hitched up and her bottle for sale.

Someone will defend his behaviour, saying to me, "We too behaved like that when we were young." That's as may be, but you surely stopped, and didn't foster the mistake any further. Disgraceful derring-do ought not to last long: there are some faults which should be trimmed with your first beard. Make allowances for boys: but Lateranus headed for those bathhouse wine cups and painted awnings when he was old enough for war, for defending the boundaries of Armenia and Syria, the Rhine and the Dan-

<sup>36</sup> Probably a scornful way of referring to the Porta Capena with its Jewish enclave.

<sup>37</sup> A prostitute; lit. "Dark Blue" (of her eyes).

securum valet haec aetas.] mitte Ostia, Caesar,  
mitte, sed in magna legatum quaere popina.  
invenies aliquo cum percussore iacentem,  
permixtum nautis et furibus ac fugitivis,

- 175 inter carnifices et fabros sandapilarum  
et resupinati cessantia tympana galli.  
aequa ibi libertas, communia pocula, lectus  
non alius cuiquam, nec mensa remotior ulli.  
quid facias talem sortitus, Pontice, servum?  
180 nempe in Lucanos aut Tusca ergastula mittas.  
at vos, Troiugeneae, vobis ignoscitis et quae  
turpia cerdoni Volesos Brutumque decebunt.

Quid si numquam adeo foedis adeoque pudendis  
utimur exemplis, ut non peiora supersint?

- 185 consumptis opibus vocem, Damasippe, locasti  
sipario, clamosum ageres ut Phasma Catulli.  
Laureolum velox etiam bene Lentulus egit,  
iudice me dignus vera cruce. nec tamen ipsi  
ignoscas populo; populi frons durior huius,  
190 qui sedet et spectat triscurria patriciorum,  
planipedes audit Fabios, ridere potest qui  
Mamercorum alapas. quanti sua verbera vendant  
quid refert? vendunt nullo cogente Nerone,

192 verbera Courtney: funera PAU

<sup>38</sup> Lines 170–1: "His is the perfect age for giving Nero security."  
<sup>39</sup> A *gallus* was a eunuch priest of Cybele.

<sup>40</sup> Estates where slaves were worked in chain gangs and kept in prisons.

<sup>41</sup> Names of old Republican families.

<sup>42</sup> Not known. The name Damasippus appears among the

ube.<sup>38</sup> Despatch your lieutenant to Ostia, Caesar, but first look for him in a huge—diner. You'll find him reclining next to some hit man, mingling with sailors and thieves and runaway slaves, among executioners and coffin-makers and the now silent tom-toms of a priest sprawled flat on his back.<sup>39</sup> There, it's "freedom" for all alike, shared cups. There, no one gets a separate couch or a table set apart. What would you do, Ponticus, if you happened to have a slave like that? You would surely send him off to Lucania or the Etruscan chain gangs.<sup>40</sup> But you of Trojan blood, you forgive yourselves. Behaviour that would disgrace a labourer is fine for a Volesus and a Brutus.<sup>41</sup>

The cases we cite are revolting and disgusting—but what if there are always worse to come? When you'd squandered all your money, Damasippus,<sup>42</sup> you hired out your voice to the stage, to act the noisy "Ghost" by Catullus.<sup>43</sup> Nifty Lentulus<sup>44</sup> took the part of Laureolus and did it rather well: in my opinion, he deserved a real cross.<sup>45</sup> And don't you go excusing the populace. It has a hardened gaze, this populace that can sit and watch the tri-fooleries of aristocrats, listen to barefoot Fabii,<sup>46</sup> and laugh at slapstick by Mamerci.<sup>47</sup> The price they sell their beatings for—what does it matter? They sell themselves without any Nero forcing them, and they have no hesitation in selling, even

Iunii and Licinii. It is also the name of the bankrupt in Horace *Sat.* 2.3.

<sup>43</sup> A Neronian mime writer.

<sup>44</sup> A member of the aristocratic gens *Cornelia*.

<sup>45</sup> A play about the life and execution by crucifixion of the bandit Laureolus.

<sup>46</sup> Mime actors wore no shoes. On the Fabii see 8.14n.

<sup>47</sup> Members of the gens *Aemilia*, which traced its ancestry back to Mamercus, son of King Numa.



