FOOD: A SUITABLE SUBJECT FOR ROMAN VERSE SATIRE

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF PhD.

Variable print quality
This thesis looks in particular at a number of satires by the Roman poets Horace and Juvenal in which food is prominent: Horace’s Satires 2.2, 2.4 and 2.8 and Juvenal’s Satires 4, 5, 11 and 15. Where relevant the works of Lucilius and Persius have also been brought into the scope of the study.

It begins with a discussion of the reasons why food might be considered a suitable subject for Roman verse satire (considering the nature of food and of eating, and the nature of the genre), and a brief survey of the forms which food takes in the genre. This is followed by an analysis of the gastronomic terminology which the satirists use to achieve a satirical rather than a gastronomic effect.

The body of the study is taken up with the specific areas which interest the satirists when they deal with food: the antithesis of town and country diet, gastronomy, the dinner party (‘cena’), gluttony and cannibalism. For the most part these are dealt with on a satire by satire, chapter by chapter basis. In the case of the town versus country antithesis, however, Horace’s Satire 2.2 is used as a starting point for the discussion of the subject in Persius’ and Juvenal’s satires.

The thesis suggests that the satirists create for the reader’s entertainment a number of ‘perfect’ misinterpretations of the proper role of food: the failure to see food as nutrition, the over-intellectualisation of the subject, and the abuse of conviviality, among others. Roman verse satire does not, therefore, provide a
comprehensive or accurate picture of eating habits during the period in which the satirists were writing. It does, however, offer the satirically attuned reader a sophisticated and literary discussion of diners, ‘cooks’ and cannibals in the broader moral, social and cultural context.
I should like to thank all those who have helped with the research and preparation of this thesis at Exeter and Leicester Universities:

My supervisors at Leicester - Duncan Cloud and Professor Andrew Wallace-Hadrill - for their continual support within and beyond their respective periods of office. Helen Parkins and Dr. Graham Shipley for their astute comments and proof-reading. The completion of the thesis was made possible through the generosity of my previous employer East Midlands Electricity. Finally, special thanks are due to Dr. Su Braund of Exeter University. Much of the inspiration was hers, but all of the mistakes are my own.

# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROLOGUE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 FOOD: A SUITABLE SUBJECT FOR SATIRE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 INTRODUCTION: THE NAMING OF SATIRE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 THE SATIRICAL PROCESS: MORALITY, POLARITY AND LAUGHTER.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT, OR, YOU EAT WHAT YOU ARE?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Cultural demarcation: 'You don't eat what I eat'</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 The menu as the man</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 THE PROTOCOLS OF FOOD: SYSTEMS OF SHARED VALUES</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.1 The protocols of body and soul: a paradox of the necessary and the inferior</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.2 The protocols of digestion: disgust and refinement</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4.3 The protocols of hospitality: obligation and beneficence</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 THE FOOD SATIRES: LUCILIUS, HORACE, PERSIUS AND JUVENAL</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 TOWN FOOD, COUNTRY FOOD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>THE 'RUSTIC' SATIRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>The elements of an idyll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>The role of food in the idyll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>Idyll versus reality: the idyll undone?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4</td>
<td>A reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5</td>
<td>The satirical 'solution'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>THE OFELLUS DIET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Ofellan ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Ofellus' guide to eating 'well'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3</td>
<td>Ofellus' country meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4</td>
<td>The 'proper' meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>THE RANGE OF APPROACHES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>Mouse country: Horace's Satire 2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>Persius' retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3</td>
<td>Juvenal's eleventh satire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE MESSAGE OF THE MEAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>GASTRONOMIC LANGUAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>The uses of the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2</td>
<td>Specific language: the lure of the rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>THE MATTER OF TASTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>WHAT DOES IT COST?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>HOW MUCH AND HOW MANY?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Gluttony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3</td>
<td>Subtle combination versus agglomeration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>IS IT NEW?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 THE PERVERSE DINNER-PARTY 196
5.4.1 Convivium: Food and the meeting of friends 198
5.4.2 Symposium: Wine and the meeting of minds 203
5.4.3 Cena: Food and the meeting of stomachs 209

5.5 CONCLUSION 219

6 JUVENAL'S FIFTH SATIRE: 'FLESH VERSUS FOUL'

6.1 ANOTHER 'CENA' 221
6.1.1 A familiar setting for conflict 223
6.1.2 The target of Satire 5 224

6.2 A REAL MEAL? 227
6.2.1 The meal as emblem 228
6.2.2 The meaning of the meal 230

6.3 THEMATIC IMAGERY: POWER AND IMPOTENCE 238
6.3.1 The king and the slave 244
6.3.2 Extending the image 248

6.4 AGENTS OF VIRRO'S POWER 252
6.4.1 The natural world, the elements and the gods 253
6.4.2 The past 258
6.4.3 Servants and social inferiors 260
6.4.4 Inanimate objects 262

6.5 CONCLUSION 262

7 THE EMPEROR'S NEW FISH

7.1 INTRODUCTION 264

7.2 HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN 267
7.3 STRANGE BUT TRUE
7.4 'NEMESIS' IN THE SHAPE OF A FISH
7.4.1 Food and other pleasures of the flesh
7.4.2 Why a turbot?
7.5 THE LONG ARM OF THE EMPEROR
7.5.1 The scope of the imperial power
7.5.2 Fear is the key
7.6 CONCLUSION

8 JUVENAL 15: THE SATIRIST AND THE BARBARIANS
8.1 INTRODUCTION: A FOOD SATIRE?
8.1.1 A serious attack?
8.2 CANNIBALISM: STRANGE BUT TRUE?
8.3 ASPECTS OF CIVILISATION AND BARBARY
8.3.1 Religious 'otherness'
8.3.2 Civilisation and technology
8.3.3 Boys, beasts and men
8.3.4 Civilised accomplishments
8.4 CONCLUSION: IS ROME REALLY CIVILISED?

9 CONCLUSION

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY
PROLOGUE

In the climate of apprehension concerning salmonella in eggs in the late 1980s, one well-known radio producer was prompted to deliver a comic analysis of eggs in their cultural context. The thought of not being able to dunk his 'soldiers' in a soft yolk provoked questions about the peculiar etiquette of eating eggs. Do you have the yolk runny? Should fried eggs be turned? Which do you eat first, yolk or white? Evidence was brought forward from anecdote and observation. He knew one woman who only ate the yolk. Others were found to nibble around the white. Someone smothered the whole thing in ketchup, and another crazed individual mashed the lot up with the side of the fork. How you ate your egg was, of course, indicative of more general character; the last was clearly a homicidal maniac. As the speaker reached the end of his analysis, a crescendo of strings accompanied an orgasmic description of the bready soldier entering the golden warmth of the yolk.

The speaker was adopting a semi-moralistic persona, and his mock-serious tone suggested self-deprecation and an ironic attitude to food as a subject for serious discussion. The aim was to conform rather than inform, and most importantly, to entertain. Although this was not even satire in the modern sense, being more like undirected social observation with satirical elements, in a relatively short time the speaker had managed to touch on many of the universals lying at the heart of Roman 'food
Predominant among these was the recognition of certain codes underlying the speaker's message. These might include the dangerous or sensuous aspects of food; the role of a type of food (in this case bread 'soldiers') in the common (British) consciousness (as a symbol of the parent-child relationship as reflected in the 'comfort factor' of food); codes of behaviour and how those of the individual relate to those of the group; and the use of food as metaphor (in this case sexual).

What if the listener had been trying to draw from this piece a definitive analysis of contemporary British attitudes to the egg? The material is rich, but by no means comprehensive. Moreover, much is only implicit. The same might be said of Roman verse satire as a source of information on Roman eating habits. The reader has first to ask him or herself the question, 'What are you asking satire to do?' What satire cannot answer - because of its literary nature - are the kinds of questions an ethnographer or anthropologist might seek to ask in the field. That is, it cannot give an objective, accurate picture of what the people of the Roman world ate at the time when a satire was written. It cannot provide information about all types of meal, eaten at all times of day, by all regional or social groups of people. It cannot tell us who ate with whom, or why people served what they served. Finally it cannot tell us what Lucilius, Horace, Persius, or Juvenal (the writers of the satires) ate, what they thought about food, or whether they wanted to change the behaviour of others with regard to food.
We might try to extract that kind of information from the satirists for a number of reasons. First, because they talk about food often, describe it in apparent detail, and show people behaving in relation to it. These things are not common in Latin literature. Secondly, because the satirists— not the writers of satire themselves—suggest that they are describing real people and events. Moreover, they use their examples of 'food behaviour' to illustrate definitive (in their terms) statements about the gastronomic state of their contemporary society.

Therefore satire might seem to be a good source of information, but while there is plenty of material available, the process of extraction has to be a careful one. It must be remembered that the satirists are writing to entertain, and are sifting (i.e. rejecting as well as selecting) the material with which they do it. This thesis will look at how they sift and use the material.

It will also seek to explore the contribution of Roman verse satire to a number of issues relating to food; for example, how Romans saw food in relation to the moral condition of people (men, to be more accurate) in Roman society. This can be found in the sorts of things the satirist chooses to criticise, such as gluttony and gastronomy, and in what strikes him as an appropriate means of entertaining his audience, in exposing those chosen 'wrongs'. The satirists also expose the 'intellectualisation' of food by the gastronome, and compare this with the treatment of other subjects. They are also greatly interested in the settings in which people could be seen acting in relation to food, often
using the 'cena' as a focus for conflict between individuals and groups. Finally, we see food used as a metaphor for other types of behaviour, for example through the language of nutrition and digestion.

The key to the satirists' depiction of food is the use of polarisation in order to achieve an image of perverted attitudes to food. To appreciate the perversion, the reader must have a clear idea of what 'norms', or codes of food behaviour, are being perverted. These 'norms' can be expressed explicitly within satire, or can be revealed by extrapolation from what the satirist has to say. They are the cultural tools at the satirist's disposal. But to be able to read the code, one must first be able to read satire.
CHAPTER ONE

FOOD: A SUITABLE SUBJECT FOR SATIRE

1.1 INTRODUCTION: THE NAMING OF SATIRE

Food was present at the naming of 'satura'. Two of the four derivations of its name proposed by Diomedes\(^1\) derive from food images: a mixed dish of foods and a stuffing. Similarly, we have Juvenal's description of his chosen genre as a meal mash for animals ('farrago', 1.85-6):\(^2\)

\[
\text{quidquid agunt homines, uotum timor ira uoluptas}
\]
\[
\text{gaudia discursus nostri farrago libelli est.}
\]

The use of the food metaphor carries with it implications about the genre, Roman verse satire, and inherently about the metaphorical value of food. The genre had an element of variety, as suggested by the very word 'satura'. But, more importantly for the purposes of this thesis, the accompanying idea of a mixed dish, a sausage or a stuffing, seems to bring with it a flavour of the low-brow, mundane, down-to-earth perception of food commonly found in literature.

\(^1\)AG. 3 (Keil, 485-6), the 'locus classicus' for 'satura'.
\(^2\)Var. R. I 31, 5. Plin. Nat. 18.41.142. Braund and Cloud, 78, draw attention to the sophisticated allusion to the etymological derivation of 'satura'.

The affinity between the genre and food is reflected most clearly in the number of satires devoted to the subject and in the frequency of passing images and examples used throughout. This initial chapter will examine the reasons why the Roman verse satirists might have descended upon the subject of food; how, briefly, they moulded the rich material it yielded to the purpose and character of their satire; and which areas of Roman culture are exposed in the process. In asking the question 'Why food?', we can first look at the nature of the genre.

1.2 THE SATIRICAL PROCESS: MORALITY, POLARITY AND LAUGHTER

According to Diomedes, the Roman satirist aims to discuss and attack men's vices in an entertaining manner:

Satira dicitur carmen apud Romanos nunc quidem maledicum et ad carpenda hominum uitia archaeae comoediae charactere compositum...

(Keil, 485)

The exact balance between edification and entertainment is clearly an issue for dispute, and, to a certain extent, subjective assessment. But to experience Roman verse satire as a primarily moral exercise would severely restrict our appreciation of the skill of all the writers

3 In particular Hor. S. 2.2.4 and 8; Juv. 4, 5, 11, and 15; infra, 1.5.
of Roman verse satire in, for example, narrative, parody, allusion and characterisation. Indeed, as this thesis will attempt to show, to a greater or lesser extent from satirist to satirist and satire to satire, the demands of a good joke are more frequently answered than those of moral force or moral originality.

The writer of satire adopts for himself the voice of a moralist, the 'satirist', with which to describe, revile, and destroy wrongdoers.\(^6\) He has no obligation to offer explicit recommendations of good behaviour; nor is his goal the explanation and elaboration of a moral position as an end in itself. Rather, he depicts the moral issues in action, for the amusement of the reader. His weapons are ridicule and laughter. The position he adopts denies ambiguity. His tone can be reasonable, sardonic, angry, or dogmatic, and his morals reflect the readily recognisable morality applied to everyday issues. Paradoxically, while advocating a moderate position between extremes of behaviour, he may put his case with extreme force. For one authority at least, the anger which drives a number of Juvenal's satires is the result of 'something very strange and violent' that happened in the first part of the writer's life (Highet 1954, 20). If this were the case we are presumably meant to be swayed by the 'truthfulness' of the feeling behind the satire. Such anger, however, should

\(^4\) Rudd 1986, 1 proposes three functions: attack, entertainment and preaching.
\(^5\) For a contrasting view see Witke, 2: 'Satire's chief aim is to instruct rather than amuse ... The laughter that it frequently causes is not central to its performance.'
\(^6\) Anderson, 3; Kernan, 16: the public and private personality of the satirist.
be seen as an integral part of a satiric process whereby the satirist undermines his own credibility as a voice of reason by his vehemence. In this case he is aiming for a combination of moral monochrome and literary technicolour to achieve aesthetic impact rather than moral authenticity.

The satirist, in aiming for a 'conviction', tends to polarise the moral issues. His technique is to establish the generality through the particular, by focusing on one sensual pleasure to taint the larger group of nefarious activities, and by demolishing a target specially created to epitomise a particular failing. The foods used as illustrative material, and the terms in which they are couched, therefore represent the extremes of their kind, whether in a gastronomic or any other sense. We see city versus country diet, poor versus extravagant menus, raw versus cooked, and modern versus ancient diet used as illustrations of rhetorically antithetical sets of values: truth against falsehood, weight against emptiness, wisdom against foolishness, health against sickness; in short, good versus evil.

The reasons behind the inclusion, and the nature of the treatment, of food and related issues therefore depend on two important factors: first, the potential for developing one or more moral facets of the subject, and secondly, the suitability of the theme as a source of comedy and

---

7 cf. Anderson, xiii.
8 Hor. S. 2.2, 2.6; Juv. 11.
9 Juv. 5.
10 Juv. 15.
11 Juv. 11.
ridicule, deriving from the ridiculous or ludicrous in human affairs. Essential to both is the familiarity of the subject-matter and of the relevant moral issues. In the case of food, the reader draws on the familiarity of eating, both as a physiological and cultural activity and as a subject to which a complex of other cultural value-systems are attached.

Any analysis of the role of food in Roman verse satire must refer back to the nature of the genre as described above, and to the role of food in Roman society. It is important to ask why an item of food, a menu, or a regimen is being described, and how it is moulded or modified by the demands of entertainment or education. When an item, an idea, or a contrast appears familiar, it is worth asking why is it being reused, how it has been adapted to its new context, and what message it is conveying.

Analysis along these lines shows the satirist creating a 'critical hyper-reality' through the choice and rejection of certain features of the Roman experience of food and eating. This process inherently diminishes the value of satire as a historical document, describing, for example, what was eaten, by whom and when. It does, however, reveal models and sets of values unique or common to one or more satirists.

1.3 YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT OR: YOU EAT WHAT YOU ARE?
The identification of a person's eating habits is well known as a means of assessing the quality of the person as a whole. Aphorisms proliferate on this subject: 'you are what you eat', and 'show me what a man eats and I will tell you what he is', to give two well-worn examples. By implication, any society in a position to make choices about what it eats, and why, is subject to this kind of analysis. Modern western media seem to be obsessed by this kind of cultural diagnosis. The underlying implication is that food is a language in which we communicate about ourselves to each other. So one might use food habits to place a person socially, culturally, morally, or geographically. Just how accurate or revealing that process can be depends on the observer's (or in the case of satire, the speaker's) data and intentions. The observer could, for example, be a rhetorician, a satirist, a philosopher, or a doctor, who may wish to say something new or confirm a prejudice. Whatever the aim, as soon as observations are made on the basis of eating habits, those habits are altered by the very act of observation. The commentator will bring to bear his or her own prejudices. This is something which the modern anthropologist may try to eliminate, but the Roman verse satirist has a satirical point to make, and his observations are

12 From the German proverb 'Man ist was man isst'.
13 Brillat Savarin, 13: his fourth Aphorism.
14 Which is why, for example, one Sunday colour supplement parodied a competitor's regular 'Room of my Own' feature by producing its own a 'Shopping Trolley of my Own' version. Cf. 'You are what you eat', a BBC TV series (1986, repeated 1990) on healthy eating.
15 'Cf. Foucault, 101: diet as a way of 'conceptualising behaviour'.
16 Douglas, 83.
consciously based on a mix of literary history and the constraints of his genre, as well as observation. The process continues with the experience that the audience of satire and the modern reader bring to a 'food satire'.

The saying 'You are what you eat' can be developed and modified in a number of ways. David Byrne, in a song lyric, suggests, 'eat what a man eats and you will become him':

'I felt that if I ate the food of the area I was visiting I might assimilate the point of view of the people there, as if their point of view was somehow in the food. So I would make no choices myself regarding what food I ate and simply follow the examples of those around me. I would study them very carefully making note of important similarities and differences. When shopping at the supermarket I felt a great desire to walk off with someone else's groceries and study their effects on me, as though if I ate those groceries I would become that person.'

(Byrne 1984)

The bizarre fantasy that this song describes goes on to suggest that by following another person's dietary pattern we can experience his patterns of work, sexual behaviour, and mores (or 'you become what you eat'). The Roman verse satirists produce their own variation on the theme: 'I will show you what a person eats to tell you what he is' (or 'you eat what you are'), thus using diet to invent the man. They achieve this by concentrating on the eating
habits of certain individuals, or groups, who might or might not have a literary or real existence outside the poem. However, all we learn about them in the satires is what they eat and, in some cases, how they would like their guests to eat.

1.3.1 Cultural demarcation: 'You don't eat what I eat'

The gastronomic character of the individual can be linked to the value-system of the social and cultural group to which he belongs. Systems of food protocol can be used to distinguish one race from another, or to group types within a particular culture. In both Greek and Roman thought, the degree of civilisation a society had achieved could be judged by what it ate and by its habits regarding the production and preparation of food. We see the so-called 'civilised' writer drawing a cultural map of food consumption, drawing particular attention to odd or 'unnatural' eating habits.

In his fifteenth satire Juvenal's speaker draws the conclusion that man is separated from the beasts because he does not eat the same things; he is a technological step up from them because he can cook his food:

17 Exceptions: Domitian in Juv. 4 and the cannibal tribes IR Juv. 15.
18 E.g. Hor. S. 2.2; Juv. 4, 11, and 15.
19 E.g. Hor. S. 2.4, 6, and 8; Juv. 5.
20 E.g. Hdt. 4.17-19, 23; Arist. Pol. 1.3.2 (1256a-b), animals and men; Strab. Geog. 7.3.6-7; Plin. Nat. 4.26.88; 6.20.53; ibid, 35.195.
From this he makes the moral extrapolation that, unlike animals, men have been granted 'mollissima corda' (131) and that this concern for human woes separates him 'a grege mutorum' (143).

Similarly, groups can be identified within the same society. Differences in attitudes to food and eating habits can be delineated to show differences in income, education, age, or a number of other factors affecting status within society. The importance that members of these groups attach to particular foods, or to food in general, can set them apart, as indeed can codes or patterns of behaviour regarding the buying, preparation, and serving of food. Moreover, tensions or conflicts can arise at the borders between these groups, where individuals try to cross over, or where interests conflict.21 These cultural borderlands are of particular interest to the Roman verse satirists. They seek to identify or create groups within their own society or

21Douglas, 192-3; group self-classification (for example concerning eating habits) can be enforced 'to stabilise power, filter information, ration it, limit access'. 
within the borders of the Empire, and then, in the narrative of their satire, depict these groups in conflict, moreover in direct opposition with each other. The moralising satirist, simply by speaking out, portrays himself as defender of a norm to which 'civilised' folk should be wedded.

1.3.2 The menu as the man

Pithy food anecdotes occur in Latin literature to indicate the general character of an individual under scrutiny. True to type, we are told by Pliny, Cleopatra proved her extravagance by drinking dissolved pearls.\(^{22}\) Plutarch captures the essence of Lucullus in the story of the slave who, serving the great man with one course when dining alone, is berated for not realising that on that occasion Lucullus was dining with Lucullus.\(^{23}\)

The Roman verse satirist, more often than not, focuses on the behaviour of an individual on a single occasion, as a means of exposing the general behaviour of a group. In so doing he walks a fine line between character-sketching and caricature. The latter presents extremes of behaviour, describing individuals who, predicably, will always act excessively within their sphere of activity. This

\(^{22}\) Plin. Nat. 9.58.121. Cf. the modern Japanese habit for eating gold-leaf. In the words of the inventor of the trend, 'Gold has no taste whatsoever ... but it is agreeable to look at and it flatters people's self-esteem' (Tan, 83).

\(^{23}\) Plut. Luc. 41.2.
extremeness is often funny in itself. In their behaviour they fulfill the audience’s expectations of certain types of individual, and are thus part of a prejudice-confirming process. The satirist can play on his audience’s recognition of subtle types of behaviour which betray major quirks in a person’s underlying motivation, as in Horace’s description of the various characters at Nasidienus’ dinner party (S. 2.8). An individual like Nasidienus is built up layer by layer as the courses go by. The audience’s full appreciation of just how ghastly he is depends on their receptivity to the nuances of gastronomy and social behaviour as displayed by him.24

The satirist describes people who have chosen their attitude to food on the basis of a thoroughly misguided set of values. There are gluttons, who seek to extend the sensual pleasure they get from eating, and gastronomes who get a thrill from impressing others with the originality and daring of their creations. Both of these can be described through paradigmatic perversion or inversion of the proper way to behave in food matters. The terms of the perversion are strictly controlled by the satirist for maximum comic as well as moral effect. Catius25 confuses gastronomy with philosophy. Nasidienus (like the town mouse) equates gastronomic chic with social success and happiness.26 Domitian, his cabinet, and his turbot are the ridiculous products of power ‘gone bad’27 and Virro and Trebius represent the monsters of tyranny and feebleness

24 Infra, ch. 5.
25 Hor. S. 2.4.
26 Hor. S. 2.8, Nasidienus; ibid. 2.6, the town mouse.
27 Juv. 4.
created when the values at the heart of the patron-client relationship are perverted or inverted.28 These individuals as gastronomes and gluttons, exemplify a broad range of wickedness, which can be elaborated through the satirists' grasp of the metaphorical potential of food.

1.4 THE PROTOCOLS OF FOOD: SYSTEMS OF SHARED VALUES

Whether he is dealing with the individual or the wider groupings, the satirist depends on one crucial factor: his audience recognises the differences in people's eating habits, and understands the meaning of those differences.

The satirist's basis for ridicule is a set of values shared with his audience (ancient and modern). In the case of Roman verse satire these values inform the Romans' perceptions of themselves and their judgements (in this case negative) of others. Therefore the satirist draws on recognisable rules of behaviour that have accumulated around eating as a physiological and social function, and warps them to evoke a response of disgust, ridicule, and moral outrage. The rules referred to here are elements of a complex set of protocols surrounding the eating, preparation, and cooking of food and associated activities, such as dining.

It is crucial in appreciating the meaning and ramifications of a 'food satire' that the reader

28 Juv. 5.
recognises the value-systems and patterns of ideas within which food functions in Roman verse satire. These patterns provide, both individually and in conjunction, a basis for the satirical treatment of food and eating. In them are contained the 'norms' from which representations of the abnormal can be drawn.

1.4.1 The protocols of body and soul: a paradox of the necessary and the inferior

There are, then, rules of necessity which have a powerful influence over the role of food as a moral issue. Broadly speaking Horace's, Persius', and Juvenal's satirists all subscribe to a similar set of basic values concerning food, in which the basic nutritional demands of human survival define a sense of proportion.

In practical terms, this means that food has a fundamental role in the maintenance of health, yet is not worthy of the excessive attentions of the glutton or the gourmand. So it fulfils a need, and helps towards proper functioning of the spirit and intellect. When circumstances allow, the dual objective of 'a healthy mind in a healthy body' can be achieved, through adopting a regimen. The satirist writes for an audience whose basic needs, as far as nutrition is concerned, are satisfied. Despite, in one notable case, the pose of the poet being

29 Juv. 10.356.
30 Cf. Infra, 4.3.2.
forced to write by hunger, it is unlikely that any of the Roman verse satirists faced starvation; yet their attitudes to food, together with those of many modern and ancient sources, reflect the ethics of subsistence (the amount of food needed by an individual to last from day to day).

The satirists' denunciations of the wicked are constructed on the basis that individuals are able to make choices about what they eat, according to a less utilitarian system of values. As Barthes (72) has suggested:

'It [food] has a twofold value, being nutrition as well as protocol, and its value as protocol becomes increasingly more important as the basic needs are satisfied.'

However, the 'rational' satirist will always be mindful of food as necessity, because he knows that an understanding of what is necessary will engender a proper sense of proportion.

Therefore Ofellus, Horace's wise countryman, berates the gourmand for his failed sense of proportion:

laudas, insane, trilibrem

mullum...

(2.2.33-4)

32 The satirist often presents himself as the voice of reason, although his satire may indicate otherwise. Cf. Anderson, 390-2: Juvenal's use of anger.
and for his weakness for appearances. Juvenal makes a similar plea for introspection. 'Know thyself', he says (11.27); 'noscenda est mensura' (11.35). Having established the value of rationality, the satirists can then mock individuals who are convinced that they are behaving rationally and reasonably. 33

The concept of sufficiency represents a moral touchstone in food ethics, which is reflected in the satires. Saving up enough for the future is a common theme in fables, including those translated into satire. For example, Babrius (106) tells the story of the lion host who gave all his food to guests; another of his fables (140) is about the cicada who sang instead of storing. Horace, in S. 1.1.32-8, retells the fable of the ant who worked hard to store up enough for winter. The satirists have a recurring interest in the preservation of food, in the flitch of ham hanging over the fire or the fruit hanging from the rafters. Horace describes how the ancestors were supposed to have kept boar until it was high, just in case guests arrived. Horace's Ofellus buffers himself not against famine, but, emotionally, against a time when his land may be lost to him (S. 2.2.133-6).

For the purpose of creating a powerful image, the necessities can be described in moral shorthand, tailored to fit the particular culture. These 'necessities' are unlikely to be absolute. 34 Nor, indeed, is the concept of

33 Eg. Hor. S. 2.4 and 2.8 (passim) Catius' and Nasidienus' gastronomic self-belief; Juv. 5.2, the wilful misguidedness of Trebius.
34 Douglas, 17: 'It is unlikely that a physiological and material concept [subsistence] which is implicitly static (Footnote continued)
'enough' as straightforward as it might seem. For example, necessary food to Epicurus is bread and water, a formula varied in Horace as bread and salt. Bion, a predecessor of the satirists in the didactic tradition, said that man could survive as long as there were roads full of herbs and springs full of water. Plutarch's idea of the essentials comprises barley meal, cheese, a loaf, and olives. Epicurus, Horace, and Bion have mere survival in mind, whereas Plutarch is concerned with the easily and locally available. These formulae for survival may or may not have had a basis in practice or reality. More than this, however, they can be symbols of an antithesis to what (in Plutarch's words) is 'difficult, rare, hard to procure and useless'.

Food played a vital role in the 'mos maiorum', that value-system according to which the frugal and expedient habits of Rome's past helped explain the outstanding social, political, and martial achievements of her citizens. It was a symbol of the agricultural productivity of Italy, and eulogised what was considered to be the rigorous physical culture of the ancient ancestors:

(continued)

---

Cf. Balagura, 6: there may be limits to ingestion, but not necessarily to the search for food, i.e. there can be a conflict between the environmental cue (food is available) and the satiation cue (you have had enough). Epic. Men. 131 (Bailey, 88); cf. Sen. Ep. 18.10; 25.4. S. 2.2.17-18. Cf. Hense p. 7. (Teles on self-sufficiency). Plut. Love of Wealth, 523f. In Seneca's case sparked off by thoughts of the excesses of the Saturnalia (Ep. 18.1). Cf. Sall. Cat. 9.1.2.
For clarity and impact, therefore, the satirists invoke the uncomplicated and recognisable standards of the time. They continually apply these values in their assessment of the moral quality of contemporary Rome's eating habits as a reaction to a perceived pattern of moral decline; in the case of Rome in particular, to the increased availability of exotic foodstuffs and the financial implications which that carried. Rome experienced a widening of the range of foods available. This is what lies behind Ennius' Hedyphagetica, for example, and is also evident in Juvenal's eleventh satire (90-167). The satirist mentions goods from across the Empire; Mauretania, the River Indus, Arabia, Gaetulia, Spain, Scythia, Africa, Phrygia, and Lycia, among others.

By contrast, deeply embedded in the Roman moral tradition was a feeling that self-sufficiency was right and proper. Partly for this reason, the first importation of foreign goods was marked out as the time when moral degeneration began; a phenomenon to which Livy assigned a date (187 BC), when the army serving in Asia returned. Not only was exotic food one of the many new

---

43 Cf. Liv. 39.6.3-9; Sall. Cat. 13.3, return of Sulla's army, softened by contact with Asia.
commodities available, but our sources voice the theory that the specialisation of culinary art through the foreign professional cook played a significant part in the degenerative process. 44

These changes are expressed in satire in a number of ways: in terms of a broadening of gastronomic criteria (including changing expectations of quality from improved imports, and increased recognition and knowledge of gastronomic issues in general), and in terms of the sheer variety of raw materials and finished products available. All of these are criticised for using up (surplus) wealth and involving the professionalisation of the food 'business'. Therefore a sense of change is evident in the satires of Horace, for example, where the gastronome is seen trying to get a toe-hold on the ladder to advancement. This is transformed, in Juvenal's satires, into the sense of an altered status quo, whereby the astute use of food can successfully keep a patron at the top of the heap.

The various roles of eating, as a mundane, sensual activity or a necessity for human survival, create tensions concerning its place in a developed society such as Rome. Food is crucial to survival, yet it should not over-interest the rational individual. Abundance of produce provides security and wealth for a country, but cooking, in a slave-rich society, should not be of direct interest to the cultured or wealthy. Dinner-parties provide a means to social contact and advancement, but

should be enjoyed as convivial rather than culinary occasions. These tensions between the various protocols and the fundamental role of food provide the satirists with both their hunting-ground and their weaponry.

Food preparation and provision clearly had a servile connotation. Food is also inanimate; man exerts control over food by hunting, growing, cooking and serving it. Food is mundane; eating shows people to be human, ridiculous, mortal even. Those who dealt with food were perceived as lowly. Cicero describes the least respectable trades as those which are concerned with the pleasures of the body, namely (quoting Terence) fishmongers, butchers, cooks, poulterers, and fishermen. Livy tells us that in early days the cook was regarded as the most lowly of slaves.

Therefore, from the satirist's viewpoint food has enormous potential as a subject for incongruity when juxtaposed with supposedly serious objects or ideas.

In the following lines from his Prologue:

Quis expediuit psittaco suum chaere
picamque docuit uerba nostra conari?
Magister artis ingenique largitor
uenter, negatas artifex sequi voces.

(8-11)

45 Off. 1.42.150.
46 Eun. 256.
47 39.6.6-8.
48 E.g. Dali's famous sculpture of a boiled lobster on a telephone is a visual incongruity joke based on food.
Persius outlines the human preoccupation with fulfilling nutritional and super-nutritional requirements. Here food symbolises not only our needs but all that is base in the human spirit. The humour of the comment lies in the incongruous juxtaposition of eating and poetry.

Horace juxtaposes the whole idea of gastronomy with that of philosophy. The food on Nasidienus' and Catius' menus emphasises the basic contrast between these two disciplines. Through a similar process, Juvenal's fourth satire deflates Domitian by introducing a fish into the agenda of a cabinet meeting, and by describing the event in epic style. Similarly, in modern satire, Dustin Hoffman (an actor famed for his dedication to his art) has been ridiculed for being able to play a convincing tomato or lettuce.

In Roman verse satire we see a further reflection of the stigma which could be attached to food matters. As has been pointed out above, the satirists themselves note this in the culinary etymology of their genre. Juvenal's 'farrago' is a self-deprecating term to describe his 'libellus'. Perhaps the sausage ('farcimen') connotation of Horace's 'satura' is reflected in his naming of the worthy countryman 'Ofellus'. Similarly, there is a wealth of food metaphor in the naming of farces to reflect a coarser grade of style. Knoche (12) draws attention to the Atellan farce entitled 'The Cake' ('Placenta'), and a

50 Supra 1.1; Mash of barley and spelt fed to animals, Var. R, 1.31.5; Plin. Nat. 18.142.
51 Coffey, 211 n. 25; Braund and Cloud, 78.
52 'Ofellae' being little chunks of meat or rissoles, infra, 2.1.5.
mime called 'The Bean' ('Faba'). A certain amount of contrived self-deprecation exists in this style of naming. Rather than simply offering a humble entertainment, the writer is signalling a degree of pride in his down-to-earth approach to literature and life which he could use to positive advantage. 53

1.4.2 The protocols of digestion: disgust and refinement

Leading on from the perceived humble status of food as described above, food in satire can be presented in a number of ways calculated to raise a laugh, shock, disgust, or horrify. These effects are often achieved by showing an individual or group infringing the rules of eating, digesting, cooking, preparing food, or dining. Thus the satirists describe some of the more unpleasant aspects of the physical process of eating, using lurid detail and repulsive food images to alienate the audience from the miscreant both intellectually and on a 'gut' level.

The satirist explores the possibilities of digestion as metaphor and source of concrete imagery. Hence the rapacious glutton 'gobbles up' his inheritance. 54 The speaker can exploit the fact that all of his readers will be in their own way sensitised to the physical process of

53 Hor. S. 2.1.75 (Cic. Orat. 2.6.22); Lucilius chats with Scipio while the cabbage cooks.
54 Juv. 1.138.
digestion, and that images derived from that process can be simultaneously fascinating and revolting. Thus vomiting and flatulence, among other unpleasant or 'corrupt' aspects of the nutritional cycle, have a role in creating impact in Roman verse satire, and not necessarily in relation to 'food satires'. Allusions to the digestive functions can also be used to degrade the glutton, as is shown in the pervasive image of death in the bath:

\[ \text{turgidus hic epulis atque albo uentre lauatur,} \\
\text{gutture sulpureas lente exhalante mefites.} \\
\text{sed tremor inter uina subit calidumque trientem} \\
\text{excitit e manibus, dentes crepue retecti,} \\
\text{uncta cadunt laxis tunc pulmentaria labris...} \]

(Pers. 3.98-102)

The satirists take pleasure in bringing together the process of eating with things which are not meant to be eaten. There are certain items that it is unnatural for humans to eat, such as other human beings. Cannibals crop up in Roman verse satire to symbolise the antithesis of the natural, right or proper. But it is not enough just to introduce the idea of the cannibal; there is even more potential for alienation and revulsion by exploring what cannibalism really could really involve in physiological and culinary terms. Therefore in his fifth satire, Persius adopts the common poetic technique of asking for 100

---

55 Eq. Hor. S. 1.8.46-7.  
56 Cf. Hudson, 56.
mouths. The reader's attention is then directed towards the throat and tongue, as he witnesses the painful process of swallowing indigestible poetry:

quantas robusti carminis offas ingeris, ut par sit centeno niti?

(5.5-6)

The blurring of distinctions between the physical and intellectual world in the lines that follow, is calculated to bring the reader's reaction to a peak. With his mind on swallowing he or she is confronted with a picture of child-sized hands and feet steaming on the plate; that is an all-too-recognisable meal.57 A few lines later come the poet's own exploding cheeks, not directly connected with cannibalism but gaining in impact from the preceding images. Similarly, Juvenal's Egyptian cannibals precede the ghastly act with a fight that turns faces into bloody pulp, and drag their fingers through the sand to get the last drips of gore (15.90-2).

The further a culture moves away from the demands of necessity in defining its habits, the greater the importance it attaches to questions of etiquette and manners, or so the orthodoxy goes.58 Lévi-Strauss (506-8) shows how 'food taboos, good-manners and utensils are used as mediators', between our 'pure' selves and the 'impure'

57 Pers 5.17-18. For a modern example compare the revolting climax to The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover (Greenaway, 1988) where a horribly recognisable human body is served up, to be eaten with a knife and fork.
58 Cf. Barthes, supra, 1.4.1; D'Arms 1990, 329.
outside world. These so-called niceties of table behaviour therefore help to mask the physiological reality of eating, which ties the human race to the rest of the animal world. Table manners were themselves part of the value system of the civilised Roman diner. The sudden and calculated confrontation with the mechanics of digestion surprises the polite reader of satire:

saepe horridior glandem ructante marito...

(Juv. 6.10)

Here Juvenal's satirist uses this effect to describe the belching men of the age of Saturn, implying a contrast in their manners with those of his readers' refined world. Lack of manners is not in itself a major crime. However, the accusation acquires ironic power when coupled with a much more serious act. Hence cannibals cannot wait to cook their prey; they eat it raw (Juv. 15.92).

In Roman verse satire we also see attacks on the hyper-refined, who see the protocol of good manners as an end in itself. Whole satires are devoted to such individuals, constructed around their devotion to doing the right thing, down to details of cleanliness and presentation. Nasidienus for example, (Hor. S. 2.8.67-70), is ribbed mercilessly when he falls for Balatro's sarcastic mock-sympathy over the care a scrupulous host devotes to pleasing his guests.\(^{59}\) The hyper-refined host

\(^{59}\text{Cf. Hor. S. 2.4, Catius frets over bowls and covers; Juv 11, hosts scour the world for fine tables, cups, and trappings.}\)
defines himself in terms of correctness and elegance, those qualities which he pursues as his 'summum bonum'. In fact he has moved so far in the opposite direction that he fails to see the real meaning of dining.

1.4.3 The protocols of hospitality: obligation and beneficence

Formalised encouragement and support up the social ladder formed a key element in the social and political organisation of the Roman world. These phenomena would, in theory, bring benefits to all parties involved, and there developed around it a set of values involving obligation and beneficence. Food was valuable social currency in this exchange, and its role in social relationships raised moral issues that demanded exploration by the satirists.

At its most fundamental, this meant that those with the means to feed themselves could give food to others in return for support. Lucilius and Persius express some interest in the distribution question in time of hardship:

\[ \text{deficit alma Ceres, nec plebes pane potitur.} \]

(Lucil. 200)

Similarly in time of celebration:
Opinions on large-scale issues such as food distribution or alternative uses of money⁶⁰ are rare, however. Juvenal's satirist reviews the set-up from the position of the city-dweller in the dole queue, scrabbling for his allowance alongside the hangers-on of the wealthy (3.250-6). He, alone among the satirists, shows any kind of interest in the daily urban food-supply.

In general, the satirists prefer to focus on the workings and failings of the system, where the individuals involved exercise their power-relations face-to-face, at dinner. The satirists' basic premise is that hosts and guests show their moral character in the way they behave, and are treated, at dinner. Furthermore, because the meal has a very complex significance in the realities of social life Roman-style, those characterisations express a wide cross-section of social and moral issues.

The 'cena' is used to illustrate the social mechanism in action. The function of the dinner-party of satire was far removed from any role that it might have had in the provision of sustenance for those worse off. However, the satirist draws frequently on an idealisation of that kind

⁶⁰E.g. Hor. S. 2.2.103-4, Ofellus suggests that the temples of the gods would be more worthy beneficiaries of wealth than the gourmand's stomach.
of relationship to draw a comparison with a perceived decline in moral values. The satirist humorously illustrates the dysfunction between the proper 'cena' (an occasion for sustenance and friendship) and the contemporary gastronomic extravaganza. This he achieves through ironic use of terms such as 'amicitia' and pointed comparison with idealised meals or drinking-parties, 'conuiuia' and 'symposia'.

The meaning of the 'cena' in satire depends on the premise that a host wields power over his guests. In a real sense they are trapped at his table, having to listen to his conversation, eat what they are served, and, most important of all, consume the image of himself that he wishes to present. They do it because they hope to receive something in the long term. The guests described by the satirist are offered the choice of not going, of having to take responsibility for themselves. Hosts like Nasidienus, Virro and Nasidienus' Menippean counterpart Trimalchio take advantage of their position. The dining-room is a miniature kingdom where the host makes the rules and exercises authority over his subjects. He uses the opportunity of the meal to lay claim to or reinforce his social superiority, and uses the actual food he serves to communicate his wealth, elegance and esoteric knowledge. The irony for the satirist is that in the ideology the

61 Infra, 5.5.1-3; 6.3.1.
62 Bek, 83-5: describes the way in which the social dynamics of eating are expressed architecturally, in the decoration of dining rooms and in the planning of seating arrangements. These are all used to enhance the relative status of a host and his guest. Cf. D'Arms 1990, 314: the enhancement of status by the poet.
guests are fondly imagined to be of equal status. Clearly, in the Roman world, exotic or 'good' food was one of the most pervasive, accessible and relevant reflectors of wealth, and the dinner-party was the most effective way of not only showing off that wealth, but spreading it among those who might be of future use to oneself. This was a major factor behind the sumptuary legislation relating to food that was enacted intermittently during the late Republic and early Empire, some of which can be interpreted as being aimed at curtailing attempts by the wealthy to exert influence.

In many ways food is a vehicle for discussing issues, such as where power should and actually does lie. Thus, in our satirical sources, we see a Nasidienus (Hor. S. 2.8) or a Catius (Hor. S. 2.4) threatening the likes of Maecenas. Access to luxury foods and culinary knowledge is their means of social advancement. The potential rewards could be enormous; however, they can be nipped in the bud by the satirist's ridicule.

---

63 D'Arms 1984, 333: the dichotomy of real and idealised status. Dining represents an opportunity to break down the social restrictions within a ritualised framework. Infra, 5.2.1.
64 Cf. again the Japanese fashion for eating gold, which compensates for the lack of opportunity to show off wealth in the home due to crowded and expensive living conditions (Tan, 85).
65 E.g. Lex Fannia, 161 BC (Rotondi, 287-8); Lex Didia, 143 BC (ibid., 295); Lex Aemilia, 115 BC (ibid., 320). Laws curtailing consumption of luxuries covered a number of commodities, including multi-coloured garments and gold, for example. E.g. Lex Oppia, 215 BC (Rotondi, 254).
66 E.g. Lex Antia, 71 BC, aimed at restricting dining-out among magistrates and magistrates elect (Rotondi, 367-8).
1.5 THE FOOD SATIRES: LUCILIUS, HORACE, PERSIUS AND JUVENAL.

Food has a high profile in Roman verse satire. Compared with other subjects, it consistently grabs a disproportionately large share of the satirist's attention. Food is conspicuous among the few recurrent themes that can be detected in Lucilius' satire. He mentions over 40 types of meat, poultry, fish, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, grains, and wines in fragments that cover a variety of subjects, including the disparagement of frugal fare (135), everyday food (945), and luxurious banquets.\textsuperscript{67} While the selection criteria of commentators and grammarians have undoubtedly prejudiced the picture we have of Lucilius' work, if we look back at him as they did from a vantage point illuminated by later satirists we can note with interest the attention he paid to food.

Four of the eight satires in Horace's second book of 'sermones' have food as their major source of exemplary material. The second, fourth, and eighth satires are concerned exclusively with exposing the pretensions and moral dangers of gluttony and gastronomy, by contrasting them explicitly and implicitly with simple eating habits.\textsuperscript{68} Similarly, Juvenal explores the notion of the luxury food item (the turbot), the setting of the

\textsuperscript{67}Lines 49; 132; 568-72, 1174-67, 1180? (Book 20, Parus' dinner party); 1060-77.
\textsuperscript{68}Similar issues are discussed in the sixth satire. There are also some comparisons to be made with Persius' sixth satire.
dinner-party and the contrast between urban and rural dietary lifestyles (fourth, fifth and eleventh satires respectively). Therefore, even within this restricted group of themes, certain motifs crop up regularly.

Significantly, there are many aspects of Roman diet not featured in Roman verse satire: the meals of women and children, family meals (outside the idealisation of the past), food eaten during the daytime, regional variations, and the food enjoyed by the clienteles of the 'popinae' of Italy. These are not included, because the satirists wished to transmit messages about food as it related to the activities of the socially influential.

The following chapters deal with the major themes and settings in the treatment of food by the Roman verse satirists: town food versus country food, gastronomy versus philosophy, gastronomy versus conviviality, gluttony versus necessity, and barbarity versus civilisation. The analysis of these themes is based upon certain key satires, in which food provides the main subject matter. Throughout Roman verse satire, however, there are numerous references to food, and images derived from the alimentary or culinary processes. These will also be discussed where appropriate.

Within these broad categories of food satire, it is possible to see at work the numerous protocols attached to food and related issues. These protocols provide the moral codes implicit in the position assumed by the satirists, and offer a range of metaphors and images to support that position and create its obverse. Often it is possible to
see a number of systems of values operating simultaneously. This can create paradoxes and incongruities, through which emerge the polarised values of the satirical process.

Although a number of authorities have dealt with the food satires of a particular author,⁶⁹ addressed the role of the 'cena' in Roman verse satire in general,⁷⁰ or introduced analyses of individual food satires with a general treatment of the subject,⁷¹ there has been no comprehensive study of the many forms that food took in the genre.⁷²

The absence of such a discussion is most notable in Rudd's *Themes in Roman Satire* (1986). As has already been noted, food was a common and important theme. This thesis will show that a thematic treatment of the role of food in Roman verse satire can bring to the fore those aspects of the subject which, for whatever reasons, had a universal resonance with the satirists, and which are not perhaps evident in the study of Roman verse satire in general, or in the study of the works (even the 'food satires') of an individual satirist.

---

⁶⁹Eg. Rudd 1966, 202-23, on Horace. Even then this chapter entitled 'Food and drink' deals only with *Satires* 2.4 and 2.8; cf. Classen.
⁷⁰Most notably Shero.
⁷¹Eg. Adamietz and Morford.
2.1 THE 'RUSTIC' SATIRES.

There is one motif related to food which occurs more frequently than any other in Roman verse satire; namely the contrast of country meals and attitudes to food with those of the city. On the whole the poems that deal at length with these issues contain a sufficient degree of similarity to be grouped together for convenience under the name 'rustic' satires. Such a group comprises Horace's Satires 2.2 and 2.6, Persius' Satire 6 and Juvenal's eleventh satire.

This type can be recognised by a set of features. It commonly contains a description of a 'country-style' meal eaten by the satirist or an acquaintance, which is used to illustrate in microcosm the general moral rectitude of the rural life. These rural dinners are contrasted with, and used as a yardstick by which to judge, urban degeneracy as embodied in 'citified' eating habits.

Thus town food and country food are used to represent morally opposing ways of life. Furthermore, while the virtuous country meal encapsulates the essence of proper behaviour, the discussion and vivid description of city habits provides an object lesson in types of behaviour to avoid. Therefore, although advocating rural values, it
would be fair to say that Horace's and Juvenal's speakers in particular relish the portrayal of the decadent city as the perfect antithesis to the country. In order to achieve the maximum impact in the contrast, they develop their own frameworks of polarised values and images, which enhance differences perceived (for the purposes of the satire) to exist in rural and urban ways of life. In this way they set the country off against the town in realistic and symbolic terms, illustrating in gastronomic symbols the immorality and morality of urban and rural values respectively.

The 'rustic' satire can thus be broken down into certain standard elements - the description of a country meal and the general elaboration of urban gastronomic attitudes - in a different way, perhaps, from any other type of verse satire. The similarities among these satires are not coincidental. Key themes and details are manipulated to achieve one important satiric purpose: while appearing to follow the moral orthodoxy that elevates country life at the expense of the city, they also contribute a humorous analysis of a standardised morality.