- nec dubitant celsi praetoris vendere ludis.  
 195 finge tamen gladios inde atque hinc pulpita poni:  
 quid satius? mortem sic quisquam exhorruit, ut sit  
 zelotypus Thymeles, stupidi collega Corinthi?  
 res haut mira tamen citharoedo principe mimus  
 nobilis. haec ultra quid erit nisi ludus? et illic  
 200 dedecus Urbis habes, nec murmillonis in armis  
 nec clipeo Gracchum pugnantem aut falce supina;  
 damnat enim talis habitus [sed damnat et odit,  
 nec galea faciem abscondit]: movet ecce tridentem.  
 postquam vibrata pendentia retia dextra  
 205 nequiquam effudit, nudum ad spectacula voltum  
 erigit et tota fugit agnoscendus harena.  
 credamus tunicae, de faucibus aurea cum se  
 porrigat et longo iactetur spira galero.  
 ergo ignominiam graviorem pertulit omni  
 210 vulnere cum Graccho iussus pugnare secutor.

Libera si dentur populo suffragia, quis tam  
 perditus ut dubitet Senecam praeferre Neroni,  
 cuius supplicio non debuit una parari  
 simia nec serpens unus nec culleus unus?

195 poni P: pone Φ

202 del. Guyet

202-3 sed . . . abscondit del. Hermann

204 vibrata codd.: librata Courtney

48 The names of actors.

49 Nero.

50 This noble appears not as a heavy-armed gladiator—a *murmillo* or a *Thraex* or a *secutor* ("chaser," below), with body

at the shows put on by the praetor on high. Yet imagine this choice: on one side violent death, on the other the stage. Which is better? Was there anyone so terrified of death that he'd prefer to be Thymeles's jealous husband or the straight man to the clown Corinthus?<sup>48</sup> Yet when an emperor plays the lyre,<sup>49</sup> a noble mime actor is not such an amazing thing. Beyond this, what is there except the gladiatorial school? And that's where you've got the disgrace of Rome: a Gracchus fighting, but not in a murmillon's gear, and not with shield or curving blade. He rejects that sort of get-up, you see: look, he's brandishing a trident.<sup>50</sup> Once he has poised his right hand and cast the trailing net without success, he raises his bare face to the spectators and runs off, highly recognisable, all through the arena. There is no mistaking his tunic, stretched out golden from his throat, and the twisted cord bobbing from his tall hat.<sup>51</sup> And so the chaser told to fight against Gracchus suffered a loss of face more serious than any wound.

If the people were given a free vote, who would be so depraved as to hesitate about choosing Seneca over Nero?<sup>52</sup> For his punishment more than a single monkey and a single snake and a single sack needed to be pro-

armour, shield, and sword—but as a net-thrower (*retiarius*) with minimal gear: a tunic and net, trident, and dagger for weapons. The less the concealment, the lower the status of gladiators.

<sup>51</sup> The outfit of a Salian priest. For Gracchus, see 2.117n.

<sup>52</sup> In the Pisonian conspiracy against Nero, there was talk of making Seneca emperor. See Tac. *Ann.* 15.48–74.

- 215 par Agamemnonidae crimen, sed causa facit rem  
dissimilem. quippe ille deis auctoribus ultor  
patris erat caesi media inter pocula, sed nec  
Electrae iugulo se polluit aut Spartani  
sanguine coniugii, nullis aconita propinquis  
220 miscuit, in scena numquam cantavit Oresten,  
Troica non scripsit. quid enim Verginius armis  
debuisset ulcisci magis aut cum Vindice Galba?  
[quod Nero tam saeva crudaque tyrannide fecit]  
haec opera atque hae sunt generosi principis artes,  
225 gaudentis foedo peregrina ad pulpita cantu  
prostitui Graiaequae apium meruisse coronae.  
maiorum effigies habeant insignia vocis,  
ante pedes Domiti longum tu pone Thyestae  
syрма vel Antigones aut personam Melanippes,  
230 et de marmoreo citharam suspende colosso.  
Quid, Catilina, tuis natalibus atque Cethegi  
inveniet quisquam sublimius? arma tamen vos  
nocturna et flammās domibus templisque parastis,

220 Oresten Weidner: Orestes codd.

223 del. Knoche

225 cantu PGU: saltu Φ

229 aut Hermann: seu Vat.3192, Vat.3286: tu Φ

233 parastis Φ: paratis P

<sup>53</sup> The traditional punishment for a murderer of close relations was to be sewn up in a sack with parricidal animals and thrown into the sea. Nero allegedly murdered his mother and several other relatives and wives.