Therefore the satirist relies on the familiarity of his theme in at least two ways: first, to establish expectations based on what town and country food were thought to be like, and how this could be reflected in contrasting ways of life; and secondly, to show paths of divergence from those norms and from their depiction in previous Roman verse satire. In other words each of the satirists develops a basic urban/rural contrast. However this is done to achieve different aims.
The poets attach varying amounts of space and significance to the role of food itself, and the balance between town and country food varies within the satires. They also adopt quite different tones. While Horace's satirist may concentrate on philosophical aspects of the subject to gain the rational sympathy of his audience, Juvenal's speaker uses exaggeration, literary allusion, and imagery to increase the impact of the town/country contrast.

This combination of shared features and individual adaptation means that the 'rustic' satires can provide a case study for the examination of the satiric method, both in general and as practised individually by the satirists. This satirical method raises questions about i) how the satirists mould the reality of country life into an idyll, ii) how the treatment of town food and country food can be used as an indicator of wider value systems, and iii) in what respect the moral and gastronomic information carried in these satires informs our understanding of those satires that deal with the urban 'cena', in one form or another.¹

This being the case, the reader has to be wary of trying to seek realistic vision or a transparent intention in the resulting picture of town and country life. Rather, there is value in interpreting the way in which the constraints or suggestions of the pre-existing material have prejudiced the satirist's treatment of his subject.

¹Cf. Hor. S. 2.4, 2.6, 2.8; Juv. 5, 11; infra, chs. 3, 4, 5, 6.
2.1.1 The elements of an idyll

It was (and still is) regarded as a 'truth' that city and country differ(ed) in terms of their moral and material quality of life. The central argument of the 'rustic' satires is that town life is morally, physically and to some extent sensually inferior to what the country has to offer. To argue this case the satirists devise polarised depictions that look beyond the realities of city and country life, which in fact overlap in the two, and the genuine differences that might actually exist.

By the time of the Roman verse satirists the town/country antithesis had acquired a range of accompanying symbols and images, in order to elaborate and extend those differences to suit the purposes of a condemnation of contemporary morality. In the Roman popular conception the country could stand for a range of personal and general characteristics - piety, friendship, bravery, patriotism, tradition, family values, frugality and self-sufficiency - which could be contrasted with the modern urbanised world, contaminated with foreign luxuries. The association of goodness and innocence with the toils of the distant past was a notion familiar to the Roman audience of the late Republic (when Horace was writing).3

2Jashemski, 91: kitchen gardens within the walls of Pompeii contributing to the household economy, for example at 'House of the Silver Wedding'; ibid. 241-2: 'House of the Ship of Europa', an extensive market garden orchard of filberts, figs, grapes, almonds (cherries, plums or peaches?) and broad beans. Cf. Plin. Nat. 18.239-40.

3Cic. Sen. 16.55, shows a double projection backwards. The (Footnote continued)
The country offered to an urban centred society a combined opportunity for realistic and symbolic escape, both from the pressures and sordidness of city life, and from life in the present, as they were and as they were perceived to be. Therefore in Latin literature it was possible to depict a rural place and/or time when things were not only better than, but could be completely opposed to the writer's and reader's current urban environment. Thus fantasy had a major role to play in the depiction of the rural world both ancient and contemporary.

The key areas of contrast lay particularly in areas concerning material versus spiritual ambitions. In theory, the town/country antithesis could be used as a framework for a discussion of any area of behaviour - property, dress, pastimes or sexual habits, for example - as long as that activity was common to both ways of life, and had easily differentiated characteristics. However, although there might be a choice of subjects to contrast, food is the theme to which the satirists return. More than this, the country life is hardly ever dealt with at any length by the satirists without reference to its dietary habits.

2.1.2 The role of food in the idyll

---

(continued)

elder Cato contemplates the life of Manius Curius when he retired to farming after military success. Ibid. 56, the role of the products of agriculture in the welfare of the people and the worship of the Gods.
The special link between food and rural matters as a motif in literature is bound up with the prime role of the country as producer of food, and indeed that of the city as consumer. There was a feeling that the country could survive without the town, but not vice versa. This created a power relationship that went against the grain of the political, cultural and social superiority normally associated with 'the city', which was always Rome. This is reflected in the commonly held beliefs that food production was not only the function of the farmer but was a powerful influence in the development of his moral excellence, and that Rome's past had been agricultural.

If we consider that by agriculture the Roman writer means the production of food, then the introduction to Cato's *De Agri Cultura* provides a moral blueprint for the satirist:

> et (maiores nostri) uirum bonum quom laudabant, ita laudabant, bonum agricolam bonumque colonum. amplissime laudari existimabatur qui ita laudabatur.

(1.2)

Posidonius corroborates the image with a description of rugged and frugal ancient Romans, wondrously attentive to their religious duties and deriving all their fine qualities from the pursuit of agriculture.

---

4 Lucr. 6.811-13, earth literally gives forth something skin to milk. Ibid. 816, 'terra cibum pueris'.
5 Verg. G. 2.513-4, agriculture as the antithesis of warfare.
6 Ath. Deip. 6.274a; Cf. Col. 1 Pref. 13-8, where Romulus, Cincinnatus, Fabricius and Dentatus practice defence and cultivation. Contrasted with young men in modern cities, a sort of living dead (ibid. 16-7).
The combination of country, agriculture, and food, has a key role in the 'rustic' satires. Occasionally it is illustrated with images of Rome's rural past. So, while Horace's contrast of town and country is almost entirely contemporary, the reader feels the presence of the past when s/he is told that hosts in olden days would have waited for their boar to go off rather than eat it before guests arrived, and when (at a later date) Juvenal's satirist compares the celebratory meal offered to Persicus with the celebrations and the mundane meals of the agricultural past.

2.1.3 Idyll versus reality: the idyll undone?

The Roman relationship with the countryside was in fact a difficult and paradoxical one. At the same time as cities with their seething masses, places of entertainment, overcrowding and disease could be festering patches of human depravity, they, or more to the point Rome itself, acted as the centre of public affairs, commerce and culture. Therefore the development of urban

---

7 S. 2.2.89-92; infra, 2.2.2.
8 Ov. Fast. 1.207, the Praetor puts aside his plough to judge the people); ibid. 3.779-81, Consuls and Senators soil in the fields; Met. 1.135-6; infra, 2.3.3.
10 Blanket criticism was not just aimed at cities, cf. Baiae and Canopus, Sen. Ep. 51.1-4; Asia (Cic. Quint. 11.8).
11 Ov. Ars 1.59-170. He reverses the normal practice, (Footnote continued)
life could be viewed as one of the supreme achievements of civilisation, and the thrill of the city was worth hankering after. 12

On the other hand, although the countryside was a source of family land wealth, ancestral virtues, manpower and the means of survival to the urban population, life there was for the majority rigorous and austere while even for villa owners it was lacking in the cultural and material advantages of the city. Columella speaks of a fashion for perceiving farming as a 'sordidum opus'. 13

Greek sources and Roman writers heavily influenced by the Greeks, such as Plautus, who was writing for a predominantly urban audience, have no problem in portraying rustics as boorish, unsophisticated and distinguishable from sophisticated town dwellers by their smell, 14 their clothes and their manners. Similarly Ovid places a 'rusticus' way of walking at the opposite end of a scale to an over-affected, 'mollis'. 15 If Rome was synonymous with the city, small-town life could also come in for anti-rustic criticism, for its false sense of urbanity. Naevius and Plautus both crack anti-Praenestine jokes, saying that good food is wasted on the town's inhabitants 16 and they cannot pronounce their words

11(continued)

bringing the country into the town when he describes the women at the games as like ants or bees (ibid. 193-8) or like oxen or horses who will eventually give into the plough or the rein (ibid. 471-4).

12 Mart. 5.20; 12. Pref. Likewise Baiae had its share of 'good press': Hor. Epod. 1.1.83; Stat. *Silv.* 2.5.96-8, 4.7.18-9; Plin. *Ep.* 9.7.2; Mart. 4.25.1.

13 Pref. 20. He sees this as shameful at a time when Rome is negotiating with foreigners to supply her with grain.


15 *Ars* 3.305-6.
properly.\textsuperscript{17}

The pro-urban position is further reflected in ideas of 'urbanitas' and 'rusticitas'. The former, perhaps coined by Cicero (Ramage, 52) embodied the polish and refinement identifiable to the city. Urbanity implies a standard of behaviour, referring to a person's conduct or speech. To be 'rusticus' however does not imply that one is 'inurbanus'. Although these two terms complement each other as pejoratives, implying lack of manners and lack of sophistication respectively,\textsuperscript{18} Cicero defines 'rusticus' as lying at the opposite end of a scale to 'effeminatum aut molle'.\textsuperscript{19} He therefore uses the term as describing an extreme state.

However, having either 'rusticitas' or 'urbanitas' does not necessarily indicate where you come from. Horace, writing for an audience with an urban value system, shows that 'urbanitas' is a quality that people carry around with them wherever they are,\textsuperscript{20} in the same way that it is possible to have a 'town' house in the country.

2.1.4 A reconciliation

\textsuperscript{16}Macr. S. 3.18.6.
\textsuperscript{17}Plaut. Truc. 689-91.
\textsuperscript{18}Cic. Brut. 180, indicating Quintus Sertorius as among the 'indocti et inurbani aut rustici' orators.
\textsuperscript{20}Off. 1.29.
\textsuperscript{S. 1.3.29-34.}
In the late Republic, praise for country life and values was already well established as a topic for Roman writers. Horace's audience was probably well versed in the central ideas and images at a fairly sophisticated level, if they knew their Cato, Varro, Cicero and Virgil, for example. They might well have recognised the contrast of town and country life as a rhetorical topic, and therefore realised that the idyll of country life could be something quite separate from the reality.

Writers like Virgil, Tibullus²¹ and Horace worked on the idea that although there was no such thing as a uniform experience of the country, there was a literary interpretation of rural life that would strike a chord with the literary audience. The result was a fusion of elements of the austere heritage, with the image of a fertile modern Italy, self-sufficient in produce and manpower and thus full of potential to extend her influence beyond the homeland. So while agriculture was a tough regime it was the seed-bed of civilisation. Virgil's Georgics,²² for example, emphasise the hard but rewarding life of the farmer that glorifies the Gods and the homeland to the benefit of the state rather than the individual. He contrasts rural morality with the depravity of the city, 2.495-512. The subject was a sensitive one, given the recent disruption to the Italian countryside caused by the Civil Wars and the subsequent resettlement of Veterans.²³

²¹Eleg. 2.1, probably written in the 20s BC.
²²Completed 29 BC, Suet. Verg. 25, 27.
²³Horace's family had their family estates at Venusia confiscated after Philippi, Ep. 2.49-52.
This packaging of the countryside would appeal particularly to the group of Romans who could enjoy the country and the town on their own terms. They were the fortunate individuals who had the status that went with Rome based careers, backed up by wealth invested in land. Their status and role in society, like their 'urbanitas', went with them, rather than being attached to a specific urban or rural setting. The 'rustic' satires would resonate with just such a readership, and were written by individuals who probably enjoyed the best of both worlds. All the writers of verse satire came to Rome from Italian country towns. Of the writers of satire Lucilius and Persius in particular are recorded as men of property. Persius writes to Bassus in his sixth satire from his villa at Luna on the Ligurian coast (6.6-9). Horace lovingly evokes his Sabine 'castle in the hills' (2.6. 16-7), a gift from Maecenas. While Juvenal in a rare piece of 'autobiography', parodying Horace Satire 2.6, talks of a farm at Tibur (11.65).

From the early second century BC onwards it became increasingly important to have a country retreat, but at the same time be able to carry the elegance and activity of the town into the country. Literature from this period

24 Lucilius from Suessa Arunca, on the border between Latium and Campania, (Juv. 120; Schol. a.l.); Horace from Venusia between Apulia and Lucania S. 2.1.34-9; Suet. Vit. Horat. 1. Persius from Volaterrae in Etruria (Vit. Pers. 6-7). Juvenal probably born in Aquinum (3, 319; CIL 10.5382).
25 Lucilius had family estates at Tarentum in Sicily, Cichorius, 22-9; Marx Prol, XX 105, 254, 667.
26 Sen. Ep. 86.1-14 gives an early example of a Roman country retreat. He describes the comparative simplicity of Scipio Africanus' villa at Liternum.
onwards reflects a clear interest in the subject of the villas and so-called 'villae rusticae' of the wealthy. But the rural fantasy was not for the rich alone; it trickled down through urban society; hence the views of the countryside depicted in the wall-paintings of more moderate houses. According to Pliny, the poor of Rome used to have window boxes to remind them of the country, before fear of burglary forced them to install shutters instead.

2.1.5 A satirical solution: the idyll undone

Although toil and frugality are inherent to the picture of country life, the satirists set out to make country life attractive. They achieve this by developing the city/country antithesis to suit the tastes of an audience that stood to benefit from the rewards of city life, prestige, power and wealth, but which was willing to take part in the traditional fantasy according to which, in the abstract, country life is morally and spiritually satisfying.

The satirists therefore reduce country life, in the form of the country meal, to a recognisable stereotype. They use a formula which is coherent in its antithetical function and superficially persuasive to an audience whose

27 The small house on the Via Stabiana, Pompeii, belonging to the Fausti, I.ii.10. Garden wall paintings showed fountains and fruit-laden trees, and even 'grazing deer and a springing leopard' (Jashemski, 111).
aspirations are urban. The satirists do not set out to recreate faithfully the life of everyone who lives in the country. They make no concession to regional or local climatic or social differences which would damage the homogeneity of the image they are trying to project. Instead, the country meals described in satire are constructed as appropriate vehicles for the morality espoused by the satirists, carving out the moderate path between the extremes of profligacy and austerity, gluttony and frugality, social promiscuity and reclusiveness.

As has already been shown, those with the means to do so attempted to enjoy the best of both worlds. As a reflection of this our literary sources, in eulogising the country, had a tendency to ignore the disadvantages of rural life. This was a tradition followed by the satirist, for whom being dogmatic is a positive virtue. Since the countryside is unable to compete on the city’s terms, he bases his recommendations on man’s spiritual rather than material needs. Therefore, if the city-dweller feels he would miss the social life at Rome, the satirist describes a spiritually fulfilling picture of rural social relationships. He can focus on the opportunities for communal relaxation, where dinner guests unwind with a drinking game, or where the guests are unconstrained by laws (drinking laws). Or he can simply tell his guest to cast off his business, money, wife, house and slave.

29Ov. Fast. 4. 615-16 describes Carseoli as cold and not suited to olives. It is, however, good for corn. Cf. Garnsey, 9.
31Hor. S. 2.2.123.
31Hor. S. 2.6.69-70; Plin. Nat. 28.140 describes drinking matches with prizes to promote drunkeness.
worries, recommending instead freedom from the constraints of the toga and from the guilt of doing as you please (11.201-6). Through their satire, they reinvent for the jaded city person the joy of the meal as an occasion.

The satirists have to deal with a complex situation. Their response is subtle and has resonances for the modern audience as much as the ancient. Withdrawal to the countryside is a powerful, optimistic image, and nature is still being ransacked for symbols. The opposition of the values of nature and culture is a common in modern advertising which, when it wishes, confirms the natural order. Take for example the following extract from a 'Birds Eye' pea television commercial of the late 1970s,

'It seems as if winter will last for ever. Day after day the land lies sleeping - but time flies, even in the country, and soon these little peas - perfect little peas, small and sweet. (Come home to Birds Eye country. Birds Eye country.) For the smallest, sweetest peas in all the land.'

It is not enough to say that that Birds Eye peas are simply good according to the standards by which peas are normally judged. They are 'little', 'the smallest' and 'perfect', words that used in combination give the peas an anthropomorphic character of their own, of youth and innocence. Likewise Juvenal's 'haedulus' which is 'inscius herbae', shares the effect of the diminutive image,

32 Juv. 11.183-92. 33 11.66.
'perfect little peas'. The advertisement's picture is fortified with the hackneyed themes of the relentless passing of time and the seasons and the wonderful power of nature, thereby setting up the idea of new, green growth. This is 'Birds Eye country', a fictional land where nature works to perfection and winter does not mean cold, slush, bleak skies, broken water pipes and skeletal trees but a time for the land to sleep. However, before rural fantasy takes over, who is to say that Birds Eye peas lived up to their reputation, or that the consumer was profoundly or genuinely affected by the thought of the rustic idyll, or in fact knew anything about the reality of pea-farming in Britain? Furthermore who is the consumer? These are frozen peas for people who do not 'grow their own'. By the same token, Horace's and Juvenal's (and to a lesser extent, Persius') audience can genuinely appreciate the rustic idyll for just what it is, and the rhetorical artistry that goes with it, without wanting to become 'pea-growers', or an Ofellus for that matter.

The satirist, like the advertiser, has a product to sell, in this case a way of life defined by eating habits, when he deploys his version of the country. For that reason he projects a relatively simple image. However, the audience can also allow itself a knowing smile at the excesses of the sales pitch, as does undoubtedly the satirist or copywriter responsible. To achieve this they have to defuse any advantages that are seen to exist

---

34 Hor. S. 2.2 passim.
35 Especially in these days of postmodern, self-referential advertising.
in the city, such as the possibility of social and financial advancement, as well as cultural and less worthy pleasures, which we understand Horace, for example, to revel in. 36 This presents the satirists with a problem, which they solved with the help of idealisation and rhetoric.

For the purposes of the argument the satirists present their contemporaries with a choice: where to live, town or country? Or, more accurately, in Juvenal's case: town-style or country-style? Within the confines of the poem the two are completely different, mutually exclusive even so that the argument in favour of the country can be most powerfully put. That argument seems reasonable and attractive, which makes it doubly difficult for the modern reader to doubt that the satirist is for once being serious in his recommendations. However, the rural life in the form described by the satirists is a fantasy, a representation of the 'quiet life', but in small, controllable, therapeutic doses, which is of course a far cry from the reality of the rural experience. 37 So, while in a perfect world it would be lovely for jaded city-dwellers to throw off their togas and head for the hills, the satirist knowingly offers a solution for a day,
leaving enough signs to show that he recognises the inherent paradoxes in the relationship of town and country.

The tension between this ideal image and practicality or reality creates, in satire, a humorous sub-text. This emerges particularly where the satirists’ presence draws our attention to the question of the reality of the events and individuals described.

The reader is already alerted to the possible bogusness of any ‘autobiographical’ material through the picture that the satirist draws of himself, his world and his consciously humble genre. The satirist takes care to emphasise his own humble connections or allegiances which identify him as something of an outsider, some of which can be tied in with the country. Therefore Horace’s satirist tells us that he is ‘libertino patre natum’, Persius’ speaker is ‘semipaganus’ (Prol. 6) and Juvenal’s satirist shows an interest in, if not always a sympathy for the ‘little man’, victim of insuperable forces. Therefore, it is no surprise to hear words of wisdom issuing from the mouth of a countryman in Horace’s Satire 2.2 like the low status Cynic/Stoic preacher of diatribe whom he seems to evoke. However, Ofellus is just that, an exemplary representative of a moral tradition. His wisdom is original, we are told (3). But

38S. 1.6.6. The Scholiast has ‘half-rustic’, Harvey, 11: prefers ‘half-member of the Pagus’ i.e. outsider.
39Hor. Ep. 2.2.60, ‘Bioneis sermonibus’.
40 Eg. Trebius in Satire 5 (infra. ch 6) and Naevolus in Satire 9.
the satirist manages also to cast doubt upon the credibility of this serious countryman through his frequent allusions to highbrow philosophy, such as Platonism on the interdependence of physical and spiritual welfare:

\[ \text{quin corpus onustum} \]
\[ \text{hesternis uitiis animum quoque praegrauat una} \]
\[ \text{atque adfigit humo diuinae particulam auroe.} \]

(S. 2.2.77-9)

It is not just a case of making complex ideas more accessible, Ofellus is Horace's second example of the 'doctor ineptus'. However, unlike those other later 'inepti', Damasippus, Catius, Tiresias, the Town Mouse and Davus, in the second book of satires (3, 4, 5, 6 and 7), Ofellus does not pursue a personal philosophy to such obviously ridiculous, logical extremes. This does not mean, however, that Ofellus is an accurate representation of a tenant farmer. Rather, through him is channelled a voice of moderation, preaching at the audience and unrealistically au fait with gastronomic principles. It is more than a coincidence that his name, Ofellus, suggests 'ofella', a bite-sized rissole or morsel of meat; humble, down to earth and available on every street corner. Like his near-namesake Ofellus provides ready-to-eat, easily-digestible nutrition. His fault is exposed in

\[ \text{Cf. Plat. Rep. 7. 559b.} \]
\[ \text{Anderson, 46: 'The teacher who fails to grasp the implications of his own precepts and thus ends as a figure of fun'. Trebatius performs this role in S. 2.1.} \]
the inconsistency of the sophistication his wisdom, his source material and his humble character.

The extreme frugality of Ofellus' life is put into context in Horace's *Epistle* 1.4, in which we see the writer's self-portrait as an Epicurean swine, indulging in the kind of Epicureanism he rejects through the Ofellus satire:

\[
\text{inter sem curamque, timores inter et iras, omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum.}
\text{grata superueniet quae non sperabitur hora. me pinguem et nitidum bene curata cute uises cum ridere uoles Epicure de grege porcum.}
\]

(12-6)

While the moral frame of reference is the frugality of an Ofellus, we see that human nature makes living up to the ideal difficult. Nor, at the same time, is the writer advocating a life of dissipation.

Therefore, since the satirist, presenting himself as the voice of reason, cannot admit the possibility of his own inconsistency, the 'doctor ineptus' is a convenient vehicle for dealing with the problems that come with adopting an extreme stance. So Ofellus does not so much represent a figure of fun as he does the mildly amusing, self-deprecating satirist. By the same token, both the mice in Horace's *Satire* 2.6 bear a witty correspondence to

\[\text{Cato Agr. 162.1; Col. 12.55.4; Mart. 10.48.15 'quae non egeant ferro structoris ofellae' (also a simple dinner served up to a friend); Juv. 11.144.}\]
the satirist's picture of himself in the same poem,\(^{45}\) which is likewise undermined by philosophical and epic parody.\(^{46}\) That is to say, although the picture of the country mouse is sympathetic, the anthropomorphic treatment does beg us to remember Ofellus and the satirist country-lover in the same light, as slightly ridiculous and much too good to be true.

In a different way, in Juvenal's eleventh satire our faith in the satirist's belief in the rural idyll is undercut by the rhetorical nature of the antithesis of town and country. His rural picture is coloured with images of sensuous pleasure, as we see the satirist, more accustomed to kicking against the inadequacies of life at Rome, soaking his flesh in the vernal sun (203-4).\(^{47}\) We might compare the words of Smollet's country gentleman Matthew Bramble:

'My table is, on a great measure, furnished from my own ground; my five year old mutton, fed on the fragrant herbage of the mountains, that might vie with venison in juice and flavour; my delicious veal fattened with nothing but the mother's milk. The same soil affords all the different fruits which England may call her own, so that my dessert is every day fresh-gathered from the tree; my dairy flows from the nectarious tides of milk and cream,

\(^{45}\) West, 74.

\(^{46}\) Ibid, catches the tone beautifully, 'the town-mouse is a philosopher, not however a Myo-Platonist, but a fashionable Pseudo-Epicurean'. Ibid. 74-8 presents an excellent analysis of the borrowed philosophical and literary elements.

\(^{47}\) A conflation of Pers. 4.18 and Mart 10.12.7. Both provide examples of the good life.
from whence we derive abundance of excellent butter curds and cream.

As it turns out, this perfect country meal of Juvenal's will be eaten at Rome, where the reality of country life does not have to cloud the picture of rural bliss.49

2.2. THE OFELLUS DIET

Moving from the general features of the 'rustic' satires to the particular, Horace's Satire 2.2 is the first complete 'rustic' satire remaining.50 Its 'back to the country' message is simple and comprehensive. Moreover, the vehicle in which it is carried also contains a treatment of the principles of gastronomy, dining and regime that paves the way for the elaboration of the theme in Satire 2.6, Persius 6 and Juvenal's eleventh satire.

In the first twenty-two lines Horace offers a moral overview of his theme, the proper place of food in men's lives, and establishes the credentials of his wise rustic source, Ofellus. He then gives an 'Ofellan' analysis of people's reasons for eating as they do, 'balancing' each proposition for proper behaviour (exemplified in his own

48 Cf. Mennell, 132.
49 Infra, 2.3.3.
50 Cf. Epod. 2 in which the rustic 'idyll' is expounded by the city dweller who decides to 'go native'. These poems are dated by Epod. 9 to Actium, about the same time as Horace's second book of satires was completed.
way of life) with numerous examples of urban degeneracy.

Ofellus' instructions on how to act properly are prominently, but briefly dispensed with as paragraph headings, as at lines 70-1:

\[
\text{accipe nunc uictus tenuis quae quantaque secum adferat. imprimis valeas bene.}
\]

This is followed, not by the benefits, as promised, but by the rather nastier consequences of overeating (71-88). A similar pattern emerges in a later section, lines 94-111. The first part (94-5) is taken up with the importance of good reputation, while lines 95-111 deal with the scandal and loss that will assuredly result from over-devotion to food. The satirist finishes with Ofellus' own recipe for sensible living (112-36), describing both his day-to-day and his special occasion menus. Therefore more than half of the satire's 136-line total describes the excesses of the 'elegant' diet and its unavoidable results.

Despite appearances, the contrast of country and town is never overtly drawn by the satirist. It does pervade the poem however, through both the demonstrably rural character of Ofellus and the examples of gourmandry he rejects, which clearly refer to urban practice. Ofellus is a 'rusticus abnormis sapiens' (3) and a tenant farmer (114-5). He cites sea fish particularly as luxury foods (31-4), which will turn up later in the satire as his preferred example of town 'produce' (120). He mentions urban gourmands: the auctioneer Gallonius who served sturgeon (47-8), and the youth of Rome who would eat
seagull if decreed by (fashion) edict (50-2). Therefore the reader cannot help but think of the town as the antithesis of Ofellus and what he stands for.

At the same time, however, while the terms 'urban' and 'rustic' (or 'rural') obviously imply opposing ways of life based on geography, economy and culture, Ofellus also deals with the possibility of living a 'country' life in the town and vice versa, since individuals can live out their rural or urban value systems wherever they are. Therefore Ofellus' words are equally valid against those who live the city life in their country villas, as implied in his comment that he does not send to town for fish on a special occasion.51

2.2.1 Ofellan ideology

There is nothing particularly revolutionary in the message Ofellus is trying to put across. The opinions expressed are uncontroversial, and seem to reflect ideas current in both Epicureanism and Stoicism. Epicurus' letter to Menoeceus52 seems to have had some influence in the gestation of Horace's Satire 2.2. Ofellus catches the

51Infra, 3.7.
52Fiske, 380: suggests that the elements which are not Epicurean can be explained as 'Horace's application of his ethics to life and a justification of them on the basis of common human experience'.
spirit of Epicurean philosophic principles. According to Epicurus those who live by these precepts death will hold no fear (124-30), a sentiment echoed by Ofellus:

\[
\text{saeuiat atque nouos moueat Fortuna tumultus} \\
\text{quantum hinc imminuet?} \\
\text{(126-7)}
\]

and also evident in his echo of Lucretius\(^5\) at 133-5:

\[
\text{nunc ager Umbreni sub nomine, nuper Ofelli} \\
\text{dictus, erit nulli proprius, sed cedet in usum} \\
\text{nunc mihi nunc alii.}
\]

Epicurus uses food as the necessity of life; he alludes to it in the letter to Menoeceus and in a number of the fragments that remain of his writings.\(^5\) Menoeceus, like the reader of Horace's satire, is advised to get used to a plain diet so that he will be healthy, alert to the necessary activities and fearless of fate (131). The teachings of Epicurus crop up again in the course of the mouse fable in 2.6. Perhaps we see a premonition of their 'hounding' from the table (106-117) in Epicurus' statement, 'It is better for you to be free of fear, lying on a pallet, than to have a golden couch and a rich table and be full of trouble.'\(^5\)

\(^5\)3.971, 'uitaque mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu'.
\(^5\)Frag. 39 (Bailey, 131), letter to an unknown recipient, 'send me some preserved cheese that I might have a feast'. Quoted in Vit. Epic. 11.6-8.
Socrates is credited with the comment that the best sauce for food is hunger. The 'tenuis uictus' (70) recommended by Ofellus may have been coined by Cicero to embody a Cynic/Stoic idea (Lejay, 316).

The geographical antithesis which underpins Satire 2.2 is a feature of the Roman moral and rhetorical tradition and is represented in fable, which was an element of the diatribal form of popular preaching. The tale of the town mouse and country mouse as told by Aesop has the complete combination of entertaining moral philosophy, geographical antithesis, meal-time setting and rodent characters; this is enough to confirm its influence over Horace's Satire 2.6.

The apparently simple message of Ofellus' words might thus appear to be formed out of an amalgamation of references, influences and verbal imitations. This is only partly the case, Satire 2.2, has some important original features, including the drawing together of the allusive material in a supporting role. At the heart of the satire is what might be termed a healthy eating plan, which the satirist would have us believe is suitable for practical application. This plan comprises two different types of country meal, the 'everyday' and the celebratory as eaten by Ofellus. These, we are told, are characteristic of and

55Frag. 48, letter to an unknown recipient, (Bailey, 131).
56Cf. Cic. Fin. 2.90; Tusc. 5.90.
57Fin. 2, 90; Lael. 86; Tusc. 3.49; 5.26,89.
58Quint. Decl. 2.4.24, who enumerated among the theses of deliberative and legal oratory, the first subjects in which a rhetorician should give instruction, 'quae sumuntur ex rerum comparatione (ut rusticane uita an urbana potior)'.
59West, 67.
central to his whole approach to life (a holistic approach, even). The satirist, however, uses the country habits of Ofellus to contextualise his exploration of gastro/moral principles, first in Satire 2.2, and then through the second Book of satires. Allusions to ideas and expressions of those ideas reveal the high proportion of cliche in Ofellus’ wisdom. They also cause us to question his suitability as a moral teacher, and the satirist’s motives in giving a platform to the Ofellan style of wisdom.

2.2.2 Ofellus’ guide to eating well

According to Ofellus, people can be judged by how they define and satisfy their dietary needs. The example of his own regime embodies the values of hard rather than idealised rural life. It teaches that hunger is merely a reminder to obtain nutrition. It has to be earned through hard work60 and can be satisfied with the simplest of foods: bread and salt. This dietary formula is a Romanised and satirical61 version of Epicurus’ and Socrates’ bread and water which in the same way is shorthand for the

60 Cic. Tusc. 5.34, Spartans, Persians, Plato, Ptolemy and Socrates all used exercise to work up a hunger.
61 With the pointed use of salt i.e. wit instead of water. S. 1.10.3 with which Horace claimed Lucilius rubbed down the city; Ep. 2.2.60, ‘sal niger’ the rough quality of Bion’s sermones; Quint. Decl. 6.3.18-9.
essentials of life, sometimes supplemented by heat and
clothing, and also represents the epitome of 'what does
matter':

sit mihi mensa tripes et
concha salis puri et toga quae defendere frigus
quamuis crassa queat.

(1.3.13-5)

Regularity of habit as displayed in this nutritional
cycle is portrayed as one of the virtues to commend
country life. The countryman, such as Ofellus, realises he
cannot duck fate and does not alter his behaviour in the
attempt to do so. The ceaseless cycle of the seasons and
daily routine provides a natural rhythm and predictability
denied to the harassed city dweller, and gives a sense of
place in the natural scheme of things. Therefore it is
fitting that Ofellus should describe his route to
spiritual prosperity in terms that amount to a natural
cycle (see next page):
Ofellus contrasts his advice for good habits with a description of the gourmand's life. This type of person, he maintains, endows food with a spurious role and significance. In so doing he unwittingly creates a way of life for himself which, although having avowed short-term aims of eating as magnificently as possible, has no long-term sense of order. The gourmand's 'life-cycle' is not self-perpetuating; it bears the seeds of its own destruction (see next page):
Ofellus' advice, as portrayed by the satirist, is constructed as a set of recommendations and warnings. He is at pains to make it clear that horrible habits have horrible consequences. Therefore he concludes that eating habits have inevitable effects on one's physical, psychological and material life. To emphasise the degree of contrast in rural and 'citified' life he compares health, wealth and mental state as they are affected by rural and 'hyper-refined' eating habits. In so doing he maps out a set of points of comparison which are developed in various ways as part of Horace's, Persius' and
Juvenal's treatment of the food theme.

While Ofellus' teachings attach a great deal of importance to physical fitness, the city regime leads to an enfeebled old age (88). It could be said that the urban dinner can literally be a danger to life and limb, as next seen in Horace's Satire 2.6:

\[
\text{currere per totum pauidi concluae, magisque exanimes trepidare, simul domus alta Molossis personuit canibus.}^{62} \\
\text{(2.6.113-5)}
\]

Ofellus' gourmands are seen reaping the rewards of a 'problem meal' (71-61) which makes them pale and sick. Ofellus refrains from graphic detail, unlike Persius and Juvenal who have a distinctly more 'what goes in must come out' approach. In two memorable and literal scenes of cause and effect, they describe the gourmand who dies in the bath after a heavy meal, and who has to be carried out ignominiously.\(^63\) Both descriptions are designed primarily to shock and revolt. Standard practice was to bathe before dining.\(^64\) It was and still is a stock item of common sense not to bathe on a full stomach.\(^65\) However, the practice does seem to have found its way into the list of fads and curatives available in both Greece and Rome.\(^66\) Hence the

---

\(^{62}\) A fulfilment of the town mouse's unwittingly accurate premonition, 'uiue memor, quam sis aeui breuis' (97).

\(^{63}\) Hor. Ep. 1.6.61; Pers. 3.98-106; Juv. 1.142-6.

\(^{64}\) Cels. I.3.4-12. Gal. XIX 692-3K (Puls. 7) suggests it is the ideal time to bathe.

\(^{65}\) Gal. VII 702-3K (Marc. 9).

\(^{66}\) Hippoc. Reg. 2.57.6-8, a hot bath after a meal was (Footnote continued)
outrage at the unnatural practice of bathing. Pliny blames doctors for the habit and like the satirists suggests that the damage caused will be serious, even life threatening. This does not mean that the phenomenon of death in the bath occurred as frequently in life as it does in satire. Rather the satirist brings together all the concerns about the practice in one dramatic event, possibly adding the idea of post-dinner vomiting to make the scene more nauseating for the reader. In any case, the normal direction of food through the system is reversed, reflecting an inversion of proper values.

While the ancient sources were concerned about physical condition, inasmuch as they prescribed reducing and weight-gain diets, the satirists do not often take advantage of the satiric possibilities of obesity, perhaps something of a twentieth-century obsession. On one occasion, however, Persius' heir's selfish and gluttonous tendencies display themselves in unsightly physical consequences:

\[\text{mihi trama figurae si reliqua, ast illi tremat omento popa uenter.}\]

(6.73-4)

believed to expand the moisture in the body. It is not clear whether Hippocrates is recommending the practice.

\[\text{Hor. Ep. 1.6.61.}\]

\[\text{Cels. 1.3.17, disagrees to a varying degree with Asclepiades on the practice of vomiting daily to achieve a capacity for more food.}\]

\[\text{Cf. Cels. 1.3.15-6.}\]

\[\text{Cf. Juv. 4.107, Montanus' stomach arrives before the rest of him.}\]
In general, however, the satirists deal with the social or spiritual results of over-attention to food, tending not to restrict food and eating to its obvious nutritional and physiological context. They maintain that the city and country diets diverge because of a difference of emphasis on social aspiration. In the city it is necessary to cultivate those who will further your career. The gastronome/host in satire tries to impress through what he serves, but he always ends up enduring social disgrace (be it financial or personal) and in extreme cases is forced into suicide, as predicted by Ofellus (97-9), or obscurity. Lasting reputation, on the other hand, can be acquired through the proper use of money, on public works perhaps (103-5).

The attraction of the country is, of course, that there the satirists and their friends are patrons. They do the inviting, as we see in the semi-invitational forms common in the 'rustic' satires. The satirists also get to put together their own menus and promise what a guest most requires (for the good of his soul).

Time spent away from work and worry is one of the major factors recommending country meals to the satirist, who often speaks as one who has suffered at the hands of the city. More specifically, to a greater or lesser extent, the countryside offers a removal from the material obsessions of the town. Persius and Horace speak of their

---

71 Cf. Pl. Ps. 85-93, the man who cannot afford the rope with which to hang himself.
72 Cf. Xen. Oec. 11.9; Cic. Off. 2.15.55-64; Tusc. 34, 97.
73 Hor. S. 1.9, 2.6.20-39; Juv. 11.183-192.
country villas as all the wealth they need. Freedom from cares about possessions dictates Persius' rustic ambitions:

hic ego securus uolgi et quid praeparat auster
infelix pecori, securus et angulus ille
uicini nostro quia pinguior.

(6.12-4)

Therefore it is appropriate that the theme of 'gobbling up' an inheritance, or the family heirlooms appears in the satires. The glutton trades the solidity of landed property and belongings for the ephemeral pleasures of the stomach. Finally Persicus in Juvenal 11, is urged to forget money problems (185-6). This seems particularly apt, coming at the end of a satire which attacks not simply gluttony and gourmandry, but the expensive durables that go with dining well, such as cups (100-2), tables (120-7) and marble floors (175).

It is thus possible to see the way in which the satirists view rural diet as a means of suggesting the strengths and failings, respectively, of rural and urban life in their entirety. This proposal is made through a coherent pattern of cause and effect, to achieve a mutually exclusive 'country style' or 'city style' of living.

74 Literally, Pers. 6.21-2; Juv. 11.38-41. Also Juv. 11.17-20.
75 Cf. Mart. 9.59.15-7 (the antique markets of the Saepta); 2.43.9-10 (Libyan table tops on legs of Indian ivory).
2.2.3 Ofellus' country meals

Against the backdrop of the general contrasts of rural and 'refined' diet, as presented by Ofellus, are set two types of country meal. These have the function not only of showing country values in microcosm, but of offering apparently practical applications of Ofellus' broad philosophy. Therefore, although he names bread and salt as the stuff of survival, he is not suggesting them as a viable proposition for perpetuity. Instead, he first gives a sample of his daily meal on a working day as a symbol of the practical, utilitarian nature of country life:

\[ \text{'non ego' narrantem 'temere edi luce profesta quicquam praeter holus fumosae cum pede pernae.} \]

(116-7)

The regime seems strict, but it contains a deceptively high dose of moral symbolism. In this meal the satirist is trying to create a vivid snapshot, not of what country folk ate on a day to day basis, but of which foods best summed up the satirical picture of country life. Therefore he illustrates the benefits of regularity of habit through the routine rural dinner, which is part of a formula for life, day in, day out. This cycle of behaviour is not rigid (something of a relief for the urban reader). It can be broken to permit improvisation, when bad weather stops

---

76 Dinner appears to be the only meal discussed in satire, except at Horace 1.6.127-8 where the satirist briefly refers to a daytime snack.
work or when a guest turns up unexpectedly, both being events that are out of man's control and which give rise to the 'special occasion' meal; an attractive alternative to the excesses of urban life, made all the more attractive by the strictness of the day-to-day regime. Thus we see that the everyday diet has value to the satirist inasmuch as it compares with the second type of depiction of country food in the 'rustic' satires, the country celebration meal.

Ofellus describes how he would entertain a friend or neighbour on a rainy day (118-20). Persius celebrates Caligula's fake victory over the Germans (43-9). Juvenal's ancients enjoy 'birthday bacon' (11.83-4), and his own 'country-style' meal takes place during the Megalensia (193). If the ordinary meal in the country implies a life in keeping with the nature of man and his environment, a country celebration brings a variety of extra associations. It might connote a religious occasion. Dessen (91) points out that Persius' use of religious imagery in the sixth satire 'implies that for both the miser and the prodigal, food has become a form of false religion'. This presumably is countered by the satirist's understanding of the proper meaning of celebration presented in the same poem. The occasional yet predictable nature of country celebration is also a suitable subject for nostalgic treatment, whereby the satirist evokes sensuous and spiritual imagery to

77 Cf. Suet. Cal. 43-9; Cass. Dio 49.21.1-3. 78 Cf. Cat. Agr. 132, 'porca praecidianea' offered before the harvest; cf. Gel. 4.6.7-10; Ibid. 5-6, 'porca succidanea', offered after harvest.
reinforce his case for the country. Both connotations mask the complexities of the rural experience and leave a record prejudiced towards the view that every day is a holiday in the country.

As with the everyday diet of country folk, so the satirist constructs celebration meals that embody the message of self-sufficiency, approved by the gods and validated by 'history'. They also have the added advantage of being more acceptable in a culinary sense to an urban sophisticate than their mundane counterparts.

The satirists have a number of systems at their disposal whereby they can imbue the raw material of the two types of country meal with meaning. They recognise that celebration has a culinary expression: the 'step change' by which ordinary meals are transformed into celebrations, symbolising the enhanced conviviality and/or piety of the special occasion meal.

Ofellus makes this step by adding 'little extras' which are still strictly home-grown. He makes a point of emphasising that his idea of a treat is not to send to town for fish (the immediate reaction of the town-dweller celebrating in his country villa). Thus he restates the pride in self-sufficiency which also permeates Juvenal's celebration meal served up to Persicus:

fercula nunc audi nullis ornata macellis.

(11.64)
Ofellus gives his guest fresh meat, 'pullus' or 'haedus' (121), and extends the variety and duration of the meal with dessert, 'uuae', 'nuces' and 'duplices ficus' (121-2). Persius, however, symbolises the process in Satire 6.19-21:

\[
\text{solis natalibus est qui} \\
\text{tinguat holus siccum muria uafer in calice empta,} \\
\text{ipse sacrum inrorans patinae piper.}\]

The single act of adding seasoning embodies the culinary and cultural elaboration of the simple meal. The image speaks volumes to the reader about the true meaning of celebration and, once established, can be manipulated for ironic effect:

\[
\text{nunc nunc inpensius ungue,} \\
\text{ungue, puer, caules.}\]

(ibid. 68-9)

The 'everyday' and the celebratory menus of the Roman verse satirists exist primarily as emblems of a wider set of issues than the purely nutritional or culinary. As such, individual components of the 'model' meals described by Ofellus can be rejected, added, or altered in order to enhance aspects of the individual satirist's message. The satirist has several sources of variation on the basic components. These concern what is being eaten (meat,
vegetables, fruit) how it is prepared (preserved or fresh), whether it is being eaten in the present or the past, and on what occasion the meal is being eaten (every day or as a celebration). The overall aim is to use these elements in combination, in order to enhance the contrast with the city and to make the country seem as worthy as possible, at the same time as being attractive to the reader.

To begin, then, with meat, the heart of Ofellus' everyday meals (bacon) and celebratory meals (hen or kid). Preserved pig-meat had a nostalgic and symbolic value. Tremelius Scrofa, a renowned authority on farming matters whose wisdom is quoted by Varro, is reputed to have said:

_quis enim fundum colit nostrum, quin sues habeat et qui non audierit patres nostros dicere ignauum et sumptuosum esse, qui succidiam in carnario suspenderit potius ab laniario quam e domestico fundo?_  

(R. 2.4.3)

The implication is that home-cured bacon is still part and parcel of the image of the past, as well as having a contemporary place in animal husbandry. Pig-raising is the form of meat production that occurs most frequently in the sources. The key was the adaptability of these animals; pigs could scrape an existence in any kind of terrain or environment. Thus, according to Columella, in some
out-of-the way places, raising stock was thought to be the only way of making farming pay. Pigs, therefore have a role as both a prime and a marginal source of food and income. Just how marginal is shown in the practice of some bakers of keeping pigs fed on leftover bran. The traditional ubiquity of pig-keeping means that failure to do so could be seen as a source of shame, as pointed out by Scrofa.

Preserved meat from the 'carnarium' had a role in the everyday meal, as described above. The flitch hanging up in the larder or over the fire seems to have been a powerful symbol for a Roman. Unlike salted pork packed into barrels, which could survive hot climatic conditions, it had a visible presence in the farm kitchen, hearth or storeroom. Cato and Columella both give methods for salting pork meat and then hanging it up to be smoked. The writer of the Moretum points out that his shepherd does not have a 'carnarium' hung near his hearth, being extremely simple in his habits. The high point of the meal served up by Baucis and Philemon to the gods is bacon, cut from a joint hung from the rafters and cooked in a pot of boiling water.

The presence of the 'carnarium' at the hearth evokes a sense of self-sufficiency and of the centre of rural family life, where the Penates could be found. The

---

81 Col. 7.9.4; ibid. 6, 'omnem porro situm ruris pecus hoc glurpat'.
82 Something of a nuisance in urban areas, ibid. 9.3; Pl. Capt. 807-8.
83 Col. 12.55.4.
84 Cf. Agr. 162, 1-3; Col. 12.55.1-3.
85 Mor. 55-7.
satirists are aware of this, and can include the cutting of hanging bacon in their descriptions of the rural meal. Ofellus describes smoked hock as part of his meal, but it is dried fruit that is plucked from the rafters if he is entertaining a guest (121-2). Persius jokingly proposes for himself a meal of nettles, ‘urtica’ and smoked pig’s head with the hole for hanging it still in its ear (6, 70). Pig’s head is basic, popular food rather than pauper’s fare. Later, Juvenal describes the rustic ancestors splashing out with a slice from a dried, hung flitch (11.82-3).

While the humble flitch is considered everyday by Ofellus, it provides Juvenal’s satirist with a point of contrast between country food in the present and in the past, making the harshness of rural life seem soft by comparison with the past, and therefore more attractive. The reader is drawn into comparing the most notoriously excessive aspects of urban dining, as vividly described in his eleventh satire, with an idealised version of the rural regime. So just as Baucis and Philemon, the consuls of old viewed preserved pig as celebration food:

{sicci terga suis rara pendentia crate
moris erat quondam festis seruare diebus
et natalicium cognatis ponere lardum
accedente nova, si quam dabat hostia, carne.}

(Juv. 11.82-5)

86 Plaut. Men. 208-12, one of the delicacies mentioned in a ‘pork feast’.
Fresh pork has no place in the country celebration of the satires, whereas it did have a certain role in elegant dinners as described in satire and elsewhere. Fresh pork could be sold at a premium in town markets; hence Columella recommends, in areas close to towns, the raising of suckling pigs as a means of making extra cash. On the occasions when pig-meat is served at elegant meals, a frequently mentioned dish is sow's womb.

Ofellus' and Juvenal's speaker in Satire 11 both decide to serve kid and/or fowl. Fresh meat, such as this, represents much more than a gastronomic step up from the preserved variety. It can signify freedom from self denial or an opportunity for generosity at some cost to the offerer, especially if the beast to be killed is home reared and young. To take the significance a stage further, the ancient rustic celebrants described by Juvenal's satirist would only have had fresh, 'nova' meat, 'accedente' (11.85). Fresh meat also has to be eaten at one sitting. There is no question of being able to put it aside for more than a few days.

Horace in Satire 2.2 contrasts the priority of fresh meat among ancient and modern hosts using the example of the boar. So great was the ancient Roman's interest in providing for his guests, the heroic host would rather have eaten his boar high having waited for his guest's arrival, than selfishly consume the meat himself (89-92).

---

88 Cf. 9.4.
89 Cf. Hor. Ep. 1.15.41; Plin. Ep. 1.15.3; Apic. 2.3.9; 301.6.
90 It might otherwise be used for breeding or production purposes.
The context of this comment lies in the selfishness of modern hosts rather than as a comment on the tastes of the past. The introduction of game into a rural celebration meal enhances the convivial dimension. Juvenal's satirist called it 'animal propter conuiuia natum' (1, 141), thus implying that it was meant to be shared as the main course at a special meal. Pliny reviews the gastronomic progress of boar from Cato's denunciation of those who serve it to the modern fashion for regularly dishing up two or three as the first course of a dinner.91 A wealth of mythological, heroic and symbolic material had become attached to the idea of serving boar. The cachet of this dish lay in its traditional role at dinners where guests were being entertained. It was marked out by the specialness of these occasions and the effort that had gone into procuring boar meat. Because of these connotations it makes frequent appearances in the satires. Therefore at his 'cena' Nasidienus begins his meal with boar92 and the patrons in Juvenal dine alone, or deny their guests the very meat which is the essence of conviviality.93

In the 'rustic' satires bacon is always served with vegetables. Although the specific type of vegetable most favoured by the satirists is the cabbage, its frequent appearances as a symbol of the mundane94 or frugal,95

91 Nat. 8.78, the first whole boar was served in the early first century BC. It would have been cut into three, with the middle part being a dinner delicacy.
92 2.8.6; infra, 5.2.3.
93 Cf. 1.140-1; 5.114-6; infra, 6.2.2.
94 Cf. Juv. 7.154
generally place it as an urban or suburban vegetable, rather than specifically rural. Horace describes country vegetables, which range from the vague 'holus' Ofellus enjoys (117) to the twee 'holuscula' and Pythagorean 'faba' that go with the satirist's 'lardum' at 2.6.63-4.

Persius is more specific, settling for nettles to go with his pig's cheek, an echo of Horace's rustic formula at 2.2.117. He endows the meal with frugal rather than Ofellus' healthily mundane qualities. 'Urtica' were eaten for their medicinal qualities according to Pliny, who sampled them, in a spirit of experimentation and pronounced the young plants to be 'not unpleasant'.

Juvenal's country vegetables are 'montani asparagi', an evocative version of Martial's 'incultis asparagis'. He thus brings to bear the physical character of the countryside as well as the wildness of the asparagus. The significance of the feral is borne out by Pliny who condemns prodigious cultivated specimens as monstrosities of gluttony.

In describing country meals the satirist partly tries to illustrate the self-sufficiency of the Italian countryside and the quality of its produce. However in so doing he tends to reproduce a formula for rustic diet which is morally resonant rather than sensually attractive as a realistic alternative to urban habits. He also neglects to

---

95 Eg. Hor. S. 2.3.125; Pers. 6.69; Juv. 1.134.
96 Eg. Hor. S. 2.3.125; Pers. 6.69; Juv. 1.134.
97 Eg. Hor. S. 2.4.15; Juv. 6.18.
98 Nat. 21.55.93.
100 Nat. 19.19.54; Athen. 2.62e-3a, the preferability of the wild, which came in two varieties, swamp or mountain.
reflect the variety of foods available and the ingenuity that went into dealing with them. Ofellus' everyday meal may therefore in fact be almost as restricted in terms of hard evidence about rural eating habits as the bread and salt diet he describes.

The 'everyday' meals of the country as described in the satires are devoid of many of the products that would have been part of the experience of the country. Pulses and grains play very little part in their descriptions of the rural regime. There is no mention of bread, for example, yet recipes are contained in our agricultural sources. Varro describes grain harvesting methods from a wide range of regions. Columella ranges over the grains and pulses available, commenting that 'maxime grata et in usu hominum videntur.' Columella even points out that certain grains provide subsistence for peasants in many countries and that lupine crops can provide insurance against famine in years of crop failure.

Likewise milk products have no role in the satirists' descriptions of country life. Yet Varro and Columella both deal with cheese production on the farm and give a clear impression that while there were difficulties with

100 Contrast Hor. S. 2.6.84; Pers. 4.31-2; 5.74.
101 Cf. Cato Agr. 74.1; Hor. 40-51, provides a recipe for panis'.
102 R. 1.50.1-2, Umbria, Picenum, the environs of Rome and Liguria.
103 2.7.1, beans, lentils, peas, kidney beans, chick peas, hemp, millet, panic grass, sesame, lupins, flax, barley. These are not classified as fodder crops, they are for human consumption.
104 2.9.17, panic grass and millet.
105 Ibid. 2.10.1.
106 Possibly because of the difficulty of fitting 'caseus' into hexameter verse.
transportation, and while it was not a universal activity (unlike pig rearing), it was not to be neglected.\textsuperscript{107} André suggests that in some areas cheese making would have been a necessity (1981, 152), "Transformer le lait en fromage est une double nécessité. Il faut mettre du côté des réserves pour l'hiver, quand la production du lait est à son point le plus bas. Il faut utiliser la production dans les régions isolées, éloignées des villes, où la vente immédiate et impossible'.

Finally, in their treatments of country diet the satirists give the modern reader no hint of the variety of vegetables and herbs commonly available. While they favour cabbage, nettles and asparagus Columella mentions a wide variety of vegetables cultivated in Italy, including onions, leeks, radishes, turnips, navews, cucumbers, gourds, capers, beets, lettuces, artichokes, parsnips, garlic, mustard and alexanders.\textsuperscript{108} Herbs he refers to as 'inemptis ruris dapes', mentioning varieties such as elecampane, rue, rocket, cress, coriander, chervil, dill and skirret.\textsuperscript{109}

2.2.4 The 'proper' meal

\textsuperscript{107}Col. 7.8.1, describes a variety of home-produced cheeses flavoured with pine kernals, applewood smoke and thyme. For Varro's methods of cheese making see R. 2.2.4-5. The Moretum pointedly remarks the absence of bacon, but presence of cheese at the poor countryman's birth.
\textsuperscript{108}11.3.14-8.
\textsuperscript{109}Ibid. 12.13.2.
Country-style meals as described by the satirists, whether everyday or celebratory, are not about 'real' food, they are a means to a satiric end. The desired effects can be long-term and nutritional, as is particularly the case with the day-to-day regime, or they can be social. Hence the rural-style celebration is primarily an opportunity for genuine friendship. While the everyday meal in the country, or 'country-style', meal, is an apparently solitary occasion, a rural celebration is an opportunity not to eat alone, though 'alone' may in fact conceal an unnamed troop of servants and family.

For Horace’s satirist, the point of the rustic celebration is the opportunity for like-minded friends to converse and discuss. He uses the familiar literary phenomenon of the symposium to provide a moral and narrative framework for some gentle self-mockery. The highbrow deliberations about the great questions of philosophy sit uneasily in the setting of Ofellus' dinner or for that matter Horace's own 'noctes cenaeque deum'.

Wine is instrumental to the symposium as an ideal. It loosens tongues and enhances the comradely spirit. Stimulating conversation is the desired result. The Horatian country dinner-party owes much to Symposium

110 Eg. Hor. 1.6.111-8.
111 Non-guests at Roman meals do not appear often in the sources. Hor. S. 6.116) a 'simple' supper served by three boys. Cf. Sen. Ep. 47.2, the mob of slaves surrounding the wealthy eater.
Serv. Aen. 8.310 suggests that Maecenas himself may have written a 'Symposium', 'hoc etiam Maecenas in symposio, ubi Vergilius et Horatius interfuerunt, cum ex persona Messalae de ui uini loqueretur ita.'
113 S. 2.6.65.
114 Cf. infra. 5.4.2.
literature. As in Plato's *Symposium*, Horace's meal does not centre on food but has as its essential ingredients a prayer to the gods, an absence of drinking restrictions and a significant amount of philosophy. A fusion of 'cena' and 'symposium' takes place, in which the essentially urban elements of a Greek drinking-party are transferred to a meal that has a Roman rural setting. It is a complete fabrication as an event. This type of meal contrasts vividly with the fashionable dinner party as described by Horace in 2.8, and hinted at in 2.4, in which conversation is dominated by a commentary on food, to accompany the dishes as they arrive on the table. Here the host 'philosophises' on the finer points of gastronomic art, often literally. Hence Catius is ironically called 'doctus' (19), Nasidienus is 'erus' (16).

Persius' speaker's country meal is defiantly unconcerned with company. His heir (63) and neighbours are potential sources of worry (12-13) rather than potential guests. He, it seems, celebrates alone (69-70). In the previous satire a quiet meal with his mentor Cornutus had evoked more of the spirit of Ofellus' country meal, but removal from society had been spiritual rather than geographical:

---

115 S. 2.2.118-125; cf. 2.6.65-76. 
116 Catius' lecture is arranged along the lines of a dinner party (Rudd 1966, 66). 
118 Infra, 4.2.1; 5.4.3. 
118 Cf. 6.6, the satirist's departure to the Ligurian coast.
Juvenal's country meal is designed as a way of tempting Persicus to relinquish his city preoccupations. In an echo of Horace's Epistle 1.5 he promises:

experiere hodie numquid pulcherrima dictu,
Persice, non praestem uita tibi moribus et re...

(11.56-7)

Juvenal's satirist has clearly taken on board some of the Horatian tone by offering the unidentified Persicus an alternative to his fraught urban life (as Ofellus offers the reader of Horace's Satire 2.2). The meal he plans to offer is presented as a quiet diner à deux. The emphasis is on freedom from the cares, responsibilities and restrictions of urban life.

2.3 THE RANGE OF APPROACHES

119 Cf. Hor. S. 2.6.65, a faint evocation of Horace's 'opus cenaeque deum'.
120 The beginning of Persius' sixth satire also has an epistolary feel, starting with greetings to Bassus from Persius wintering on the Ligurian coast (6).
The preceding sections of this chapter have been concerned with identifying the similarities in the 'rustic' satires; the role of Satire 2.2 in setting ideas and images in motion, the country meal as morality in microcosm; the incorporation of the idyll of country life, the interplay of the celebratory and the mundane and, not least, the culinary and gastronomic details used to describe these meals. These shared features are important in tracing the development of the 'rustic' satire as it re-interpreted the model provided by Horace Satire 2.2. But this should not be to obscure the fundamental differences between poems such as Horace’s Satire 2.6, Persius 6 and Juvenal’s eleventh satire, which show that while the 'town diet/country diet' thread is important, it is not the sole factor in the composition of the poem.

2.3.1 Mouse country: Horace’s Satire 2.6

This poem is clearly divided into two complementary sections, both presenting a contrast between town and country. Horace’s love for his country villa is set against the traumas of life as a friend of the great (Maecenas) at Rome (1-76). This section bears a striking structural relationship to Satire 2.2; that is, a general introduction to the theme (1-23), a detailed description of what is wrong with urban life (24-59) and an example of Horace dining ‘Ofellus style’121 (60-117). The second part of the piece (77-117) presents a complementary version of
the fable of the town mouse and the country mouse, incorporating two exemplary dinners and ending in the dramatic, chaotic and dangerous climax of the elegant city meal.

While dinners, vividly described, provide exemplary settings for the satirist's argument, a major function of the poem lies in picking up the autobiographical thread established in Book 1,\textsuperscript{122} reflecting the relationship of Horace with his patron Maecenas. The starting-point is the villa with which Horace has been presented. He draws himself as the 'fortunae filius' (49), close enough to travel with his patron and swap comments on the weather and betting tips (44-5). His good fortune is illustrated in the vivid contrast of villa and city, as metaphorically the reader's imagination plummets from the 'castle in the mountains' (16), weighed down by the 'plumbeus Auster', into Rome, a world of 'mala ... ambitio' (18) and even deeper into death (19) even. We learn that while urban public life is about knowing, hearing and passing on news and information, rural life is a kind of 'obliviousness' (62).

The sense of contentment facilitated by Maecenas' gift, is epitomised in the 'symposiac' country meal. Meals enhance the satire, precisely because the reader already has an understanding of the spuriousness of gastronomy. The friendly country meal of bacon, vegetables and beans (63-4), therefore, is a palatable study in freedom from social restriction, compared with the constant approaches

\textsuperscript{121}Although not in as many words.\textsuperscript{122}Satires 5, 6 and 10 particularly.
of those wanting inside knowledge from him in the city (42-8).

However, the rejection of the city in favour of the country is not as straightforward as it seems. We see that the villa was not attainable without certain concessions to the urban status-struggle. Furthermore, the country life as supposedly enjoyed by Horace and his friends is stylised. Are we really to believe that Horace would liken himself to a country mouse? The fable of the country mouse and the town mouse which accounts for the second half of the satire brings together aspects of food, friendship, freedom and fear, as raised previously, but also allows the satirist to give illustrations of his 'life' free from autobiographical constraint.

Again, the meal represents the respective moral values of town and country in microcosm. In this case, however, mice quite literally eat from their environment, dining off scraps and hoarded 'objets trouvés' (84, 104). Horace uses the meal as a finite event to define a narrative.\textsuperscript{123} But whereas the meals described by Ofellus are practically devoid of descriptive detail, the meals enjoyed by the mice are divided into courses and types of food to match their environment and 'customised' by the satirist to their rodent state. Similarly the conversation and manners of the mice reflect the interaction of individuals at dinner, and offer further clues to the relative character of town and country folk (seen in mouse terms). Therefore the country mouse serves up chick-pea,

\textsuperscript{123}\textsuperscript{Cf. Hor. S. 2.4 and 2.8; Juv. 5.}
('cicer', 84), long oat ('longa avena', 84), dried-out berry ('aridum acinum') and a half-eaten piece of fat bacon ('semesa lardi frusta', 85-6).

Although the food is not very appetising in human terms it is humanised. As West points out (71) it 'characterises or caricatures the simple diet of a poor Italian countryman'. But this is not just any countryman; it could well be Ofellus made mouse, and his celebration dinner made rodent. The significance of the fresh hen (or kid), and the fruit in the Ofellus meal lies in its not being everyday fare. Likewise the country mouse ransacks his store for variety (86). Ofellus' hospitality demands an element of sacrifice on the part of the host, hence fresh meat from his own farm. Similarly the bacon fat and berry are separate from his store of grain and pulse. Finally dessert\textsuperscript{124} is an important addition to Ofellus' meal. This includes raisins which have been hanging up to dry. The mouse provides a dried berry.

2.3.2 Persius' retreat

In this satire we see the city/country food motif as an undercurrent rather than a major theme. While the satirist's sympathies are clearly with the country, the argument is not directed purely against the city. His

\textsuperscript{124}The mouse dessert does not come at the end of the meal; as West (ibid) points out, this is to make way for the bacon 'pièce de résistance'.
annoyance lies with the constraints placed upon the individual by wealth and property (which may well be situated in the country).

In terms of similarity with the other satires discussed in this chapter, Persius 6 does contain the thoughts of the individual who has chosen to back away from the city, in this case to Luna on the Ligurian coast (9.6). The country provides the satirist in this poem with a symbol of retreat and self-fulfilment. It is also the place to contemplate a sense of moderation, where the extremes of behaviour can be illustrated in eating habits (20-2). In these broad respects there is a great similarity with the Horatian Epistle (Dessen, 79), and at the same time echoes of Horace's Satire 2.2. However, in the Persius satire the misguided do not feel any pressure to overspend, they stint themselves so that inheritances stay intact for heirs to 'gobble up'. So, where it was enough for Horace just to have a villa in the country, Persius begins to explore the question of what property ownership should and should not mean. To him property does not simply have value as untouchable wealth, it is to be used and enjoyed. Hence we see land as a kind of tangible currency, as when he speaks of breaking off a chunk to give to a friend in trouble (31-3). Therefore we have the view of the country as seen by the heir and as seen by the right minded satirist. Incorporated in this is a hint of urban prejudice against the country. The satirist speaks of finding a rustic heir for his property. 'Progenies

Hor. S. 2.2.53-69, on finding the middle way.
"terrae?" exclaims his citified heir and/or reader (57). "terræst iam filius", comes the satirist's reply (59).

This poem also suggests that the opposite of the country need not always be the city or town. In this case it might be, as we learn in the story of the shipwrecked friend, the sea. At sea you are at the mercy of the elements (27), you can lose all your belongings and your prayers can go unanswered (28). In this way the satirist extends the metaphorical scope of 'country' and 'not-country'. The sea embodies the uncertainties of a life in trade as opposed to the security and permanence of farming.

Food accounts for a number of the examples used by the satirist to illustrate his argument. The land is seen as provider; the satirist has cattle and crops (14-15). He employs food as a metaphor for enjoying life; he urges us to use up our crop and grind out our granaries (25-6). Characteristically, in Persius' satire, food is presented in the vivid sensual terms that are frequently missing from the other satirists. Persius refuses to eat without something to get his taste-buds going ('cenare sine uncto', 16), and will not sniff to test if wine is drinkable (17). The miser sprinkles his dry ('siccum', 20) veg in brine and shakes pepper on them for himself (21). The heir literally gets his teeth into the estate (21-2), while the satirist professes himself unable to recognise the subtle favour ('tenuis ... nosse saliuas', 24) of female thrushes. Later we learn that the haymakers have adulterated their porridge with thick oils (40). Finally there is the satirist's triumphant cry of freedom to drench, yes drench his greens with oil (68).
2.3.3 Juvenal's eleventh satire

The art of dining provides a thread of exemplary material that runs through this satire: from the first comparison of gourmands Atticus and Rutilus (1-2) illustrating the maxim 'Know Thyself' (35-8), via the satirist's ideal country-style meal (60-76), as compared with those of the past (77-119), to a complete guide to the catalogue of the world resources which support Rome's eating habits (120-192). As in Horace's Ofellus poem, Juvenal opts for a thorough investigation into both the urban and rural 'diet', giving them roughly equal attention. However the geographical and culinary clarity of the Horatian version is replaced by Juvenal with a fabric of moral images, to the extent that Juvenal's country' brings to mind, and is all but indistinguishable from, Rome's rustic past. Similarly the contemporary city is subsumed in the satirist's attack on the foreign goods (all, in some way, associated with dining) consumed there.

The 'rustic' element of the poem is the satirist's invitation to his 'friend' Persicus to a simple 'country' meal, which, as it turns out, is not a meal in the country. This is set initially against the idea of the city as a living breathing place. It is then used to contextualise specific elements of the urban dining experience (not necessarily items of food). The reader acquainted with Juvenal's third satire is already acquainted with the sordidness of urban life in general. Rome is described by 'ghostly' Umbricius (Braund 1989, 29) who is about to make his escape to Cumae. He calls her a
Greek city (61), filled with Greeks who have been imported along with figs and plums (83). Briefly he compares Rome with the country, where people are not judged by their dress, and with small towns, which are cool and leafy, and where property can be bought cheaply. 126 The satirist, however, remains behind, as he does in Satire 11.

In contrast with the Ofellus satire, and closer to the urban excitement of Horace's Satire 2.6, 127 the city is vividly described in Satire 11. In Juvenal's speaker's Rome, however, there are no redeeming factors. It is a place where people are hounded (9-10), and which is falling apart physically (13). The glutton and the city dominate the moral scene-setting of lines 1-55. In a passage that recalls Seneca on those who proclaim the 'summum bonum' to be in their guts, 128 Juvenal describes the depraved and virtuous areas of the city. These reprobates are seen skulking around the baths, the games, the brothel, the tavern, the meat market, at their town houses and in the gladiatorial school. They do not haunt the courts, the forum and other places of honest urban activity. Fear of detection haunts the gluttonous denisons of the meat market:

multos porro uides, quos saepe elusus ad ipsum creditor introitum solet expectare macelli.

(9-10)

126 Cf. 3.171-9, 190-2.
127 When the satirist is accosted by would-be friends of Mæcenas.
128 Vit. Beat. 7.1-3.
The scene is set for flight, but not that of the wise man to his country villa. The only departure depicted is that of the glutton to the oyster-beds of Baiae (49), taking morality in the guise of 'Shame' with him:

\[\text{morantur} \]
\[\text{pauci ridiculum et fugientem ex urbe pudorem.}\]
\[(54-5)\]

The satirist has an opportunity to explore the real and metaphorical meaning of retreat from the Rome. He turns Horace's and Persius' straightforward removal to the country into the idea of self-imposed exile within earshot of the Circus (197-8). This is embodied in a country-style meal to be served up to his friend Persicus. In Satire 3 Umbricius challenged the listener to to make the break from the attractions of the games and set up in a little place in the country (223-231). In Satire 11 the city-loving glutton, as well as the satirist and Persicus will miss the games for different reasons. Where debt forces the glutton into exile (52-3) so that he must miss his beloved circus, the satirist rejects the games as the embodiment of the city and invites Persicus to his 'non-games', that is to the 'non-city'.

The reader is presented in detail with the menu Juvenal proposes to serve to Persicus. It is reminiscent not only of Horace's Satires 2.2 and 6 but also of two Martial

\[129\text{Cf. Hor. S. 2.6; Pers. 6.}\]
\[130\text{As Ferguson points out (1987, 177), Persicus is in all probability not a real person, but 'a name redolent of ostentatious luxury', cf. Hor. Od. 1.38.1.}\]
Epigrams. The menu is simple, gastronomically speaking, as is appropriate. However, at the same time it carries sophisticated imagery of contemporary country innocence and ancient rustic virtue which contrasts starkly with the corruption that lurks in the city as described throughout the satire. Martial's words and ideas have, however, been significantly altered to create a contemporary variation on a familiar theme, recalling the specifically satiric context of the country meal. Juvenal's kid (66), innocent of grass, 'inscius herbae', derives its imagery of youth and innocence from Martial's 3.47.12 (Colton, 41):

nondumque uicta lacteum faba porcum.

The piglet has been changed to 'haedulus', a typical use of the diminutive by the satirist, which builds on the Horatian original ('haedo' 2.2.121). The kid represents young fresh meat, as does a suckling pig, and has the connotation of the unsullied sacrificial victim. However the kid has a special place in traditional tales, that make it a more sympathetic subject for Juvenal in this context. Kid as victim (sacrificial and otherwise) occurs in Martial's Epigrams, and even more significantly, a kid is saved from the wolf to become a course at Horace's rustic feast in Epode 2.60.

The combined effect of satiric and epigrammatic allusion

---

132 For the function of self-mockery here, Mayor, 2.126-8.
133 Supra, 2.2.2.
134 10.87.18 (a farmer's gift for Restitutus' birthday); 10.92.7.
emphasises the idea of innocence almost to the exclusion of 'realism'. So, even though it may be perfectly acceptable to eat kid at a country meal, it is the moral significance of the kid(ling), that carries the message and fits into the scheme of country meal as moral microcosm. The eleventh satire is rich in images of family life. In addition to kid there is chicken at the rustic celebration. Poultry, like goats and pigs, take a minimal amount of looking after and (despite opinion against the practice) was common in the humble farmyard. Ofellus suffices with plain 'pullus' (2.2.120). Juvenal, on the other hand serves the 'mothers' of the eggs that he also plans to give to his guest. As Colton points out (1964, 41), this notion is based on two passages in Martial. At 13.47.14 eggs are transported protected by hay, and at 8.31.1, hens are 'oua matrum'. Juvenal's conflation of the two ideas (11.70-1):

\[
\text{grandia praeterea tortoque calentia faeno ova adsunt ipsis cum matribus.}
\]

suggests the physical warmth of new laid eggs and therefore a sense of maternal protective cosiness. That the eggs would really still be warm is a physical impossibility, since they have to be transported into the

\[135\] Colum. 7.6.7, it was not unusual to 'get rid of' kids from multiple births.
\[136\] Cf. ibid. 1.
\[137\] Cf. ibid. 1, doubts that it is wise for country people to keep them; ibid. 4, hints that hens may have looked down upon as unprofitable (i.e. not suitable for large scale production).
The spadework put into the construction of the country meal pays off at 151-5, where Juvenal describes his innocent, homegrown serving boys:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pastoris duri hic est filius, ille bubulci.} \\
\text{suspirat longo non uisam tempore matrem,} \\
\text{et casulam et notos tristis desiderat haedos,} \\
\text{ingenui uultus puer ingenuique pudoris,} \\
\text{quales esse decet quos ardens purpura uestit.}
\end{align*}
\]

All the preceding ideas of innocence come together again. The boys are to some extent the menu personified. They are products of the countryside and of the homeland. They don’t have to be addressed in a foreign language (148). Like the food, the shepherd’s son brings a flavour of the countryside into the town. He is identified with the kid he once tended. He misses his mother. His skittish innocence, as he is described playing in the mountains of home, mocks the decadent grown up ball games of the city baths and his unfussy long hair contrasts with the perfumed, prissy crimping of the dandies who frequent them. Thus the satire begins with the corruption of the public places and returns to the same theme. However, are we really to believe this rejection of all things refined? Martial is perhaps more realistic about the prejudices of urban folk. His rough serving boys are not described in the most flattering terms. Juvenal rejects Martial’s 'hircosi' but
hangs on to the family connection, 'filius'. Instead he reminds us of what the extreme opposite of 'hircosus' can be:

uellendas iam praebuit alas.  

(157)

The case in favour of country habits is supported both by images of contemporary innocence (as described above) and by the full moral weight of Rome's rustic past. Neither Horace nor Persius make overt use of the latter, to any degree. To gain entrance to dinner Persicus is asked to play Hercules or Aeneas to the satirist's Evander (60-2). The heroic comparison typically goes over the top with Juvenal choosing an extreme and extremely well known example of a pious and worthy meal. Added to which, the only extra detail emphasises how these individuals achieved deification (through death):

alter aquis, alter flammis ad sidera missus  

(63)

Military and civic heroes of Rome's glorious past fill the two sections that immediately follow the proposed 'country style' menu.

Where Horace in Satire 2.6 contrasts country life with the personal pressures of city life, as a member of the

138 Mart. 10.98.10 (Colton 1964, 43).  
139 Virg. A. 8.359-65. 'aude, hospes, contemnere opes' (ibid. 364).
Maecenas entourage, Juvenal conjures up the heroes of the past as the basis for his comparison with modern city life. As his marker of austerity the satirist recalls the meals of the Consuls. Then, he maintains, Consuls used to behave as ordinary people. Their meals serve as a basis for comparison with the satirist's own dinner and therefore with the contemporary corrupt standards it opposes. The satirist uses the past both to quantify the degree of degradation and to grade the degradation qualitatively. To achieve the first the satirist develops a downward scale of moral evaluation. First he presents the idea that modern times are terrible (46-55). By contrast he shows that he will serve up a simple, morally virtuous meal, 'porridge' and not 'cheesecakes' as it were (58-9). Next he demonstrates how this meal would be a banquet compared with the standards of the past, pointing out that even then men had acquired luxurious tastes and tendencies (77-8). We are led to reach the unavoidable conclusion, modern moral values are at the end of a linear descent from past, though unspecified, halcyon times.

In this case the myth of the countryside, rather than any physical reality has become the destination of those wishing to escape the modern city. This complements the satirist's message that the country life can be sampled in town and also illustrates his advice to look inside for your values (11.27-38); a message he shares with Ofellus. However, the extreme excellence of the moral exempla used by the satirist, together with the

140 Hor. S. 2.2.30
implausibility of the menu, confirm that his contrast of city and country is primarily an exercise in widening the gulf between city and country, rather than proposing an alternative way of life for Persicus. Unlike the Ofellus satire, there is not even the pretense that the satirist is going to offer anything more than temporary respite; a one day window on a peaceful existence. He urges Persicus to give his cares a holiday, not relinquish them (183-5).

The terms of Juvenal’s comparison help to build up a picture of a very specific type of rustic past, that is, the time when civic duty, military glory and personal moral high standards all met in the country. The spotlight falls upon those who through their guardianship of public morality exemplify these virtues (90-1), namely Fabius,\(^{141}\) Cato, \(^{142}\) Scaurus\(^{143}\) and Fabricius.\(^{144}\) He centres the past very firmly on Rome, emphasising the foundation of the city, when Gods and men were still in direct communication and linked by blood (104-116). Physical items carry the symbols of past virtue, a decorated helmet and a clay statue of Jupiter. These are contrasted with the extravagant fripperies of modern times which serve as an ornament to their owner’s decadence rather than his country’s glory (102-116).

Ofellus’ argument was that the urban glutton has lost track of the real value of food. Juvenal’s satirist takes the argument several stages further. Not only has ‘modern’

---

\(^{141}\) Censor 304 BC, Sen. Ep. 86.10 (in which Cato is also mentioned).

\(^{142}\) Censor 184 BC (see note above), cf. Juv. 2.40.

\(^{143}\) Censor 109 BC, passed a sumptuary law, and Consul 115 BC.

\(^{144}\) Censor 275 BC, Consul 282 and 272 BC.
Rome moved away from the proper values of the past, its diners fail to realise that dining has anything to do with food. Moreover, when Rome's gluttons scour the market for produce they live out in microcosm the parasitic nature of Rome's relationship with the rest of the world. The satirist thus widens the focus of his criticism on to the grand scale. Thus, in a long section from 120-192 the satirist uses the rough framework of the 'cena' as an event (rather than as a meal) to structure his attack, and ranges around the perimeters of the Roman world and around the paraphernalia of elegant eating. The reader soon gets the impression that the 'rustic' meal is not really what the satirist wants to talk about, and that it is only present to give him a solid base of moral imagery from which to launch his attack on contemporary dining habits.

2.4 CONCLUSION.

In all of the satires discussed in this chapter (Horace Satires 2.2 and 2.6, Persius 6 and Juvenal 11) the country (meal) is contrived to represent the still centre at the heart of a rapidly changing world. Horace's speaker, through Ofellus uses it as a point of contrast with the excessive eating habits of Rome, Persius' satirist uses it as a base to criticise dysfunction in issues of ownership, property and individual autonomy and Juvenal's speaker uses it as part of a general attack on contemporary Roman Empire/city values via the emotional evocation of a rural past. More than this we see that eating habits are really
about all aspects of human as consumer. Similarly the city can be synonymous not simply with Rome, but the Empire and the present.

In the same way the country and the country meal are not what they seem. They are first and foremost symbols of whatever aspects of the country life and the rural past the satirist wishes to discuss. As such they are contrived to express a polarised set of values, which will entertain an essentially urban audience. They are therefore satirical meals, designed not to give an accurate or comprehensive picture of city or country eating habits, not to persuade anyone to 'go rustic', but to give pleasure to an audience who like to take a holiday from reality occasionally, safe in the knowledge that they have city home to go to afterwards.
3.1 GASTRONOMIC LANGUAGE

Although Roman verse satire is obviously not purely about food, it does develop a strong gastronomic, even culinary theme; most memorably in Catius' meanderings and Nasidienus' and Virro's feasts, all of which delight in lurid and detailed descriptions of gluttonous and over-indulgent behaviour at table. The reader enjoys these meals, not as a gourmand, but as a kind of cultural voyeur. To be able to do so, he or she must be equipped to extract the message written into the composition and execution of the meal. This demands an appreciation of the aims and principles of gastronomy (the judgement of food and the consequent development of cuisine according to sensual and social principles), but this must be from the standpoint (shared with the satirists) that its affectations remove food from its proper nutritional function. This demands a recognisable taxonomy of food in the satires, which does not exist in isolation but partly derives from a critical language borrowed by the serious cook or culinary expert from

1Hor. S. 2.4; 2.8; Juv. 5.
2Some further examples can be found in Hor. S. 2.6 and Juv. 11.
natural historians and medicine; a heritage stretching back to Aristotle (and probably beyond), and forwards to the modern kitchen.

The satirist exploits the fact that gastronomy uses a common *gastrocritical* language including criteria of costliness, strangeness, foreignness, rarity, and other extraordinary properties in food. As such, he is carrying out a kind of structural analysis of gastronomy; of what it means to the satirist observer rather than to the gastronome. He notes the transformation of the natural/nutritional to the cultural/cooked. His study of food patterning is very restricted, however. He deals with one meal only, that which is served to guests with a whole complexity of aims other than simply feeding them, i.e. the 'cena'. Where an objective analyst may or may not be looking for a universal message, the satirist starts with what he knows his audience to be familiar with: a moral stance based on the principles of nutrition versus excess, traditional versus new, city versus country. He then creates his 'fieldwork' findings to fit that pattern.

The Ofellus satire, in particular, has an important function in establishing a set of criteria, some of which may already be present in Lucilius' satire, for the discussion of gastronomic matters. These criteria are chosen because they best illustrate the contrasts between necessity and naturalness, and between excess and affectation, that so interest the satirist. Once set out,
they can be redeployed to varying effect in the second book of satires, to endow the meals of Catius and Nasidienus with meaning, certain features being developed in the satires of Juvenal.

3.1.1 The uses of the language

The satirist, in describing food in some detail, chooses items of food with which to illustrate gastronomy as a symbol of immorality. To achieve this he creates meals and dishes as moral symbols that show the gulf between the proper and the improper attitude to food. He takes the worst excesses and the most telling examples, making the extraordinary seem part of everyday practice in the gastronomic world. He makes use of the 'cena' as the setting for his gastronomic symbolism, creating a 'snapshot' meal that incorporates a variety of the extra-nutritional aspects of gastronomy. This demands that the audience knows how to read the meal as a complete event, having an understanding of matters of structure, manners, guest lists, conversation, settings, and much of the social and cultural paraphernalia that goes with dining, as well as of food and drink per se.

When a meal is featured in a satire, it enables the satirist to explore the motives of those who are arranging or offering it, because the 'cenae' or 'quasi-cenae' 4

---

4 S. 2.4: while Catius seems to be 'lecturing' the satirist (Footnote continued)
described in the satires represent conscious statements of
status or character on the part of those who offer them;
that is, not Horace or Juvenal, who write them, but
Catius, Nasidienus, and Virro, who are portrayed as being
responsible for them. The satirist invites the audience to
see through the fictional host's explanation of what his
meal means to him, and therefore what he believes it means
to his guests. So the satirist describes meals in which
the host expresses a sense of his standing in the
community, and in which he uses food to give clues about
his wealth, his knowledge of his subject, and his
contacts.

Hosts in Roman verse satire are defined by their wish to
confirm (and implicitly improve) their position in the
social scale. This they may try to do by setting
themselves apart within the gastronomic group, for example
by establishing themselves as innovators, like Catius and
Nasidienus. Matters of choice and autonomy are crucial to
these two, as signs of their own individuality; but
whereas they perceive themselves as autonomous spirits we
are encouraged to see them as slaves to an ignoble
obsession. Virro is slightly different, he is depicted as
someone who has achieved a certain position in society,
which can be reinforced by delineating the gulf between
him and his clients in their respective menus at dinner.

Thus the gastronomic criteria first outlined through the

(continued)
on the minutiae of gastronomy (more accurately
'gastro-science'), he clearly has guests in mind (58-9).
Cf. Lucil. 569 (Granius' dinner party), 'illi praeciso
atque epulis capiuntur opimis!'.
character Ofellus have a crucial function in establishing the difference between food as nutrition and food as status symbol, as developed by Horace and Juvenal. These criteria enable the reader to recognise experimentation and innovation, or perversion and inversion, where they occur, and thus to gauge the nature of the criticism being aimed at the gastronome, the gastronome/host, or the powerful host in satire.

3.1.2 Specific language: the lure of the rare

As depicted in Roman verse satire, the rarity value of an item or a combination of foods is the key to its acceptability to the gastronome; whether that rarity be in terms of its being unusual, extraordinary, or innovatory in respect of dimension, condition, provenance, method of preparation. These specific principles concerning the choice and preparation of food work in isolation, but also combine to achieve the gastronome's aim of elegant variety, which guarantees his status among like-minded souls. The general principle of rarity predominantly indicates the cost, and therefore 'show-off' potential, of food and, in the case of the gastronome in satire, is based on a spurious knowledge of the natural qualities and functions of foods. By contrast, the reader, versed in the value-system outlined in 2.2 and implicit in the gastronomic satires, realises that the true principles in the choice of food are predominantly nutritional, yet at
the same time edify the soul and appease the stomach pleasingly. Horace and Juvenal, in particular, use generally similar gastronomic principles to achieve a variety of effects in the discussion of the role of gastronomy, gluttony, and the culinary arts.

Rarity or exoticism are singled out by Ofellus as areas of significance where contradictions with the proper set of values can best be drawn out. In later satires the satirist highlights contradictions with the disciplines with which gastronomy might seek to compare itself, such as the study of the nature of plants, animals and people as seen in the physical sciences, medicine, and philosophy. As will be shown, in this respect Catius’ assertions have the appearance of scientific observation, as found for example in Aristotle and transmitted by the Peripatetic tradition. He begins his lecture with an echo of the Historia Animalium on eggs, and continues in the same vein, observing phenomena, pointing out the similarities and differences in a number of plants and animals, and attempting to explain the things he sees in respect of how they affect culinary and gastronomic qualities. Whereas the philosopher’s interest in physics is secondary to his interest in ethics, and the aim of research is to seek out the true meaning of things, Catius’ pronouncements betray a confusion not only in what role and approach he is adopting, but also in the specifics of his subject, food. Horace’s Satire 2.8 shows

6 Infra, 4.3.1.
7 Hist Anim. 6.2.559a.
what happens when the gastronome tries to put misguided principles into practice. Where Catius seeks to show off his learning, Nasidienus is more concerned to show off his wealth, elegance, and control over his environment.

Juvenal's fifth satire substitutes gustatory imagery for the gastronomic detail evident in the Horace 'cena' satires. The emphasis is on the visual appearance and sensual experience of various foods as they reflect the relative status of those who enjoy or endure the meal. Virro is not characterised as a conscious gastronome (as are Catius and Nasidienus) but as a conscious host and patron, for whom gastronomic excellence goes without saying.

3.2 THE MATTER OF TASTE

Ofellus puts his finger on the essential failing of the gastronome and his elegant eating habits. Comparing peacock with pullet, he concludes:

carne tamen quamuis distat nil, hac magis illam
imparibus formis deceptum te petere!

(29-30)\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{8}The MS is doubtful on these two lines.
Clearly the taste of food is the last thing on the gastronome's mind, whereas a sensible individual might put it high on the list of criteria of judgement. In the next breath he picks out the relegation of the senses normally associated with the enjoyment of food:

unde datum sentis lupus hic Tiberinus an alto captus hiet?

The answer then comes:

... ducit te species, uideo.

(31-2, 35)

Ofellus' initial premise, as far as food is concerned, is that we should eat to satisfy hunger. In so doing, we can enjoy the best kind of seasoning, that which lies within (20-1), implying that even when the food is simple, hunger will make it taste good.

Unlike the gastronomes described by Ofellus, Catius does show an interest in questions of flavour and texture. He clearly likes his greens sweet and tasty ('dulcis') and not washed-out ('elutus', 15-16), and he advises the tenderising of fowl (17). Boar from the proper habitat is also tastier than the feeble ('iners', 41), reed-fed Laurentian. However, the improvement in taste on the standards attained by his competitors, or a difference of taste observable in foods produced under different conditions, are the things that really matter to him. To some extent, therefore, taste no longer has importance as
a sensuous experience, but is more like a testing process for the characteristics of various kinds of foods, in much the same way that 'kitchen observation' (Lee, 7)\textsuperscript{9} might have led Aristotle to state that fish which have begun to breed make good eating, whereas older fish are less palatable, and that river and lake fish are better after spawning.\textsuperscript{10} But again, while Catius may imagine himself (and his teacher) to have similar aims and intellectual status to the philosopher scientist, we see the fundamental flaw in Catius' system of values.

Qualitative terms related to taste or aroma are not particularly common in Horace's final satirical meal, served up by Nasidienus. Nor are they, for that matter, prominent in Virro's and Trebius' dinners in Juvenal's fifth satire. Nasidienus serves up sharp ('acria', 7) turnips, lettuces, radishes, skirret, fish pickle, and Coan lees as appetisers to his dinner. The sharpness is not an inherently desirable quality; rather it is important that the diners have their appetites sharpened (8-9) for what is about to come. Characteristically, the flavours served up by Nasidienus are unfamiliar. Whether they are pleasant or not is immaterial. Hence familiar foods ('avis, conchylia, piscis', 27) are served but they are,

\textsuperscript{9} Aristotle's practice in dissection is described as 'ranging, roughly speaking, from kitchen observation to deliberate investigation', as opposed to 'gustatory experiment' (ibid. 4).
\textsuperscript{10} Hist. Anim. 8.30.607b.
The one flavour directly mentioned in his sauce recipe is bitter elecampane ('inula ... amara', 51). According to Nasidienus it is a culinary innovation. This, as the reader knows, does not necessarily make it good. The few tastes that emerge from this satire are perhaps designed to disorientate.\textsuperscript{11} They certainly challenge the accepted norm without necessarily improving on it. Appropriately enough, the guests dash from the meal as if Canidia herself (95)\textsuperscript{12} had blown on the food, rendering it poisonous,\textsuperscript{13} rather than plain unpalatable.

The skewed value of flavour to the gastronome gives Juvenal's satirist cause for complaint. According to current standards, he suggests, rich foods gain their taste from the tables on which they are served (11.121-7). By implication, their food would be tainted by not being carved with the proper knife. So taste is not even an intrinsic property of food (ibid. 134-5). Juvenal, in his fifth satire is very good at suggesting what it would be like to eat the food served up to Virro and Trebius, yet does everything but use the straightforward term. Hence Trebius' oil will make his greens smell like the lamp (87-8). The satirist then further contaminates it with the vision of the ghastly Numidian cargo entering Rome on the

\textsuperscript{11} They come from the less attractive side of the taste spectrum, i.e. bitter or sharp as opposed to sweet. Cf. Mennell, 1, although, as he points out, there appears to be no evidence for innate unpalatability (ibid. 5).

\textsuperscript{12} Cf. Hor. S. 1.8.24; Epod. 5.

\textsuperscript{13} Taste is one method of telling whether a food is edible.
Tiber (88-9). The after-effects are lasting and noxious. The reader imagines the smell exuding from the pores, fending off people at the baths (90).\(^\text{14}\)

Our sources do not give much evidence of the extent of the Roman vocabulary of flavour, as compared with that available to the modern gastronome.\(^\text{15}\) Generally speaking, however, the recipes that exist tend to give an impression of cooking for impact rather than delicacy.\(^\text{16}\) However, by their very nature recipes are needed only for complex dishes. The simpler, maybe subtler dishes are less likely to have been written down. The broad range of flavours that occur include salt, salt/acetic,\(^\text{17}\) sweet,\(^\text{18}\) hot,\(^\text{19}\) smoky\(^\text{20}\) and pungent.\(^\text{21}\) Combinations of sweet and savoury, with which modern Western palates might not be comfortable, appear to have been particularly popular.

The satirist is interested in the misguided 'science' of gastronomy, rather than precise evocation of flavours. In

\(^{14}\) Cf. flights of fancy in the modern gastronomic scene. Lloyd Grossman (The Superchefs. BBC TV, 3.9.90/10.9.90) describes 'a Carmen Miranda of a pudding' and 'a Barbara Cartlandesque starter'.

\(^{15}\) Simon, 101: on champagne, 'a talented winemaker can bring out a delicate, sweet apple-gooseberry fruit and a creamy, toasted, nutty taste'.

\(^{16}\) Flower and Rosenbaum, 19, suggest on the evidence of Apicius that 'Romans abhorred the taste of any meat, fish or vegetable in its pure form. There is hardly a single recipe which does not add a sauce to the main ingredient ... which changes the original taste radically', to the extent that in some recipes no single thing can be tasted.\(^{17}\) E.g. 'garum'.

\(^{18}\) 'Passum', Pallad. 11.19; Col. 12.39. 'Defrutum', 'caroenum' and 'sapa', from different levels of reduction of must, Pallad. 11, 18. Mulsum, Col. 12.41; Plin. Nat. 22.53.113.

\(^{19}\) 'Mustard', Pl. Ps. 817.

\(^{20}\) Col. 7.8.1.

\(^{21}\) Garlic, Plin. Nat. 19.34.111-13, methods for getting rid of the smell; silphium (also 'laser' or 'laserpitum'), ibid. 15.39-16.46.
addition, taste is a by-product of the gastronomic art rather than its central aim, as far as the satiric gastronome is concerned. When he approaches a dish, we see that the question 'what does it taste like?' is devalued. He has far more important questions to ask.

3.3 WHAT DOES IT COST?

In the self-sufficient model promoted by Ofellus and the ancestors, cost should not be an issue where food is concerned. At an extreme level, poverty is a moral touchstone, being the condition of men and gods at birth, and as long as there is sufficiency of food there is no need for money. In a more practical sense, for the wealthy reader there are, according to Cicero, appropriate (beneficent or generous) and inappropriate (lavish) ways of using wealth. The theme of putting wealth to good use, outlined by Cicero (above) and Seneca, appears in Horace’s Satire 2.2. Ofellus suggests that those with the money to gourmandise should be using their wealth for civic benefit (96-105), and of course celebration food can be acceptable under the proper conditions.

The satirist therefore does not consider the question of

---

22 Supra, 1.4.1; 2.2.1.
23 Sen. Tranq. 6.5; Prov. 6.6.
24 Tusc. 5.32.91.
25 Off. 2.15-19.55-64, shows of wealth such as public banquets and doles of meat versus hospitality. See also Tusc. 5.34.97.
26 Beat. 3.3; 22.3-4; 24.5; Ben. 1.11.5; Ep. 87.36; 120.2-3.
whether there are occasions on which one might properly entertain expensively. He maintains that all excessive spending on food is fundamentally misguided. Moreover, cost is not merely a matter of market value, into which (put simply) is built the cost of sourcing or production, transportation, and vendor's overheads. It has at least two meanings to the gastronome when 'shopping' for food. Price is a calculable measure of how 'good' an item of food is. But the price is also a criterion of quality in its own right, meaning that the practice of gastronomy has reached the ridiculous stage that an item is not only expensive because it is good, but good because it is expensive. This, at least, is how the satirists paint the financial implications of gastronomy and gluttony.

Apocryphal stories of the enormous amounts of money spent on individual items of food abound in Latin literature. In satire, specific prices are given rarely, but there are plenty of indicators of the phenomenally expensive. Ofellus is not specific, but characterises the expensive peacock as costing gold (Hor. S. 2.2.25). Catius bemoans the wickedness of spending 3000 sesterces on fish and then cramping it up on a dish (2.4.76-7). Nasidienus does not have to mention money, his whole meal screams the misplaced use of wealth. As the satirist sighs mischievously, 'divitias miseris!' (2.8.18).

The introductory section of Juvenal's fourth satire deals with the 6000 sesterces that Crispinus is supposed to have paid for a single mullet; that is, as he puts it, 1000 sesterces per pound. The practice of naming prices seems to have grown out of a need to quantify an abstract,
in this case moral degeneracy. Hence Pliny uses the example of Asinius Celer, who during Caligula's reign spent 8000 sesterces on a single mullet. More than this, he describes a neat scale of costs to quantify and make vivid contemporary excess. According to him, people used to protest that a cook could be bought for more than a horse. Now, he says, it costs three horses to buy a cook and three cooks to buy a fish.

All of the examples mentioned concern fish. All of the figures quoted are round numbers. Fish seems to have a particular fascination for the satirist as a symbol of the exotic. There are the obvious reasons: it could not be easily transported in its fresh state, and was therefore more likely to be available in towns or at the coast. Also it could not be cultivated or home-produced unless you happened to possess a private fish-pond. The fish-pond thus came to be symbolic of a particular kind of affluence and eccentricity, described by rhetoricians and writers as contrary to the natural order of things. Varro describes a number of extravagant country villa ponds, criticising them for being decorative rather than functional. With marked irony his speaker points out that Hortensius with all his magnificent ponds has to send

---

27 Compare this with the pragmatic definition of meals by cost, as seen in sumptuary legislation. Lucil. 1353 [Paul. Fest. 38.1], 'centenariae cenae' referring to the Lcinian Law (also 1200). The fact that three mullets were bought for 30,000 sesterces in Tiberius' reign is seen as a reason for the passing of a sumptuary law (Suet. Tib. 34). Plin. Nat. 9.81.172, Hortensius' ponds at Baui are reputed to have been something of a tourist attraction. Agr. 3.17.2-10.
out to town for fish, a distance of three or four miles (Hooper, 525):

illum sciam semper in cenam pisces Puteolos mittere emptum solitum...

3.17.5

Cicero’s frequent jibes at ‘piscinarii’ are well known.30

In Satire 2.2 we see a predominance of fish and shellfish in the examples picked out by Ofellus: oysters (‘ostrea’, 21), scar (‘scarus’, 22), pike (‘lupus Tiberinus’, 31), mullet (‘mullus’, 34), and turbot (‘rhombus’, 42). These outnumber all other types of food.31 He also reminds the reader of his Epicurean model,32 pointing out that a celebration is not an excuse to send to town for fish (120):

‘For it is not in continuous drinkings and revellings, nor in the satisfaction of lusts, nor the enjoyment of fish and other luxuries of the wealthy table which produce a pleasant life...’