<sup>54</sup> Orestes, who killed his mother Clytemnestra to avenge his father's murder. <sup>55</sup> Whereas Nero killed his sister Antonia and his wife Octavia, tried to poison his mother Agrippina, and did poison Britannicus and his aunt Domitia.

vided.<sup>53</sup> His crime was that of Agamemnon's son,<sup>54</sup> but motive makes his case different. The fact is, Orestes, on the authority of the gods, was avenging his father, who'd been slaughtered at a banquet. But he did not pollute himself with Electra's jugular or his Spartan wife's blood, he didn't prepare poison for any relations,<sup>55</sup> he never went on stage to sing the part of Orestes,<sup>56</sup> he never wrote an epic *Troy*.<sup>57</sup> Is there anything that more deserved vengeance by Verginius with his armies, or by Galba and his ally Vindex?<sup>58</sup> These were the achievements and these the skills of our highborn emperor, who enjoyed prostituting himself on foreign stages with his horrid singing, and winning Greek parsley crowns. Let your ancestors' statues have the prizes won by your voice. Go on, put your long gown of Thyestes in front of Domitius' feet, or your mask of Antigone or Melanippe,<sup>59</sup> and hang your lyre on your colossus made of marble.

What ancestry more exalted than yours, Catiline, or that of Cethegus can be found?<sup>60</sup> Yet you plotted to attack homes and temples at night and set them on fire, like the

<sup>56</sup> For Nero's performances as Orestes, see Suet. *Ner.* 21.3, Dio 63.9.4. <sup>57</sup> Line 223: "Of all that Nero did in his tyranny so cruel and savage."

<sup>58</sup> Three key rebels against Nero: Julius Vindex, governor of part of Gaul, led a revolt against Nero and was a supporter of Galba, who became the next emperor; Verginius Rufus suppressed the revolt of Vindex but acquiesced in Nero's fall and Galba's assumption of power.

<sup>59</sup> References to Nero's acting, wearing the long robe and mask of tragic actors. Domitius is his father, Gnaeus Domitius and/or a more distant ancestor.

<sup>60</sup> See 2.27n.

- ut braccatorum pueri Senonumque minores,  
 235 ausi quod liceat tunica punire molesta.  
 sed vigilat consul vexillaque vestra coercet.  
 hic novus Arpinas, ignobilis et modo Romae  
 municipalis eques, galeatum ponit ubique  
 praesidium attonitis et in omni monte laborat.  
 240 tantum igitur muros intra toga contulit illi  
 nominis ac tituli, quantum sibi Leucade, quantum  
 Thessaliae campis Octavius abstulit udo  
 caedibus adsiduis gladio; sed Roma parentem,  
 Roma patrem patriae Ciceronem libera dixit.  
 245 Arpinas alius Volscorum in monte solebat  
 poscere mercedes alieno lassus aratro;  
 nodosam post haec frangebat vertice vitem,  
 si lentus pigra muniret castra dolabra.  
 hic tamen et Cimbros et summa pericula rerum  
 250 excipit et solus trepidantem protegit Urbem,  
 atque ideo, postquam ad cumulos stragemque volabant  
 qui numquam attigerant maiora cadavera corvi,  
 nobilis ornatur lauro collega secunda.

<sup>241</sup> sibi *Jahn*: in PSGU: non  $\Phi$ : unda *Weidner*: vix *Hermann*,  
*Ribbeck*: ima *Eden*

<sup>251</sup> cumulos *Nisbet*: Cimbros *codd.*

<sup>61</sup> The Senones were Gauls who sacked Rome in 390 B.C. The Narbonese Gauls wore trousers, *bracae*.

<sup>62</sup> An inflammable coating made of pitch used on people who were burnt alive.

<sup>63</sup> Cicero was from Arpinum, a town (*municipium*) east of Rome, and was the first of his family to enter the Senate, hence the technical term "new man."

sons of trousered Gauls and descendants of the Senones,<sup>61</sup> committing an outrage which could lawfully be punished by the "uncomfortable shirt."<sup>62</sup> But the consul<sup>63</sup> is alert: he halts your banners. He—a "new man" from Arpinum, of humble origin, a municipal knight new to Rome—posts helmeted troops all around to protect the terrified people and is busy on every hill. So without stepping outside the walls, his peacetime toga brought him as much titled distinction as Octavius grabbed for himself at Leucas and on the fields of Thessaly with his sword wet from nonstop slaughter.<sup>64</sup> The difference is that Rome was still free when she called Cicero the Parent and Father of his Native Land. In the Volscian hills, the other man from Arpinum used to work for a wage, labouring behind someone else's plough.<sup>65</sup> Later on, he got the centurion's lumpy staff broken on his head if he was lazy in digging the camp's defences with a sluggish pick. Yet it's he that takes on the Cimbri<sup>66</sup> in a national emergency, he alone that protects a trembling Rome. And that's why, when the ravens flew down to feast on the slaughtered heaps (and they had never fastened on corpses that were bigger), his nobly born fellow consul<sup>67</sup> is honoured with the second-place