Epic. Men. 130 (Bailey, 89)

30 Att. 1.20.3.10; 1.19.6.9; cf: 1.18.6.8; 2.1.7.8; 2.9.1.14.
31 Grouse (22), peacock (23), pullet (24), boar (42), stork (40), and gulls (51). The last two are particularly ridiculous.
32 Cf. infra, 2.2.1, A Stoic might have expressed a similar view. Sen. Ep. 18, 7-8.
In the letter to Menoeceus, fish is the only luxury food mentioned, and as such takes on symbolic value as the opposite of simple food. Hence Ofellus uses the general term 'pisces', rather than alluding to a particular breed or species, as outlined earlier in the same satire. He could have sent to town for any one of the exotic foods mentioned earlier, but doing without fish also represents to his audience that the meal is missing a whole course.

That extraordinary markets do develop for single luxury items is not so surprising. Prices paid for certain works of art today appear unreal against the cost of property. But the fish is the supreme example of the luxury item. It is ephemeral, it has to be eaten or it will go off, and it can only be transported over long distances with great care. Away from coasts and rivers, it is therefore a premium item. It cannot be passed on to an heir, and it can only live on in the minds of those who saw it, or through being recorded in literature. It is not generally big enough to be shared among a large group of diners. These factors combined make it a powerful symbol of having money to burn, for both the satirists and other Roman writers.

This does not mean to say that fish was intrinsically rare, or exclusively the food of the wealthy. It was a valuable source of protein in coastal regions.  

---

33 Plin. Nat. 32.10.20, a sumptuary law, supposedly dating to Numa's reign, apparently to prevent stripping of Rome's fish markets for sacrificial meals. The source, Hemina, dates to the 140s BC.

34 Plin. Nat. 32.53.142, names 144 species of sea creatures, many of them native to Italian waters. Ov. Hal. 82-118, on the range of sea fishing available: deep sea, shallow and in-between.
Furthermore, the entrails of shoaling fish such as mackerel, were the basis for the ubiquitous 'garum' or liquamen. The luxuriousness of fish depends on the rejection of the readily available in favour of less easily accessible species: those which swim singly or in small groups, those which demand individual baskets or hook and line, and those which only rarely get caught up in nets. It also demands that they be eaten away from the place where they were caught, or that a special environment be created in which they can breed, the fish-pond.

Apart from food, there were other aspects of dining that guaranteed that the amount a person spent on entertaining was clearly displayed. Dining-rooms provide an opportunity to show off elegant villas, furniture, wall paintings, and other related items. The quality and numbers of servants used can be surveyed by guests, as can the food and wines themselves, together with the vessels in which they are served. The key is having guests who know the value of such items. The satirists, however, see such practices as fraught with irony. They describe how the money could have been better spent.

Horace, Persius and Juvenal all take the effects of

35 Cf. Geop. 20.46.1-6 (quoted in Flower and Rosenbaum, 22).
36 Pompeii II.11.2, the dining-room of House of Loreius Tibutinus had 'a direct view across a little bridge to a small tetrastyle temple with many jetting fountains' (Jashemski, 46).
37 Ibid. 92 (Pompeii I.vii.10-2/19), House of the Ephebe, outdoor masonry triclinium with painted sides, in front of which stood the statue of the Ephebe, made into a gandelabra.
38 Ibid. 333.
spending too much money on food to its logical conclusions: poverty, shame, and starvation. These are contrasted starkly with the voluptuous style of life which the glutton or gastronome desires. The satirist's final warning to the glutton, for example, is that financial ruin is unavoidable, bringing shame and a suicide bid, but the poor wretch hasn't the money to buy a rope (98-9). It is underlined by the fact that these words come from Ofellus, a displaced farmer who can live contentedly despite financial disaster (133-5).

Persius' and Juvenal's Satires both make a point of emphasising good management of personal finances. The central issues of Persius' sixth satire are the relinquishment of cares about property and financial one-upmanship (12-18). The reactions described are extreme: austerity of diet (19-21) and the frittering away of inheritances on food (21-2). His examples continue along culinary lines: turbots (23), hen thrushes (24), dates and pepper from abroad (39), and goose liver (71). These are described as expensive, rather than being judged on purely gastronomic principles.

Juvenal's eleventh satire contains a circular discussion of spending on food. According to him, as in Horace, gluttons waste their time spending and sniffing out cash, and end their days in penury, thus dying as they lived:

...digito mendicat Polio nudo.
non praematuri cineres nec funus acerbum
luxuriae, sed morte magis metuenda senectus.
(43-5)
The satirist's maxim 'know thyself' is interpreted in this context as 'know the state of your finances'. What, after all, is funnier than a poverty-stricken Apicius (3), and why hanker after mullet if you are only worth a gudgeon (35-8)?

3.4 HOW MUCH AND HOW MANY?

Seneca, in a vivid passage in the Epistles, evokes the twilight world of the glutton. He describes their unnatural waking hours, filled with multi-course dinners. They are not banqueting, he says, they are attending their own funeral banquets. Implicit in his criticism is the notion that money does not only buy more food, it makes accessible a greater variety of foods. Likewise gastronomy and gourmandism promote both. Gluttony as such is only a target for satire as it relates to gourmandising. By comparison, gastronomic variety as attacked by the satirists is a particularly fertile subject, manifesting itself in a number of forms. First there is the dividing up of the meal into a number of courses. Each course can be made up of a number of dishes, and those dishes in turn may be made up of a number of ingredients. This provides the satirist with a set of permutations for describing gastronomy and gluttony.

39'Gobius' (another fish 'exemplum'), Ov. Hal. 128 (130); Plin. Nat. 9.83.175; 32.53.146, among the 'rhomborum generis pessi'; Mart. 13.88.
40 Ep. 122.3 '(epulis) in multa fericula discoctis.'
3.4.1 Gluttony

Socrates, Epicurus, and Ofellus\(^41\) said that natural hunger can be produced by exercise and can be satisfied with simple food such as bread and water (or bread and salt); the implication being that there are natural limits to appetite as well as to nutritional requirements. Therefore satisfaction cannot be improved upon by luxurious or exotic foods, or by large quantities of food. As Ofellus points out, an excess of food is not an aid to enjoyment. If anything, it brings a decrease in and a removal from the true pleasure of eating:

\[
\text{pinguem uitiis albumque neque ostrea}
\]
\[
\text{nec scarus aut poterit peregrina iuuare lagois.} \quad (21-2)
\]

In stark contrast to the 'hunger through exertion' regime advocated by the countryman, there is nothing natural about the appetites catered for by Catius and Nasidienus. They deal in the science of stimulants, perceiving the ability to eat and drink as much as possible as one of the aims of the gastronome. Thus Catius speaks of creating appetite afresh in mid-meal:

\[^{41}\text{Supra, 1.4.1; 2.2.1.}\]
\[^{42}\text{Cf. Epic. Men. 130 (Bailey, 89), 'plain savours bring us a pleasure equal to a luxurious diet'}.\]
Even worse, Nasidienus assumes guests' palates to be worn out by a life of inferior\textsuperscript{43} eating before embarking on his new and exciting delicacies:

\begin{quote}
\textit{in primis Lucanus aper; leni fuit Austro captus, ut aiebat cenae pater; acria circum rapula, lactucae, radices, qualia lassum peruellunt stomachum, siser, allec, faecula Coa.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{(2.8.6-9)}

This perhaps adds an extra edge to the satirist's original request to Fundanius:

\begin{quote}
d\textit{a, si graue non est,}
quae prima iratum uentrem placauerit esca.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{(2.8.4-5)}

Perhaps this innocent mention of the aggrieved stomach contains a prediction of the horrors to come, a combination of novelty, quantity, and variety.

\textbf{3.4.2 Variety}

\textsuperscript{43}That is, all other offerings of 'le monde gastronomique' as opposed to simple food.
The exemplary country meals are carefully delineated as individual items, with no idea of preparation or even seasoning. At most these meals consist of three courses, none with more than two items per course and none with ingredients combined. Ofellus' imaginary gourmand suffers from the 'problem meal':

As if to bring the prophecy to life, in 2.4 Catius introduces separate food items, some general, but most specific. Nasidienus' meal offers named food items and four wines, not including the ingredients of a

44 Hor. S. 2.2.121-2; 2.6.84-6; Juv. 11. 65-73.
45 Rudd 1973, 79.
46 Eggs (12), cabbage (15), hen (18), Falernian wine (19), mushroom (20), mulberry (20), honey (24), mulsum (26), mussel (28), ordinary shellfish (28), sorrel (29), Coan wine (29), purple-fish (32), giant mussel (32), oyster (33), sea-urchin (34), scallop (34), fish (37), sauce (38), boar (41), roe (43), hare (44), fowl (45), confectionery (47), wine (49), oil (50), Massic wine (51), Surrentine wine (55), pigeon's egg (56), prawn (58), snail (59), bacon (60), sausage (60), compound sauce (63), simple sauce (64), reduced wine (65), brine (65), herbs (67), saffron (68), Venafran oil (69), apple (70), grape (71), wine lees (73), fish sauce (73), white pepper (74), black salt (74).
47 Boar (6), turnip (8), lettuce (8), radish (8), skirwort (9), fish sauce (9), Coan lees (9), cake (4), plaice (29), turbot (30), honey-apple (31), lamprey (42), prawn (42), crane (87), salt (87), flour (87) fig-fattened goose liver (88), hare (89), blackbird (91), pigeon (91).
complicated sauce and general types of food such as fowl, fish, shellfish, bread and sauce. These arrive in six or so waves. The precise arrangement of courses cannot easily be discerned from Fundanius' description of the meal, which groups items together so as to give the impression of quantity and diversity. He guides us from game to fowl to fish, more fish, yet more fish and then back to fowl and game. We must assume that there would have been more to come had the guests not rushed out in mid-meal, just as Nasidienus was trying to pick up the pieces of his disrupted dinner-party.

Juvenal's satirist in the programmatic first satire complains that the wealthy patron dines alone off seven courses. This prophecy is effectively brought to life in Virro's meal in Satire 5, where the wealthy host is effectively eating 'alone' in the company of his guests. In this case eight separate dishes compare with the measly four given to Trebius. Each item is presented singly, with a touch of garnish as the only hint of preparation.

---

48 Caecuban (15), Chian (15), Alban (16), Falernian (16). 49 Oil (45), mackerel garum (46), wine (47-9), white pepper (49), vinegar (49), rocket (51), elecampane (51).
50 Possibly comprising seven courses: lobster with asparagus (80-2), mullet (92), lamprey (99), goose liver (114), capon, (115) boar and truffles (116), mushrooms (147) with apples (147, 150).
51 Crayfish with egg (84), eel or pike (103-4), toadstools (146), and apples (153).
3.4.3 Subtle combination versus agglomeration

Clearly, the argument of the satirists is against complexity in the preparation and serving of food, the extremes of which are best summed up in the recipe; gastronomy in microcosm. A feature of Horace's Satires 2.4 and 2.8 is the favourite sauce recipe of the respective gastronomes (2.4.63-69; 2.8.45-53). The ingredients are set out in the table below to show points of similarity and divergence of content and emphasis.
### TABLE11: CATIUS' AND NASIDIENUS' RECIPES FOR SAUCE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.4</th>
<th>2.8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'dulci...olivo' (64)</td>
<td>'oleo quod prima pressit cella' (45-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'pressa Uenafranae quod baca/ Uenafri/ remisit oliuae' (69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'pingui...mero' (65)</td>
<td>'uino quinquenni, uerum/ citra mare nato,/ dum coquitur (cocto Chium sic conuenit, ut non/ hoc magis ullam aliud)' (47-9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'muriaque...decebit/ non alla quam qua Byzantia' (65-6)</td>
<td>'illutos Curtillus echinos,/ ut melius muria quod testa marina remittat' (52-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'sectis herbis' (67)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Corycioque croco' (68)</td>
<td>'garo de sucis piscis Hiberi' (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'aceto,/ quod Methymnaeam uitio mutauerit uuam' (49-50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'pipere albo' (49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'erucas uiridis, inulas...amaras' (51)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are several striking features in these two extracts. First, their presence in the satires at all. Although the satirists are fond of describing their victim's failings in some detail, it is unusual to go into an esoteric subject so deeply. Secondly, while the recipes are very similar in general detail, there is a marked development from Catius to Nasidienus. Although Catius seems to promise a compound sauce ('duplex', 63), he in fact gives the recipe for single sauce ('simplex', 64). Nasidienus adds more possibilities and variations; his recipe is more a show of erudition than technique.

The two gastronomes are explicit not only about ingredients, but about cooking methods. Catius has things mixed up (67), boiled (67), and left to stand (68). Nasidienus goes a step further, having ingredients added while the mixture is boiling (48), or giving an alternative version, or an additional complication, if the mixture has already been cooked (48). Neither specifies quantities. In the satirists' time the serving, preparation and cooking of food was labour-intensive, physically demanding, and time-consuming. Take the various cooking methods seen in the satires: boiling, baking, and roasting. Constant attention would be required to keep ovens and fires hot. Roasting meat would have to

52 Somewhat appropriate to his characterisation as someone who can never quite deliver what he promises.
53 The Apicius books rarely give quantities. When they do, they can be precise ('scripulus', 1.18.1; 'cyathus', 4.2.4,5,8,9; 'uncia', 1.10.1) or approximate or relative ('pugnus', 2.10.1; 'modicus', 4.2.2; 'plusculus', 1.15.2).
54 Sen. Ep. 47.5-8, the number of slaves involved in one meal.
be turned and basted, perhaps over a matter of hours. The application of the intellect to these skills, in the form of gastronomy, might have caused complex and ambivalent attitudes about this discipline properly belonged to. Therefore the gastronome has to walk a tightrope between well informed interest, with a view to quality control and innovation in the output from his kitchen, and what would today be termed a 'hands-on' approach.

The recipe has a crucial role in this grey area. While in a practical sense it was an aide-memoire passed on from generation to generation of cooks, it could also be a declaration of a gastronome's identity within the culinary competitive arena, as can be seen in the naming of recipes in the Apicius collection. A number of the dishes seem to be named after the individuals who created them, or perhaps are named after those whose style they follow, such as the body of 'Apicianae', the 'patella Lucretiana', the 'minutal Terentinum', and the 'minutal Matianum'. These are not to be confused with honorific dishes, probably named after those for whom they were invented (or retrospectively as being appropriate to certain individuals), such as 'pultes Iulianae', 'pisa Vitelliana', 'pullus Varianus', 'porcellus Flaccianus', and 'porcellus Traianus'.

55 4.1.2; 2.14; 3.3; 5.4.2; 6.8.1; 7.4.2.
56 4.2.25.
57 4.8.2; 8.1.10.
58 4.3.4.
59 5.1.1.
60 5.3.5,9; 8.7.7.
61 6.9.11.
62 8.7.8 (surely not a reference to Horace as 'Epicuri de grege porcum', Ep. 1.4 1).
63 8.7.16.
In satire the recipe is used to show how Catius and Nasidienus overstep the boundaries of gastronomy by voicing out loud (and trying to make a reputation through) the culinary basis for a recipe. The item they choose is a sauce, a 'basic' in culinary terms, but they offer in each case a 'twist' on the simple version. It is through this 'twist' that the satirist exposes them.

The very fact that the sauces are so overwrought, in the satiric context, might have been cause enough to mock Catius and Nasidienus. In culinary terms, as can be judged from Apicius, neither recipe is particularly strange in terms of the combination and variety of ingredients; it is the accompanying detail that is particularly telling. First there are the similarities in the two recipes; both demand a base of oil and wine. Catius' Venafran oil is added at the very end of the process, as extra ('insuper', 68) to the sweet oil required for the simple sauce. It is not simply Venafran oil, it is 'juice yielded by the pressed berry of the Venafran olive' — poetic comment that adds nothing to the recipe, but everything to the characterisation. Nasidienus also uses an adjectival clause: his Venafran oil has to be from the first pressing. His five-year-old wine is not simply Italian; by way of poetic periphrasis, it comes from 'this side of the sea', showing that he is not a slave to the exotic. On

64 Apic. 1.15.1-2; 16.1-2; 17.1-2; 2.2.4; 3.4.1; 9.1.1,3,5; 2.1,2; 3.2; 4.1,4; 6; 7; 8.2.5; 9; 10, 3,7; 11; 12; 10.1; 2; 3; 4. Chapters 9 and 10 are predominantly concerned with sauces for fish.
65 Var. R. 1.2.6; Plin. Nat. 15.8; Strab. Geog. 5.3.10, recognised to be the best, it came from Samnium in Campania. Cf. the modern vogue for 'extra-virgin' oil.
culinary grounds he also chooses to do away with the salty element. It is no surprise that the brine for Catius' recipe has to come from somewhere special, Byzantium. The speaker, however, would probably rather not be reminded that this variety smells high ('putuit', 66).

3.5. IS IT NEW?

Horace homes in on the fact that gastronomy and 'hostmanship', like cookery are competitive arts. He illustrates this with a characterisation of Catius and Nasidienus as individuals in search of the innovation that will make their reputation as trend-setters. By normal Roman standards this is a perverse way to achieve posterity, as we learn from Ofellus' scornful treatment of Gallonius the auctioneer, who became famous and influential for serving an enormous sturgeon (46-8), and of Rufus the praetor, who introduced the gullible city to the idea of turbot and stork (49-50).

In Satire 2.4 we are given deeper insight into the search for originality. Catius and his breed base their observations on the true nature of things. Just as the philosopher-scientist seeks out observable differences as a means of classification, Catius differentiates himself from the crowd of culinary experts through his eye for the peculiarities of his raw material. He announces his

66Cf. Lucilius 1238-40 [Cic. Fin. 2.8.24].
borrowed wisdom as 'noua praecepta' (2). However, he is addressing a basically conservative audience who reject the slavish fashionability of Roman youth. For them 'nouus' means 'newfangled' in this context.

For the sake of being different, Catius changes the accepted norm or inverts it, juggling around superficially with standard principles. Occasionally the inversion is visible:

primus et inuenior piper album cum sale nigro
incretum puris circum posuisse catillis.

(74-5)

There is a further affectation in the 'puri catilli' in which the seasonings are not only served but sifted ('incretum'). He makes white black and black white, a suitable metaphor for his gastronomic approach as a whole. Not that these condiments are per se without parallel in the ancient sources; it is the completeness and unnecessary nature of the inversion that interests the reader. Catius refers simply to the colour swap, without justifying it on culinary or even medicinal grounds. In fact, in leaving his salt dark he is going against the grain of popular opinion. When salt is artificially made it is 'niger', and natural salt comes in shades varying from white to yellow, red, and purple. In fact, from a

67 'Catillus', diminutive of 'catinus' (Wickham, 167: "little salt-cellars").
68 The colour is imparted from the wood used in the production process, Plin. Nat. 31.40.83.
69 Ibid. 85-6.
comment made by Pliny it is clear that salt was judged according to its whiteness.\textsuperscript{70} White pepper was known; Columella mentions its use in recipes for digestives.\textsuperscript{71} According to Pliny it had a milder flavour than the black variety.\textsuperscript{72}

Later on, in suggesting the yolks of pigeons' eggs for collecting the sediment of Surrentine wine, Catius puts innovation before sense. The specification of pigeon is a silly detail that compounds the mistake of using yolks. In a similar process, the 'bleaching' of dark wine, other culinary sources use egg-whites or bean flour.\textsuperscript{73}

At Nasidienus' meal, the guests have innovation thrust upon them. The stooge Nomentanus is present, to make sure they miss nothing of significance (25-6). They are told that they are being treated to flavours which are not simply new ('ingustata', 30), like the turbot entrails, but far different ('longe dissimiles', 28). Nasidienus preens himself on his own originality, showing how to put elecampane and rocket into sauce (51-2). Furthermore, he is characterised as being all too aware of the competition he faces in the gastronomic world, even naming Curtillus as one who differs from him in practice (52-3). Indeed, it is the fear of being upstaged or of failing

\textsuperscript{70}Nat. 31.41.85, 'suauissimus omnium Tarentinus atque condissimus est'. Cat. Agr. 88 has a recipe for bleaching 'sal popularis'; Hor. Epý 2.2.60, 'sal niger' referring to "Bion's rough wit.\textsuperscript{71}\textsuperscript{12.59}, 4-5.\textsuperscript{72}Nat. 12.14.27.\textsuperscript{73}Apic. 1.5, 'uinum ex atro candidum facies'; Pallad. 11.14.9-10. Compare the modern use of eggshells and egg-whites to clarify consomme. Bean flour was known as a clarifying agent in the process Catius is describing (cf. André 1965, ad, Apic. 1.c.)
that adds to the effectiveness of Balatro's mock sympathy for the worries of the host (64-74). For if the meal flops, so does Nasidienus' reputation in the gastronomic and social milieu in which he moves.

By comparison, Virro's menu is one of consolidation rather than innovation. From where he stands there is more value in being seen to have the best or the most of what is commonly accepted to be good, rather than in trying out new ideas that will impress only those on the 'cutting edge' of gastronomy. Hence his food is described in comparative terms (99, 114-15) rather than in the absolutes of innovation.

3.6 WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

The general precepts of gastronomy are useful to the satirist inasmuch as they remove food from a purely nutritional frame of reference. That is, function ceases to have anything to do with an object's value. Ofellus, in particular, complains that the gastronome assigns to his favourite subject a role in a system where status and show are the desired goals. Hence details of presentation and serving can start to take precedence. As Ofellus says:

\begin{verbatim}
corruptus uanis rerum, quia ueneat auro
rara auis et picta pandat spectacula caudal74
tamquam ad rem attineat quicquam. num uesceris ista
quam laudas pluma? cocto num adest honor idem?75
\end{verbatim}
The peacock is the perfect example to illustrate this point. It was reared for its ability to delight, and had a reputation for admiring itself. But looks are not enough for it to find favour with Cicero, who judged them useless.

Catius would have us believe that the look of an item of food can tell him something about its quality and properties, a technique borrowed from Aristotle, for whom visible differences were the key to understanding the natures of plants and animals. Catius determines the taste and sex of an egg from its shape; Aristotle could only manage the latter. He is not swayed simply by appearances, though, as he is keen to point out. Apples from Tiburtina may look nicer, but they are inferior in taste to those from Picenum. These touches of common sense, presented as brilliant originality, are typical of the characterisation of Catius. Ironically, when the look of a type of food might be helpful, for example in identifying dangerous mushrooms, he chooses to rely on where they were grown (20-1). Celsus' suggestion would seem to be infinitely more sensible:

74Ov. Fast. 6.177.
75The satirist draws out the misplaced sense of 'laus' and 'honor'. Juv. 15.9-13 extends the joke of food as something to be worshipped.
76Col. 8.1, 3, 8; Mart. 13.70.1, pronounces it a shame to deliver such a beautiful bird to a cruel cook.
77Fin. 3.5.18.
78Hist. Anim. 6.2.559a.
ipsi (fungi inutiles) uero hi et specie quidem discerni possunt ab utilibus et cocturae genere idonei fieri.
(5.27.12)

3.6.1 Size

According to Ofellus, the gastronome is dazzled by the extraordinary and the superfluous. This places a premium on items which are odd or startling in appearance; so large or magnificent specimens of familiar foods, as well as new or unfamiliar types, command high prices and attract the interest of the gastronomic innovator. The size, of course, physically embodies the massive expense of buying it and the grand aspirations of the buyer:

laudas, insane, trilibrem
mullum in singula quem minuas pulmenta necesse est.
ducit te species, uideo; quo pertinet ergo
proceros odisse lupos? quia scilicet illis
maiorum natura modum dedit, his breue pondus.
(2.2.33-7)

Catius is interested in the factors that influence the dimensions of particular kinds of shellfish (30-4) — with no mention of the flavour. He rails against cramping a sprawling great fish in a tiny dish (76-7), entirely missing the point that he should not have been thinking of spending 3000 sesterces on a fish in the first place.
By way of confirmation of Catius' tenets of 'good' taste, Nasidienus uses art to imitate life, serving up a lamprey stretched out on a dish, moreover with prawns swimming round it (42-3).\textsuperscript{80} Pliny\textsuperscript{81} describes the lamprey as 'serpent-like'. It would have been impressive, coiling round the dish. Story has it they were identifiable enough as individuals to be kept as pets.\textsuperscript{82}

Juvenal's satirist employs dimension, scale, and the idea of wholeness to reflect the relative status of the protagonists in his food satires. He makes use of the phenomenon of the apocryphal fish, in this case Crispinus' six pound mullet which preludes Domitian's fabulous turbot in the fourth satire (15-6, 39, 45). The turbot is too big for the net, too big for the Adriatic,\textsuperscript{83} too big for the sea, and too big for an ordinary fish-pond.\textsuperscript{84} In fact it is too big to be natural, meaning that it is an 'omen' (125).\textsuperscript{85}

Virro, the monstrous host in the fifth satire is served a huge lobster:

\begin{quote}
aspice quam longo distinguat pectore lancem
quae fertur domino squilla, et quibus undique saepa
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{79}The reader thinks, 'how could Catius have that kind of money anyway?' He is, of course, echoing the words of his source.
\textsuperscript{80}{In patina porrecta' being thrown into prominence by enjambement.
\textsuperscript{81}Nat. 32.5.14.
\textsuperscript{82}Ibid. 172.
\textsuperscript{83}It rivalled the Pontic turbot in size (44).
\textsuperscript{84}Meaning that it must have come from the Imperial fishponds (50-1).
\textsuperscript{85}Not unlike Crispinus, a 'monstrum', 'a prodigy portending evil' (Ferguson 2, 159 n.2).
asparagis qua despiciat conuiuia cauda, 
dum uenit excelsi manibus sublata ministri. 

(5.80-3)

This contrasts with Trebius' crab, squeezed to one side of its tiny plate by half an egg (84-5). The satirist's description sums up both the look and scale of the dish, and the oppression of its recipient. Virro's meal continues in the same vein. His mullet is from Corsica or Sicily because the home waters have been fished out of big specimens, (92-6) and his lamprey is 'quae maxima uenit gurgite de Siculo' (99-100). He gets a huge goose liver (114), a capon the size of a goose (114-5), and a boar worthy of Meleager's blade (115-16). Finally, his truffles have been enlarged by thunder (116-8), and Trebius' plate of toadstools cannot measure up to his single imperial-sized mushroom (146-8).

In order to appreciate size, it is important that the item is kept whole to the moment of serving. As Ofellus points out, the glutton likes to see the whole thing, even in the knowledge that it will have to be cut up into portions. In the first satire Juvenal concretises the idea:

\[
\text{quanta est gula quae sibi totos ponit apros.}
\]

(140-1)

\[86\text{Carried in on high to emphasise its superiority, not only to other dishes, but to the guests themselves.}\]

\[87\text{Hor. S. 2.2.33-4.}\]
This is further underlined in the inclusion of the carver as an essential member of the dinner staff\textsuperscript{88} in Juvenal's eleventh satire. The boar, antelope, Scythian fowls, tall flamingoes, and Gaetulian gazelles (136-41) cannot possibly be eaten whole, but their dismemberment has to take place at table, rather than in the kitchen.

3.6.2 Presentation

The gastronome's concern with presentation does not limit itself to individual dishes. To do justice to the care and consideration taken over the choice of food, it has to be served in the appropriate elegant circumstances. To the satirist these things are an added distraction; to the gastronome they are essential. Learn the benefits of the simple life, says Ofellus:

\begin{center}
non inter lances mensasque nitentis,  
cum stupet insanis acies fulgoribus et cum  
acclinis falsis animus meliora recusat.
\end{center}

(2.2.4-6)

Catius completes his quasi-lecture with some advice on hygiene (78-9) and cleanliness (80-4). He recommends the use of basic cleaning equipment, and is shocked at the thought of sweeping a mosaic with a mucky broom or putting

\textsuperscript{88}Cf. Sen. Ep. 47.7: even worse, those who carve, but not for a living.
unwashed covers on tapestries. The advice is so basic as to be laughable, and perhaps even then is misjudged.\textsuperscript{89}

In \textit{Satire} 2.6, where Horace relates the meals of the town mouse and the country mouse, particular importance is placed on matters of presentation. In the country the mice stretch out on fresh straw (83).\textsuperscript{90} The town mouse has his companion stretch out on a purple cover (106-7); he acts as serving-boy, even to the point of sampling dishes for his guest (107-9). By paying special attention to the niceties of dining, what might be considered the exclusively human gloss, the satirist heightens the anthropomorphic humour of the description.

Nasidienus takes the peripheral detail of dining a stage further, turning his meal into something of a 'production number'. His table is wiped with a purple cloth\textsuperscript{91} by a loin-clothed serving-boy (10-1). His wine is processed in as if at a religious ceremony (13-15),\textsuperscript{92} and there is a canopy stretched over the table which collapses at the high point of the meal (54-5).\textsuperscript{93}

While Catius bemoans slaves with dirty hands, Juvenal conjures up the bony fingers of the Mauretanian waiter, who, with the Gaetulian groom, is the sinister attendant to Trebius and his like in \textit{Satire} 5 (52-5). Virro, however, is attended by the 'flos Asiae', who is young,

\textsuperscript{89}Infra, 4.3.4.
\textsuperscript{90}A laudable practice, but perhaps echoing the cleanliness important to Catius.
\textsuperscript{91}Cf. 2.6.106-7.
\textsuperscript{92}Similar to the basket-bearers at the rites of Demeter, 1.3.10.
\textsuperscript{93}The napkin, which Catius found so essential (2.4.81), here comes in handy for Varius to stifle his laughter with (2.8.63-4).
beautiful, aloof, and expensive (56-62). Where waiting staff warranted only a passing mention in Horace's food satires, they are integral to the atmosphere of the meals conjured up in Juvenal's satire. They are part and parcel of the character of the meal, reflecting the status of the diners. More than this, they are the weapons of Virro's cruelty, ever present to ensure that the guests do not pop the jewels out of their gold beakers (39-41), if they get them, or help themselves to the wrong bread. Like the slaves, the accoutrements of dining are essential to the social friction between patron and client. The crockery and napkins quite literally become weapons and bandages, after the imagined battle between servants and freedmen (26-9). 94

In Juvenal's eleventh satire the account of what the city eats begins with the table on which the food is served, the resplendent metalware in which it is served (100-16), and the couches on which the diners recline (93-9, 117-29). The satirist then moves on to the professional carver, and compares his unsophisticated serving-boy with the decadent foreign slaves of the fashionable (136-61). Finally, there is a lurid picture of the kinds of 'exotic' dancers he will not have at his 'rustic' dinner (162-75). The section of Satire 11 from lines 100-175 illustrates the 'meal' at its furthest remove from food or nutritional values. It is described purely as an opportunity to show off material wealth and indulge the sensual passions.

94 Infra, 6.3.2.
3.7. WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Provenance was and still is a crucial aspect of gastronomic lore. Beluga caviar, Dijon mustard, Scottish salmon are all famed as best of their kind. Greek gastronomic writers in particular devoted whole works to a cook's tour, as it were, of the world's best sources of quality foods, and this type of literature was satirised by Ennius in his *Hedyphagetica*. The only fragment remaining of this work concerns where to find certain varieties of fish and shellfish.⁹⁵

In the contrast between town and country, luxury foods are partly defined as not being home-produced. Therefore Ofellus, in his only comment on city food within the description of his simple meal, emphasises that he does not send to town for fish when he has a visitor:

\[
\text{bene erat non piscibus urbe petitis.}
\]

Clearly, Horace is aiming his satire at those who would consider sending to town for extras. In this context 'town' means the town markets, to which goods come that are superfluous to the producer's requirements. That producer might be local, or might be foreign.

The obsession with origins forms part of Ofellus' criticism; he explains that the choosy man will refuse all but Hymettan honey and Falernian wine, and expects his

⁹⁵Frags. 1-11, pp. 408-11.
pike to have been caught 'between the two bridges'. He sees concern with provenance as affectation. To him it does not matter where a fish (for example) was caught, because there is no way of telling the difference by taste alone; and even if you could, the criteria of choice would be erroneous.

So, for the gastronome, the correct provenance can serve two purposes, as a guarantee of quality and as a 'trade mark' for the innovator. In the first instance, choosing by name by-passes all the problems of individual research and helps to bind the gastronomic community; it also brings a guarantee of uniform quality. In the second case, the claim to have found something new in a certain place gives the innovative gastronome instant credibility and identity within the competitive field.

Catius is a professional name-dropper. He has reasons for being meticulous about the origins of his food, believing (unlike Ofellus) that items from different places have perceptibly and crucially different qualities. For example:

Picenis cedunt pomis Tiburtia suco;

nam facie praestant. uenuncula conuenit ollis;
rectius Albanam fumo duraueris uuam.

(2.4.70-2)
Where his food comes from is often predictable,

murice murice Baiano melior Lucrina peloris, ostrea Circeis, Miseno oriuntur echini, pectinibus patulis iactat se molle Tarentum.

(32-34)

The quality of shellfish from these resort areas (and others) is well attested; however, Catius comes at his subject as a 'pseudo-scientist':

lubrica nascentes implent conchylia lunae.

(30)

This is as spurious in Horace's time as it was to Lucilius:

luna alit ostrea et implet echinos, muribus fibras et iecur addit...

(1201-2)

He specifies precisely which area is best, condescendingly implying that the competition is misguided if it imagines that there are other possible sources of good shellfish:

---

99 Lucil. 1210, 'murex marina'.
100 Juv. 4.120; Plin. Nat. 32.60.62.
101 Common, 'uiles', meaning of unspecified provenance, shellfish will, by contrast, do as a laxative (28).
102 Gel. 20.8.4.
103 His examples range from Tarentum in the south to Misenum in Latium. Plin. Nat. 32.60.61, oysters like to be moved around.
sed non omne mare est generosae fertile testae

His reason for choosing these varieties is their outstanding size as compared with those from other places; but he is not comparing like with like (32). By contrast, a natural historian might use provenance as an identifying feature in his observations of the natural world, but as one of many criteria of analysis.

Catius' favourite kind of boar comes from Umbria rather than Laurentia (40-2). He seems to put their relative qualities down to habitat and feeding habits, perhaps guessing that an animal which feeds on sedge and reeds, both water-loving plants, is bound to be diluted in flavour. The rationale is extremely superficial. We are told that snails are not enough to rouse the jaded drinker; they must be African snails (58). What precisely is special about African snails (apart from their country of origin) we are not told. Why? Possibly because Catius does not know either. The cachet of somewhere exotic is enough for him. Later on, his recipe for double sauce is a homage to 'brand name' cooking: Byzantine brine, Corycian saffron, and Venafran olive oil (66-9).

Our only comparative material on the expertise of the Roman cook comes in the writings attributed to Apicius, a personality of the early Empire whose recipes (possibly with those of other cookery writers) are handed down in a book dating probably from the third century AD. While the

\[104\text{Ibid. 62; Pliny is comparing like with like.}\]
\[105\text{Arist. Hist. Anim. 4.5.30-1; 4.6.10-4.}\]
books were compiled for those who already had a basic
knowledge of cookery, presumably including provenances, it
is noticeable that they only refer to forty-three
place-specific foods in ten books, whereas Catius manages to bring in
nineteen in ninety-five lines.\textsuperscript{107}

Nasidienus rarely explains the provenance of his food, but when he does, like Catius, he misses the salient feature. His sauce recipe specifies five-year-old Italian wine, for example (47). Obviously all wine from one country will not be good, or even similar after an arbitrary amount of time. Nasidienus, however, is keen to contrast Italian with Greek.\textsuperscript{108}

Juvenal's satirist brings to life his own image of the glutton gobbling up the Empire. Domitian's turbot in Satire 4 breaks the gastronomic rules by not coming from Pontus (4.43). In the fifth satire, provenance is one of the many factors that describe each individual dish. Virro dines on Alban and Setian wine (33-5), but he is served by the 'flos Asiae' (56). His oil is Venafran (86) compared with Egyptian (88-91), his mullet Corsican or Sicilian (92-3), his lamprey is also Sicilian (100) as against Trebius' Tiber pike (104-6), and his truffles come from

\textsuperscript{106}Including a number of regional recipes: 1.2 'absinthum Romanum'; 1.4, 'oleum Libernicum'; 5.6.4 'Fabriciae Bajanae'; 2.4, 'Lucanicae'.

\textsuperscript{107}Falernian (19), Coan (29), Baian (32), Lucrine (32), Circean (33), from Misenum (35), Tarentine (34), Umbrian (40), Laurentian (42), Massic (51), Surrentine (55), African (58), Byzantine (66), Corycian (68), Venafran (69), Picenian (70), Tiburtine (70), Venuculan (71), Alban (72).

He tends not to introduce really exotic produce. He offers Caecuban, Chian, Alban, and Falernian wine (15-16), Venafran oil (45), Spanish garum (46), and vinegar from Lesbos (50).
Libya (119). In the eleventh satire, Juvenal's satirist tells us what he will not be serving at his country meal, thus providing a further tour of the luxuries of the known world, including Mauretania and India (125), Scythia (139), Gaetulia (140), Phrygia (146-7), Spain (161), and Sparta (175). 109

3.8. CONCLUSION

The 'food satires' have the appearance of being packed with the kind of gastronomic or culinary detail that is rare in the other Roman literary sources. Quite often that detail has resonances for the modern reader. However, as has been shown, each detail has been chosen to enhance a characterisation, and in some cases to locate a satire in relation to the rest of the genre. Differences or developments of detail can likewise, in some cases, be affected by the satirist's wish to pick up on something mentioned by a predecessor.

Notwithstanding the role of these details in tracking the development of gastronomy as a satiric phenomenon, it is also possible to see, through analogy with non-satiric material, the outline of gastronomy as an intellectual tendency, and as a practical discipline. As such, it held potential for social conflict, as can be seen in the satirist's superior attitude to the contamination of the Roman dinner with foreign foods and the contamination of

109 Supra, 2.3.3.
the Roman intellectual and social hierarchy with new, potentially dangerous, specialisms. A number of these trends will emerge again in Chapter 4, which deals with Horace's creation Catius, a would-be gastronome.
In this poem the satirist reveals to his audience a new kind of intellectual elitism in Rome. Some of the city's generators of ideas, he would have us believe, are devoting their brain-power to gastronomy rather than philosophy.

The basic idea behind the satire, its structure, terminology, content, and ultimately its 'success', depend entirely on the recognition of certain parallels drawn between philosophy, gastronomy, and their respective related disciplines; in particular, the recognition that both involve skilled individuals using their knowledge of a certain set of values and principles to strive for excellence and achieve a betterment of the lot of mankind. The satirist and his readers know that there is, in fact, a crucial difference; that the philosopher's 'better' is in many ways derived from the opposite set of values to those of the gastronome or cook.

To some minds cookery is diametrically opposed to the praiseworthy arts. According to Socrates,¹ human skills can be divided into those that concern the spirit

¹Plat. Gorg. 462d-465d.
(politics, legislation, and justice) and those that concern the body (gymnastics and medicine). In the absence of rationality these arts degenerate into base means of gratification: sophistry, and rhetoric or self-adornment and cookery respectively. By that standard we see that Horace’s protagonist Catius is guilty of a truly degenerate practice.

The process by which incongruous subjects, such as food and philosophy, are linked for comic effect is a familiar one. Intellectual snobbery concerning food is still a powerful vehicle for satire on social aspirations:

'Was Spinelli trying to say that all life was represented here in the antipasto, with the black olives an unbearable reminder of mortality? If so, where was the celery? Was the omission deliberate? At Jacobelli’s the antipasto consists solely of celery. But Jacobelli is an extremist. He wants to call our attention to the absurdity of life. Who can forget his scampi: four garlic-drenched shrimp arranged in a way that says more about our involvement in Vietnam than countless books on the subject.' (Allen, 130)

In this satire Woody Allen captures the excesses of New York literary criticism by applying the technique of exaggerated incongruity in a parodic context. Food is clearly an unsuitable subject for a philosophical dialogue and it therefore provides the perfect medium for deflation by laughter. He overlays the framework of the meal (antipasto, entree, and dessert) with the vocabulary of

2Sall. Cat. 1.2-3, men use the mind to rule and the body to serve; qualities shared with the gods and the beasts respectively.

Ibid. 465b; Cf. Cic. Off. 1.150, cooks are numbered among fishmongers, butchers, poulterers, and fishermen as the least respectable trades. Above them are tax-collectors, manual labourers, mechanics, and retailers; Sen. Ep. 88.18, cookery is even further relegated to take its place with perfumery.
literary criticism at its most pretentious. His persona here might represent a modern version of Catius: the interpreter of the topsy-turvy values of gastronomy. The sweep of Woody Allen's criticism goes beyond literary criticism and the cookery metaphor; he takes aim at pretension in general. Similarly, we might be able to read into Satire 2.4 and its kind a mechanism for deflating a broad range of unworthy pursuits of an unbalanced, status-hungry section of society.

From what we know of Woody Allen's satiric persona, he charts the failings of New York society so well because he observes from within. Indeed, he makes a point of letting us know that he is tarred with the same brush. Likewise the satirist, in a way, is present at the feast. He, too, has to negotiate the pitfalls of belonging to an elevated social milieu which might have tendencies towards the behaviour under attack.

Therefore Satire 2.4 is to a large extent an exercise in incongruity, played out through the character of Catius; not the fount (94) of wisdom himself, but a besotted devotee. The speaker enters into a dialogue that probes and establishes the character of Catius as a satiric creation, through the speaker's fictional relationship with him.

4.2 CATIUS
Catius professes himself to be what he clearly is not. He promises what no man can provide (gastronomy that will change lives) and is ridiculous in this impertinent self-belief. He appears as part-philosopher, -doctor, -host and cook, in order to illustrate the misguided elevation of the study of food. He thus betrays not only confusion about the status of food in Roman society, but a complete mangling of the specific principles he is trying to relay.

We gain our impression of Catius from his 'own' words during a chance meeting with the satirist. Catius believes that he is telling us about food; we know that he is telling us about Catius. The controlling hand of the satirist is present throughout to achieve the complete denunciation of Catius as someone who acts contrary to, or perversely in relation to, normal or expected behaviour. In order to explore the incongruities of the role of food and cookery outlined above to their full ironic effect, the satirist establishes a comic strategy. He sets up a number of expectations based on perceptions of the appropriate status and activity for those who deal with food and those who deal with more elevated arts. He also depends on an understanding of the satiric gastronomic language, as discussed in the previous chapter, as well as the niceties of dining in polite Roman society.

Each item of food is discussed in a manner that reinforces or develops Catius' character as a would-be gastronome who delivers the opposite, or a pointedly perverse form, of what he promises. The reader therefore has to look for layers of spurious extra refinements in
Catius' principles, and particularly in his concern with where the food came from, its appearance, cost, rarity, natural properties, and uses in combination with other ingredients. Gastronomic detail is set in a narrative that begs comparison with the norms of civilised table protocol. For example, the satire is organised along the lines of a meal 'ab ovo ad malum' (Rudd 1966, 206). This sets up expectations about the scope of the encounter between Catius and the satirist, meaning that we look forward to each course, and expect an end to the satire after the last course arrives. The overall effect is a satiric meal whose courses warp the normality of taste, good manners, and culinary lore, whose order has been subtly disrupted, and which has been 'served up' by a would-be gastronome who cannot make up his mind whether he is a cook, a host, a philosopher, or a doctor.

4.2.1 Catius on Catius

The essence of the humour of the piece is the contrast between what Catius thinks of himself and what we think of Catius. Catius consistently leads the reader to expect the original, the sophisticated, the elevated, or even the 'life-changing' in his words. The reality, however, does not live up to the 'hype'. The more certain and assertive he becomes, the more laughable we find him.

Catius' character and concerns are established in the opening dialogue between him and the satirist. During this
brief exchange Catius raises expectations about the nature of his subject and his ability in the field. At the same time the satirist manages to drop enough hints to enable us to 'read' what follows with the proper degree of scepticism.

We meet Catius as he is rushing away from an encounter with a wise man, apparently at a public lecture. Catius believes that the batch of knowledge he has just acquired will revolutionise philosophy:

\[\text{nouis praecptis, qualia uincent} \]
\[\text{Pythagoran Anytique reum doctumque Platona.} \]
\[\text{(2-3)}\]

We learn that he is hurrying to get this wisdom safely recorded for posterity (1-2). From his tone we might expect a new definition of 'the good', as suggested by his use of 'praecptae', and how to achieve it, or perhaps we expect oracles, with their connotations of divine advice, as indicated by Catius' choice of verb, 'canere' (11). Perhaps it is appropriate that Catius should keep his source undisclosed, 'celabitur auctor' (11).

The satirist appears at first to be suitably impressed and deferential, encouraging Catius to stay and divulge more information (10) and preparing himself and the audience to hear this heady mix of philosophy and perhaps

---

\[\text{4Cf. Sen. Ep. 40.3, that which a philosopher passes on to a pupil; Juv. 5.2, uses ' bona summa' to convey a misguided aim.}\]
\[\text{5Cf. S. 2.5.58, the ironic possibilities of seer and seeker of advice; S. 1.9.30.}\]
prophecy. Yet at the same time we already suspect that such subjects are hardly suitable for satire, being forewarned through the painful experience of listening to Damasippus' Stoic wisdom in Satire 2.3.6.

At line 12 Catius looks like he is about to deliver. At first he seems to be keeping his promises, starting off apparently with some natural history:

longa quibus facies ouis erit illa memento,  
ut suci melioris et ut magis alba rotondis,  
ponere.  

(12-14)

The subject is standard Aristotelian stuff, but the slant is certainly original, an inversion of the commonly held view. It is only with a verb, 'ponere' (to serve), delayed and isolated at the beginning of line 14, that Catius fully reveals his reasons for being interested in eggs: gastronomy. As the astute reader expected, he is a 'doctor ineptus'. He presumes to give advice on inappropriate subjects and, while considering himself wise, leaves an impression on the audience of his overwhelming foolishness. In this case, having 'hi-jacked' philosophy for his own misguided ends, he treats the satirist to a lecture on the refined way of dining, 'ab ovo ad malum' (12.70), in order to make the proper impression on 'guests'.

6 Lines 323-6; in the end the satirist has to pray that he will stop.  
Arist. Hist. Anim. 6.2.559a. ‘long, pointed eggs are female, round ones and those that have a gentler curve at the pointed end are male.’  
Supra, 2.1.5.
Success in this field, he is at pains to make clear, takes talent and an ability to diversify.

\[\text{sunt quorum ingenium nova tantum crustula promit.}\]

\[\text{neguquam satis in re una consumere} \]

(47-48)

He makes too much use of the emphatic negative, as he tries to exclude all those who imagine they know the rules. These unnamed others are his adversaries in a competitive gastronomic scene:

\[\text{nec sibi cenarum quiuis temere arroget artem non prius exacta tenui ratione saporum.}\]

\[\text{nec satis est cara piscis auerrere mensa...} \]

(35-7)

and whom he must beat in the race for innovation:

\[\text{ante meum nulli patuit quaesita palatum.}\]

(46)

He rejects the practice of others by contrasting his own wisdom with theirs: Laurentian boar is 'malus' while the Umbrian is tasty (40-2). Roes bred in the vineyard are not always edible; by implication, others presumably believe that they are (43).

\[\text{He could in fact be spreading himself too thinly, given all the disciplines covered in the few words allowed him.}\]
Catius' presumptuousness is reflected in a characterisation that apes the didactic literature familiar to the satirist's audience. In keeping with the philosopher status he has assumed, Catius passes on his wisdom in the fitting style. The connoisseur is 'sapiens' (44) and 'uafer' (55) he appreciates the big questions ('quaesita', 46) concerning the quality ('natura', 21, 45) and age ('aetas', 45) of food. He follows both in the footsteps of Archestratus, whose Hedypatheia made him the 'Hesiod or Theognis of Epicures', 10 and Lucretius, whose terminology included 'praecepta' (11, 95), 'quaesita', 11 'ingenium' (47), and natura. 12

Having set himself up as the voice of reason Catius dismisses unbalanced behaviour:

nequaquam satis13 in re una consumere curam;
ut si quis solum hoc, mala ne sint uina, laboret,
quali perfundat piscis securus oliuo.

(48-50)

The true meaning of moderate behaviour has already been thoroughly discussed in Horace's satires. 14 Catius, by way of an object lesson in immoderate behaviour, presents poor hygiene as a serious crime:

10 Ath. 7.310a.
11 Cf. 2.6.82.
12 Wickham, 160: 'a new De Rerum Natura' but 'the art of living, not of dining'.
13 Another emphatic negative.
14 Cf. 1.3.80-3.
magna mouet stomacho fastidia, seu puer unctis
tractauit calicem manibus dum furt.

(78-9)

But who is he to talk? He is, after all, prepared to spend 3000 sesterces on fish (76-7).

4.2.2. Catius the impure vessel

Catius the individual is a satirical creation: part seer, part doctor, part philosopher, part host, part cook, and all fool. In all these guises he is a purveyor of misinformation on a subject which is itself misguided. The satirist therefore derives humour from the idea of the exclusivity of knowledge, and from Catius' misguided belief that he has the ability to understand, put into effect, and pass on the principles of wisdom. There may be an ironic allusion to this in his name; if he was 'catus' he would have been wise, or astute. 15 Very late evidence hints that the deity Catius was worshipped as the protector of boys whom he made intelligent. 16 Our Catius' wisdom, however, concerns food. It has also been suggested (Fairclough, 184) that Catius is a type based on the Epicurean Catius, who died 17 in the mid-40s BC. 18 Suitably enough, this

15 Cf. TLL 3.623. Also in a bad sense (sly, cunning or crafty) cf. LS 302; Hor. Ep. 2.2.39.
16 August. CD. 4.21, 'Catius Pater'; RE 3(2). 1794.
17 Ibid. 185, Trebatius and Damasippus also personalities introduced from an earlier generation.
individual had a reputation, with Cicero at least, as a boor and misinterpreter, although not as bad as some Stoic 'rustics' Cicero could name. Horace's Catius mistakes the gastronomic good life for the real thing, as underlined by Horace's ironic allusion to Lucretius in the last lines of the satire (92-5). If the original Catius got his Epicurus wrong, it is also the case that Horace's Catius misrepresents the source of his wisdom. The specific precepts and the staccato, disorganised delivery may suggest this, as will be discussed later. However, even before Catius gets started, the clearest indicator that he is going to make mistakes comes in the satirist's opening conversation with him. We see that Catius has not been able to take notes, which gives Horace the opportunity to comment on his memory:

\[
\text{siue est naturae hoc siue artis, mirus utroque.} \\
(7)
\]

This is surely a clear and ironic signal from Horace that we are in fact to look out for faulty recall. The need to remember information is a recurrent theme in the satire; 'memento' (59, 82) is one of Catius' favourite injunctions to the listener. This is playfully picked up by the satirist in the dying lines of the poem, as he echoes

---

18 Cic. Fam. 15.16.1; Quint. 19.1.125; 'leuis ... sed non igiucundus'.
19 Fam. 15.19.2, 'ipse enim Epicurus, a quo omnes Catii et Amaffini, mali verborum interpretes, proficientur.'
20 1.927-8; Hor. S. 2.2.8-22, Ofellus presents by contrast a correct reading of Epicurean as well as Stoic precepts, as do the satirist and the country mouse in 2.6.
Catius' phrasing and reminds us that what was meant to be faithful recollection (90-1) has turned into a travesty of invention and inversion.

The audience, knowing that Catius is not the original source for the gastronomic precepts outlined in the satire, sees him unwittingly slip into the character of his teacher. These unguarded moments underline a lack of objectivity about his role, and about his underlying desire for intellectual status, that make him a 'doctor ineptus'. 21 Emphatic use of the first person tends to coincide with areas of discovery, 'hanc ego ... ego primus' (73) and 'primus et inuenior' (74). 22 The conflation of sage and acolyte signals the height of his effrontery. The 'scurra' type in comedy was characterised by his tendency to gossip about unfamiliar subjects, and, according to Horace, would fawningly repeat verbatim the words of his patron: 23

\[\text{alter in obsequium plus aequo pronus et imi derisor lecti sic nutum divitis horret, sic iterat uoces et uerba cadentia tollit, ut puerum saevo credas dictata magistro reddere uel partis mimum tractare secundas.}\]

\[\text{Ep. 1.18.10-14}\]

21 Cf. 2.3.77-81, Damasippus also speaks as if giving a lecture.
22 The fame to be gained from discovery, e.g. Plin. Nat. 5.1.16, the naming of things after those who discover them. Or the ignominy, cf. Hor. S. 2.2.46-50.
We might see Catius, perhaps, an impudent 'pars secunda', who has developed a life away from his 'pars prima' by adding his own skew to the master's words.

Despite being able to summon up the right words and forms of argument, Catius gets the emphasis completely wrong. He is the very product of rhetoric that the elder Cato feared would result from the importation of Greek styles. He embodies what Cicero might have called 'ineptia':

nam qui aut tempus quid postulet non uidet aut plura loquitur aut se ostentat aut eorum, quibuscum est, uel dignitatis uel commodi rationem non habet aut denique in aliquo genere aut inconcinnus aut multus est, is ineptus esse dicitur.

(Cic. Or. 2.17)

Or 'impudentia', the characteristic of Greek orators who arrogantly extemporised on subjects beyond their experience.

4.3. POLYMATH OR JACK OF ALL TRADES?

---

24 Appropriate for a 'doctor ineptus'.
25 Cic. Or. 1.102-5, such individuals are not difficult to find, promising much but delivering little, eg. Gorgias of Leontini, ibid. 102.
At no point in Satire 2.4 does the satirist explicitly describe Catius' profession or social status. We can draw up a vague profile of him, however, based on the information the satirist deems to be worth divulging. All we really know is that Catius has been at a lecture, but he did not have the means of making notes (2). He is therefore a bad student or a passer-by. In fact we learn what he is from what he says, from his relationship with others (the culinary maestro, the satirist, and those who will eat his food) and from his name.

No convincing evidence has been produced, or is possibly necessary, to pinpoint Catius as a contemporary of Horace. It is possible to approach him as a contrivance, with no existence beyond satire. The allusions that identify him (and to some extent his teacher) as a type within the Satire span the philosophical literature from Plato\textsuperscript{26} to Lucretius,\textsuperscript{27} and the social and intellectual spectrum from philosopher/patron via scientist/teacher to acolyte/cook.

By rendering Catius in a mixture of roles, reflecting an ambiguity in the status of gastronomy in Rome, the satirist asks the reader to explore the social paradoxes that arise when the social distinctions of those who concern themselves with food become blurred, thus widening the range of standards by which we may judge him badly.\textsuperscript{28}

Catius is interested in many aspects of food, for

\textsuperscript{26} Men. 234a.
\textsuperscript{27} 1.927-8 (93-5); 2.582 (90); 3.858 (9).
\textsuperscript{28} Cf. Brillat-Savarin, 52: on gastronomy; 'the seasoned comprehension of everything connected with the nourishment of man. Gastronomy pertains to natural history, ... physics, ... chemistry, ... cookery, ... commerce and political economy.'
example: how it is chosen, prepared and served, and its
natural properties. These subjects would seem to be the
preserve of the professional cook or serious gourmet.
However, as it becomes clear, they can also become confused
with the intellectual interests of the educated. The
commonest gibe against the gastronome is that he takes
himself too seriously, as has already been seen in Woody
Allen’s words. In a similar vein, the introduction to a
modern translation of Apicius carries a somewhat
overwrought panegyric to the gastronomic arts:

The gastronomer is the highest development of the cooking
animal. He — artist, philosopher, metaphysician,
religionist — stands with his head bared before nature:
overawed, contemplating her gifts, feasting his eyes on
beauteous forms and colours, inhaling intoxicating
fragrances, aromas, odors, matching them all artistically,
partaking only of what he needs for his own subsistence —
eternally marvelling at nature’s inexhaustible resources
and inventiveness, at her everlasting bounty born of
everlasting fierce struggles."

(Vehling, 39)

During the century before the invention of Catius,
philosophy (including 'science', ethics and politics),
arquitecture, law, and oratory were among a range of
intellectual disciplines benefiting from a wave of interest
in Rome. 29 During the period a two-way traffic developed;
of Romans going to Greece to acquire a rounded education, 30
and of foreign authorities and skilled workers travelling
to Rome to benefit from the new interests growing there.

29 Rawson, 4: 'the galloping hellenisation of poetry, the
visual arts, the way of life of the rich and to some
gtent formal education.'
30 Cf. Arist. Pol. 8.2.1337b; the liberal arts, those
disciplines which make men free to do virtuous things;
Quint. Inst. 1.12.5; 'mutatione recreabitur sicut in
cibis, quorum diversitate reficitur stomachus et pluribus
minore fastidio alitur'.
Our sources often show themselves to be learned individuals who are pleased to show off their interests covering a range of subjects. Later we see laymen such as Celsus, for example, writing on a vast number of topics including agriculture, medicine, military science, rhetoric, and perhaps philosophy and jurisprudence. The disciplines described would all be considered suitable for a man of education, although some, such as medicine, had a residual stigma to shake off. Other subjects, however, had to be apologised for. Pliny, in the preface to his Natural History is careful to admit to the use of 'rustic' language and to the practical nature of his subject matter. Cookery is similarly tainted as a practical art. Thus we see the fundamental incongruity between proper and improper subjects for study. Yet gastronomic matters seem to have received the intellectual, multi-discipline treatment, as we can see in Athenaeus' Deipnosophistae. The guests at this fictional literary dinner party, including Galen, discuss philosophy, law, literature, medicine and natural history, but only as they relate to diet and gastronomy. As will be shown, Catius tries to draw on a wide range of disciplines when he discusses food. This, he believes, will make him a man of broad intellect. We know, however, that the only 'well-rounded' gastronome is a fat one.

31 Cf. Vitr. 6. pref. 4.  
32 Writing in the reign of Tiberius, 14–37 AD.  
33 Pref. 12.  
34 Sen. Ep. 95.23–4, laments the vogue for cookery which leaves the rhetorical schools empty and stoves crowded.  
35 Athen. 1.1c–e.
4.3.1 Catius the philosopher scientist

As one would expect from a condescending gastronome to an aspiring 'foodie' (at least that is how Catius perceives the relative status of himself and the satirist), the advice being given is esoteric. Thus Catius is characterised as an intellectual, but a failed one, in order to expose the fact that his chosen field of study is, by definition, the antithesis of an intellectual discipline. It is suitable, therefore, that his advice is presented as a pastiche of the methodology and presentation of the natural sciences. Catius' words illustrate the point that the 'show-off' potential of food is based on a spurious knowledge of the natural qualities and functions of foods both individually and in combination. Terms relating to principles, precepts, 'science', and natural phenomena are central to his presentation of himself. In this respect, Catius' assertions are reminiscent of both Epicurus and Lucretius, and have a 'natural scientific' quality, as suggested earlier. Aristotle seeks out observable differences as a means to classification. In a corrupt version of the same process Catius differentiates himself from the crowd of culinary experts through his eye for the peculiarites of his raw material. Also, where gastronomic observation forms part of Aristotle's discussion, it is only one of many criteria of analysis.

---

36 An unshackled life comes from understanding the true nature of things. Lucretius rationalises the natural world, but concerns himself with the great natural phenomena (e.g. motion, 2.62-332; the senses, 398-443) rather than the minutiae.
37 Supra, 3.1.2.
Nor does he attach any particular value to qualities that might interest the gastronom. He does not therefore — unlike Catius — view large size as desirable quality in crustacea. Compare Catius’ treatment of the shellfish world with Aristotle on the sea-anemone. First, Aristotle:

'There are two kinds of sea-anemone: the smaller ones, which are more suitable for food; and the large ones which are hard, such as are found around Chalcis. In winter their flesh is firm (which is why they are hunted and suitable for food), but in summer they go off — they become soggy and if you touch them they quickly come to pieces.'

(4.6.531b)

Catius uses a similar method on shellfish, but makes the mistake of not comparing like with like:

murice Baiano melior Lucrina peloris.

(32)

Particularly noticeable are the geographical, seasonal, and physiological elements favoured by the likes of Catius and Nasidienus. This is possibly an example of the 'kitchen observation' that stood alongside the more 'deliberate investigation' of the Historia Animalium. But there is a major difference in purpose: Aristotle is bringing to bear all types of observation to add depth to his

\[^{38}\text{Hist. Anim. 4.5.530b, on sea urchins.}\]
investigation, whereas Catius is using the outward appearance of investigation as an end in itself.

4.3.2 Doctor 'ineptus'.

The effect of diet on health was of crucial importance in the medical practice of the ancient world. Galen cites Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Chrysippus on the subject of digestion. Pliny recognises the debt of gratitude owed to Asclepides who rejected drugs in favour of a regime based on bathing, diet, and exercise. Celsus, whose medical writings divide medicine into three disciplines (dietetics, pharmaceutics, and surgery), considers digestion to be the most important natural process. Debate on matters of diet was critical to the development of medical theory. It was also open to those who did not practice medicine professionally and was a legitimate subject for lay writers. Pliny, for example, describes the knowledge of sympathetic and antipathetic foods as a 'maximum opus', and details the medicinal uses of numerous food items including wine and wine products.

---

39 For example a qualitative statement about thyme honey forms part of a general analysis of bees, Hist. Anim. 5.22.554a.
40 Meth. Med. 1.3.26 (X 19, K) he also sets doctors in opposition to cooks, among other professions.
41 Nat. 26.7.12-17,
42 Prol. 9, 11, 20.
43 Cels. Prol. 20. Medical experts and pupils in heated debate about digestion: does it putrefy, grind or heat food?
44 Nat. 20.1.1.
olives, fruits, nuts, pulses and grains, and kitchen garden vegetables and herbs in his *Natural Histories*. 45

The science of pharmaceutics and dietetics lies on the margins of kitchen lore. A number of recipes in the Apicius collection are recommended for their medicinal properties. 46 Ancient sources (medical and culinary) divided foods into types according to their effects on the body. 47 Celsus, for example made recommendations on diet based on a scale of 'strength' of foods; a food could be 'ualens', 'leuis' or 'imbecillis', or in a middle group. 48 Within these groups there could be gradations and, using criteria of judgment very similar to those of Aristotle, factors such as age, condition, season, part, and habitat had to be taken into consideration in evaluating the nutritional quality of a food. 49 Regime was an important factor in the maintenance as well as the improvement of health. Therefore Celsus also classified foods through a sort of 'sympathetic physiology'. Foods could be differentiated as having 'good' or 'bad' juices, 50 according to the effect they had on the state of the body. There were also divisions of 'heating' foods and 'cooling' foods. 51

---

46 4.2.4, 5, 8, 9, 29, 31, 36. These can be traced to a Greek dietary cook book since they specify quantities, an unusual feature in Apicius. Cf. Flower and Rosenbaum, 13, 15.
47 Cato Agr. 156.1, recommends cabbage as a 'cure-all' (laxative, purgative, and stimulant), attributing this to its ability to change its nature with heat, being 'arida', 'umida', 'dulcis', 'amara' and 'acris', ibid 157.1.
48 2.18.2-3.
49 2.18.8-10.
51 Cels. 2.27. These qualities of hot and cold are not (Footnote continued)
Finally, the fact that medical practice itself had a somewhat chequered history adds to the degradation of the pseudo-scientist gastronome. The arrival of the physician in Rome, like that of the cook, was a defineable, far from happy event,52 and the remedies they brought could be rejected as going against Roman traditional methods.53 Indeed medicine was simply not a suitable discipline for a Roman. 54 Like cookery, medicine was dogged by a servile, low status connotation. While in 46 BC it was a foreign art. Julius Caesar extended the citizenship to practitioners.55 Seneca regarded medicine as a dubious trade, but cookery was far worse:

qui non est uir bonus potest nihilominus medicus esse, potest gubernator, potest grammaticus, tam me hercules quam cocus.

Ep. 87.17

We have already seen that Socrates was supposed to have damned cookery as a pseudo-skill, and might therefore infer that even in his time cooks were assuming the terminology

\begin{verbatim}
related to the temperature or taste of the food. Striking parallels can be seen in Oriental and South East Asian cookery.

52Plin. Nat. 29.6.12-3 describes Archagathus arriving in 219 BC, who was known as 'the Executioner.' For some time after, according to Pliny, all physicians were loathed in Rome.

53Plin. Nat. 29.5.11; Galen 14.30K.

54Plin. Nat. 29.7.17, 'solam hanc artium Graecarum nondum exercet Romana gravitas'.

55Suet. Jul. 42.1, The discipline had only been elevated in Greece by the Alexandrian School; Cic. Off. 1.42.151 medicine was a suitable occupation, (for those of appropriate status) requiring intelligence and having beneficial value. Ibid. 150, medicine superior to cookery.
\end{verbatim}
and methods of the scientific investigator. The gastronomic terms and criteria used by the satirist are an illustration of the discrepancy in the aims of medical science and gastronomy, that is, where the doctor aims at improvement and maintenance of health, the gastronome aims at sensual gratification as a means to social advancement. The result in Catius' case is a hybridised taxonomy of food based on impropriety and confusion.

To Catius, the principles of gastronomy are tied up with the understanding of the processes of nature to achieve a number of effects: original sensations, an intellectual frisson, and not least, a beneficial physical effect. We might compare, for example, the following observation from Brillat-Savarin on a well-known man of food, Monsieur de Borose, who instructed his cook thus:

'...that the nature of his functions set him between the chemist and the physician and was superior to the pharmacist because of his continuous usefulness in maintaining the animal machine'.

This is all very well, but we have been led to believe that the aim of Catius' advice is to provide guests with elegant tastes. His lecture starts with questions of the flavour of eggs and cabbage (13, 16) and the texture of fowl (20). He may be a bad gastronome, but at least he is concentrating on food as something to be experienced and enjoyed. The idea that food can be harmful is raised; mushrooms can be dodgy, he hints (21), and mulberries picked at the wrong time can be dangerous to health (21-3). His terminology
begins to tend towards the medical or physiological, with talk of health ('salubris', 21), empty veins ('uacui... uenus' 25), and constipated bowels ('dura... aluus').

Therefore, instead of providing a coherent gustatory experience he mixes up the medicinal, social and gastronomic potential of food. This is the result of trying to present cookery as an intellectual discipline as well as a social art: in short, a confusion of 'good food' and food that is good for you.

Therefore pseudo-medicine can be used to spur the diner on to eat more and, should the assault of elegant food get to be too much, the mulberries he prescribes against summer fever are also renowned for their laxative qualities (22-3) 56 Gastronomically speaking, ripe berries would be far preferable 57 So much for the art of elegant dining. When is Catius expecting his lucky listener to put this information to use? Surely one would not really question a guest on the condition of his bowels. Then neither should such subjects enter a learned discussion on matters of the table:

si dura morabitur aluus,
mitulus et uiles pellent obstantia conchae
et lapathi breuis herba, sed albo non sine Coo. 58

(27-29)

56Cf. 2.29.1; Plin. Nat. 24.73.120, a remedy for cholera, heartburn and spiders' stings.
57If they are black, they must already be ripe. Cf. Col. 10.400-3; Plin. Nat. 25.26.96-7, on the perniciousness of the ripe mulberry stain.
58NB. even with laxatives you have to choosy about your wine.
4.3.3 Catius the cook

We are told very little about Catius' source of information and are forced to piece him together on the basis of Catius' scrambled report. He appears to be some sort of a professional gastronome, maybe a Greek specialist ('Romanus an hospes?', 10). The satirist draws our attention to the idea of the foreign expert; framed in politeness, his opinion appears neutral. However, 'hospes' may be tinged with the connotation of arrival of 'Graecified' ideas, as well as of 'guest'.

On the basis of the pseudo-scientific and philosophic tendencies of Catius' report, it is unlikely that his source is meant to be imagined as a 'jobbing' cook. However, Catius can be treated legitimately as his 'scurra' and a cook, that is, the cook as characterised in comedy: the upstart who does not know his place. In Greek New Comedy this character was the 'mageiros', the non-slave expert brought in to prepare meals for special occasions. He was notable for his use of 'grandiloquent' language, his tendency to ask questions, and his self-proclaimed expertise and importance (Lowe, 74-5). There is a revealing exchange in a fragment of Damoxenus' comedy The Foster Brothers, written in the second or third century BC which

59 Fiske, 156,8), defines Catius' words as both a pupil's report on the words of a teacher and a philosopher's notes or memoranda. Cf. Hedypatheia of Archestratos of Gela, parodied in Ennius' Hedyphagetica; Peri Edesmaton of Varro.
60 Cic. Brut. 46.172, 'foreign'; Cic. Or. 2.30.131, 'ignorant of Roman ways'.
61 Hor. S. 2.2.118; Juv. 14.59.
62 Ath. 3.102a-3b.
exemplifies these qualities and bears a striking resemblance to the treatment of Catius. A professional cook, urged on by an unknown interlocutor, reveals the secrets of his trade (93-5): 63

'In me you will see a disciple of the sage Epicurus...'  
Ath. 102a

Like Catius he studies natural phenomena (30):

'Nature is the primal source of every art...'  
ibid.

and despises those who do not recognise how elevated their art is (35-6):

'When you see an illiterate cook, one who has not read their Democritus entire or rather does not know him by heart, *spurn* him as an empty fool; and if he does not know the rule ("kanona") of Epicurus, *dismiss* him with contempt, as being outside the pale of philosophy'.  
102b

This pretentious oaf hijacks the methods of philosophy to enhance his own importance. He discusses the effects of the seasons on the quality of food [102b-c](22-4) and boasts that this knowledge allows him to 'prescribe' dishes that never cause discomfort [102d](21). The interlocutor,
clearly the voice of ironic reason, suggests that the cook has to be something of a medical man or a musician even [102d,f]. The cook rises to the bait. Like a great maestro he says:

'For myself I never enter the kitchen - I sit nearby and watch, while others do the work; to them I explain the principles and the result'.

With devastating irony, just as effective as Horace’s parting shot (88-95), the interlocutor replies:

'I quite agree. Let us, then, dismiss the rest of your story; it has long been plain what it is'.

In Satire 2.4, Horace’s speaker similarly assumes the pose of an apparent sympathiser, causing Catius to argue himself into a noose. The audience, with its proper set of values sits in judgement as, Catius like the cook who boasts about his opportunities to fleece his employer, unwittingly reveals his failings to those he most wants to impress.

Berthiaume (77) points out that the mageiros possibly held a middle ground position in Greek society, having a role in religious sacrifice, yet still being a professional cook available for hire. He therefore combined specially

---

64 Cf. 2.8.77-8; the wealthy host Nasidienus rushes into the kitchen to avert complete disaster.  
65 Pl. Merc. 746.
commissioned expertise with a servile occupation. Hence the tensions explored in the Damoxenus comedy between how the mageiros saw himself and how he was seen by others. When the professional cook arrived in Rome, the paradox inherent in his situation was accentuated. If the preparation of food was really, with the inevitable comparison with the past, the duty of slaves, it was a profession not worth the serious attention of free men. Thus the arrival of the professional cook in Rome was picked out as the symbol of the beginning of the process of moral degeneration. According to Livy, the rot set in in 187 BC after the Galatian campaign of Cn. Manlius Vulso; before this, he says, cooks were judged to be valueless and were used less than other slaves. Apart from the damage done by cooks to the ancestral moral fibre, there is the added fact that imported expertise costs money. Cato, for example, casts his mind back fondly to ancestors who (in monetary terms) valued horses more highly than cooks. Comments like this suggest that a cook is a commodity who adds to the visible wealth and prestige of a householder, and who could be loaned to friends.

The evidence would seem to suggest that there was no Roman equivalent for the freelance expert 'mageiros' during

66 Just as the skill was foreign, so were those who carried it out. Cf. Cic. Tusc. 5.35; Hor. Od. 3.1.18; Plin. Nat. 10.140; cf. Harcum, 21-4.
68 Cato Mor. 2. (Gell. 11.2.5); Plin. Nat. 18.18.108, cooks did not used to be on the regular staff, but were hired when necessary from the market; in the Hellenistic world, Ath. 6.275b (quoting Theopompus); 'nowadays people of moderate means dine extravagantly and own cooks.'
Cicero had a slave cook who travelled with him and could be loaned out, Fam. 16.15.2. Evidence of slave cooks, CIL 6.8745, 10.3938, T4.2875.
the Republic. Cooks were generally household members who would cater to their master’s tastes as well as bring in their own expertise acquired in their homelands. If a culinary innovation were to be made it would also come from a master who had developed foreign tastes while abroad or had attended learned talks on the subject, or had been influenced by the foods served up at other peoples' or public dinners. The key point is, however, that the skills of preparing and appreciating good food are, to Roman eyes, quite separate. The former combines servility, foreignness, and, to a lesser extent, women’s work. Pliny does, for example, point out that before the war with Persicus, it was women who used to bake bread, and not professional bakers. The contrast he is making is between cooking taking place in the home and cooking in the outside world. The fact that it is the women who are responsible underlines the previously domestic, and low status (unprofessional) nature of the activity.

The gastronome was therefore not to be taken quite seriously. Through Comic parallels and philosophical language the satirist places Catius in a kind of social ‘no man’s land’. Even from the middle ground of the mageiros, Catius’ presumption to host status is, at the very least, impertinent. Nor from the satirist’s treatment of Catius

---

70 Cic. Fam. 9.16, Cicero jokes to Paetus that in return for helping them with their oratory, he has been taking lessons in the culinary arts from the wealthy gastronomes Hirtius and Dollabella.
71 Cf. Cic. S. Rosc. 46.134, cooks, bakers and bearers are among the commoner kinds of slaves; Plin. 67; Fam. 9.20.2; 16.15.2; Sall. Jug. 85.39, Marius claims that acting and cooking are effeminate occupations; Harcum 867-8, 70.
72 3rd Mithridatic War, 171-68 BC.
73 Nat. 18.18.108.
can we believe him to be a person of means and manners combined.

Cooks in comedy vied with each other for prestigious clients through skill and originality in their art. The aim in Plautus' *Pseudolus* is that the delighted diners will be eating their fingers off in pleasure:

\[
\text{ut quisque quicque conditum gustauerit, ipsus sibi faciam ut digitos praerodat suos.}
\]

(883-4)

Quite literally the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Catius, like the cooks in comedy is driven by the need to succeed. This can be judged to a large extent by the degree of originality and invention, and a sound knowledge of the principles of elegant cookery. While he describes himself in the language of success, the 'reality' as revealed by the satirist is very different. For the sake of being different, Catius changes the accepted norm or inverts it, juggling around superficially with old principles as shown earlier.\(^74\) So he says that male eggs are long (12-4) when Aristotle says they are rounded. He says that cabbage grown on dry ground is better than that from watered gardens. In fact, nothing is more tasteless than produce from a watered garden (15-6). Practice would seem to show otherwise. Catius suggests that cooks should be skilled in all areas when it was accepted that specialisation was best.\(^75\) According to Catius, Laurentian

\(^{74}\) Supra, 3.5.
boar is 'malus' (42) compared with the tasty Umbrian variety (40-1). This is odd, considering the fine credentials of Laurentian as meat for heroes.76

4.3.4 The failed host

Catius suggests to the satirist that his field is the art of dining. Despite lapses into medical and philosophical country, we do see that he is particularly concerned with creating a good impression, and this must be meant for the people who are going to eat his food, his guests. Therefore he discusses making provision for the guest who drops in unexpectedly (17), 77 and for reviving the appetite of a flagging diner (39, 60-1).

The gastronome/host of Horace's satire78 invests an inordinate amount of emotional energy in the proper use of the particular; the implication being that any other ingredient in terms of provenance, age, size, colour, and quality would be disastrous. His mistakes are seen as major catastrophes because his social and personal aspirations depend on gastronomic success. The language of culinary failure therefore takes on far greater weight than it deserves. The unbalanced view is taken to the extreme in

75 Cf. Cic. Pis. 67, Cicero seems to have had his own 'cocus', 'atriensis', 'pistor' and 'cella'. Sen. Ep. 47.8, the staff provisioner ('obsonator') who is not a 'cocus'.
77 Virg. Aen. 9.48.5; 10.45.4.
78 Cf. 2.2.118-20.
78 Cf. The gastronome of 2.2, Catius, the town mouse and Nasidienus.
the case of Nasidienus who sees making an impression at dinner as the means to earning social respect and thereby advancing his status. Culinary failure to him equals social death, when an awning falls on his lamprey pièce de résistance he weeps as at the death of a favourite son (2.8.54-9). This is an equation Horace's right-minded audience will appreciate as being redundant, since reputations should be based on birth, education, virtue, and the good taste which goes with those qualities. For Catius it is a dreadful crime ('immane est uitium', 76) to spend 3000 sesterces on fish and then cramp them into a little dish; 'vitium', as the audience well knows, is a term more appropriate to the philosophical definition of extreme moral defects\(^79\) as used frequently by Horace in that context\(^80\) and applicable to human failings on a much grander scale.

As a scrupulous host Catius' duties extend to the care of the trappings without which no refined dinner party can be a success. Hence he makes a transition from food to frills,\(^81\) seemingly without pausing for breath. He seems to wage an obsessive war on dirt, dealing first with the bowls themselves rather than what is in them. They should not be grubby with slaves' greasy fingermarks. Sensible enough advice perhaps, but he cannot leave the dirty bowl question there. Determined to clarify further he says,

\(^{79}\) Cic. Tusc. 4.14.32, 'uitia, quae virtutibus sunt contraria'.

\(^{80}\) S. 1.3.35; 2.3.213, 307; 2.6.7; 2.7.19.

\(^{81}\) I.e. he plummets from philosophy to grubby fingernails.
This is enough to make the refined stomach churn, but not in the way Catius imagines. First, what is he doing serving food in antique bowls? Second, and far worse, if he is, is he thinking of cleaning off its valuable tarnish, its guarantee of antiquity? The separation of, and emphasis on the qualifying adjective 'grauis' also adds to the humour of both interpretations. The misunderstanding of the reasons behind accepted norms of behaviour and the resultant confusion occurs in the next and final piece of advice from Catius:

ten lapides uarios lutulenta radere palma...

Again, fair enough advice, implements ought to be kept clean, but surely:

et Tyrias dare circum illuta toralia uestis...

82 Cf. Cic. Verr. 2.4.58, 131, imported bronze craters. Plin. Nat. 34.3.7, Corinthian bronze is melted down to make food plates for connoisseurs (therefore it is not used in its antique state).
83 Cf. Vickers, 109-10; Plin. Nat. 33.146.131, the value of silver rises as its shine diminishes. Also a method for premature tarnish.
misses the mark. To make an impression, the fancy covers have to be on show.  

4.4 CONCLUSION: THE SCOPE OF THE CRITICISM

The experience of the Ofellus satire has thoroughly prepared the audience for the dangers of taking food too seriously. The Catius poem gives voice to some of the consequences of applying those misguided principles. This is no reason to read the Catius poem as a blanket dismissal of the role of 'good food' in 'polite society'. Through the manner of his attack on Catius, we see the satirist sharpening his focus on a type of social aspirer, who tries to use wealth and a misplaced sense of learning as a means to climb the social ladder. In so doing the satirist offers no challenge to the established status quo. In fact he tends to confirm it.

The Catius and Nasidienus satires explore the possibilities of gastronomy as a vehicle for social mobility. The key factor in the mobilising potential of food, or more to the point, in knowledge about food, is accessibility. It can be upgraded when even a small amount of additional income is available. Moreover, the crucial factor in gastronomy and the culinary arts is the assumption shared by a sufficiently large and influential

84 Cf. Pet. 40, couch covers with elaborate hunting scenes. A modern equivalent would perhaps be keeping the plastic covers on a new three piece suite.

85 Cf. infra, ch. 5.
group of people that certain types and qualities of foods, and methods of preparation and serving are better than others, and that presenting food in an accepted way makes some people better than others. Therefore the key prerequisites for success, that is enhanced status, in these fields are knowledge and money. The destabilising potential becomes clear, especially in the event that gastronomy becomes the basis of social status.

Gastronomy therefore implicitly brings a value system which can support or clash with other existing systems of social organisation. The social upheaval that can be wrought by gastronomy are described by Brillat-Savarin (145): compare the following, for example, with the position of Catius and especially Nasidienus, who tries to entertain the influential Maecenas:

'Cook did battle with genealogists, and although the Dukes did not wait to take their leave before they made fun of their hosts, they had come as guests, and their presence was proof of their defeat.'

Brillat-Savarin’s point is that gastronomy is a territory which the so called ‘middle classes’ can develop and make their own, thus intruding on, for example, an aristocratic monopoly. In the Roman context viewed through Catius, a dilettante elite have a role in legitimising practice to their own advantage, particularly since the patronage system at Rome was geared towards communicating ideas and values from the top down. This is the effect described by Cicero when he suggests that the home of the distinguished
man should not be a private dwelling, but a place where guests and visitors of all types should be admitted and entertained. The result not only confirms the status quo, but also defines a set of aspirations for those lower down the scale and provides a basis for imitation. But gastronomy as described by Catius is a highly competitive business. He feels the pressure to be original. The need for originality is presumably a by-product of the widening interest in food. The more people there are actively engaged in gastronomy, the more pressure there is to push forward the frontiers of his art (74), and the greater the potential for confusion, between the influential gastronome of dubious background, and the enlightened man of sound background.

Thus the need is created, in the milieu of individuals such as Maecenas, to delineate the grounds on which one might properly improve one's status. Through Catius we witness what happens when this alternative route to the top clashes with the traditional view that status and wealth derive from merit and birth, that is, when gastronomy becomes a social circuit breaker. But wealth and its trappings, such as 'good food', were part and parcel of the status system; they were not, however perceived as causal factors in it. Therefore in the Roman moral tradition there is a fine line drawn between ostentation and magnificence. According to Cicero, it was important to maintain a lifestyle that was in keeping with your position. A man

---

86 Ibid. 140 admonishes readers for wishing to imitate the luxurious standards set by Lucullus in housing. 87 Ibid. 139.
should be a credit to his beautiful house, however, and not vice versa. So, as long as we know that Maecenas and his colleagues for example harboured a proper set of values, and had not actually achieved their status through their dinner-parties the satirist is free to make his attack on a gauche, aspiring 'foodie'.

The discussion of matters of elegant behaviour therefore need not have proved uncomfortable for someone in the satirist's position. This particular satire, for example, could not have taken this form without the expectation of some knowledge of the principles of gastronomy on the part of the audience. No doubt Maecenas and his social equals gave and attended numerous elegant dinner parties. However, the important point for Horace was that literary depictions of social values are two-dimensional. They ignore inconvenient double standards in the cause of proposing a clear moral thesis. For example, Maecenas had a reputation for indulging in jewels and clothes,\textsuperscript{88} and his poetry was playfully criticised for its luxurious and esoteric imagery\textsuperscript{89} to the extent that writers of elegies on his death felt the need to explain and justify such tastes in terms of having earned this by right by serving Augustus,\textsuperscript{90} Even if this 'effeminacy' and absence from the political scene were the main criticisms levelled against him, it was felt that he was a man of taste and high ideals, who had achieved his position in society through actions not wealth.

\textsuperscript{88} Eleg. in Maec. 1.17-21.  
\textsuperscript{89} Macr. 2.4.12.  
\textsuperscript{90} Eleg. in Maec. 1.25-6, 57-92, 103-6.
It must also be added that Horace’s satire is notably lacking in attacks on the social elite at Rome. Despite hints to the contrary\textsuperscript{91} he is essentially conservative, setting his sights on those who would undermine the status quo or seek to enter his cherished group:\textsuperscript{92} slaves who act like masters, ex-auctioneers who would be philosophers, legacy-hunters seeking to queue-jump their way up the social hierarchy. All, being morally unbalanced, are depicted in Horace’s satire as uncultivated and socially inept. Thus:

\begin{quote}
\textit{quis me scribere pluris}\\
\textit{aut citius possit uersus? quis membra mouere}\\
\textit{mollius? inuideat quod et Hermogenes, ego canto.}
\end{quote}

\textit{23-5}

says the famous pest of \textit{Satire} 1.9, frantic to get access to Maecenas. Likewise Catius, who never had a chance.

\textsuperscript{91}For Horace’s bogus offensiveness and fears of attack from those he has insulted, see 1.10.78-80; 2.1.1-4.
\textsuperscript{92}1.10.81-90. Horace wants to impress Plotius, Varius, Maecenas, Virgil, Valgius, Octavius, Fuscus, The Viscus brothers, Pollio, Messala and his brother, Bibulus, Servius and Furnius.
CHAPTER FIVE

'UT NASIDENI IUVIT TE CENA BEATI?': HORACE'S SATIRE 2.8

5.1 INTRODUCTION: FOOD AND STATUS

In Satire 2.8 the object of the satirist's scorn is clear: a section of society who believe that the summit of achievement can be reached not by the traditional merits, but by the short cut of wealth. These people, whose status comes from money alone, delude themselves. In the satirist's eyes they merely go through the motions of being top-class citizens, by entertaining other top people lavishly, but lack the essential moral wherewithal. This hollow social mechanism is manifested in the dinner-party given by the fictitious individual Nasidienus; he takes food too seriously, perceiving it as an aid to social advancement.

In order to emphasise this misinterpretation of the proper place of food at Roman dinners, the satirist depicts Nasidienus' meal as a perversion of the ideal meal, as depicted in Roman verse satire and other types of literature. The effect is twofold: the bare action of the 'cena Nasidieni' shows the meal failing as a realistic social and gastronomic event, while the satirist's

---

1 Nasidienus Rufus (lines 1, 58, 75, 84); cf. Mart. 7.54, probably no connection.
manipulation of available images extends the scope of Nasidienus' failure in both degree and quality.

5.2 A LITERARY DINNER.

Few would argue that the description of the dinner given by Nasidienus is a verbatim report of a real event. Nor, perhaps, is it even necessary to look for the realistic depiction of similar events that might have taken place. Rather, the clear aim of the poem is the complete discrediting of an archetypal gastronome/host, whom the satirist chooses to call Nasidienus, in as entertaining and vivid a manner as possible. In so doing the satirist describes not only the false meritocracy of gastronomy, but a more general kind of disturbance to the social fabric.

This effect is achieved partly via the familiarity of the theme and subject matter, within and outside satire. As has already been shown, on the basis of previous satires the reader is already armed with an understanding of the gastronomic principles that suit the satirist's purpose. Satire 2.8 shows Horace's satirist applying the theories espoused by Catius in civilised society; that is, society as he chooses to imagine it. This is shown in two ways: first in the presence of literary society at

E.g. Wickham, 197-8: 'perhaps a specimen of the kind of talk at supper-tables which moved Horace's spleen'; Lejay, 588; Rudd 1966, 222.
Nasidienus' 'cena', and secondly in the manner in which Nasidienus' dinner is described.

The interrelation with his predecessor in satire, Lucilius, and with other genres is integral to Horace's satire. Some of the clearest parallels with Lucilius can be drawn in relation to the 'cena', and consequently have been well documented. Fiske (408), for example, shows the presence of at least two elegant 'cenae' in Lucilian satire, those of Granius (1180) and Gallonius (1238-40). He points out that the former character is something of a wit, unlike Nasidienus, while the latter is possibly satirised for his misplaced values. Horace's satirist also parodies the techniques and styles of other genres to add weight, interest, or incongruity to the satirical expression of ideas. In the case of the food satires of Book 2, the antithesis of town versus country was a rhetorical and moral commonplace while the gastronomic catalogue was a literary form wrought with parody even before 'Catius' dealt with it. Similarly, the satirist recognises that the dinner-party was not only a vital part of Roman social interaction, but had a separate literary life; for example, as a setting for the discussion of both philosophical subjects and of human behaviour.

Therefore the poem has a number of non-satirical features which enhance the satire. For example, it has a

---

4 Rudd 1966, 204, notes the parodic tone of parts of Archestratus' Hedypatheia. For echoes of Ennius' Hedyphaetica cf. supra 3.7.
5 Cf. Adamietz, 79; Horford, 219; Shero, 126-7.
6 E.g. as in the Symposia of Plato and Xenophon. E.g. the comedies of Aristophanes and Plautus.
large list of 'dramatis personae', which includes named individuals of the satirist's acquaintance. Events are described through a mixture of comment, dialogue, and action. The satirist is completely absent from the action of the dinner itself. Although we see him in a dialogue with Fundanius, in contrast with the previous satires of Book 2, the interlocutor does not emerge as the object of the satirist's scorn; instead, he is the channel through which we gain our impression of the 'cena' given by Nasidienus' for Maecenas and a group of his friends.

There are nine diners at Nasidienus' table, four on the 'home team' and five 'visitors'. Although not all have speaking parts, each has a role in making Nasidienus reveal himself, the weight of numbers (opinion) being on the winning side. The degree of thought that has gone into the satirist's planning of this meal is clear.

Nasidienus is the host. We hear his words only occasionally, but see his deeds often. He needs only a little well-timed prompting to reveal through his dinner the extent of his misguidedness. Two members of Maecenas' party, Balatro and Vibidius, help to provoke their host to further depths of revelation, and undermine his control of the event. Nasidienus is aided by his 'sidekick' Nomentanus, appropriately named for a 'namer of names' (a 'nomenclator' perhaps), and the aptly titled glutton, Porcius.

The Maecenas party includes a number of those individuals mentioned in the satirist's list of people he respects and for whom he is writing: Fundanius (19),
Viscus (20), Varius (21), and Maecenas (22). Fundanius was a comic poet (41-2), Varius a writer of epic. Maecenas was both a patron of the arts and Horace's own patron; he also tried his hand at writing. His reputation as a man of style did not go unquestioned; for example, Tacitus comments on his disastrous oratorical style.

The meal, therefore represents, on one level, literary society (the society of the mind, as it were) drawn up against the 'nouveaux riches' (the society of the body); in other words, a physical representation of the opposed values that fuel the food satires of Book 2. As part of this, Horace's satirist effectively sets himself up against Nasidienus as someone who needs to find favour with the right people (10, 89-90). Horace achieves favour through words; Nasidienus tries to do so with food. The satirist is not seen trying to entertain the likes of a Maecenas; as we already know, he is an eager guest at the rich man's table, as Davus takes pleasure in pointing out:

iusserit ad se
Maecenas serum sub lumina prima uenire
conuiuam: 'nemon oleum feret oculi? ecquis audit?' cum magno blateras clamore fugisque.
mulius et scurrae tibi non referenda precati

---

8S. 1.10.41-2, 81, 83.
9Cf. ibid. 43-4, 'forte epos acer / ut nemo Varius ducit (43-4); Macr. 6.1.39; 2.19.20.
10RE 14.226.
11Dial. 26.4.'calamistros maecenatis'.
Moreover, his presence at table is a sign of his social dependency. However, through a number of devices, the satirist shows what Nasidienus' crass but well-heeled world can serve up, contrasted with what the 'gentleman' poet has to offer. For example, the satirist suggests himself as a host to fellow writer Fundanius; 'I was going you to dinner', he says, 'but Nasidienus got in first'. The would-be invitation performs a number of functions. Most obviously, it neatly conjures up the easy-going friendship of satirist and interlocutor. As has been mentioned, it also introduces the possible tension between Nasidienus and the satirist, but in addition it suggests extra meaning in the choice of an interlocutor who writes comedy. As Daemenes in Plautus' *Rudens* says:

spectatores, uos quoque ad cenam uocem, 
ni daturus nihil sim neque sit quicquam polluci domi, 
niue adeo uocatos credam uos esse ad cenam foras.

(1418-20)

5.3 A 'COMIC' DINNER

Just as today, so in the time of the Roman satirists, the dinner-party was an event fraught with proprieties of behaviour and structural norms. The satirist can put these to use, exploring the boundaries of acceptable behaviour for hosts and guests, and the expectations formed by them in his audience. In the present case, the aim is to show the breakdown of a host's control over an event, showing that in some ways the more formal or lavish a dinner-party is, the more entertaining an anarchic denouement.  

Naturally, laughter is one product of the satirist's remit to entertain. The whole idea of Satire 2.8, for example, is to make the reader laugh at Nasidienus. However, the sound of laughter is heard frequently within the mise en scène of the poem. Porcius makes the guests laugh when he swallows cheesecakes whole (23-4). Varius, has to stuff a napkin in his mouth to stop himself laughing out loud (63-4), and the guests have a chance to laugh at their host when he leaves the room (83). While Lucilius rubbed the city down with salt to make his readers laugh, Nasidienus sprinkles his crane 'sale multo', and inadvertently makes his guests laugh.  

It is not just a coincidence that, in addition to the voice of the satirist, Horace assumes the persona of his friend, the comic poet Fundanius, whose 'Palleatae' (comedies in Greek dress) he admires. The satire, it seems, has more than its usual tinge of comic drama. More

13 Cf. the Hollywood stock item of the elegant dinner-party which degenerates into a custard-pie fight.  
14 Hor. S. 1.10.3-4.  
15 2.8.87.  
16 1.10.40-2.
than most other Horatian satires, 2.8 plays on the natural drama of the events being described. For the first time, more than two characters are drawn, as has already been pointed out, and there are vivid descriptions of physical action. This, combined with the humour with which Horace treats his subject and the setting of the dinner-party, leads to comparison with aspects of Greek and Roman comedy, especially in their use of the meal. This is not so surprising, as Horace does cite the influence of Old Comedy and, in this instance, puts words into the mouth of a writer of comedies.

In this respect, the placing of the satire is important. As the last poem in the second Book of satires, it is appropriate that it shows what happens when the misguided are allowed to put their beliefs into action. It also provides the satirist with the opportunity to step back and let others speak. Dinner-parties often feature at the end of Aristophanic and Plautan comedies. In some cases they provide the setting and opportunity for the delivery of justice and a thoroughly deserved 'come-uppance' for the wicked - which clearly suits the role of the Nasidienus satire. Thus Plautus’ Persicus finishes with the guests ejecting the pimp Dordalus, while in the Asinarius, Demaenetus is dragged off by his wife before he can have his promised night with a prostitute.

In Satire 2.8, the natural quasi-dramatic form of the 'cena' allows the satirist to organise events and

---

17.10.16-7.
18. Aristoph. Acharn. 1085-1234; Knights 1404-8; Wasps 1249-334; Frogs 1479-81; Eccles. 1110-82.
19. E.g. St. 683-774; Per. 757-858; As. 829-942.
interrelations with an eye to maximising visual and psychological impact. A number of dramatic high points are created, which track the natural progression of the narrative: the scene is set very briefly (1-5), and we are straight into the meal with boar and appetisers (6-17). Next, the audience are given a chance to catch up with a list of 'dramatis personae' (18-24), and are introduced to the split in the parties. Then comes a highly 'original' second course (23-5), followed by heavy drinking instigated by Vibidius and Balatro (33-41). Finally, with the arrival of the lamprey dish (42-53), the canopy stretched over the table comes down (54-74). The poem ends with Nasidienus' return (75-93), at which all the guests who matter flee (93-5).

These divisions exploit the natural dramatic points of interest as new dishes arrive, or when the flow of food is interrupted by a comment from the listener (18-19) or a guest (33). Drink, however, provides the most consistent point of division: between the first course and the introduction of the guests (13-17), between the second course and the lamprey (33-41), and between the collapse of the canopy and the ill-fated last course (80-2). The sense of Nasidienus' control slipping, which culminates in the early departure of his guests, increases as the party gets more and more drunk.

The systematic use of structure helps generate an audience expectation that the outrageousness of Nasidienus' behaviour will be taken a step further. This is most clearly seen in a number of gastronomic set
pieces; pièces de résistance, as Nasidienus imagines them to be. First comes the boar:

in primis Lucanus aper; leni fuit Austro captus, ut aiebat cenae pater...

(6-7)

Then the lamprey:

adfertur squillas inter murena natantis in patina porrecta.

(42-3)

And finally the crane:

deinga secuti mazonomo pueri magno discerpta ferentes membraw gruis sparsi sale multo, non sine farre...

(85-7)

All give vivid visual clues that Nasidienus has sunk to a new low in taste.