<sup>64</sup> The future emperor Augustus, here referred to belittlingly as Octavius (not Octavian), won major battles at Actium in 31 B.C. (here referred to as Leucas, an island nearby) and at Philippi in 42 B.C. (here conflated with Thessaly).

<sup>65</sup> Gaius Marius (157–86 B.C.), who in his early days worked for hire and served as a private soldier.

<sup>66</sup> Marius defeated the Cimbri and Teutones in battles in 102 and 101 B.C.

<sup>67</sup> Quintus Lutatius Catulus, who was eclipsed by Marius in the celebration of the triumph.

- 255 plebeiae Deciorum animae, plebeia fuerunt  
nomina; pro totis legionibus hi tamen et pro  
omnibus auxiliis atque omni pube Latina  
sufficiunt dis infernis Terraeque parenti.  
[pluris enim Decii quam quae servantur ab illis.]  
260 ancilla natus trabeam et diadema Quirini  
et fascis meruit, regum ultimus ille bonorum.  
prodita laxabant portarum claustra tyrannis  
exulibus iuvenes ipsius consulis et quos  
magnum aliquid dubia pro libertate deceret,  
quod miraretur cum Coclite Mucius et quae  
265 imperii finis Tiberinum virgo natavit.  
occulta ad patres produxit crimina servus  
matronis lugendus; at illos verbera iustis  
adficiunt poenis et legum prima securis.  
Malo pater tibi sit Thersites, dummodo tu sis  
270 Aeacidae similis Volcaniaque arma capessas,  
quam te Thersitae similem producat Achilles.  
et tamen, ut longe repetas longeque revolas  
nomen, ab infami gentem deducis asylo;  
maiorum primus, quisquis fuit ille, tuorum  
275 aut pastor fuit aut illud quod dicere nolo.

<sup>258</sup> del. Markland, Dobree

<sup>68</sup> Publius Decius Mus, father and son, who both offered themselves in the ceremony called *devotio*, committing themselves and the enemy to death, in battles in 340 and 295 B.C. respectively. <sup>69</sup> Line 258: "the Decii were worth more than everything they saved."

<sup>70</sup> Romulus. <sup>71</sup> Servius Tullius, the sixth king of Rome.

<sup>72</sup> Three stories from the early Republic when Lars Porsenna was trying to restore the monarchy. Gaius Mucius put his right

laurel. Plebeian were the souls of the Decii,<sup>68</sup> plebeian too their names. Yet they are enough for the gods below and for Mother Earth in place of all the legions and all the allies and all the youth of Latium.<sup>69</sup> A man born of a slave girl won the robes and crown and rods of Quirinus<sup>70</sup>—he was the last of our good kings.<sup>71</sup> The traitors who were planning to undo the bolts of the gates to the exiled tyrants were the sons of the consul himself, precisely the people who should have been doing something impressive for shaky liberty, something to be admired by Mucius or Cocles or the girl who swam the Tiber, the empire's boundary.<sup>72</sup> It was a slave who revealed the secret plot to the senators, and for this he deserved to be mourned by the Roman matrons, while those traitors got their just rewards: flogging and the first legally sanctioned axe.

I'd prefer that your father were Thersites, provided you behaved like the grandson of Aeacus and brandished the weapons made by Vulcan, rather than that Achilles fathered you to behave like Thersites.<sup>73</sup> And after all, although you trace your name far back and unroll it far back, you derive your family from the notorious refuge:<sup>74</sup> the first of your ancestors, whoever he was, was either a herdsman or something I'd rather not mention.

hand in the fire to demonstrate his courage to Porsenna; Horatius Cocles defended the bridge across the Tiber against Porsenna until it could be destroyed; and Cloelia was a hostage who escaped from Porsenna by swimming across the Tiber.

<sup>73</sup> Aeacus was Achilles' grandfather. Thersites, who spoke out against Agamemnon in the *Iliad*, combines low birth and low behaviour.

<sup>74</sup> Often called the "asylum"; to increase the population of Rome, Romulus opened the doors even to slaves and criminals seeking refuge.