While the food served at the meal helps greatly in the characterisation of Nasidienus, his faults are underlined in the way in which personalities interact at the event he has organised. The tensions between the literary and the gastronomic groups build up, as the guests begin to challenge the rules imposed by the host. The progress of these tensions is charted by theatrical convention. The early part of the Satire establishes everything we need to
know about the types of people involved, in the form of a kind of 'dramatis personae' and 'stage plan'. Next, the personal tensions begin to surface. Friction builds to a peak, at which point the curtain comes down, both literally and figuratively. This is an inverted signal that it should all be over (the meal, the play and the satire). Not so, just as Nasidienus ought to be aware of the normal conventions of dramatic climax in meals, so he ought to be able to spot the effect he is having on his guests. The meal continues, and the guests are forced to delay their escape. Thus the satirist increases the tension, and in so doing widens the terms of his attack on Nasidienus. The moment of greatest embarrassment should have provided the host with an opportunity for circumspection, but Nasidienus decides to carry on in the face of Fortune.

Characterisation is crucial yet selective in this satire. Nasidienus is put 'centre-stage', to condemn himself through his actions and interaction with others. However, none of the literary clique has an active role in moving events along. Fundanius is a commentator, effectively describing action off-stage to the satirist, but not describing his own involvement in the events. The rest, non-verifiable as people (Balatro, Vibidius, Nomentanus and Porcius), are stock comic characters with a satirical twist. Balatro, named from 'blatere' (to

20 'Aulaea' (54); cf. Hor. Ars. 153-5, the test of play is to keep people in their seats. Cic. Cael. 65, the curtain is lowered at the beginning and raised at the end of a play. The pun is on the word, not only on the action. Nasidienus' encore, perhaps (to stretch a point).
babble), is a buffoon. Vibidius' name possibly carries an echo of bibulous 'bibulus'. Porcius (Piggy) appears to be perpetually hungry, like Gelasimus in Plautus' Stichus. Finally, Nomentanus' name reflects his role as 'namer of names' on behalf of Nasidienus. He was also proverbial in Horatian satire as an inheritance-waster.

Fundanius' 'account' is dotted with snapshots of their actions, reactions, and expressions. Physical humour increases in importance as the satire progresses. The awning collapses (54), as has already been mentioned; Varius has difficulty stifling his laughter with a napkin (63-4); Nasidienus calls for his slippers, and we imagine him dashing off to the kitchen as the guests immediately start to gossip about him (77-8), and finally Maecenas' party flee the scene, just at Nasidienus' greatest moment (93-4).

The listener's comment on hearing the tale,

nullos his mallem ludos spectasse,

(79)

reminds us of the presence and controlling hand of the satirist, as well as the occupation of his narrator and the 'knockabout' nature of the dinner. The satirist is

\[\text{22} \text{Cf. Lejay, 584: Maecenas' 'parasites' Vibidius and Balatro are set against Nasidienus' 'scurrae' Nomentanus and Porcius.}
\[\text{23} \text{Cf. Hor. S. 1.2.2, a calling numbered together with other professional entertainers.}
\[\text{24} \text{Cf. Hor. Ep. 1.14.30; ibid. 1.18.91. Also Cf. Pl. Curc. 374, the invented 'Bibesia' (Drinkland).}
\[\text{25} \text{Cf. St. 155-6: 'famem ego fuisses suspicor matrem mihi, / num postquam natos sum satur numquam fu.'}
\[\text{26} \text{Cf. 1.8.11; 2.1.22 (also 1.1.102; 2.3.175, 224).} \]
doing himself a disservice. This satire extracts some of
the essence of a performance at the 'Ludi Scaenici' to
fulfil a strictly satirical purpose.

5.4. THE PERVERSE DINNER-PARTY

The reader of Horace's second book of satires knows to
expect an introduction in which he or she will have to
detect the victim of the satirist's attack and on what
grounds he is to be criticised. The reader is also aware,
however, that this crucial information may not be
immediately available. So in Satire 2.8 the 'speaker'
assumes the role of the 'listener' who is, at first, an
innocent, willing to believe that the 'cena' of the
'beatus' Nasidienus must have been a jovial and elegant
affair, as those words would suggest, and as Fundanius
seems to confirming this when he says,

sic, ut mihi numquam
in uita fuerit melius.

(3-4)

This is, in fact, the beginning of a gradual process of
revelation, in which the sympathies of the listener change
fundamentally towards the intended victim. Fundanius is
not lying when he says that he has never dined better. No

\[27~2.3.16-18, 26-7,31; 2.7.2, 4-5, 21-2.\]
meal could have been a better source of inspiration for a writer of comedy (or satire for that matter).

Thus we see the satirist using the opening lines of his satire to achieve a kind of moral orientation for the reader. The fantasy is that Horace's satirist is talking to Fundanius the comic poet. Their subject is Nasidienus the rich host. This, appropriately (given Nasidienus' social aspirations), makes Nasidienus the subject of gossip; a cruel fate, if the gossip is antagonistic. Early on in the poem, the satirist announces that he was going to invite Fundanius to dinner, but Nasidienus got in first. Thus an implicit contrast is drawn between the satirist's putative meal and Nasidienus' 'cena'. At this point Nasidienus' meal would seem to have the advantage (because Nasidienus is wealthy). Within a few lines, however, we begin to see that this is not the case, and the reader can backtrack mentally: 'What would the satirist's dinner have been like?'

At various points in the satires, most obviously in Satire 2.6, the satirist outlines the 'proper' way to dine. Other dinner-party 'norms' are also available to us:

Nec id ad uoluptatem refero sed ad communitatem uitae atque uictus remissionemque animorum, quae maxime sermone efficitur familiari, qui est in conuuiuis dulcissimus, ut sapientius nostri quam Graeci; illi 'symposia' aut 'syndeipna', id est compotationes aut concenationes, nos 'conuiuia', quod tum maxime simul uiuitur.  

(Cic. Fam. 9.24.3)
The satirist’s meal would have been a literary phenomenon. As such the reader might have expected a 'symposium' or a 'deipnon'; that is, broadly speaking, either the description of the conversation that takes place after a meal, or a description of the food that was served. In fact the satirist evokes both, in order to show that Nasidienus' meal fails to live up to expectations in terms of either wine-inspired conversation or food.

5.4.1 Convivium: food and the meeting of friends

There was an idealised expectation that a host would treat his guests fairly, ignoring any differences of rank and wealth in order to reinforce the communal nature of the activity; hence the emphasis on the prefix ('sym/syn' and 'com/con') in Cicero's translation of the Greek terminology of dining into the Roman context.

Early on, Fundanius makes it clear that the diners at Nasidienus' party do not consider themselves to be together. When Vibidius and Balatro start to swill wine against the wishes of their host, we are told that their lead is followed by everyone ('secutis omnibus', 40). However, 'everyone', as Fundanius goes on to say, means everyone in the Maecenas party. During the next drinking-bout the Maecenas group are the 'conuiuae':

---

28 Cf. Shero, 126-7: noting the separation of two types of literary meal.
Ironically, Nasidienus believes that he has arranged a convivial affair. Balatro sees this, and probes his unwitting host's weak spot, to the delight of his friends, with some thoughts on the ideal of conviviality:

\[\text{sed conuiuatoris uti ducis ingenium res aduersae nudare solent, celare secundae.}\]

Nasidienus digs his own grave with his reply:

\[\text{ita uir bonus es conuiuaque comis.}\]

This whole exchange depends on the audience's proper understanding of what a 'conuiuium' ought to be.

The success of a 'conuiuium' ultimately depends on the guests being able to forget the constraints of real life and enjoy each other's company. Nasidienus, however, is portrayed unwittingly promoting friction at every opportunity. This is not because he fails to be even-handed in his treatment of his guests.\(^{29}\) Far from it; he bends over backwards to be fair and generous (in his own terms). In fact this is his downfall.

\(^{29}\) Cf. Juv. 5.
In its ideal form the dinner-party represents the opportunity to create a temporary enclosed society, but one in which guests can feel relaxed. This is reflected both in behaviour at, and the setting of, the 'cena'. At a Roman dinner it was normal to remove one's outdoor shoes; this marks the contrast between the outside and the inside world. Plutarch talks of the importance of 'washing away vanity' on entering the dining-room, just as one would wash the mud from one's feet. He also says that as soon as the diner enters through the dining-room door, he must realise that dinner is a democratic affair. 30

Dining-rooms were decorated to evoke other worlds, with architectonic and rural styles of decoration (Bek, 85). They might overlook elaborate gardens or seascapes, thereby distancing the diner not only from the confines of life, but from the feeling of being in a house. 31 There might be dining-rooms for different times of the year, to maximise the natural conditions and achieve the temperature regulation that was an important factor in the physical comfort of the guests. 32 Vitruvius suggests that entry into a person's dining-room was by invitation only, presumably to ensure that proper control was kept on who was admitted and to what degree of intimacy. 33

Therefore, not only should there be no reason to leave the table or allow the intrusion of the outside world, but

---

30 QC. 1.2.616d-f.
31 Var. R. 2.4.2, Lucullus had an aviary and a dining room under the same roof.
32 Vitr. 6.4.1-2; Col. 1.6.1-2. Vitr. 7.4.5, decoration to suit the conditions of the seasons.
33 Vitr. 6.5.1. The same went for bedrooms and bathrooms as well.
doing so can create a rip in the social fabric of the dinner. Nasidienus, for example, breaks the boundaries of the enclosed world by putting on his slippers and dashing into the kitchen (77). As if to signify the loosening of his hold, the guests start to talk to each other, but in whispers (77-8), presumably so as not to be heard by Porcius and Nomentanus who remain. In this way they vocalise the opinions that fundamentally separate them from their host, thus showing that the meal did not perform its function of putting their differences 'on hold'.

The confinement of the dinner-party should be an aid to the relaxation of the guests; it cuts them off from their worries. However, it was possible for the restriction of the dinner to cause the very kind of friction that it was trying to avoid. Therefore the interplay of rules and freedom have an important role in dinners described by the sources. There was the notion of a dinner with limits: self-imposed or jointly agreed limits of consumption (of wine) or duration.\(^{34}\) Good dinners could go on too long, meaning that the guests got drunk; so too could bad dinners, in which the guests felt stressed. Pliny describes an ideal host, Spurinna, at whose dinners in the country guests could please themselves. They could join him for a reading or bathe; they could keep going long into the night if they wished.\(^{35}\) The meal would be followed by sleep, rather than by a return to 'normal' life.

\(^{34}\text{ Cf. Plin. Ep. 3.12.4.}\)
\(^{35}\text{ Ibid. 2.1.8.}\)
The important differences, those of background, wealth, and status, were (in theory), forgotten in the shared experience of the event. According to Plutarch, Cato called the dinner-table the best means of promoting friendship. By inviting Maecenas to dinner, Nasidienus is effectively testing this theory. Maecenas is invited precisely because of his status. Nasidienus is only in a position to invite Maecenas because he has money. Hence Balatro's comment that by drinking Nasidienus out of his fortune they will be avenged, presumably preventing him ever discharging his hospitality on them again (34). The moral position of Maecenas' group, as painted earlier by the satirist, is such that it does not respond to the 'levelling' tactics used by Nasidienus. The irony of his position is, therefore, that he desperately wants the respect of Maecenas, but only manages to alienate him.

Nasidienus' basic misreading of the priorities of friendship and social interaction has, therefore, created a confrontation rather than a meeting of souls. This is echoed in the physical layout of the event. Maecenas is the guest of honour; he reclines at the 'locus consularis', the right-hand place on the middle couch. His party are ranged along the 'medius lectus' and 'summus lectus' (20-2), and Nasidienus' group take up the third remaining couch (23-4). Nasidienus has given up his rightful position, next to Maecenas, so that his deputy Nomentanus can point out culinary niceties to the guest of

---

36 Plut. M. Cato. 25.2, he was supposed to have invited his country neighbours.
37 Plut. QC 619b-f.
38 Wickham, 199.
honour. Here we see the misunderstanding of proper values illustrated. Gastronomy has almost literally assumed the physical proximity normally reserved for friendship. Where Nasidienus had a chance, literally, to get close to his would-be friend, he has given it up for what he believes to be of greater value to his cause: that Maecenas should be properly informed. 39 Maecenas' party is drawn up on two couches opposite Nasidienus' single-couch group. The visitors have superiority in numbers, despite the host's supposed control over the action, and therefore are unlikely to be defeated. The military metaphor 40 employed by Balatro may therefore have an extra ironic twist:

\[ \text{sed conuiuatoris uti ducis ingenium res} \\
\text{aduersae nudare solent, celare secundae.} \]

(73-4)

Perhaps both Maecenas and Nasidienus are generals. As to the host's ability to rescue his cause in the face of disaster, we know that only a fundamental reform of values and priorities would suffice, not a bit of superficial tinkering in the kitchen.

5.4.2 Symposium: wine and the meeting of minds

---

39 i.e. making the purpose of his dinner-party too clear. 40 Cf. Plaut. St. 'sed interim, stratege noster, cur hic cessat cantharus?'
The first three lines of the satire carry an apparently innocent question and qualifying statement:

Ut Nasidieni iuuit te cena beati?
nam mihi quaerenti conuiuam dictus here illic
de medio potare die.

(1-3)

The first thought is that the wealthy Nasidienus' meal will be preferable to anything that the satirist could offer. From his comment that they have been drinking since the middle of the day we might also imagine that it was a convivial, boozy affair. As it turns out, these comments are both loaded.

Why, then, does the satirist lay so much emphasis on drinking when it is a 'cena', and is there any significance in the fact that two of the main characters, Fundanius and Nomentanus, bear the same names as two popular Italian vintages? The answers lie in the role of wine in a number of relevant areas: as integral to the success of the Roman dinner-party; as part of the Greek symposium; and as part of the satirist's literary language. To deal briefly with the last: Horace's speaker maintains that verse can benefit from a blending of Latin and Greek, as one would blend Falernian and Chian. Perhaps it is appropriate, then, that his interlocutor Fundanius made his reputation from successfully

41 'Fundanum' and 'Nomentanum': Tchernia, 324-5 and 326-7 tabulates literary references to these wines.
42 S. 1.10.24.
transferring Greek comedy onto the Roman stago,\textsuperscript{43} while the gastronome host encounters disaster when he misguidedly tries to blend five-year-old Italian wine with Chian.\textsuperscript{44} Thus the successful juggling of literary cultures is contrasted with the messy attempt to foist misunderstood foreign-style cookery\textsuperscript{45} onto cultivated Roman dinner-guests.

Next, is it possible that Fundanius has missed out on a satirist-style 'conuiiium'?

\footnotesize{o noctes cenaeque dei quibus ipse meique
ante Larem proprium uescor uernasque procaces
pasco libatis dapibus. prout cuique libido est
siccat inaequalis calices conuiua, solutus
legibus insanis, seu quis capit acria fortis
pocula seu modicis uuescit laetius. ergo
sermo oritur, non de uillis domibusue alienis,
nec male necne Lepos saltet; sed quod magis ad nos
pertinet et nescire malum est agitamus: utrumne
diiitiiis homines an sint uirtute beati;
quidue ad amicitias, usus rectumne, trahat nos;
et quae sit natura boni summumque quid eius.

(2.6.65-76)

In this earlier satire the satirist wished to emphasise the proper importance of friendship and conversation and the relative insignificance of eating. The symposium form

\textsuperscript{43}Ibid. 40-2.
\textsuperscript{44}2.8.47-9.
\textsuperscript{45}How appropriate that the final dish (crane) is served 'mazonomo ... magno' (86)!
presents an appropriate literary framework in which to set these values. In fact, the meal described in 2.6 is deliberately absurd; not a touchstone for a real dinner-party, but a knock at the conventions of the philosophical dinner-party. Compare Horace’s meal, for example, with the following extract from Plato’s Symposium:

‘When Socrates had taken his place and had dined with the rest, they made libation and sang a chant to the god and so forth, as custom bids, ’til they began on the drinking. Then Pausanias opened a conversation in this manner: ’Well gentlemen, what mode of drinking will suit us best?’

(176 a-b)

This is the idealised version of the meal that emphasises its value in breaking down social barriers through wine and conversation. Using this as a standard, we can see just how thorough the satirist has been in depicting Nasidienus’ failure as an orchestrator of a meeting of minds. The key lies in the treatment of wine in the Nasidienus satire.

The satirist’s opening comment is misleading. As it turns out, Nasidienus is anything but free with his wine, although paradoxically, some of the guests do manage to get drunk. In fact, he misinterprets the role of wine by reducing it to its ostentation value alone. So he starts with the best stuff, served in an extraordinary manner. The drinks arrive as in a perverted religious procession, a travesty of the customary first libation, borne by an
Indian slave, comparable to an Attic girl, and by a Greek, indelicately dressed ('alte cinctus', 10). Nasidienus shows off to Maecenas that although Caecuban and Chian are on offer, Alban and Falernian are also available (15-16). It is a boast delivered under the guise of deference to the wishes of a guest of honour. Presumably it is also the kind of offer that a polite guest (Nasidienus hopes) would not take up. That is, the offer is delivered as a kind of challenge: in effect, 'now dare to question my choice of wines!'. Sadly, in offering his Chian unsalted, he is opening himself up to ridicule already (15).

Nasidienus tries to restrict the drinking of his guests by giving them small cups. Excessive consumption of his quality wines gives him cause to blanch, as we see when Vibidius gets the party guzzling from big Allifan beakers (35-40). The satirist has already made it clear that restrictions on drinking have no place in the properly conducted 'conuiuium', and even when there are to be recommended limits, it is the job of the drinking-master to set them.

As the guests react against the strictures imposed on them, we see Nasidienus' command of the situation begin to loosen. He has to play the sober 'straight man' to Vibidius and Balatro, the increasingly drunken buffoons. More pointedly than that, it is Vibidius' role first to make guests drink (34), and then to make them drink more (80-2).

---

46 Cf. Lucian. Symp. 15, transaction between Cleodemus and the handsome cup-bearer.

47 2.6.67-70.
One of the recommendations of a good dinner-party was the quality of the conversation that took place there. In one of his Menippean satires, Varro discusses the conduct of banquets. He places particular emphasis on conversation, addressing subjects such as the garrulousness of guests and proper subjects for discussion. Nasidienus' assembly of nine diners is just on Varro's upper limit. Too many remain silent, however. According to Seneca, when friends dine, the talk naturally ranges from subject to subject. High-quality conversation, no matter what the subject, might result from the lack of social inhibition that comes from dining among like-minded people, aided by the lubricants of food and wine. The quantities had to be right, of course. Thus, according to Plutarch, moderation in wine leads to song, laughter, and dancing, whereas excess can mean unrestrained talk that might be regretted later. Conversation and philosophical discussion were the main features of the symposium of literature. In parodying this form in Satire 2.6, the satirist and his like-minded friends discuss philosophical questions that are not as innocent as they seem. They raise an issue of morality that will be displayed in some style in the behaviour of Nasidienus in Satire 2.8; namely, the mistaken confusion

---

48 Cf. Wasps 1299-1325, 1388-91; a parody symposium. Philoclean gets drunk. He beats up Xanthias, mocks the other guests, then knocks over a baker woman's bread stall.

49 Gel. 13.11.3-5, Varro's Menippean satire, 'Nescis Quid Vesper Serus Vehat'. Ibid. 4, proper subjects; 'non super bus anxiiis aut tortuosis, sed iucundos at inuitabilis'.

of economic and moral substance.

As has already been shown, at Nasidienus' dinner-party the guests divide into two clear camps. As it turns out, the host's misreading of his guests' priorities and values prevents any common ground from developing, and when the wine eventually does begin to flow, it widens the gulf between the two parties rather than bringing them together. Ultimately the guests leave before the real conversational part of the evening would normally begin. Moreover, those who might have a revealing or enlightening contribution (Varus, Viscus, Fundanius and Maecenas) stay silent throughout. This is Nasidienus' doing. All talk is monopolised by him and his deputy Nomentanus. Moreover, the main topic of discussion is food. The only guests we 'hear' speaking are the designated buffoons Balatro and Vibidius. When the tone of the debate eventually does rise, it is with Balatro's mock-sympathetic, -epic, and -philosophical reaction (65-74) to Nasidienus' epic imprecation (61-3). The host's inability to recognise that he is being mocked proves once and for all that he is not equipped to take part in anything like erudite discussion.

5.4.3 'Cena': food and the meeting of stomachs

Nasidienus, driven by the need to impress his important guest, tries to arrange the kind of dinner-party that he would himself find elegant and refined. Food, what it is and how it is served, is the overwhelmingly dominant
element. This is, of course, in direct contrast to the position maintained by the satirist: that food should be a lubricant to the machinery of the successful dinner-party; not important in itself, but a vital element in the event as a whole. We find similar sentiments expressed in Lucilius:

\[
\text{bene cocto et condito, sermone bono, et, si quaeris, libenter...}
\]

\[(1122-3)^{52}\]

Although not entirely missing from the philosophical symposium, food is dispensed with in the minimum of words. Plato has Socrates arriving half-way through the meal, as if to emphasise the irrelevence of the food element.\(^{53}\) Xenophon has finished with food by the end of the first book out of nine. At Lucian’s satirical Symposium the narrator chooses not to enumerate the individual dishes (11). Like Nasidienus, the host Aristaenetus is rich, but he chooses to entertain philosophers, rather than the wealthy or the influential. In this case, some of the guests seem to be rather more interested in food than they ought to be.\(^{54}\)

The Comic dinner-party often takes the form of anticipation of a meal from the point of view of a guest, or of the cook, who describes in detail the food he is

\[^{52}\text{Cic. Fin. 2.25; Att. 13.52.1.}\]
\[^{53}\text{Symp. 175c-6a.}\]
\[^{54}\text{Cleodemus and Ion watch Zenotheimis gorging himself and slipping food to his slave (11). Alcidamas locates himself where the food is, simultaneously criticising opulence (13-14).}\]
planning to serve. The dinner may never reach the table, but the catalogue of mouth-watering dishes has the effect of whetting the audience's appetite for the action and the 'dinner' to come. The 'deipnon', as exemplified by Athenaeus' Deipnosophistae, like Horace's Satire 2.8, represents a fusion of drinking-party and dinner, but with an entirely different purpose. Athenaeus brings together a group of philosophers at a fictional dinner in Rome during the 'Parilia'. The subject they discuss is food in its historical, philosophical, cultural, and culinary contexts. Thus, while Horace's Nasidienus satire seeks to show how food is not a suitable subject for serious discussion, Athenaeus aims at the opposite. In a similar vein, Plutarch's Quaestiones Conuiuales are reports of after-dinner conversations. Although the area for discussion may be identified during the food part of the meal, the talk only gets under way when the drinking has begun. Talk revolves around matters related to dining, in the broad context, such as etiquette and custom, rather than food.

None of these literary 'dinners' purports to be an accurate portrayal of meals as they actually took place. The so-called 'deipnon letters' of Hippolochus and Lynceus may have been written with the intention of accuracy. Unfortunately nothing of these survives except a reference to them in Athenaeus as accounts of meals which these two

55 Arist. Ach. 1085-1142; P1. Aul. 371-6, buying the food; Ibid. 398-405, preparing the food; Capt. 845-51. 56 1.1a; 1.20b, Rome as the 'epitome of the civilised world. 54 661b.
individuals had enjoyed. 58

Therefore the Nasidienus 'cena' is part of a tradition of redefining the literary meal. It is divided by courses, rather than by the broader transition from food to wine to conversation, or even by the natural elements of 'hospitium'. Behind this lies his fundamental error: that the role of the host brings with it a position from which to exert power. Thanks to the satirist’s nicely observed characterisation, we see that Nasidienus' generosities regarding food and gastronomic knowledge, and his gauche attempts at deferring to his guests' wishes, barely cover a totally unjustifiable arrogance. To underscore this Fundanius refers to the host by ironic epithet rather than by name; as 'cenae pater' (7), 'erus' (16, 43), 'parochus' (36), and 'dominus' (93). Moreover, like Catius in Satire 2.4, Nasidienus is the wise sage ('sapiens', 60), who teaches his guests (31). The notion of superiority is attached to everything he says or does. He does not point out the special qualities of the dishes, but has a stooge do it:

Nomentanus ad hoc, qui si quid forte lateret
indice monstraret digito.

(25-6)

This is hardly a great compliment to the estimable company, which is treated as an ignorant mob ('turba', 26) who need initiating into a hidden ('celantia', 28) sphere

58Ath. 4.128a (the historical setting is c. 300BC).
of new taste-experiences ('ingustata', 30). Worse still, as well as assuming that Maecenas and company are in his 'camp' gastronomically speaking, Nasidienus suggests that they do not enjoy his degree of refinement; hence, his description of the recipe comes out as a kind of 'master-class'.

The satirist knows that the audience will approach the meal aware of both the relative unimportance and the satiriric taxonomy of gastronomy, and of the proprieties of dining. The meal starts with boar:

\[
\text{in primis Lucanus aper; leni fuit Austro captus ...} \tag{6-7}
\]

This would be quite a shock to the Roman audience who were used to the dish as a piece de resistance at the climax of a meal. The reference to the prevailing climatic conditions belongs to the Catian school of culinary art, and reminds the reader of the satirist's (not Fundanius') style of presenting gastronomic matters. The first course is accompanied by appetisers, 'qualia lassum peruellunt stomachum' (8-9), the implication perhaps being that Nasidienus' type of guest normally arrives at dinner with his digestive faculties already fatigued.

The second wave of dishes at Nasidienus' meal brings fowl, shellfish, and fish, all prepared so as to present the guests with a world of previously unknown flavours.

\[^{59}\text{The epitome of convivial food.}\]
\[^{60}\text{E.g. 2.4.51.}\]
(27-30). Some might say they have remained unknown for a good reason. Included among these is a dish of turbot and plaice livers. It is not a unique reference to serving fish entrails, but to provide enough of these organs to serve nine diners would imply the gutting of a considerable number of expensive fish. The idea is especially ridiculous in the case of turbot, which was prized for being magnificent when whole. Nasidienus is of course trying to overturn normal practice. The entrails are normally the first part to be thrown away, or, in the Roman world especially, were used in large quantities in the making of garum. Significantly, this course is not served anonymously; Fundanius tells us that he was handed the dish personally by Nomentanus (29-30). Bearing in mind that the former is 'summus in summo' and the latter 'summus in imo' (20-2), the two could not be much further apart; yet we see the eager Nomentanus trying too hard to push things onto the guests.

After the fish course, the fruit arrives, with another piece of natural science worthy of Catius:

\[
\text{post hoc me docuit melimela rubere minorem}
\]
\[
\text{ad lunam delecta.}
\]

\[(31-2)\]

\[\text{61To the guests, not to Nasidienus.}\]
\[\text{62Mart. 13.84, the entrails of the sea bream were the only part worth eating of this once esteemed fish.}\]
\[\text{63Mart. 13.81. It would have been gutted when served whole}\]
\[\text{of course. Cf. infra 7.4.2.}\]
\[\text{64Apic. 2.5.3; Plin. Nat. 31.43.93, garum made from fish}\]
\[\text{guts and other parts which would normally be thrown away.}\]
\[\text{65Cf. Mart. 1.44.4.}\]
However Nasidienus manages to go a step further. According to Catius, shellfish grow under waxing moons ('nascentes lunae', 2.4.30). Using similar logic, Pliny would seem to be in agreement when he says that waning moons make things diminish in size. There seems to be a confusion between the power of the moon to affect physical properties and the role of the sun in ripening. The apples, then, are red; surely the obvious effect of the ripening sun, rather than of the waxing or waning moon.

Once they have reached the apple course the guests might be forgiven for thinking that their ordeal is over, having by now had appetisers (7-9), fish (27, 29-30), fowl (27), game (6), and dessert (31-3) - although admittedly not in the usual order. Far from it; Nasidienus has barely started. Although the lamprey is the central feature of the new dish, the narrator maximises the surprise and impact of the dish by leading in with the prawns that swim around the fish as it lies 'in patina porrecta'. The fact that the beast is stretched out is thrown into prominence at the beginning of line 43, prompting us to recall Catius' comment on big fish at 2.4.76-7:

\[
\text{immane est uitium dare milia terna macello}
\]
\[
\text{angustoque uagos piscis urgere catino}^67
\]

and the moment when the satirist describes a glutton's wish:

\[
\text{66 Ibid. 2.102.221.}
\]
\[
\text{67 The fish are literally squeezed in between 'angusto' and 'catino'.}
\]
As has already been shown, Nasidienus' behaviour represents the practical culmination of a Horatian scheme of gastronomic folly. This means that the presentation of an individual dish is not enough. Fundanius, through the use of indirect speech, has so far described how Nasidienus or Nomentanus explain the nature of each food item as it is put before the guests. When it comes to the sauce for the lamprey, Nasidienus' words are reported verbatim. The sauce, as has been shown earlier, is very contrived. This technique brings the host to life for the audience; we hear clearly the degree of condescension in his didactic manner. For example, without preamble, notice, or apology he plunges in with the conditions of the lamprey's capture, 'capta est' (44). Then the ingredients for the sauce are punched out as the first words of a series of clauses: 'oleo ... '(45), 'garo ... '(46), 'uino ... '(47), 'uerum ... '(47), 'pipere ... '(49), 'erucas ... '(51) and 'inulas ... '(51). The effect is to enhance the impression of an unbecoming, workmanlike authority combined with a misplaced sense of variety and ingenuity, especially as each ingredient has a snappy qualification of age, provenance, or other relevant quality. The exceptions to this method of delivery also

68 Supra 3.4.3. The raw ingredients may not have been too unusual, cf. Apic. 10.2.1-2, but the specific detail is extremely overwrought.
help to focus our image of Nasidienus. The assault on the listener slows for a moment with the addition of a contrasting detail, added in pompous periphrasis:

\[ 'uino quinquenni, uerum citra mare nato, dum coquitur (cocto Chium sic convenit, ut non hoc magis ullum aliud). ' \]

\( (47-9) \)

We know that it is ridiculous that all Italian five-year-old wine will be of comparable quality.\(^{69}\) We also recognise an emphatic negative in Catius' style:

\[ non sine aceto quod Methymnaeom uitio mutauerit uuam. \]

\( (49-50) \)

Recipe completed, the awning comes down; little wonder. As in the Catius satire, the listener would be justified in thinking that the meal has come to an end. But Nasidienus is tenacious, especially where his reputation as a host of refinement is concerned. Spurred on by Balatro's observations on the good general being judged by his performance in the face of disaster, he reappears with a hotch-potch of dishes (85-91). These would have been rather elegant ('suaues res', 92) according to Fundanius, had not Nasidienus felt compelled to tell the guests that the crane was male and seasoned with care ('sparsi sale

magno, non sine farre', 87); the goose that donated its liver was white, female, and fed on figs (88); the hare 'multo suauius' because only its wings were served (89-90); and the blackbirds had charred breasts and the pigeons were rumpless (90-1).

In order to appreciate the humour of this final section it is necessary to imagine Nasidienus' actions on rushing out into the kitchen. The lack of time available, and the necessity of keeping things moving, prevent any fancy combinations of flavourings and seasonings, the priority is just to get whatever is available, cooked and served. However, he cannot return to the dining-table without having introduced some originality. Therefore, in some cases only certain pieces are served, producing what must have been an odd-looking assortment, in view of the culinary surgery involved. Some bits are cooked more than others. The sex and colour of the beast is observed and added to the culinary formula, as is the quantity of perfectly ordinary seasonings (salt and flour in the case of the crane). All is presented in the gastronomic style as if preconceived and recognisably à la mode. Ironically, the plainness of the food imposed by necessity suits the guests. However, good food is not enough to save Nasidienus; we see that disaster has in no way altered his basic faults.

70 Note the emphatic negative of 'non sine farre' (87).
5.5 CONCLUSION

As a descriptive narrative, Horace's *Satire* 2.8 is both accessible and entertaining. The action moves along effortlessly, and the acute observations of character and detail engage the reader's attention and sympathy for the plight of the unfortunate guests. More than this, however, if 'the art is to conceal the art', Horace has been doubly successful. First, while the poem can stand alone as an inflated anecdote, it also presents a synthesis of many of the ideas concerning food already discussed in the second book of satires: the misplaced self-satisfaction that inevitably goes with putting gastronomy on a pedestal; the bizarre logic of gastronomy as 'science'; and the foolishness of the gastronome in the eyes of the 'reasonable' world. Thus we hear the links between the 'gastronomic satires' (2.2; 2.4; 2.8) in the recurrent modes of expression of the gastronome, such as the emphatic negative.

Secondly, at the same time a broader message is being transmitted. Gastronomy does not stand simply for an approach to food; it is the satirist's chosen vehicle for discussing the values and beliefs of a world, in direct antithesis to what the reader understands to be his (the satirist's) own: that of the aristocracy of literature, breeding and the 'mos maiorum'. Thus we see the 'bookish' world drawn up against the 'cookish' world; an appropriate end to a body of poems in which the satirist seeks to explain his value as a lowly writer of 'sermones' to an
audience versed in epic and history and carrying a high profile in the arenas of politics and social affairs.
6.1. INTRODUCTION: ANOTHER 'CENA'

After Horace's Nasidienus poem the 'cena' is next dealt with at length in Juvenal's fifth satire. Here the satirist describes to the pitiful client, Trebius, the kind of treatment he is likely to receive at the hands of his patron, Virro. The message to the client appears to be straightforward: 'Why bother to go through all this rigmarole if the reward for your efforts is a wretched, humiliating meal'. The vehicle in which this message is carried, however, is fairly sophisticated: food and the terms in which it is described are used to delineate in minute, but unreal detail the gulf between opposing individuals, not just as eaters, but as examples of their wider value-systems.

One essential difference between the Horatian and the Juvenalian 'cena' lies in the relative power of host and guest. In the Nasidienus satire both the social and the moral initiative lies with the guests, who are blessed with the proper sense of values, as well as an established place in the social hierarchy. From where Juvenal's satirist stands, however, the corrupt system within which a host, such as Virro, operates is seen as successful. Yet
it could be said that the guest has the power to overturn the corruption of the host’s system, by simply refusing to take part.

There are, at the same time, certain underlying similarities in the two ‘cena’ satires. Both pieces hold a climactic position in their respective books of satires. In fact Juvenal, in his first book of satires, has engineered the possibility of criticising the whole society in which Virro and his kind operate, by fulfilling in the fifth satire a prophecy set out in the first: to describe how the poor client can expect to be treated in one day by the mercenary patron (Braund and Cloud; 80-1).

In both Horace’s Satire 2.8 and Juvenal’s Satire 5, the body of the satire is defined by the narrative of the paradigmatic meal in which we see the host using the elements of the ‘cena’ to express his aspirations and his attitude to his guests through what he feeds them. The satirist is present at neither meal. Thus, the distorting mirror of ‘autobiography’ does not interfere with the clarity of the paradigm.

In Juvenal’s fifth satire, the way in which the satirist deals with food is central to the characterisation of the individuals around whom the satire revolves. It is used to define what Trebius and Virro are, not individually but in relation to each other. To put it simply, guest and host do not eat the same things, they eat significantly different things: they eat what they are.
6.1.1 A familiar setting for conflict

Comparative dinners of the type to be found in Latin literature derive from the notion that certain foods are considered in social and gastronomic terms better than others, and therefore reflect those qualities in those who eat them. Hence, for example, we can witness Pliny’s advice to an up-and-coming young man on the false economy of divisive behaviour when it comes to serving food.¹

Martial, in particular, deals with the theme of the double menu in his Epigrams 1.20, 2.43, 3.60, 82, 4.68, 6.11, 9.2.² Similar issues of theme and treatment in Martial and Juvenal have proved a fertile area of study³ Indeed, it can be argued that the idea behind these epigrams provided Juvenal with a model. However, as a satirist, Juvenal has the advantage over Martial. He has an opportunity presented by satire to discuss the subject at greater length, and therefore to pick out and elaborate on the elements of the meal that best suit the satiric purpose. He uses the opportunity to develop a structure and system of thematic imagery that enhances the impact of his contrast of the comfort of the patron and the degradation of the client.

¹Plin. Ep. 2.6.6, meaning that true economy is restraint by those who could live better. cf. Plin. Pan. 49.6, which combines the ominous presence of the host with the disgraceful treatment of guests.
²Cf. 2.14, Selius desperate to receive a dinner invitation; 2.53, urging Maximus to cut loose from the tyranny of dining out; 3.49, a contrast of wines; 4.69, 85, contrasting cups; 9.48.
³Adamietz, 85-96; Gérard, 172-8; Morford, 222-4.
6.1.2 The target of *Satire* 5

The fifth satire is about the relationship of a patron, Virro, and one of his clients, Trebius. We have no clear evidence to suggest that the satirist had particular individuals in mind when he chose these names. Ferguson (1987, 232) suggests that Trebius was a common name in Juvenal's home town of Aquinum. He also suggests that Virro was a familiar name in Juvenal's home district (ibid. 232). Virro is a name that crops up several times in Juvenal's satires, and, given the way the patron treats Trebius, it is almost tempting to equate him with the repulsive creature described in *Satire* 9.35.

The strength of characterisation of these two individuals, however, does not lie in their credibility as individuals, but in their aptness to their roles.

Although addressed to the client Trebius, the poem is not exclusively about him. In fact, in the elaboration of his potential treatment as a client, we are given just as much detail of the patron Virro. Moreover, both are, in their own ways, 'targets' of the satirist's criticism. Both Juvenal's satirist and Martial view the situation from the perspective of the client in order to attack the patron,\

\[
\text{Inuitas centum quadrantibus et bene cenas.}
\]

\[
\text{Ut cenem inuitor, Sexte, an ut inuideam?}
\]

\[4\] Unlike Pliny for example, supra, 6.1.
\[5\] Cf. 1.20; 2.43; 3.49, 60, 82; 4.68; 6.11.
Martial's criticism is not directed per se against the principle of dining well. By the same token, seen from Trebius' viewpoint, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with Virro's luxurious lifestyle apart from the fact that he seeks maliciously to withhold it from his poor clients. Therefore within the confines of the satire, the host's high quality dinner is criticized only in so far as it compares with Trebius' measly meal. From this we might assume that Virro's apparent success in getting away with bad behaviour has been incorporated as part and parcel of Martial's model. Juvenal's speaker does add something new, however, in that he emphasizes the degradation experienced by the guest as a means of criticizing his willingness to put up with this poor treatment.

Thus Trebius is the satirist's apparent victim, as is made clear from the direct attacks on him which begin and end the poem. His self-deception and consequent lack of pride allow him to live at another man's table (1-2), and to be enslaved by the odours of the wealthy patron's kitchen (162). He may as well be a free beggar, it is suggested at the beginning of the satire (8-9), and at the end poor, but free at least (163-5), since he will eventually undoubtedly become a slave (171-3) otherwise. Satire 5 appears to be aimed at alerting Trebius to the irony of his own situation in which the client is far from blameless. He is addressed at first as someone who has chosen a philosophy of life, hence the use of 'propositum' (1) and 'bona summa' (2). Whereas, according to the satirist, it would be difficult to find
someone less rational in outlook. Trebius is either lying or unbalanced, he says, not even to be believed on oath (5).

So, viewed uncritically, Virro's way of life is marvellous, that of Trebius is appalling. Sarcastic comments attempt to make the poor client wise to the truth of his situation:

\[\text{fructus amicitiae magnae cibus}\]

(14)

scoffs the satirist, and,

\[\text{qualis cena tamen.}\]

(24)

Within the fictional relationship of satirist and Trebius this seems rather harsh on the client. However, our sympathy ultimately lies with the client, since the satirist is after all making the effort to teach him that it is not necessary to give respect and the pleasure of power to someone who deserves neither.

The method of attack employed against the patron reverses that used on the client. Virro is, in a perverse way, being praised for behaving as he does because the system he operates is constantly being reinforced as successful. The satirist establishes a code of

\[\text{6 Cf. 9.21; 10.325.}\]
\[\text{7 Cf. 4.11; 9.118. Luc. Paras. 8-12, 14, parasitism as an art, with pleasure as its end.}\]
differentiation which apparently shows Virro leading a physically comfortable life, while Trebius suffers physical and emotional indignity. This is carried through thematic images of excellence and degradation, which accompany each element of the patron's and the client's meals respectively. However, while these images are persuasive and superficially consistent, the apparently luxurious lifestyle accredited to Virro is undercut by irony that exposes its general immorality. We also know, on the evidence of the first book of satires where the satirist stands on the subject of powerful patrons.

Thus we see that the moral remit of Juvenal's fifth satire is more sophisticated than epigram which deal with similar subjects, because the satirist gives himself room for manoeuvre in where he places his sympathies and his bile. The result is not a particularly realistic or constructive criticism of the patron-client relationship, but it is meant to be an entertaining one.

6.2. A REAL MEAL?

Juvenal's speaker uses the recognised form of the meal to provide a framework for his fifth satire. He deals with the event course by course, comparing the treatment of host and guest as regards food, wine and the non-culinary details, such as service and crockery. In many respects he

8For example in the use of loaded terms such as 'rex' and 'dominus', cf. infra, 6.3.1.
echoes Martial's epigrams, in which furniture, clothes, perfume and jewels also numbered among comparable goods. The comparison is not exclusively that of the pleasures to be enjoyed by a host, with the treatment of a guest. Martial also compares his lot with that of the wealthy man's mistress. Juvenal's satirist seems to have picked out particular elements of Martial's comparison meal, for example the underlying message of the client's plea that his palate is no less tutored than that of his patron, and that love can be bought with love. He revives the polarised imagery of Epigram 9.2, and he deals with the meal course by course as in Epigram 3.60. While Martial might have been a source of inspiration, the comparison meal constructed by the satirist has a different direction and treatment. Where the epigrammatist personalises and boils the meal down to its bare bones, the satirist takes this lean structure and adds layers of imagery in order to create something which is emblematic of the patron/client relationship.

6.2.1 The meal as emblem

9E.g. Food, 1.20.1-2; 2.43.11-2; 3.60.3-8; 3.82.18-21; 6.11.5; wine, 3.82.22-5; service, 2.43.13-4; 3.82.8-17; Yssels, 3.82.24-5. Furniture, 2.43.9-10; clothes, 2.43.3-8; 6.11.7-8; perfume, 3.82.26-8; jewels, 9.2.9. Food, 9.2.3-4; wine, l.c. 5-6; property, l.c. 7-8. 12Mart. 6.11.10.
The meal served to Trebius is designed to exemplify the kind of treatment he can expect. It is related as a template, a projection of what would most appropriately happen to him if he were to be invited to a meal at an unspecified time in the future. The satire is, as it were, a cautionary tale. Hence there is an absence of the kind of detail that would pin down the meal as a real, gastronomic event. Guest and host generally receive one very meaningful specimen of each type of food mentioned. This is described in terms which underline its appropriateness to the status of the diner. However, obvious details, if the meal were to be seen as a gastronomic event, such as side-dishes, mixture-dishes, sauces, and seasonal availability are not mentioned in the account. Indeed, the one example of a seasonal food highlights the emblematic nature of the rest of the meal:

post hunc tradentur tubera, si uer
  tunc erit et facient optata tonitura ce nas
  maiores.

(116-8)

Similarly, the state of the patron's stomach is conditional rather than factual:

si stomachus domini fervet uinoque ciboque

(49)
While the meal starts as explicitly imaginary, the satirist has the task of making it as vivid as possible. A transition at line 15 to the apparent narration of fact, supposition, and experience helps to achieve this. Perhaps it also lulls the audience into a false sense of credulity.

6.2.2 The meaning of the meal

The meal as a structured event is the vehicle that carries the detailed antithesis of patron and client in terms of grades, types and quantities of foods. The satirist makes use of what might be considered to be a standard order of courses: appetisers (‘gustus’ or ‘promulsis’, 80-5, 87), fish (92-106), meat and trifles (114-9) and dessert (‘mensa secunda’) (146-55) not forgetting accompaniments such as bread (67-75), oil (86-91), wine (24-37), and water (53). Within this framework the satirist illustrates how the meals of client and patron might be contrived to differ meaningfully, especially at points where differentiation is least expected or warranted by normal standards of behaviour. Therefore he describes the comparative grades of basic items such as water, bread, and oil. Trebius’ portion of

\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}Duff, 199 and Ferguson 1979, 173 maintain that no ‘gustus’ is mentioned. The eggs and vegetables which accompany Virro’s and Trebius’ shellfish (and the fact that it is shellfish not fish) would suggest that the ‘squilla’ and ‘cammarus’ are appetisers, cf. Mart. 3.60.5. That is, less likely to be differentiated. supra, 3.1.2.}\]
bread, for example, is hard, mouldy and made from 'farina' (67-9), the general term for any product of grinding. Virro's, by comparison, is made of 'siligo', the highest quality bread grain, and is soft and 'snow white' (70). Here we see a comparison in quality of the common or unspecific versus the special which is reinforced by the sensual qualities of the two types of bread.

The menus of host and guest can also be compared quantitatively to show that Trebius receives his worst treatment at the point where he should be doing best. Dish for dish the diners are matched at the appetiser stage, but then Trebius is presented with an 'either, or' when Virro enjoys two types of fish, mullet (92-3) and lamprey (99-100). Next, at the high point of the meal Trebius is forced simply to look on as Virro devours 5 different types of meat: goose liver (114), capon (114-5), boar (115-6), hen and hare (124), and a dish of truffles. The client guests are reduced to having to beg for scraps of meat when the meal is over (166-8). They return to a 'numerically' balanced dessert: Trebius' rotten apples versus Virro's Phaeacean beauties (149-155). The result is a satiric climax at the meat course which coincides with the dramatic expectations of a meal. The idea of not serving a guest with meat infringes the fundamental code of behaviour. It is the absence of meat that dominates Trebius' wistful last words in the Satire:

15 Cato Agr. 74.84; Plin. Nat. 18.20.88.
16 Ibid. 20.86, 'e siliigine lautissimus panis pistrinarumque opera laudatissima'.
17 Cf. Ferguson 1979, 173.
To rub salt in the wound, while the guests are not getting meat, they still have to watch the 'performance' of the prancing carver ('chironomunta', 121). It is at this stage, when the gulf between patron and client is widest, that the satirist envisages Trebius making an objection. If he does he will be ejected, just as Cacus was by Hercules (125-6). As had already been discussed, the traditional attitude of the Roman verse satirists to boar is as an animal designed for conviviality. Meat also had a sacramental significance, therefore in denying his guests a portion, Virro is not just depriving them, he is issuing a significant snub.

The satirist uses disruption and displacement in the order and content of the comparative menus to alert. At 146-8 the guests are served with 'dodgy' toadstools while Virro receives a 'Claudian' mushroom; imperial-sized but lethal. So, where Trebius'
toadstools are naturally poisonous, Virro is in danger from human hand. Mushrooms would not normally be served at the end of the meal. Catius places them after the cabbage, eggs and 'drowned' hen, but before the body of the meal. Martial describes a meal of shellfish, mushrooms, fish and fowl. However, in this case, the connotation of death is more suitably placed in what might be called a 'terminal' position. The proper place of the mushroom at the beginning of the meal is taken up with Virro's lobster, not a low key appetiser, but a set piece in its own right. This might be compared with the treatment of Nasidienus' meal, where the guests are assaulted straightaway with boar, admittedly plus 'appetisers'. The satirist, it seems is loathe to miss the dramatic potential presented by the opening of a dinner.

The satirist does not treat the meal as a self-contained unit within the poem. Instead he uses its natural breaks as intermissions in which Trebius can be reminded of the world outside the confines of the meal, and therefore of what could be his own rational view of his situation. The establishing 'scene' occurs before the meal (12-23). We learn of Trebius' state of mind, his anticipation of his dinner, and the early morning vigils for which it is payment. We see him setting off in the chilliest, bleakest part of the day, in the chilliest time of the year (23).

24 Hor. S. 2.4.20-1. 26 Mart. 3.60.5. 28 Cf. Duff 199; Morford 245.
25 Just before dawn; Courtney, 234.
In the next break, after the wine, cups, water, service, and bread (76-9) the satirist has Trebius asking himself if it was all worth it, having had to leave his warm bed to dash up the Esquiline. Rain and a steep slope\(^{29}\) have been added to the discomforts of the cold and the dark. When the shellfish and fish have been served (107-113), Trebius is asked to imagine himself actually managing to get a word in with the great man. This is what he has fought so hard for, but the unjust treatment he has received allows Trebius (and the other guests) a chance to challenge: 'poscimus ut cenes ciuilter' (112), they think.

After the grossly unfair meat course, when Trebius has learned that speaking his mind will get him thrown out (125-145), the satirist informs him that money is his bar to gaining Virro's respect and attention, but he must be careful not to have any heirs. In this topsy-turvy world, it is a disaster to have male triplets (141-2). Finally, by way of a summary, after dessert (156-165) the satirist reveals the true depth of malicious intent behind Virro's actions. He is prepared to make the investment of energy in eating so well and treating clients so badly, to ensure that the status quo prevails:

\[ \text{ergo omnia fiunt,} \]
\[ \text{si nescis, ut per lacrimas effundere bilem} \]

\(^{28}\)Cf. Mart. 8.21.8. In winter Bootes sets around dawn; Curtney, 234.
\(^{29}\)Mart. 5.22.1-8, on the dirty pavements and wet steps of the Esquiline.
cogaris pressoque diu stridere molari.

(158-60)

These diversions represent a series of futile attempts to gain Virro's attention, through which the satirist shows Trebius' increasing indignation, and the intolerable stacking of the cards against him. The only way to win is to get out.

Both Martial's and Juvenal's comparative menus contain certain foods that reiterate familiar perceptions - to the reader of satire that is - of the luxurious and the low-grade. This suggests that the satirists are restricting themselves to certain types of food and dining details suited, or adapted to carrying their message.

Starting with re-used material, Nasidienus also serves up the vintage wine, Venafran oil, lamprey, mullet, boar and apples enjoyed by Virro. 30 Setian wine (34), lobster (81), asparagus (82), crayfish (84), eel (103), and truffles (116) are the only elements of the meal not mentioned by Horace. They can all be found in Martial's epigrams, however. 31 This would suggest considerable restriction of the range of foodstuffs being exploited by the satirists, reflecting little of the diversity that must have arrived in the intervening years. 32 There are no

30 Supra, 5.4.3.
31 Setian wine, 4.69.1; 6.86; 8.50.19; 9.2.5; 22.3; 10.14.5; 36.5; 74.11; 11.29.6; 12.17.5; 13.23; 112; 124; 14.103. Cf. Tchernia, 327, 331; asparagus, 13.21.1-3; eel, 12.31.5; truffles, 13.50.2.
32 For sheer diversity in Martial alone cf. figpeckers, (Footnote continued)
signs of the elaborate fricasees or agglomerations to be found in the Apicius collection. Even the conglomerations and sauces beloved of the Horatian gastronome, or 'toned-down' versions of Trimalchian novelty dishes fail to make a showing.

As discussed earlier, luxury in food is often equated with the expense of the rare rather than any intrinsic taste or nutritional value. These extra-gustatory values are central to the discussion of the relative merits of the food eaten by Virro and Trebius. Where there is overlap in the foods served to Virro and Trebius, and Martial and his host, it can be in the context of a comparison of high-quality wine, shellfish, fish, mushrooms, game, fowl and fruit with an inferior counterpart. Occasionally they differ in respect of the boundaries of the courses, and those of natural classification. Martial, for example, compares crayfish, 'cammarus' with mullet, while Juvenal sets 'cammarus' against freshwater crayfish, or giant shrimp ('squilla', 80-5).

(continued)

13.5.49; smoked cheese, ibid 32; citrons, 37; sucking pig, 41; pomegranates, 42; guinea fowl and pheasant, 45; peaches, 46; thrush and fieldfare, 51; duck, 52; turtle doves, 53; dormice, 59; Ionian heathcock, 61; partridge, 65; sea bream, 84; bass, 89; sturgeon, 91.

34 E.g. Lucanian sausage 2.4; forcemeat ('e/isicium'), ibid. 2.1.1-7; 2.2.1-3.
35 Supra. 3.4.3.
36 Petr. 49, pig stuffed with sausages.
37 Cf. ch. 3 passim.
38 Thompson, 100: also freshwater crayfish.
39 2.43.11-12.
40 Thompson, 19: identifies this with Martial's 'squilla'
41 13.83.
42 Thompson, 103-4: identifies 'squilla' with prawn or shrimp; regarded as a luxury, Plin. Ep. 2.17.
to be despised since both writers are illustrating the extreme ends of a scale. Martial, however, chooses the mullet to represent the extreme of size and expense, and compares it, using the standards of judging mullet, to something that would not even have been served at the same time. Juvenal chooses the 'squilla' and the 'cammarus' because in visual and classification terms the comparison is more vivid. The 'squilla' may well have been smaller than the 'cammarus' under normal circumstances, hence the prodigious nature of Virro's 'starter'. Apicius presents the two as interchangeable in terms of gastronomic type but as different in size. Juvenal fixes the scale of Trebius' specimen saying it is small enough to be hemmed in by half an egg. There seems to be a lack of definition in identification of the 'squilla' to 'cammarus' range. Juvenal builds on this to make the comparison of a single prawn with its big relative ridiculous and contrived:

---

42 Both are sea creatures, Plin. Nat. 32.53.148-9. 'Squillae' are not normally small, hence Pliny refers to the 'squilla parua', ibid 9.66.142. Varr. R. 2.11.3; Col. 8.15.6. It was fed in large quantity to ducks. Both are pink also, cf. Mart. 2.43.12; Thompson, 100: 'cammari' are not crabs, as sometimes translated (Lat. 'cancer' cf. Thompson, 105). 45 cf. 2.1.3, 'Isicia de scillis vel de cammaris amplis'. Prawn sized in fact, a relative of the Italian 'gambero'. Cf. Thompson, 100; David, 178-9. 46 Flower and Rosenbaum, 61: 'stomopod crustaceans similar to prawns'. Perhaps as shown also by Italian waiters who tend to refer to anything from a langoustine to a shrimp as 'scampi' c.f. David 177.
aspirae quae longo distinguat pectore lancem
quae fertur domino squilla, et quibus undique
saepa
aspargis qua despiciat conuia cauda,
dum uenit excelsi manibus sublata ministri.
set tibi dimidio constrictus cammarus ovo
ponitur exigua feralis cena patella.

(80-5)

The size of Virro's shellfish is emphasised by the way it
brackets its own description 'longo ... cauda' (80-2),
just as it covers the dish, a 'lanx' \(^{48}\) compared with
Trebius' diminutive 'patella'. The little shellfish is
literally hemmed in by half an egg, the 'constrictus
cammarus' being bracketed by 'dimidio ... ovo' (84). We
might then say that the potential for a vivid visual image
attracts Juvenal to the 'squilla' and the 'cammarus' in
his re-working of Martial's original antithesis, rather
than to a change in the eating habits of wealthy hosts and
poor clients in the intervening period.

6.3 THEMATIC IMAGERY: POWER AND IMPOTENCE

\(^{48}\) André, 1965, 310, 'plat creux pour servir les mets
semi-liquides ou accompagnés d'une sauce'. Mart. 11.31.19,
'causaque lances'.
Considering that the satirist uses 173 lines to describe a single meal, there is a distinct absence of the basic vocabulary for evoking the experience of eating. Dishes are not hot, cold, sweet, sharp, spicy, salty, satisfying, pungent, rich, or appetising. They are more likely to be 'dignus ferro Meleagri' (115), or 'subrepta soribus Afris' (152) and when allusion is made to a sensual quality, a food is not merely cold, it is 'frigidior Geticis pruinis' (50). The point of Juvenal's system of imagery is not the evocation of a culinary event but the illustration of the relative power and impotence of patron and client. This is reflected in the sub gastronomic vocabulary that he uses. The satirist describes food to be enjoyed or endured on an intellectual level. At the same time he widens the perceived experience of the eater, to enhance the subjective, sensuous appreciation of the satire.

The idea of attaching external images to comparative menus is exemplified in Martial's Epigram 6.11. He suggests Pylades and Orestes as potentially differentiable diners in the comparison of his own meal with that of his host:

Tu Lucrina uoras, me pascit aquosa peloris:
         non minus ingenua est et mihi, Marce, gula.
te Cadmea Tyros, me pinguis Gallia vestit:
         uis te purpureum, Marce, sagatus amem?
ut praestem Pyladen, aliquis mihi praeestet Oresten,
         hoc non fit uerbis, Marce: ut amonis, ama.

(5-10)
The image is straightforward. It depends on a heroic transposition of the idea of friendship. The foods and clothes mentioned are described in plain terms of sensation, 'aequosus' (5), 'pinguis' (7), and 'purpureus', (8). Juvenal's satirist, however, using the same general framework of the elements of the meal (food, wine, and service) concentrates on the comparison of emotional states: degradation versus potency, for example, showing 'less concern with the objective entity of the menu than with a purpose of provoking an emotional response towards each item on the list' (Anderson, 248). So although the reader has to realise that Virro is a patron because he is rich, the important feature for the satirist is the feeling of personal power that goes with wealth's corrupting influence, and the extreme sense of degradation experienced by those he misuses. To this end, the extreme degree of distinction in social, economic, and personal status between Virro and Trebius is the motivating factor, and is depicted in symbolic terms whereby each element of the dinner is, to a greater or lesser degree selected and moulded to fit the symbolic framework.

The process by which the satirist illustrates the relationship of patron and client, and imbues the elements of their meals with meaning is laid out in the following table. We see that the character and status of the two men is not only illustrated in realistic terms as patron and client, but also in metaphorical terms. The experience they have of the meal suits their real and metaphorical

\[^{49}\text{Cf. 7.129-43; 9.8-33, 135-46; e.g. 11.117-29, for personal effects, clothing and furniture.}\]
status, and is suggested as being both physical (but not necessarily in the gustatory sense) and emotional. Therefore the satirist's description of the meal has broad suggestive powers.
### Table 6.1 The Terms of the Relative Status of Virro and Trebius as Expressed Through the 'Cena'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VIRRO</th>
<th>TREBIUS</th>
<th>PATRON/CLIENT RELATIONSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PATRON</strong></td>
<td><strong>CLIENT 16</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend* 14,173</td>
<td>friend* 134,146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giver*/receiver 13-4</td>
<td>brother* 135, 137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giver/receiver* 13-4</td>
<td>subject 12-23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>king* 14,130,137,161</td>
<td>'parasitus' 2-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>master* 49,71,81,92, 137,147</td>
<td>free man* 161-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hero/god* 30,36,115</td>
<td>slave 170-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impressario* 157-8</td>
<td>captive 162</td>
<td>METAPHORICAL RELATIONSHIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legacy hunter 140</td>
<td>sub-human/animal 11,153</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comic performer, clown 157-8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beggar 8-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>madman 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>philosopher* 1-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>servants</th>
<th>guests</th>
<th>natural forces</th>
<th>inanimate objects/food</th>
<th>the past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discussed 6.4</td>
<td>AGENTS</td>
<td>OPPRESSION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>heroic/mythic* 38-9, 25,125*,138-9*</th>
<th>44-5,59*,100-2,115-6, 151-2</th>
<th>QUANTIFYING FACTORS (food and trappings)</th>
<th>Republican/historical/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>regal 30-7,57-9,109-12</td>
<td>imperial* 147-8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>natural 50</td>
<td>manufactured 46-8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIRRO</td>
<td>TREBIUS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowing/user 170</td>
<td>fulfilled* 18-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>calculating 14-5,157</td>
<td>credulous/naive 156</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sexually suspect 56-9</td>
<td>self-deceiving 166</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proud 62,64-5,128-9</td>
<td>family man 76-7,141-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violent 125-6,171-2</td>
<td>humble/humiliated 126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hypocritical 132-45</td>
<td>intimidated 54-5,84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>angry 159</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>disappointed 158</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hurt 27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wretched 87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weeping 159</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cold 23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wet 78-9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sleepless 19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>harrassed 20-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>silent 126-7,169</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSICAL CONDITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>expensive 56-59,97-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>large scale 80-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'exotic' 56,119,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclusive 70,147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>young 56,59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curative 49-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fresh 70-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>light/white 70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cool/soothing 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bejewelled 37-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beautiful 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fragrant 150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soft 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TREBIUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mean 6,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiny 84-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'foreign' 88-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ordinary 46,53,63,104-6,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deathly/old 53-5,85,(91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poisonous (91),103,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polluted 11,105-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>putrid 68,104,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark 53-5,91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pale 87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abrasive/hot 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ugly 46-7 (thin) 53,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>putrid 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hard 68-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

* denotes terms used ironically.
NB the use of a mixture of contrasting and complementary terms to describe Virro’s and Trebius’ states.
6.3.1 The king and the slave

Satire 5 centres around two named individuals in conflict. It is important therefore to define the relationship of Trebius and Virro. They are of course patron and client, and many of the terms used to describe them take the lead from the terminology of patronage. The satirist, however, extracts the ironic potential of the terminology exposing and extrapolating from the ideal behind 'amicitia', 'officium' and 'fraternitas'. Virro is never a 'patronus' and Trebius is only twice a 'cliens' (16, 64). Instead they tend to be 'amici'. Friendship ('amicitia') carried implications of equality, in some senses as a heroic ideal. In practice, however, it was usual to have 'friends' of unequal status. One could be a 'mediocris amicus', a 'tenuis amicus', a 'humilis amicus', an 'amicus minor' or an 'amicus pauper', for example. The satirist's pessimistic reading of the situation sees to it that he applies the ideal version, but heavy with irony, ignoring the subtleties of the various gradings of 'friends':

fructus amicitiae magnae cibus; inputat hunc rex,  
et quamuis rarum tamen inputat.  

(14-15)

50 Cic. Fin. 2.26.84, 'Pyladaea amicitia'. Cf. Amic. 27.  
51 Cic. Ben. 6.34.2-3, 'amicus prīmi' and 'secundī' who are still not 'amicī ueri'. Cf. ibid. 5.  
52 Cic. Fin. 2.85; Cic. Mur. 70; Sen. Ep. 47.1; Plin. Ep. 2.6.2; Plin. Ep. 9.30; White 1988, 81.  
Trebius' past services are 'officiis' (13). As such they entail 'an element of reciprocity' (Saller, 15). The satirist plays to Trebius' sense of dashed expectation at the kind of return he receives for services which have cost him time and personal comfort (15-16, 19-23, 76-9). Virro, it seems, does not fail to repay, but he rations his generosity to the bare minimum. Therefore Trebius has to wait two months for his invitation to dinner. Worse still, this seems to be acceptable (since people like Trebius do turn up to his measly dinner in the satire). All of which contrasts with the gifts that Seneca, Piso, and Cotta used to bestow on their 'modici amici' (108).

Virro is a 'rex' (14, 130, 137, 161) or a 'dominus' (49, 71, 92, 137, 147), terms of respect in one sense, but also full of pejorative potential. Martial had already brought out the inherent irony in using 'rex' and 'dominus' to describe patrons who did not display the necessary qualities, often combining the two in the same phrase. Juvenal's satirist compounds the idea, however, to make Virro seem all the more powerful in a society run by 'kings' and 'masters':

---

54Cic. Ben. 5.8.1; ibid. 6.4.1.
55Cf. Cic. Off. 1.15.48-9, criteria for judging the quality and therefore degree of obligation; Plin. Ep. 9.30.1, it is more important to be generous with an amicus pauper than an 'amicus potissimus'.
56Cf. Mart. 4.40.1-2; 12.36.8.
57Cf. 1.136, the patron who dines alone off the produce of forest and sea.
58Cic. Ben. 6.34.1.
591.112.2, titles should be won by merit; 2.68.2, 5, 7, the acquisitiveness of the bad patron.
The ironic possibilities of 'rex' and 'dominus' provide Juvenal with his moral context in *Satire* 5. They also form the basis of the scheme of imagery through which perversion of the patron-client relationship is explored. That is, if Virro is a king, he will be served with food fit for a king, but he will have to drag around all the dangerous and negative connotations of kingship\(^{60}\) that the satirist can marshal. Therefore he introduces Cassius and Brutus, 'kingslayers' (37),\(^{61}\) and Helvidius, son-in-law of Thrasea,\(^{62}\) who denounced Vespasian (36).\(^{63}\) By contrast, the poor clients' wish is that their patron dine ('ciuiliter', 112), i.e. not as a 'king', not as a 'dominus', but as a patron-host.

If kingship is the very top of the social scale, Trebius is depicted at the very bottom. Throughout the satire his status is established in relation to others. The implication is that he was born free (164-5), yet he seems to come off worse in a battle with Virro's freedmen guests (28), and Virro's foreign slaves are distinctly superior to those they are serving (60-6). Therefore the meal shows an inversion of the traditional status quo. The satirist formalises this idea when he states that Trebius might as

\(^{60}\)Cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.30.53; 2.27.50; *Off.* 3.21.83-4; *Fam.* 12.1. 1; *Agr.* 2.6.14; *Mil.* 28.76; *Sall.* *Cat.* 20.7.
\(^{61}\)Sall. *Jul.* 80.4; 84.1-4.
\(^{63}\)DC. 65.12.1-2.
well assume the 'non status', and receive the treatment of the slave (173). He has, after all, lost every vestige of freedom.

The relationship of patron and client is translated for satiric effect into other forms of relationships. While Trebius believes himself to be a client and a guest, such has been his abasement at the hands of Virro that he would suffer in the comparison with a beggar or with the dog whose scraps he might as well eat:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nusquam pons et tegetic pars} \\
\text{dimidia brevior? tantine iniuria cenae,} \\
\text{tam ieiuna fames, cum possit honestius illic} \\
\text{et tremere et sordes farris mordere canini?}
\end{align*}
\]

Clears the idea that starvation is better, and begging more dignified than being a client is ridiculous. The satirist, however, has set himself up as an uncompromising moral judge. He thus adopts a vehement tone that exaggerates and occludes 'reality'. At an early stage he focuses on the most emotive type of debt one person could owe another; his means of existence. He mocks Trebius for allowing his patron the power to save him from starvation (9-10), even though he is not starving (9-10).

When Trebius achieves his heart's desire, and is invited to fill a gap at the least prestigious place on the least prestigious couch, a 'slapstick' narrative prepares the audience for further exaggeration of Trebius' humble status. He jumps to do his master's bidding. Sleeplessand
with shoelaces trailing, he dashes through wintry streets (15-23). Eventually, when he gets to dinner, the crockery begins to fly (26-9). He is a figure of fun, who evokes aspects of comic performance, especially those with dinner party settings, as well as street entertainment. At dinner he receives exactly the kind of treatment dealt out to 'parasiti' in comedy. As the satirist points out:

nam quae comoedia, minus

quis melior plorante gula?

Later, in a more sinister incarnation of the performer, he becomes sub-human, a monkey (153-5), whose actions are controlled by fear, just like those of Trebius.

6.4 Extending the image

---

64 Very nearly 'planipedes' perhaps. Cf. 8.191.
65 Cf. Luc. Symp. 18-9, the shaven headed clown arrives and gets into a fight with one of the guests. Cf. Juv. 5.171, 'uertice raso'.
68 Cf. Hor. S. 2.8.79
These alternative forms of life (king, master, beggar, slave, clown, monkey) are attached directly to the individuals Virro and Trebius. Once the relative status of the two characters has been outlined within the chosen field of discussion (patronage), the satirist chooses the images that attend the various dishes and accoutrements of the dinner party for their maximum effectiveness, in evoking a complete picture of splendour and degradation that extends far beyond the dinner table.

Indeed, once patron and client start to 'eat' there is no need to refer to Virro and Trebius as named individuals, or rounded people again. Everything we learn about their character relationship with each other and their position in society can be extracted from the 'character' of their meal, which is devoted to enlarging and making vivid a code of differentiation between the two men. Therefore the starting point for an analysis of the images and events of Juvenal's fifth satire must be the potential for elaborating on the motifs of power and subjection.

Furthermore, although the relationship of Virro and Trebius is simultaneously excessive and emotionally effective for the reader, this is not an exercise in serious criticism of the patron-client relationship. It helps to envisage Trebius and Virro as living, breathing people in order to experience the evocative power of the

Cf. Mart. 1.41, Caecilius believes himself a wit, 'urbanus'. Really he is a peddler (3), pease-pudding seller (5-6), viper-man (7), salt-seller's slave (8), sausage-seller (9-10), bad street poet (11), rough dance master (11). Appropriately the victim considers himself a Gabba (16) Cf. S. 5.4.
satire. This is no reason, however, to imagine that such people existed, or that such a dinner ever happened. Items, ideas and descriptions are included primarily for their aesthetic potential to show Virro's advantage as being physical, as well as social and psychological. This is enhanced through a scheme of images which suggest both the sensual qualities of a meal and their effect on the diner, as well as the degree of that effect. They also evoke a sense of the vast scale of Virro's power and Trebius' degradation, and the range of instruments of oppression seemingly at the patron's disposal.

As has already been shown, the fifth satire can be divided according to the components of a 'cena'. Each item is designed to further our appreciation of the experience of being a patron or client, and to contrast with the depiction of their social opposite. Therefore sets of images tend to relate to one type of food at a time; Trebius' wine, for example, is dealt with completely before Virro's is described. However individual courses may be contrasted item by item, for example at the dessert stage. The starting point for each set of images is an exemplary type of food that fits the point reached in the meal. The satirist's aim in grouping those images together around each food (or dinner-table) item is to achieve a complete and extreme picture of Virro or Trebius' physical and emotional state. Each individual item can be subjected to a number of processes involving suggestion, and secondary imagery such as metaphor. These are roughly

71 Mushrooms are contrasted first and then apples (146-55).
similar for each item but may differ in order. The process can be illustrated through the satirist's treatment, for example, of Trebius' wine (24-9):

\[
\text{uinum quod sucida nolit}
\]
\[
lana pati: de conuiua Corybanta uidebis.}
\[
iurgia proludunt, sed mox et pocula torques
\]
\[
saucius et rubra deterges uulnera mappa,
\]
\[
inter uos quotiens libertorumque cohortem
\]
\[
pugna Saguntina feruet commissa lagona.
\]

The satirist starts by suggesting the gustatory inferiority of the wine: it is rough, but not in as many words. Rather it is not even suitable for medicinal use, as suggested by the inabsorbency of wool (which had a variety of medical uses, to wipe, soothe, or plug, for example).\(^7^2\) The satirist thus suggests a secondary, physical, but not gustatory, effect: the sordid associations of pain and disease that go with medicine. Next he incorporates the possible behavioural effect of coarse wine: drunkenness and in extreme cases, madness. Instead of saying that the wine will make the guests very drunk, and perhaps fall over or vomit, he uses a mythical connotation. Corybants were associated with Dionysiac revelry and the reader is left to fill the gaps in the picture with his or her own associations on that theme.\(^7^3\) The effect of the wine does not stop here however. Its potency becomes an indirect instrument of Virro's power.

\(^{72}\) Cf. Var. R. 2.11.7; Plin. Nat. 29.9.30-4.
\(^{73}\) Eg. Strabö Geog. 10.3.7, noisy and inspiring terror.
In the course of this section Trebius is outnumbered, set upon and physically damaged by those who ought to be his social inferiors (freedmen) thus bearing out the earlier hint at wool, presumably in this case to staunch bleeding. The social imbalance and conflict which lies at the heart of the satire therefore becomes concrete. The foods or wines, as described by the satirist, produce a set of reactions: gustatory, physical, and emotional.

6.4. AGENTS OF VIRRO’S POWER.

The satirist’s aim is to illustrate and widen a gap between patron and client that exists because of the misuse of power. He therefore seeks out the most extreme vehicles for emphasising the degree of Virro’s power (and thereby Trebius’ subjection). Virro, for example, is depicted in terms of control: over land, sea, elements, natural forces, men (past and present), gods, and inanimate objects. These are the metaphoric and concrete agents of oppression he uses on Trebius, but they also serve as a scale on which to judge the extent of Virro’s power. However, by employing such a wide ranging scale of measurement, the satirist makes the objects, happenings and social disparity he describes more vivid, but less believable. Furthermore, it is possible to see that certain apparently ‘realistic’ elements of the meal have been chosen for, and moulded by Juvenal’s scheme of illustrating power versus impotence.
6.4.1. The natural world, the elements, and the gods

From earlier satires it is already clear that the wealthy have a rapacious mastery over the resources of the known world:

optima siluarum interea pelagique uorabit
rex horum.

(1.135-6)

and,

si quid Palifurio, si credimus Armillato,
quidquid conspicuum pulchrumque est aeqore toto,
res fisci est, ubicumque natat.

(4, 53-5)

In these extreme, even ridiculous depictions of power, the satirist is at pains to emphasise man's domination of land and sea. The natural world and the elements provide the most impressive manifestations of hitherto unconquerable domain. In Satire 5 the satirist maintains a constant undercurrent of images illustrating power on the grand scale. Where Trebius is at the mercy of the natural world, Virro controls the forces of nature. This point is neatly illustrated by Juvenal at lines 48-50, with the juxtaposition of fire and ice:
rupto poscentem sulpura uitro.
si stomachus domini feruet uinoque ciboque,  
frigidior Geticis petitur decocta pruinis.

Here sulphur suggests not only the obvious, cheap connotation of 'recycled', but at the same time, perhaps, fire. Moreover, the physical nature of volcanic sulphur and Thracian frost not only enhance the quality and degree of heat and cold, but add to our appreciation of the unlimited use of the elements enjoyed by Virro.

The long arm of the patron, as shown above, reaches not only to the furthest bounds of the Empire but also into the oceans. Therefore the fish he eats are not bred in fish-ponds but are taken from a relatively calm, but potentially lethal sea. Fishermen still risk their lives for his table:

nam dum se continet auster,
dum sedet et siccat madidas in carcere pinnas,  
contemnunt medium temeraria lina Charybdim.

(100-2)

The epic personification allows us to see that Virro's control of the elements operates on a personal level. A wealthy fish connoisseur might have chosen sturgeon, the much favoured wrasse, turbot, or bass, for example,

---

74 Mart. 1.41.4.  
75 Cf. Plin. Nat. 9.30.64, red mullet does not grow large in fishponds. The best examples come from the sea.  
76 Courtney, 242: notes the 'near-golden line'.  
77 Mart. 13.91, an 'imperial' fish. Not favoured by everyone, Plin. Nat. 9.27.60.
to adorn his table. Yet the satirist chooses for Virro two types of fish as familiar to the reader of satire as to the gastronome; the mullet and the lamprey. Home waters have been overfished for the benefit of rapacious gluttons and can no longer provide fish big enough for the likes of Virro (95-6) yet as Pliny shows, neither grows large in Italian waters anyway.

We see the care the satirist takes in choosing his exemplary fish when he starts comparing Trebius' fish course. If he had simply wished to choose a cheap fish, he could have gone for mackerel, sprat, or sardine. Juvenal's comparisons are made using eel and pike. As with Virro's fish, his guest's eel might also have come from Sicily. It is comparable in general appearance to a lamprey, being long and sinuous, but does not have the girth to make it fit for a patron. However, eel was not regarded with the disdain Juvenal suggests, but is in fact 'made as unattractive as possible by insisting on its relationship to the snake'.

---

78 Plin. Nat. 9.28.62-3, imported to Italy in Claudius' reign.
79 Hor. Epod. 2.50; S. 1.2.116, 2.2.22; Col. 8.16.7, could be reared in fish ponds; Pers. 6.23; Mart. 3.45.5; 13.81; 13.84; Juv. 4 passim; Plin. Nat. 9.79.169. Enn. (Hedyphagetica) ap. Apul. Apol. 39.3; Var. ap. Gell. 16.5 (Sicily).
80 Peri Edesmaton: Var. ap. Gel. 6.16.5; Petr. 24.7 'post gellum diaria non sumo'; Plin. Nat. 9.28.61.
81 Plin. Nat. 9.29.63-30, 64; Col. 8.16.10, lamprey could be reared in fish ponds.
82 Plin. Nat. 9.39.75; Macr. S. 3.15.7; Athen. 7.298e.
83 Pliny classes the two together, cf. Nat. 9.39.75. Cf. supra 6.2.2, the general comparison of lobster and prawn.
84 Mart. 12.31.5.
with poison,\textsuperscript{86} and the pain and death that would ensue. Trebius' alternative to the eel is a pike:

\begin{quote}
aut glacie aspersus maculis Tiberinus, et ipse vernula riparum, pinguis torrente cloaca et solitus mediae cryptam penetrare Suburao.
\end{quote}

(104-6)

As described by Juvenal it would not be possible to get much further from the qualities represented in Virro's fish. Whereas the mullet and lamprey come from the rocky depths, off the far end of Italy, Trebius' pike can be caught practically on his doorstep, denoting the lack of effort that goes into acquiring it, and its availability to all. The fact that the pike was bred in the 'cloaca maxima',\textsuperscript{87} lends impact in a metaphorical and realistic sense. First there is the implication that the fish will taste of its unpalatable environment, and second, Trebius will be dining on the waste products of all Rome.

As if at Virro's beck and call, the elements assault Trebius incessantly. For the duration of the satire the poor client spends his time literally and metaphorically 'out in the cold', hungry, shelterless, and outside human company:

\textsuperscript{86}Cf. Hor. Od. 1.17.8; S. 1.8.42, a hint of witchcraft. 
\textsuperscript{87}Draining N.E. Rome from the Argiletum to the Tiber by way of the Forum Romanum and Velabrum.' OCD, 253; cf. RE. 4.1.58.
As has already been suggested, starving and being forced to beg is not a serious alternative, but a violent expression of physical and spiritual isolation and desperation.

The poor client is forced to leave the comfort of sleep, wife, and home for a dash through the freezing cold streets:

The idea of disrupting one's sleep is found in other descriptions of the sufferings of the client. However the satirist adds emotional impact by having Trebius not only leaping out of his warm bed, but scampering through icy cold streets with his shoelaces undone. In his mind's eye, the whole army of clients has got there first (20-3). This is an early morning scene, yet it leads straight into

---

the description of an evening dinner, telescoping time and fulfilling the programme laid out in Juvenal's first satire.

Finally, as if in the ultimate confirmation of Virro's sphere of powerful friends, it appears to Trebius that even the gods have been piling the natural obstacles up against him:

```
scilicet hoc fuerat, propter quod saepe relict
coniuge per montem aduersum gelidasque cucurri
Esquilias fremeret saeua cum grandine uernus
Iuppiter et multo stillaret paenula nimbo.
```

(76-9)

Even if Trebius allows Virro a certain amount of social advantage because of his position as host and patron, the guest might at least assume that he would be treated as a superior by the servants and given some respect by freedman guests.89 Far from being the case, he is treated with disdain by both (60-6).

6.4.2 The past

Frequently the elements of Virro's meal are imbued with qualities that suggest he not only has a monopoly on the grandeur of the past (mythical and historical), but is

89 By pointing out the freedman status of other guests Juvenal leads us to assume that Trebius is freeborn.
somehow touched by the moral and personal virtues associated with it. This is of course ironic, as we can deduce both from the general moral context and from the specific types of images the satirist chooses.

Virro's wine is reminiscent of conflict of the Social wars, but our attention has been drawn away from this pejorative connotation, because at this stage the subject under discussion is apparently the relative merits of the wine served to guest and host. Therefore, at first, the reader notices the usual criterion of judging wine, its vintage. In establishing a consistent pattern of good food and wholesome images to accompany Virro, Juvenal leads the reader towards superficial judgements.\(^9^0\) However, there is a sub-plot of negative connotations aimed at undermining Virro and the status quo and it is thematic imagery that bears this meaning rather than the reality of the elements of the meal. Virro's 'Republican' wine (31) does not belong to a famous vintage and would, in fact, be so old as to be undrinkable.\(^9^1\)

In the same vein, Virro's meal frequently carries with it an association with figures from the past who would have been antagonistic towards him. Thrasea and Helvidius, (36) whose principled speaking of their own minds led to their deaths\(^9^2\) fit ill with someone who represents the corrupt status quo; the same is true of Cassius and the

---

\(^9^0\) This technique is used by Horace in S. 2.8, when he appears to believe that Nasidienus has thrown a fine dinner party.

\(^9^1\) Plin. Nat. 19.6.55. Wines of 121 BC still surviving were undrinkably bitter, even when diluted.

\(^9^2\) Ferguson, 1987, 112-3(a); 225-6.
Bruti (37), the most famous opponents of the imperial ethos\(^93\) which Virro represents. It is also ironic that he falls short in a comparison with those implicated in a conspiracy against Nero (108-112).

Virro’s power is based on wealth rather than bravery and qualities of leadership, therefore it is ironic, and far from worthy of praise that his cups are decorated with jewels which Aeneas might have had on his scabbard, (45) and that his Asian serving boy\(^94\) is worth more than the fortune of the kings of Rome (56-9). Finally, there is a kind of justice in the fact that his amber is formed from tears (38), a point to which Juvenal draws our attention.\(^95\)

All of these mythical and historical connotations represent an isolated, extreme point of moral comparison, but they do not add anything to our specific knowledge of Virro’s wealth, the quality or variety of his jewels, the cost of his servants, or the quality of his wine.

6.4.3 Servants and social inferiors

The friction that exists between the social classes at Virro’s dinner is translated into physical confrontation. The wine served to the guests is not merely rough, it

\(^{93}\text{Ibid. 36(b); 47-8.}\)

\(^{94}\text{Quite possibly a sideswipe at Virro’s sexual preferences.}\)

\(^{95}\text{Tears of the Heliades who lived among the Hyperboreans, cf. Ov. Met. 2.364-6.}\)
makes them rough too. In a characteristic piece of wild exaggeration we see the diners become pugnacious on a Dionysiac scale. Trebius literally has to do battle ('pugna', 29) with the massed ranks ('cohortem', 28) of freedmen.

Money can also buy Virro the power of life and death. When Trebius does eventually reach the dinner-table we find that in addition to food he is to be served with death, pain, and dishonour by those most suited to that task. He is attended by the dark and skeletal, who bring to mind the dangers to be encountered in the tombs of the Via Latina at night:

\[\text{tibi pocula cursor} \]
\[\text{Gaetulus dabit aut nigri manus ossea Mauri} \]
\[\text{et cui per medium nolis occurrere noctem,} \]
\[\text{cliuosae ueheris dum per monumenta Latinae.} \]
\[\text{(52-5)} \]

They hand over oil stronger than snake venom (91), and a crab and egg course fit for the dead (85), and the toadstools served to Trebius are 'ancipites' (146). By contrast, where Trebius is attended by death, Virro enjoys the attentions of the youthful 'flos Asiae' (56).

---

96 Supra, 6.3.2. 97 Cf. Juv. 1.171; 10.19-22, robbery while journeying at night. 98 An interpolation picking up the tone of the passage. 99 'cena nouendialis'. Cf. Hor. Epod. 17.48. 100 'Anceps' connoting both gastronomic non-specificity and danger. Cf. Hor. S. 2.1.34; Tac. Ann. 4.59.
6.4.4 Inanimate objects

Finally, even inanimate objects have the upper hand over Trebius. His bread will not allow him a bite, 'non admittentia morsum' (69) and the bread basket demands his respect:

\[
dextram cohibere memento, \\
\text{salua sit artoptae reuerentia.}
\]

(71-2)

Virro's lobster looks down on the assembled guests (82) while Trebius' crab is literally hemmed in ('constrictus') to the corner of the plate by half an egg (84). As we see in the satirist's final observation, Trebius has been 'captured' by the delicious smells emanating from Virro's kitchen (162).

6.5 CONCLUSION

The most striking feature of Juvenal's fifth satire is the way in which the satirist creates a coherent, evocative and comprehensive picture of the patron-client relationship out of a well-worn idea like the comparative 'cena'. The satire is effective because it works on a number of levels. These arise from the interaction of physical experience of eating, and the social experience of dining with the satirist's eclectic attitude to myth, history, and literary culture. As always an essential
ingredient the recognition that the 'cena' has a strong structural undercurrent - in this case in its courses. This structure creates certain expectations on the part of the attuned reader, for example in terms of what should, and should not be served to whom, in what quantities and in what style.

The satirist is therefore not interested in giving a realistic impression of what is acceptable behaviour for hosts and their client guests, but in setting up and responding to expectations of the meal that go way beyond the gastronomic.
CHAPTER SEVEN

JUVENAL 4, THE EMPEROR'S NEW FISH

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The Roman verse satirist likes to paint man as an acquisitive animal by depicting him in terms of what he believes he wants, contrasted with what he genuinely needs. The glutton and the gastronome want food; not just to satisfy a very basic kind of greed but to fulfil a need for status. Catius and Nasidienus, in Horace's *Satires* 2.4 and 2.8, are frantic for social acceptance via food. Virro, in Juvenal's fifth satire, wants to maintain and confirm the position he has achieved by signalling the difference between his set and the rest, as displayed at dinner. The likes of Catius and Nasidienus can be laughed at rather than feared because the satirist views them from a position of moral superiority. Virro and Domitian,\(^1\) on the other hand, have reached the top of the heap, and it is up to the satirist to find alternative methods of turning the tables on them.

Domitian, the focus of the satirist's attention in Juvenal's fourth satire, is characterised as a sinister glutton who not only covets and expects the best food, but craves as much power as a single man can achieve. In order

\(^1\)The protagonists in Juvenal's fifth and fourth satires.
to attack this prodigy among consumers, Juvenal removes food from its social and gastronomic context and takes a look at the issues that lie at the very heart of all the food satires. In this case, a gluttonous patron is a kind of despot whose personal desires for the superfluous cause him to reject his proper duties or responsibilities, and lead him to actions which might cause harm to others, directly or indirectly. Therefore it is fitting that Domitian, who has the status to be a tyrant, is depicted consuming all before him; the fruits of his subjects' labour, wealth and territory. Appropriately, our first (and only) glimpse of the emperor shows him thrashing a half-dead globe, with Rome lying abject (37-8).

However, in this satire a single turbot stands for all the objects of Domitian's desire. Just as, in some ways, a single boar epitomised the patron's greed in Satire 1, turbot is chosen as a type of expensive food. In turn, a love of 'good' food could be used to represent a general type of moral degeneracy. This particular turbot, however has several added dimensions. It is intrinsically exceptional as a specimen, probably valuable, spectacular to look at and thus is both a real 'status-symbol' and is symbolic, in the literary sense, of Domitian's reign. In order to enhance the emblematic effect the satirist selects events, people, and descriptive details which maximise the illustrative value of the turbot story. He

2Cf. Hor. Ep. 1.2.48, the harmful cycle of avarice.
3Cf. Plin. Pan. 50.5-6.
4Cic. Fin. 2.7.21; Juv. 11.77; Sall. Cat. 13.3, a combined sexual and gastronomic connotation.
5cf. OED 16.573: 'a possession or asset sought or acquired as a symbol of social prestige.'
sets an incongruously humble object (an edible fish) in a highbrow setting (the 'consilium'), describing the event in the most elevated of literary styles (epic). Thus he achieves the boldest contrast of power, and the weakness of those who wield it, by imbuing a turbot with meaning far beyond its culinary or gastronomic significance.

A single episode concerning a fish is instrumental in parading before us the highest in the government (or a satirical version of the highest) as a collection of murderers, cowards and snivellers. Lucilius is thought to have written a spoof consilium in which the gods deliberate the death of L. Cornelius Lentulus Lupus. Seneca's Apocolocyntosis made use of the parodic 'consilium' in which the subject under discussion is the recently dead Claudius: should he be admitted to the ranks of the gods? Juvenal takes as his setting a serious and honorific account of Domitian's council as depicted in Statius' Bellum Germanicum, of which a few lines remain. As will be shown, there are a number of deliberate 'digs' at the poet's relationship with Domitian, as displayed in the Silvae. The introduction of a turbot into this setting is the springboard for a parody which borders on the outrageous.

6 In the mock-epic form of a catalogue of individuals, following an invocation (Juven. 4.34-6); Cf. Hom. Il. 2.484-6; Virg. A. 7.641-817; 10.163-5; Sil. 3.222-7; V. Fl. 6.33-44.
7 Luc. 47.54. Cf. Plut. QC. 4.4.668a; Courtney, 197: suggests that he might be making a pun on 'lupus' the fish, not the animal.
8 The Homeric inquisition of Claudius, Apoc. 5.23.
9 Cf. Scott, 77.
Politically, legally, constitutionally, and by the standards of his own corrupt society, Domitian is the highest of the high. This is clear in the characterisation of him presented by both Suetonius and the satirist who refers to him in his capacity as 'Pontifex Maximus' (46), 'Caesar' (51), 'dominus' (52, 96) and 'dux magnus' (145). The terminology of power surrounds his every presence in the satire and, as Sweet points out (284-5), serves to 'conceal the man himself'. Conversely, we are intended to see him as one of the meanest creatures ever to walk the earth. The effect is achieved simply by refusing to deal with the emperor, despite the formality of his power, in imperial terms. Instead his regime is reduced to human scale by being exposed for its avaricious gluttony, and the application of corrupt personal standards to affairs of world magnitude.

This technique of debasing the mighty through their undeniable humanity assumes a readership which acknowledges the following set of values: the state is more important than the self, and positions of authority benefit the state rather than enhance the status of the individual. Allied to this assumption are certain expectations of how an emperor ought to behave.

10 Eg. Tac. Ag. 41; Suet. Dom. 13.2-3, Consul seventeen times and two Triumphs.

II Lc. Domitian as a Flavian (37-8), as Nero (38), as Atrides (65), as scourge and plague (84), and indirectly as a king of seas, lands and peoples (83) and as a tyrant (86).
An essential feature in the representation of imperial authority is the 'charismatic' nature of the emperor himself, that is 'the possession (in his subject's eyes) of powers regarded as coming from outside, not from normal human nature' (Wallace-Hadrill 1981, 298). The satirist depicts Domitian in terms that would normally enhance his charisma. That is, his reign is marked by prodigy (125), he promotes links with the gods (60-1), and he instills a sense of fear and awe in all his subjects. Yet we see that his power is at the root of his downfall. The fish turns out to be a portent of disaster (i.e. it is the thing which destroys him in the eyes of the reader, and it symbolises the ridiculous extent of Domitian's grip). His control is as genuine as his links with the gods, and the very people he terrorises will eventually bring about his death (150-4), proving conclusively that he is anything but immortal.

Yet, for the purposes of the satire, it is important that Domitian maintains his charisma. References to his physical presence, appearance and character are kept to a minimum (38), unlike in historical biography, for example, where such personal details are the key to the man. The sense of ridicule by which the emperor is undermined is much more subtly (and enduringly) elicited through the incongruity of fish and imperial power, of satire and epic, and of fantasy and history.

Domitian's turbot lives on today in a French saying:

---

12 Cf. Stat. Silv. 4.3.160-1; 5.2.168-70; 5.3.37-9; 4.5.2.
13 Cf. Suetonius, whose Domitian is squeamish, Dom. 9.1; vain, 18.2 and lustful, 22.1.
'Le turbot de Domitien'... se dit d'une affaire mineur qui fait cependant beaucoup de bruit, par allusion à Domitien, empereur romain qui aurait réuni le sénat pour savoir à quelle sauce manger un remarquable turbot.'

Guillemard, 264

Resonances of the tale can also be heard in Hans Christian Andersen, writing in Sweden in the mid-nineteenth century, and his fourteenth century Spanish antecedant, Don Juan Manuel. In fact Juvenal's fourth satire seems to be able to transcend many of the restrictions of time and place that apply to other satires. The satirist, in turn, may have been influenced by a tale bearing marked similarities with the Domitian story that is told by Herodotus: Amasis, King of Egypt, writes to Polycrates of Samos advising him to throw away something he values, in order to avoid the disaster that inevitably comes after an unbroken spell of success. Polycrates throws away a seal-ring (a symbol of power) which turns up again in the belly of a huge fish. The theme (power) and the vehicle of nemesis (an extraordinary fish) are shared by the historian and the satirist. The satirist, however uses the chain of events that begin with the fish to illustrate the character of Domitianic tyranny. The fish is seen to be food. It shows not only the gluttony, but the atmosphere

14Not an accurate reading of the satire. The subject for discussion is how to cook the fish.
15Cf. the story of 'The Emperor's new clothes'.
16OCSL, 308-9: 1282-1348.
17The seventh tale of El Conde Lucanor, 'That which happened to a king and three imposters' (York, 53).
18.40-3.
of fear and cruelty that accompany the Domitianic regime.

The inflation and embellishment of the target's greatness, so that his fall appears all the more cataclysmic is integral to the later tales mentioned above. Both relate an episode that exemplifies the wickedness of a ruler, his taste for, and right to, the best, and the atmosphere of fear and sycophancy that holds sway in his court. Don Juan Manuel and Hans Christian Andersen both tell the story of a ruler who is taken in by rogues. These rogues persuade a ruler that they can weave the finest clothes ever seen, but which are only visible to the legitimate and the worthy. The king in his greed agrees to them weaving a suit, and, when the cloth (which is in fact non-existent) is presented, he pretends that he can see it. The turbot and the cloth are both symbols of the reigns in which they occur and are designed as such. The similarity becomes clearer in those parts of the narrative which deal with an emperor or king's relationship with his councillors. Compare Juvenal on Catullus, the blind flatterer:

nemo magis rhombum stupuit; nam plurima dixit in laeuum conuersus, at illa dextra iacebat belua.

4.119-21

with the description of the Officer of Justice in the Conde Lucanor, when he takes his turn to view the cloth:19

19As in Satire 4, the members of the Council are presented individually.
'He, however feared if he was to declare that he could not see it (the cloth) he would lose his honourable position; to avoid this mischance he began praising the cloth even more vehemently than the others.'

(York, 53)

Likewise, the 'honest' minister in the Andersen version:

"Oh, it is excellent!", replied the old minister looking at the loom through his spectacles. "This pattern and the colours - yes, I will tell the Emperor without delay how very beautiful I think them".

(109)

All three courts are characterised by an atmosphere of terror. The natural result of such a regime has to be blind sycophancy and a conspiracy of silence.21

7.3 STRANGE BUT TRUE?

The first Book of Juvenal's satires purports to deal with the crimes of the present,22 yet it often draws upon the past for its examples.23 Domitian and his court, for

---

20 Short-sighted rather than blind sycophancy.
21 Cf. a Sicilian proverb, reflecting attitudes in territory with a strong, charismatic Mafia presence, 'Cu e surdu, orbu e faci, campa cent 'anni 'mpaci.' (He who is deaf, dumb, and blind lives a hundred years in peace), Mess, 100.
22 The satirist asserts his right to attack the wrongs of his own time, cf. 1.51-2, 147-9,
example, are not drawn from the present, but are verifiable historical figures from the very top of the power structure. The event being described is supposed to have happened, but if firmly in the past, around AD 82.24 The satire itself was quite possibly written after AD 110, some fourteen years after Domitian’s death in AD 9625 and at least a decade after Pliny had attacked Domitian in his Panegyric.26

From the point of view of a satirist with an exaggerating, angry persona,27 a wicked emperor from the past provides a near perfect target as an illustration of extreme power at work (power-relations being the thread that joins all the satires of the first Book).28 The satirist puts a few years between himself and his target to create the room he needs for exaggeration and literary embellishment. Paradoxically therefore, while he is at his most forthright in the naming of names, this is not dangerous, or even mildly risky satire. It is, however, a literary exercise in controlled hyperbole that distances the satirist from contemporary Rome; a dynamic entity full of difficult paradoxes (as reflected in Juvenal’s apparently disorganised and multi-faceted jigsaw picture

23 Anderson, 304: the setting is ten years too early for Domitian to be a tyrant. Cf. Suet. Dom. 3.2, the emperor’s tyrannical disposition was not fixed in the early years.
24 Cf. 143-5; Bramble in CHCL 2, 604: similarities to Statius’ Bellum Germanicum, commemorating the campaign against the Chatti in AD 83; cf. Griffith, 137.
25 Suet. Dom. 17.3.
2652.3-5.
28 Cf. Braund and Cloud, 82: articulation of Book 1 of the satires ‘in an alternating sequence, with the focus passing between the poor client and the corrupt nobility.’
of present-day values).

The crime under the microscope has to seem as awful as possible, but the satirist has to walk a fine line between what his audience is willing to believe really happened and what he would like to imagine could have happened. Therefore he conjures up an atmosphere of realism; in the case of Satire 4, through pen portraits of the individuals involved. We see their expressions, and physical appearance (104-5, 107). They are described as scurrying to the council chamber (75-7, 94) where the satirist has taken up his position as a 'fly on the wall', reporting the movements and words of the main protagonists.

A number of commentators have studied the identities of the named individuals, particularly Crispinus (commonly agreed to be a person of 'non-councillor' status). It has been noted that anachronisms exist concerning the group of individuals gathered together. At least four members of the council were prominent in Vespasian's reign: Pegasus (77), Rubrius (105), Montanus (107, 131) and Pompeius (110). Veiento (113, 123) had been banished by Nero. Acilius senior (94) was also old by the time the

---

29 Most thoroughly, Vassileiou, passim. Cf. Ferguson 1987
30 Gaius 1.31; 2.254, consul with Pusio.
31 DC. 63.27; Tac. Hist. 2.51.99; Jos. Bell. Iud. 7.92, AD 66, sent by Vespasian to punish the Sarmatians.
32 Tac. Ann. 9.33; 16.28, 'detestanda carmina factandis'; Hist. 4.40-3, Montanus and Crispus at work in the Senate early in Domitian's reign.
33 Vassileiou, 54-5: tentatively identified as M. Pompeius Silvanus Staberius Flavinus, Consul between AD 75-9;
36 Ferguson 1987, 17 possibly a member of Claudius' 'consilium'. 
events described was supposed to have happened. The aim was perhaps to put together a collection of elder statesmen who, because of their years, should have been venerable figures, but who in fact owed their advanced age to an ability to bend with the violent winds of political change.\textsuperscript{36} This parade of sordid old age contrasts with the young Acilius, who is the hope for the future, and who meets a violent early death (95-6, 99-101).\textsuperscript{37} This leaves Fuscus, possibly the only other less than elderly member, who too will die violently, apparently through his own ineptitude.\textsuperscript{38}

The sorry parade of named, verifiable individuals, described in living detail, does not really divert attention away from the inherent ridiculousness of the scenario, rather it emphasises the literary processes at work. The reader sees the degree of terror and corruption that the satirist would have us believe characterised Domitian's reign through the emperor's trivial concerns and the terrifying details that 'happen' to come out in the telling of the tale of the turbot. The true message of the satire, then, concerns cruelty, power and intentional injustice. The medium, however, is a fish.

7.4 'NEMESIS', IN THE SHAPE OF A FISH

\textsuperscript{36} Cf. 13.184-5
\textsuperscript{37} AD 91 Consul with Trajan, CIL 6.1988; DC. 67.12.1; Front. M. Caes. 5.22; Suet. Dom. 10.4, AD 95 condemned to death.
\textsuperscript{38} While on active service in Dacia, AD 86, Suet. Dom. 6.1; DC. 68.6.5; Mart. 6.76.
The essence of any parody is in the memory of the sincere original that the reader sets alongside the trivialised parodic version. In the case of Juvenal's fourth satire, the trivial focus is a fish, and in particular, the incongruity of fish and public institutions, fish and imperial authority, fish and fear, and fish and death even. As has already been suggested, Juvenal's fourth satire goes beyond the scope of the illustrative 'exemplum'. The poem is a definitive statement about Domitian's reign. It is not unusual in Roman literature for a single episode or incident to carry, in microcosm, a message about that individual's whole way of life, on the basis that events are a natural result of character. This poem, however, is one of the two occasions in Juvenal's satire when a single item of food is singled out as a sign of its times. Similarly in the fifteenth satire, the story of the Egyptian cannibal outrage is emblematic of the moral standards of an entire culture.

The juxtaposition of a dead fish and the imperial government could hardly be more pointed, and this surely adds to the overall effect and sticking power of the satire. In the illustration of this incongruity the satirist depicts 'good' and 'evil' in black-and-white terms: Crispinus versus a Vestal Virgin turns into Domitian versus the people of the Empire; Crispinus and his expensive mullet become Domitian and an enormous turbot. Domitian is thoroughly evil and wholly responsible

39Infra, ch. 8.
for a completely corrupt government. For the purposes of the satire then, people and things become products of their time.

Symbols⁴⁰ are used by the satirists to mediate between their 'message' and the potential difficulties of attacking a particular event and person.⁴¹ Thus the satirist describes a turbot and the events and individuals concerned with it in an attempt to convey the character of the reign of Domitian, rather than trying to characterise the emperor as a glutton. Furthermore, because the turbot is a trivial symbol, it can be used to synthesise two threads of Domitian's character: a tendency towards passive trivialising of important things and a streak of active cruelty.

The turbot, therefore, has a number of functions: it has meaning as a luxurious item of food, and it has a function as the object of the emperor's and his council's attentions.

⁴⁰Musurillo, 2: 'objects or events which are considered to have, in addition to their original objective function, another deeper reference or relationship'.

⁴¹Eagleton, 21: assigns to symbols a 'role in the solution of conflicts insoluble in ordinary life'.
The turbot in fact stands for all the produce of the Empire, which he metaphorically gobbles up. He extracts his due (as he believes it to be) through intimidation of the people, here represented by the fisherman, using informers and the force of law. Domitian's greed for the best food illustrates the Imperial greed for things and power, and it is the cabinet that condones and services that greed.

Broadly speaking Juvenal's speaker's message is; although Domitian's tastes are expensive, morally they cheapen him. The same point could be made through the example of a magnificent gem, cloak or piece of furniture. However, food, or rather a single item of food, as we have seen, has a weight of connotations in and beyond the genre that makes the satirist's message all the more effective. For example, ridicule is the satirist's primary method of attack. Eating, breeding and excreting are among the basic bodily functions shared by all living organisms, but humans are the only species to cover these up with convoluted etiquettes and social niceties. A malevolent biographer can therefore take pleasure in revealing physical proclivities that show one to be human, obesity among them.42

An atmosphere of profligacy surrounds Domitian in the satire, making his court appear all too human. There is

42 Cf. 1.32-3, the lawyer Matho fills his new litter; ibid, 142-3, the swollen bellied glutton dies in the bath. Suet. Nero 61, spotty, malodorous, thick-necked, with a prominent belly and skinny legs. Vit. 17, Vitellius had a flushed face from too much wine, was too tall, limped and had a 'uenter obesus'.
the obese Montanus, the physical embodiment of gluttony, with his stomach arriving yards before the rest of him:

Montani quoque uenter adest, abdomine tardus.

107

 Appropriately ('digna uiro sententia', 136) Montanus is the one who comes up with the idea of a special dish for the turbot. As has already been shown, personal attack on the emperor in the satire is restricted to the fact that he is bald. It is only in other sources that we see his size was open to ridicule:

... postea caluitio quoque deformis et obesitate uentris et crurum gracilitate.

Dom. 18, 1

Thus, not only is Domitian reprehensible for being a fish-lover, his whole cabinet is painted as simultaneously laughable and fearsome in their taste for the pleasures of the flesh. This contrast of interests is made clear by the representation of the Council. First we are presented with four predominantly good individuals who had the misfortune to be at the top of the political tree at the wrong time. There is Pegasus the honourable but impotent, newly appointed city prefect representing the legal establishment (80). Eloquence and oratory as practised by Crispus are useless under the corrupt regime (81-93) and the nobility and ancestral virtue of the Acilii (94-103), and particularly the physical strength of the
younger Acilius (99-101) are similarly ineffective. Law, oratory, tradition and might, in normal circumstances the checks against corruption, have been made useless by a reign characterised by sensual gratification. Hence, 'ignobilis' Rubrius (105) is a shameless fiend, having, according to the scholiast, seduced the Empress Domitia in her youth (Ferguson 1987, 200). Montanus as we have already seen is grossly fat (107), Crispinus, whose vices are already well documented, wears a perfume more pungent than embalming scent (108-9), Pompeius the informer can slit throats with a whisper (109-10), Fuscus, although notorious for his military exploits is described contemplating war in his marbled villa (111-2) and Catullus is revoltingly lascivious (114).

In the preamble to the narrative of Satire 4 the focus is on gluttony and its place in the hierarchy of vices. In the assessment of Crispinus that takes place in the early lines of the satire (1-36), just as in the summing up of Domitian's greater crimes at the end of the poem, we learn that being hooked by an extraordinary fish is far less dreadful than murder. This is a technique used frequently in Juvenal's satire to give an argument spurious credibility while at the same time making the crime under discussion appear all the more heinous. For example in Satire 5 Trebius is made out to be more wretched than a beggar, a slave and finally an animal. The fifteenth

---

43 Sen. Ep. 3.4. The family claimed descent from Aeneas Herodian.
44 Seductions (3-4), incest (8-10), vast property (5-7) and gluttony (15-7).
45 The allusion to death adds extra bite to the comment.
satire presents a similar sliding scale of cannibalism in which although necessity might justify the act, those who eat human flesh out of choice are not men but animals, and then not really animals but incomparable to anything known in the living or mythical world. A similar process can be seen in the fourth satire. The satirist spends the first 36 lines affirming that he is a teller of truth as he describes the thoroughly evil Crispinus:

monstrum nulla uirtute redemptum

a uitiis.

Implicitly, then, all this man's actions must be corrupt, from the enormity of his violation of a Vestal Virgin (8-10) to his gluttony, petty by comparison (15-16). As the catalogue of wickedness progresses the satirist appears to be making us all the more willing to accept some Domitianic horror. Perhaps he starts with 'food crime', because it is less serious and therefore, by comparison with other crimes more believable. This seems to be the case with the satirist's constant affirmations of truthfulness. The logic of the satire's opening lines seems to run as follows: Seius, Teius, the reader and the satirist have right on their side. Apicius was thought greedy in his time, but was nothing compared with Crispinus, and if we thought Crispinus was bad, seducing Vestal Virgins and the like, think how bad the emperor

46Infra 8.3.3.
was. Even his petty crimes were worse than those of Crispinus.

The taste for expensive fish is the initial point of reference between Crispinus and Domitian. The satirist then sets about describing a similarly thorough range of crime perpetrated by the emperor. We are led to expect a Domitianic episode to counterbalance Crispinus' crime and therefore give the satire a big crime/ little crime/- little crime/ big crime structure. The fact that a major expose of the emperor's activities is never forthcoming does not mean a structural blunder on the part of the satirist. The Crispinus episode is a deliberate tease, a build up of structural expectation that is confounded by the very nature of Juvenal's satire. We expect a piece of true wickedness from the emperor, but are fobbed off with passing references. However, the tale of the turbot is described in the literary style that fulfils our expectations of something big, that is, epic. It is not in fact ever in the satirist's remit explicitly to condemn the large scale shortcomings of Rome. In this satire he reveals directly to the reader his interpretation of the genre, to attack the mighty through their minor misdemeanours. In that way they are seen as all the more thoroughly and ignominiously corrupt. Therefore, just as the wealthy women of Rome can be ridiculed as gladiator fanciers (6.82-4) and the empress Messalina as the blonde,

47 The chiastic structure and thematic unity of the poem has been the subject of considerable debate, perhaps at the expense of the interpretation of the piece as a whole. Cf. Higget 1954, 76-7; Kenney, 30-1; Townend, 158.
48 Jones, 49: notes the change of tone from the satirical treatment to the epic treatment of Domitian.
bewigged 'wolf-girl' (115), so the cruel Domitian is humiliated as a 'turbot freak'. However, unlike the other satires, Juvenal is also revealing the bones of his argument, and in making it plain that we are to recognise that he is dealing in symbols, and food is chosen to provide that symbol because of the place of gluttony on the scale of human criminality.

7.4.2 Why a turbot?

The turbot had already played a prominent role in the food satires. Horace singles it out with peacock as a favourite among gastronomes and it also features in the list of town foods missed by the urbanite who 'goes rustic' in his second Epode (5). On all these occasions the turbot is enumerated alongside a number of luxury items. It is not singled out for the special treatment of the mullet, or the lamprey for example. Yet Domitian's turbot is special. First it is a fresh fish, caught in the sea, not in a fishpond.

It is clear that fresh fish was a premium item in the Roman inland diet. Taking into account the speed of transportation and the ingenuity required to ensure that fish arrived on the market in prime condition, it is unlikely to have been otherwise. Hence the privately-owned fishpond was well represented in Roman

49 Cf. 2.2.42, 48,49, 95.
50 Supra, 3.7.
bewigged ‘wolf-girl’ (115), so the cruel Domitian is humiliated as a ‘turbot freak’. However, unlike the other satires, Juvenal is also revealing the bones of his argument, and in making it plain that we are to recognise that he is dealing in symbols, and food is chosen to provide that symbol because of the place of gluttony on the scale of human criminality.

7.4.2 Why a turbot?

The turbot had already played a prominent role in the food satires. Horace singles it out with peacock as a favourite among gastronomes \(^{49}\) and it also features in the list of town foods missed by the urbanite who ‘goes rustic’ in his second Epode (5). On all these occasions the turbot is enumerated alongside a number of luxury items. It is not singled out for the special treatment of the mullet, or the lamprey for example. Yet Domitian’s turbot is special. First it is a fresh fish, caught in the sea, not in a fishpond.

It is clear that fresh fish was a premium item in the Roman inland diet. Taking into account the speed of transportation and the ingenuity required to ensure that fish arrived on the market in prime condition, it is unlikely to have been otherwise. \(^{50}\) Hence the privately-owned fishpond was well represented in Roman

\(^{49}\) Cf. 2.2.42, 48, 49, 95.

\(^{50}\) Supra, 3.7.
literature as both architectural wonder and indicator of wealth. It became a symbol of opulence, as did individual 'celebrity' fish, on a scale in literature that obfuscates the picture of the Roman fish market. Cicero, as has been shown condemned these 'tritons of the fishponds', condemning them for putting their 'uiuaria' above the needs of the state. However, given the importance of the comparison between Domitian and Crispinus, it is perhaps most pertinent to ask whether there is anything more than satiric hyperbole in the story of the six thousand sesterce mullet.

The turbot, 'rhombus', might have been considered special. It must have been special to warrant a notch up the gastronomic scale from mullet. A sea-floor feeder and a flat-fish, it does not shoal and does not have a uniformity of size. The gastronomic fuss over the creature has continued to the modern day. According to Mrs Beeton (165), writing in the middle part of the last century, turbot was, 'most esteemed of all our flat fish.' Such great care had to be taken in its preparation and serving that a special kettle was patented (by Messrs R. and J. Stock, we are told) and, it is said, one embarrassed bishop had to sew the fins back on to a turbot when his cook made the mistake of cutting them off. Domitian and his councillors show the same concern with cooking the fish whole:

51 Att. 2.9.
52 Thompson, 223.
54 Plin. Nat. 9.36.72.
'quidnam igitur censes? conciditur?' 'absit ab illo
dedecus hoc' Montanus ait, 'testa alta paretur,
quae tenui muro spatiosum colligat orbem.
debetur magnus patinae subitusque Prometheus.
argillam atque rotam citius properate, sed ex hoc
tempore iam, Caesar, figuli tua castra sequantur'

(130-135)

According to Martial, no matter how large the dish, the
turbot will always be bigger. Size is clearly the issue
in judging this type of fish, a point that both Horace and Juvenal pick out.

7.5 THE LONG ARM OF THE EMPEROR

It is not particularly surprising that the leader of the
Roman world should want to reflect his status in the
quality or quantity of his food. However, the satirist
does not simply use the big fish to cast the emperor as a
Catius or Nasidienus writ large. Domitian's attitude to
food aligns him more with the Virro type of consumer.
These two powerful individuals are drawn together by the
satirist's indignation. In Satire 5, the gastronomic
concerns of the emperor and his court are the springboard

55 12.57.17 Cf. ibid. 9.30.9; Hor. S. 2.8.30; Plin. Nat.
56 32.81.
58 Cf. S. 2.2.95.
for a discussion of the emperor as one who wields power. In the episode of the fish, the satirist therefore seeks to emphasise certain aspects of his authority. We learn that Domitian controls all Italy and its people in a manner that makes them feel personally intimidated. His command is complete, involving both men and the produce of land and sea. Furthermore, the control he has is maintained through terror and oppression. This is a wide ranging criticism, yet it is dealt with in a single episode.

7.5.1 The scope of the imperial power

The satirist is at pains to make clear the scope of the imperial authority. Where the fish comes from is important, not because particularly fine fish come from Ancona, but because that is the other side of the country, across the large physical barrier of the Apennines. Even so far away from the Emperor's person, objects can be deemed to be his personal property. The message is Domitian owns Italy as he might own an estate. The fisherman, like the bailiff of an estate is conscious of this fact, reserving all the best produce for the master's consumption, without thought for his own profit.

So, Domitian is in a fortified palace on a mountain top.

57Cf. ARW, 11-2: Ancona 47 degrees North, 13 degrees East; Mons Albanus (Monte Cavo), 41 degrees North, 12 degrees east.
Naturally the fisherman is at sea-level. The continuous and conscious (sometimes literal) elevation of the emperor in relation to the rest of his subjects is directly influenced by the panegyric literature of Statius addressed to Domitian. In his *Silvae* he announces that he is in heaven to be eating in the presence of the great man who descends but rarely from the Alban Hills.\(^{58}\)

According to the satirist, however, the relationship of master and subject is not born out of love or personal respect, but out of terror, and it is administered by law:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{si quid Palifurio, si credimus Armillato,} \\
\text{quidquid conspicuum pulchrumque est aegore toto,} \\
\text{res fisci est, ubicumque natat.}
\end{align*}
\]

(53-5)

The predecessor for the fisherman and his fish lies in an anecdote told by Suetonius about Tiberius.\(^{59}\) At one time when the emperor had retreated to Capri and was wandering around the rocky shore, a fisherman surprised him and presented an enormous mullet he had caught. Alarmèd that he had been tracked down so easily, Tiberius orders him to be beaten around the head with the fish. The fisherman cheekily remarks that he was glad he had not caught a lobster,\(^\text{60}\) at which the punishment is repeated, with, of course, a lobster. Such are the rewards for generosity.

---

\(^{58}\) 4.2.10-2, 63-7. Cf. Ibid. 5.2.167-80, tells how Domitian comes down from lofty Alba to bestow a military tribuneship on the sixteen year old Crispinus.

\(^{59}\) Tib. 60.

\(^{60}\) Compare the cheeky remarks of the fisherman to Domitian (65-59).
Juvenal borrows the idea of the imperial gift, but he concentrates on the characterisation of Domitian’s power-relation with his subjects. By having the man beaten, Tiberius is explicitly cruel and paranoid. Domitian’s cruelty is more sinister.

Men of all rank rush to do his will for fear of the consequences. The skipper of the fishing boat is forced to declare the fish to be Domitian’s:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dispersi protinus algae} \\
\text{inquisitores agerent cum remige nudo,} \\
\text{non dubitaturi fugitium dicere piscem} \\
\text{depastumque diu uiuaria Caesaris, inde} \\
\text{elapsum ueterem ad dominum debere reuerti.}
\end{align*}
\]

(48-52)

He is prepared to dash one hundred and fifty miles across country from Ancona to Alba (uelut urgueat auster’, 59), so that this single fish will arrive fresh and undamaged. He escorts the fish personally.

More shocking still is the fact that the noble council of advisors are prepared to abase themselves and misuse the structures of government to please the emperor. They are forced to fawn, not only through fear of losing their status, but also of losing their lives (86-8). In their frenzy to please, some are prepared to make complete fools of themselves:
Therefore the reader sees a pitiful lack of pride and value in the people and offices that most require them. Moreover, it is not just the already perverted who bow to the Imperial whim, but previously honourable souls (who presumably have to try and reconcile their duty to govern with their fear of their leader). The corruption is so complete that even the honourable are powerless.

7.5.2 Fear is the key

Domitian's reign is referred to as 'cladis' or 'pestis' (84). These were 'tempora saeuitiae' (151) during which were snatched Rome's most noble and illustrious souls. Deadliness, therefore, is the main characteristic of the regime. The threat to life that it represents contrasts violently with the apparent triviality of the turbot incident, just as Crispinus' extravagant spending on a mullet is set against his more heinous crimes. However, in Domitian's case, it is his very lack of this proper sense of proportion that makes him unpredictable and dangerous. To Domitian, the satire suggests, the dealing out of death is a trivial matter and can happen for the most trivial of reasons:
sed quid uiolentius aure tyranni,
cum quo de pluuiis aut aestibus aut nimboso
uere locuturi fatum pendebat amici?

(86-8)

The dislocation of the trivial and the important is used to evoke a sense of menace in the satire. The fisherman fears that he will be killed for not handing over the turbot. The advisers are afraid they will die for not attending the council at top speed,\(^{61}\) or pleasing the emperor with their answer. For Domitian's subjects the deliberation over the fate of a fish is a matter of life or death.

The atmosphere of terror and suspicion is heightened by the satirist's frequent allusions to death, or subjects that suggest death. Crispinus, we learn, has caused a Vestal Virgin to be buried alive (10). The first mention of Domitian shows the world to be already 'semianimus' (37). His subjects fear the 'inquisitor' (49), the obvious consequences of denunciation. Images of death accompany the members of the Council, even the fundamentally honourable. There is the poignant hint of the early death of the younger Acilius (95-6), ironically the only young man in the gathering described by the satirist. Silent acquiescence is the only way to ensure a long life, as exemplified by Crispus (89-93). The inherently cruel contingent on the Council not only fear for themselves,

\(^{61}\) Cf. Jones, 53: the ministers are in a race to get to Domitian first, with the use of 'primus'. A ridiculous image, given the age and supposed dignity of these men.
they are fatal in their own right: Crispinus’ perfume gives him the funeral reek (109); Pompeius has a deadly whisper (109-10); Fuscus is the military representative, planning warfare at home in his villa, but unaware of his own fate at the hands of the Dacians (111-12); Catullus is a ‘death-bringer’, with a taste for the gladiatorial games (121-2).

Domitian’s power therefore, as described by the satirist, is based on charismatic terror. He is seen creating for his subjects an alternative set of norms based on fear, in which words can be as effective and as terrifying as the weapon they inevitably mask (86-8). Essential to this is the lack of humanity to be found in the description of Domitian himself, the ever-listening spectre at the feast.

7.6 CONCLUSION.

The object of Satire 4 does not, despite appearances, seem to be the confrontation of the reader with the ‘truth’ of Domitian’s behaviour. The parodic presentation of the tale of the turbot, and the subsequent picking up of the threads of the tale show the poem to be, first and foremost, a good story, well-told.

---

62 Nb. the resemblance to the method of satire.
63 Cf. Hess, 52: on the terror tactics of the Mafia, ‘what most creates the impression of awe in the charismatic personality is an icy impenetrability or a mysterious, lurking cunning or uncertain element’.
In fact the satirist wants to show us the satirist at work. He demonstrates that he can say something entertaining and definitive about the nature of power and its misuses. This he achieves through the processes of simplification and distillation: corrupt power in general is refined into the misuse of the imperial authority; the pleasures of the flesh are refined into those of the stomach; fish as a type of luxury food becomes a particular (and prodigious) example of a particular species.

The monster turbot is therefore integral to the satirist's evocation of a regime of terror. It stands in for everything that is unsaid about Domitian's reign (as the satirist imagines it): the greed, the fear, the violence, the pettiness, and the cruelty of the man himself. None of these things are mentioned explicitly by the satirist, yet all are suggested.
8.1 INTRODUCTION: A FOOD SATIRE?

In all the 'food satires' the poet attacks those who use a misguided set of criteria to draw cultural boundaries according to what they eat. The gastronome discriminates against the 'uninitiated' and the powerful rich who excavate the gulf between themselves and the poor. The satirist invents 'typical' characters to illustrate these types. These people are then placed in a satirical landscape that might be Rome, its surrounding countryside, and parts of Italy familiar to the satirists and their readership.

Although there is plenty of criticism that Rome has been contaminated by foreign habits, and despite dealing with racial eating habits, the context of the satire is not culinary. In fact the idea of foreign cuisine as such, unless we count the general 'Graecification' of Roman food, is never presented by the satirist as grounds for criticism.

1 E.g. Hor. S. 1.6.8, 9; 2.2.6; Juv. 1-3.
2 Supra, 2.1.4, the villas of Lucilius, Horace, Persius and Juvenal. Juv. 11.49; seaside villas at Baiae; 4.61, Domitian's Alban villa.
3 3.81-3; 11.100-78.
4 Which has had a crucial role in the development of modern Western cookery.
Something slightly different happens in Juvenal's fifteenth satire. We see the satirist levelling his gaze on foreigners in their home territory, behaving in a manner that perfectly illustrates their foreigness. As usual, however, he looks at a different culture reflected in its prohibitions and allowances as related to food. In this respect, the treatment of religious taboo by the satirist can be compared with his approach to the gastronome, who turns his art into a code of interdictions and allowances, in which taste and quality dictate codes of behaviour that take on a quasi-moral, or philosophical significance. In satire, the gastronome is ridiculed for considering himself 'civilised' compared with those who do not apply his standards. The same might be said for the practitioner of religious taboo. Therefore gastronomy and cannibalism lie at opposite ends of a spectrum of eating habits. To a Roman reader (and a modern Western one too) the cannibal reflects the extreme limit of peculiar eating habits when viewed from a moral and physiological perspective.

The attack on the 'foodie' and the cannibal therefore bears certain similarities of method, if not of scale. The satirist pretends to call upon people to explain their habits by example. Sometimes he purports to understand their motivation. He paints both gastronome and cannibal as being conscious of their acts, as holding beliefs that

---

5 Catius and Nasidienus, for example, might be seen as members of the gastronomic culture.  
6 Cf. supra, 4.2.1; 4.3.1.  
7 I.e. having knowledge unavailable or inaccessible to others, and using it to exert influence.
have a strange, indeed, topsy-turvy logic behind them. This veneer of 'rationality' is first laid on and then stripped away by the satirist.

First we see that the gastronome or the cannibal takes himself seriously: the former by intellectualising food, the latter by treating some objects that should be edible as objects of worship, and others, which should be profane, as legitimate (human flesh). Rather than elaborating a reaction of fear or disgust, the satirist makes the food criminal look silly and small. This is partly achieved by relating his habits back to the proper place of food in the scheme of human activity; drawing, for example, on the norms of table manners, and preparation and serving of food. Thus the grim humour of Satire 15 lies in the violence of the contrast between eating human flesh and eating as a refined activity. Therefore the gastronome who wishes to appear elegant emerges as gauche and the cannibal who believes himself brave and pious can be characterised as a coward with no table manners.

8.1.1 A serious attack?

Juvenal constructed two satires around an anecdotal narrative: Satires 4 and 15. In the latter the satirist recounts an apparently recent ('nuper gesta', 27-8)

8E.g. leeks and onions (Juv. 15.9); kid, ibid. 12.
cannibalistic occurrence. Two neighbouring Egyptian tribes, in an explosion of a long-harboured religious enmity, come to blows at an Ombite festival (38). The revellers turn on their assailants and in the subsequent fight, one of the Tentyrites trips and is fallen upon by the pursuing pack (75-8). He is eaten, raw (78-83).

The shocking cruelty exhibited in this act of cannibalism indicates, some have said, a bitter hatred on the part of the satirist for Egyptians. He is after all charging them with one of the worst crimes imaginable: the selfish atomisation and absorption of another human being. Cannibalism is too grave a subject for satire, perhaps:

'The fifteenth is an ugly humourless Satire, totally unredeemed by laughter.'

(Ferguson 1979, 233)

The accusation of xenophobia is based on the view that a single atrocity and its named perpetrators are the sole objects of the satirist's ire. Indeed, the satire is designed to look like an 'all out' attack. It begins with the bizarre nature of Egyptian religion, and attached to a central narrative concerning the most savage of crimes is a framework of ridicule and criticism that makes Egyptians appear cruel, bestial and cowardly. The audience is also seduced into an anti-Egyptian mood by reminders of Roman codes of behaviour. Whether a reader finds a particular piece of literature funny is, of course, largely a matter

9 Highet 1954, 151.
of personal taste, but there are clear signs that the writer of the fifteenth satire wished to make his audience laugh at Egyptians, at the satirist and at themselves.

In dealing with the subject of cannibalism there is, in fact, a consistent oscillation between passages of serious and flippant tone. For example, the introduction, reminiscent of Ciceronian observation on Egyptian eating habits, is joined to an epic dinner (13-16) by a passage on the crunching of leeks and onions, and religious abstension from woolly animals. Nor does the satire end on an emotional or philosophical high note, although the reader is led to expect this from a preceding passage which comes almost straight from Lucretius (147-9). On the contrary, the poet’s parting words to us concern the most candid view of the whole subject of taboos, 'civilised' and 'barbaric':

aspicimus populos quorum non sufficit irae
occidisse aliquem, sed pectora brachia uoltum
crediderint genus esse cibi. quid diceret ergo
uel quo non fugeret, si nunc haec monstra uideret
Pythagoras, cunctis animalibus abstinuit qui
tamquam homine et ventri indulsit non omne

10 Cic. Tusc. 5.78, praising their fortitude in respect of religion (but they are still mad).
12 3.94-7, all creatures have life but only men have souls.
Then we turn to the ghastly act of cannibalism itself. The reader soon grasps that the satirist is rather enjoying the descriptive exercise. Physiological detail, such as at 170-1 above, forces the reader to imagine the human body as 'joints' of meat, as does the reminder of culinary niceties of which the uncivilised cannibal is ignorant (81-2). We hear the crunching of bones as the cannibals get stuck into the feast, and then there is the final grim touch as those on the outside drag their fingers through the earth to get a smack of the blood. (91-2). This is certainly 'black' humour, which might be distasteful to some readers, but, for others, the ability to appreciate the joke represents a complicity with the satirist as enlightened iconoclast.

Cannibalism is far from taboo as a subject for analysis and discussion, as is clear from the ancient philosophical and rhetorical tradition. Some thinkers took as their starting point the fact that human flesh is a form of meat. Logically therefore, some argued, one must adopt a consistent position on meat eating, and not just the issue of cannibalism. Therefore if you are going to eat meat, you might as well be eating the flesh of your family, so better to eat no meat at all. The Stoics addressed the

13Courtney, 83.
14We might compare, for example, J. Swift's, A Modest Proposal in which the speaker suggests, with great relish, putting Irish babies and children on to the meat market.
15E.g. Emped. fr. 120-4 (Wright, 284-7); Sext. Emp. Pyrrh. 3.247; Plut. Usu Carn. 2.3.2-4. Cf, Juv. 13.84-5.
problem of what constitutes the proper circumstance in which to eat another human being. Zeno said that man will turn cannibal under certain conditions. Chrysippus also permitted the eating of the bodies of the dead. Clearly then, the discussion of cannibalism involved probing the boundaries of anthropophagy as taboo.

The structure of the satirist's moral argument also lies in the rhetorical tradition. He places cannibalism in a hierarchy of wrongs. Despite an introduction to the contrary, the satirist concedes that there are reasons for eating human flesh: mischance, famine, and ravaging armies (119-21). By way of example he cites the besieged Vascones (93). Survival cannibalism does not involve murder. Instead it allows the survivor to feed, literally, off the misfortunes of others. Egyptian cannibalism, however, as far as the satirist is concerned, is not a matter of 'eat or die' for the cannibal. The victim is killed and eaten by his assailant. This does not, of course, mean that the Egyptians set out with the intention of eating human flesh. But the satirist does not see fit to draw out this aspect of his story. He implies with his xenophobic introduction that Egypt is basically cannibalistic, and that its inhabitants eat men as often as Romans would eat leeks, onions or goat (9-13).

The satirist adds his own slant to the subject in his graphic description of events. This is designed to evoke

---

16 Diog. Laert. 7.121. 17 Ibid. 188. 18 Cf. Sext. Emp. Pyrrh. 3.207; 223-5, arguing against taboo as inherent to all men; 228. 19 Cf. Rankin, passim.
the repugnance, aversion and revulsion that come with the breaking of a taboo, not in thought, but in deed. The reader is constantly drawn to the act itself. Did it actually happen? Which came first, the idea of the (f)act or the theme of cruelty? A number of commentators begin with the episode, assuming that it or something similar actually happened, to spark the satire. However, it is possible that the satirist started with his theme of cruelty by constructing an event to epitomise it, as has been shown to be the case in the fourth satire. It is generally agreed, however, that the Egyptian atrocity is a means to an end: the satirist’s parting message is not, ‘how cruel are Egyptians’ but, ‘how cruel is mankind’. The reader therefore has to switch expectations as the satirist moves from the specific narrative subject to a broader theme.

8.2. CANNIBALISM: STRANGE BUT TRUE?

In cannibalism the satirist has purposely chosen a type of human activity that evokes strong and contradictory feelings. The idea of eating another person is ghastly but imaginable: that is, if we have ever eaten meat, we can put together an image of what the act of cannibalism would be like (which is obviously very different from believing ourselves capable of cannibalism). Moreover, the idea of

20Eg. particularly Highet 1949 (passim) and 1954, 151.
cannibalism is fascinating, to the extent that if it does not exist, humans seem to have to create it. So, in extreme circumstances, the fear of the potential for cannibalism can lead to a number of psychotic conditions, known collectively as Windigo disorder (or psychosis). This has been observed among, and is named after, a tribe of native Indians in North America. Through a combination of isolated instances of cannibalism and a 'highly developed cultural fantasy', the affected individual fantasises that he might be capable of eating another human. Fear of his own hunger, the threat he poses to the rest of the tribe, and the 'knowledge' that human flesh once tasted establishes an insatiable craving, causes the Windigo to become an outcast. Through a similar process, in places where such disorders are not manifested, the cannibal still has to be called into existence, but is pushed to the outer limits of the known world.

The satirist uses the powerful connotations of cannibalism to develop a xenophobic 'language' of attack. This is based on the idea of otherness. He chooses in cannibalism a subject that has universal resonances of alien behavior, and applies the accusation to a race which was traditionally regarded by Romans as odd. It suggests to the modern and ancient reader uncharted areas of the human psyche, which can be projected into the further reaches of the past or of the globe. There were

21Teicher, 8-9.
22Fogelson, 81.
23Fogelson, 77-9.
cannibalistic tribes on the periphery of the known Greek and Roman world. The construction of the cannibalistic 'other' seems to dissolve some of the tensions of being a consciously organised society. These others are a manifestation of the fear of a breakdown in society. Hence cannibals not only eat flesh, they are nomadic and lawless; that is, they are the embodiment of an unstable, unpredictable society. They might also be particularly unintelligible. The accusation of cannibalism was used against Cynics, whose behaviour was criticised for allowing a breakdown in the human taboos of incest and parricide, and who were also thought to condone cannibalism. Plato seems to see a hint of cannibalism in the behaviour of tyrants. On many occasions the cannibal is characterised as having bestial, sometimes anti-family tendencies, as will be discussed later.

Ancient literary examples of cannibalism are placed to command special attention, as one might expect. The common factor that seems to draw occurrences together is the sense of transition, or hinterland, between states of the human condition. For example, it often accompanies a rite de passage from barbarity to civilisation, or is the final straw that leads to violent conflict and the ultimate

24 Hdt. 4.106.119, 125; Thucyd. 3.94; Arist. NE. 7.5.2 (1148b); Pol. 8.3.4 (1338b); Plato Laws 782b6-c2; Plin. Nat. 4.12.88.
25 Hdt. 4.106.109, 125.
26 Thucyd. 3.94.
27 Theophil. Autol. 3.5.
28 EU. 571.
29 Arist. NE. 1.c., bestial creatures in female form that rip open pregnant women and eat the foetuses, and savage tribes on the Black Sea (Pol. 8.3.4, Achaeans and Heniochi) who each provide a child for a common banquet.
resolution of a long drawn out feud. Hence the houses of Atreus and Thyestes finally come to arms after the famous ghastly banquet.\textsuperscript{30} The feud is finally settled with the establishment of democracy at Athens. The Theban sphinx devours young boys until defeated with human reasoning power, as is the Cyclops, who is without 'dikas' or 'themistas'.\textsuperscript{31}

Cannibalism as a reality is fundamentally incredible, yet it is possible that we are loathe to relinquish the belief that it can happen, especially in other times and other places. Proof of cannibalism by choice is unlikely to be conclusive, yet examples abound of both wilful cannibalism and cannibalism of necessity.\textsuperscript{32} While wilful cannibalism is unequivocally taboo, even the most open-minded person would be loathe to drop the cultural programming which says that cannibalism by choice has happened in the past, or is happening now in a violent and less 'civilised' part of the world. Emperor Bokassa was reported to have kept human flesh in his fridge for his own consumption. In the words of his successor David Dacko, 'He went about his macabre meals in the solitude of hidden corners of his palace. We have discovered pieces of human flesh in the Emperor's fridges'. That Dacko was Bokassa's successor is important. The accusation of cannibalism is an effective means of turning an enemy into a non-person.

\textsuperscript{30}Eur. Or. 1007-8; Sen. Thyest. 59-67; Pers. 5.7-9, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{31}Od. 9.215. Cf. Rankin, \textsuperscript{382}.
\textsuperscript{32}Cf. Arens, ch.1, describes in detail the evolution of cannibalism as myth. Cannibalism of necessity is relatively well documented e.g. Tannahil, 118: famine in Dark Ages Europe.
The satirist's audience might well have felt similar ambiguity of reaction to the idea of cannibalism, with or without 'proof'. According to Strabo, the writer had a duty to avoid being carried away on a wave of sensationalism where such subjects were concerned. On the importance of distinguishing the cannibal Scyth from the meat-abstaining Scyth, he points out that:

'Other writers... tell about their savagery because they know that the terrible and marvellous are startling, but one should tell the opposite facts too and construct patterns of conduct.'

(8.3.9)

Although he has no doubt that there are cannibal Scythians, he is also aware that there is a danger that sensationalism will tar all Scythians with the same brush. Similarly, the reader of the fifteenth satire can choose whether to believe, but belief in the act itself is not central to the message of the satire. More important is the fact that the idea of cannibalism is understood as an indicator of that which is beyond the boundaries of the 'civilised world' and 'civilised behaviour'. The more alert the reader is to the broader connotations of the act, the better he or she can appreciate the way in which the satirist moves from the particular to the general: from the Tentyrite atrocity to the Ombites; from these two

33 Cf. Hight 1954, 152: 'the barbarous cruelty which is always pressing in upon civilisation from just outside its frontiers or from beneath the surface of its mind.'
tribes to the whole of Egypt; then to the potential for savagery shared by all mankind, whether civilised or barbarian.

Cannibalism without necessity is therefore chosen as the worst crime available to mankind. We want to detect an attack of the highest ferocity on the Egyptians. Because the act is by definition rare (or non-existent), and belongs to the realms of myth and ancient history, the crime seems all the more wicked, but not necessarily any more believable. The chronological and geographical distancing of cannibalism from the accuser's own world, under normal circumstances, is usually central to the creation (i.e. the existence of) the cannibal. But the episode described in the satire is practically contemporary. This, according to Juvenal's speaker, makes the act not only more believable, but more savage. In fact, we only have the satirist's word that anything did happen. He implies that he is a witness to Egyptian atrocity, but not the atrocity:

horrida sane
Aegyptos, sed luxuria, quantum ipse notaui,
barbara famoso non cedit turba Canopo.

(44–6)

---

There is no real reason to consider cannibalism as being synonymous with the decadent lifestyle, as the satirist is suggesting. Nonetheless, the Egyptian episode is presented as fact, and to enjoy the telling of the tale the reader has to suspend his or her disbelief. Yet, having taken the veracity of the episode as a foregone conclusion, the satirist still goes to enormous (more to the point, too much) trouble to establish his credentials as a teller of truth. He assigns to the events one of only two specific dates mentioned in the satires. The eccentricity is underlined not only in specifying a year, but in implying a time of year also, by the naming of a suffect.

We begin to guess that the satirist is conscious that the whole substance of his story is so wild as to be unbelievable. Therefore he states that he is not an 'aretalogus' (spinner of tales at dinner parties), simultaneously pointing out that the phenomenon is normally consigned to ancient history and mythology, and even then is laughable:

\[
\text{attonito cum tale super cenam facinus narraret Ulixes} \\
\text{Alcinoo, bilem aut risum fortasse quibusdam mouerat ut mendax aretalogus.}
\]

(13-16)

\[35\] AD 127, Aemilius Iuncus suffect Consul with Sext. Iulius Severus, Cf. CIL 3 p.874 n. 3; Syme, 1142: notes the oddity. Ferguson, 123: sees this attention to detail as a possible indication of a personal connection to the events described. Nb. 'Recent' for the satirist may mean anything up to twenty years. Cf. Juv. 1.49 and 8.120 on Marius Priscus' extortionate activities in Africa. Ferguson 2, 148.
The idea of satirist as a second Ulysses is hilarious, and is not an aid to credibility. Unlike Ulysses, the satirist was not present at the events described, although, as we have seen, he would like to give the impression of first hand knowledge. As Scott points out (89), Ulysses 'once told of Scylla and Charybdis and of the Cyclops, marvels hardly to be believed, particularly since they were told on the authority of Ulysses alone'. Knowing that he has no other witnesses to confirm or dispute his story, the satirist has a license to fabricate. We do after all have no evidence of any such event. The satirist mentions no sources or eyewitnesses. Who would be present at such an event and not be involved? Yet he describes events in gory, 'frame by frame' detail. He speaks as if the reader is well acquainted with the events in question. But, as has been shown, the familiarity is mythic, rather than specific. All this frantic assertion of truthfulness should, of course, be ringing alarm bells with the reader of satire. The more the satirist claims, the less inclined we are to believe, because verisimilitude can serve the satirical purpose much better than veracity.

From the outset of the poem the satirist assumes an outraged, Egyptian-hating persona. 36 He takes on the task of presenting the case against the cannibals as persuasively and vividly as possible, not in an attempt to prove that the events described actually happened, but to use them as a starting point to denounce the people as a whole ('demens Aegyptos' 1-2).

36Corn, 67.
The satirist's apparent aim is the complete destruction of the Egyptians in the eyes of an imaginary audience with anti-Egyptian tendencies. To achieve this, he establishes a complex code of differentiation in which the persona, whose main characteristic is a self-satisfied belief in the virtues of 'civilisation' Roman-style, uses 'civilisation' as a yardstick by which to defame the whole race. Egyptians, he would have us believe, turn the normal rules of behaviour upside-down, and because they do not observe the standards set by Rome, bring down upon themselves the loathing and laughter of the gods:

ergo deus quicumque aspexit, ridet et odio.

(71)

an ironic comment, bearing in mind the initial definition of the Egyptians as a religious race.

The Egyptians, however, are a glimpse of the future, part of an evolutionary process moving inexorably downhill. Lines of criticism seemingly developed for use against the Egyptians assume a more general significance:

sed iam serpentum maior concordia, parcit
cognatis maculis similis fera.

(159-60)

The xenophobe, as will be shown, turns on the whole of humanity, and we see that his wild and apparently specific anger is now aimed at showing that the edifice of civilisation is cracking. That same civilisation which
until a few lines earlier was the platform for his moral argument. At such points, with the satirist's credibility as a coherent and sane moral authority brought into question, the reader can laugh at the persona's rampant xenophobia, the 'civilised' world's double standards regarding savagery, and perhaps even his or her own credulity.

8.3. ASPECTS OF CIVILISATION AND BARBARITY

The satirist's attack, therefore, is twofold. First, he sets out to describe the crudest crime imaginable to prove that Egyptians are completely monstrous. Then he fits their cannibalistic activities into an attack on the morals of the modern world as a whole. The worse the Egyptians seem, the more the rest of mankind suffers in the subsequent comparison.

If, from the satirist's point of view, cannibalism represents 'them', 'us' is expressed in terms of what can be called civilisation. To Juvenal's speaker this is an ideal state based on a set of complementary values embodying the social and personal qualities of an ideal Roman, living in an Empire at the height of its powers. Although a single term is never used to convey all these ideas, the consciousness of the concept of civilisation makes the subsequent comparison all the more vivid.

The notion of 'civilisation' presented by the satirist is based on a combination of evolutionary theories: the
differences of men and animals, whether these are innate or based on man's evolution from animal state; the presence of rationality which makes men capable of divine actions (144), and which is a gift of the gods; and the subsequent development of technological, intellectual, and emotional gifts which are exclusive to mankind. Many of these ideas are to be found in the fifth book of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. The notion of civilisation in which they are couched bears a striking resemblance to that constructed by Virgil in his pro-Augustan writings.

The satirist begins by outlining a violent moral and behavioural contrast in the introductory discussion of religious practice. He then widens the gap further between Egyptian and Roman by emphasising other differences to the Egyptian detriment. With Rome are associated qualities of bravery, fortitude, self-control, humanity, manliness, and intellectual, social and cultural achievement. He describes in vivid detail how the Tentyrites and Ombites (as representatives of all Egypt) possess none of these qualities in their true form, but display a sham or parodic version of the attributes of civilisation.

8.3.1 Religious 'otherness'

Cannibalism is first raised in the context of religious phenomena worthy of a kind of communal Roman suspicion. 'Quis nescit ...?' states the opening line, and after all, how else might a xenophobe begin? To him there are only a restricted number of ways of viewing Egyptians: as a
religious curiosity comes high on the list. We only have to look at the earlier satires to see this:

\[
\text{si candida iusserit Io,}
\]
\[
\text{ibit ad Aegypti finem calidaque petitas}
\]
\[
a Meroe portabit aquas, ut spargat in aede
\]
\[
Isidis, antiquo quae proxima surgit ouilli.
\]

(6.526-9)

The idea of worshipping animals was regarded as particularly odd, and reactions to this Egyptian habit among Greek and Roman sources range from curiosity to outright suspicion.\(^{37}\) Visitors to the Great pyramids used to go out of their way to see the priests feed the crocodile deity in the pool of his temple at Arsinoe.\(^{38}\) Octavian, it is said, refused to visit Apis the bull, saying he was accustomed to worshipping gods not cattle.\(^{39}\) Animal worship was therefore part and parcel of the Roman view of the part of Egypt which lay beyond Greco-Roman Alexandria,\(^{40}\) and provided a ready-made basis for the satirist's first line of attack. Moreover, he makes it clear that he is adopting a traditional stance by opening the satire with Cicero's words on the strangeness of Egyptian religion.

Animal worship could not be easily accommodated into the

\(^{37}\) In the absence of special pleading the picture is more balanced, e.g. Plut. Is. 352-4; Griffiths, 17: the uniformity of sources (Aelian, Plutarch, Porphyry and Macrobius) on Egyptian religious practices.

\(^{38}\) Millar, 186: Strabo's visit.

\(^{39}\) DC. 61.16.

\(^{40}\) Plut. 352-4 feels obliged to make a rebuttal of such opinions.
Roman pantheon, no matter how flexible, because the objects of veneration did not hold a similar position in the Roman hierarchy of living creatures. Egyptians, the satirist tells us, worship inanimate objects which would more usually be eaten. We infer from this that Egyptians can be seen as lesser beings than even vegetables. The vegetable gods of Egypt represent the height of silliness and look forward to the Pythagorean veto on beans in the satire's last three lines. In an elegant piece of ring composition we see that Pythagoras' vegetables, unlike the Egyptian versions, are not gods born in the gardens (10). He respects them for humanitarian reasons (172-4), whereas some Egyptians will save leeks and onions, but by implication will eat men. Both taboos are, however, ridiculous as described in the satire because they are the product of the xenophobe's extrapolation of logic. Pythagoras' beans, no matter how worthy, mark an anticlimax to the emotional heights achieved immediately before (131-68), and bring home the message that by avoiding the cruelty of cannibalism we are potentially in danger of falling into the trap of

---

41 It is in their flesh-eating habits that distinctions are traditionally drawn between men and animals. Hesiod, WD 276-80, for example, contrasts mankind which has 'nomos' and 'dikai' and does not eat his fellow man, with the animal world. The satirist is wrong when he says that animals of the same species do not eat each other e.g. rabbits, praying mantis.

42 They misread the meaning of vegetable worship i.e. celebrating man's vegetarian past (blessed by the gods).

Cf. Blundell, 97.

43 Cf. 118-9 religious sanctity of beans; Plin. Nat. 18.30.118; Plut. QC. 727b, abstinence from flesh; ibid. 728d-30f, particularly from fish.
faddism. 44

The particular aspect of religious practice that fascinates the satirist is food taboo. He approaches the subject not only from the religious angle, but as it compares with Roman views of proper moral and social activity. He applies to the idea of allowing and prohibiting certain foods the logic of literalism and 'common sense', in order to make Egyptian religious practices look violent and irrational.

The overlap of secular and religious codes of behaviour provides a thread that runs through the satire. For example, just as the Roman gods gave humanity its tender virtues and intellectual capacity (131-47), Egyptian gods take away man's self-government and are responsible for holy wars characterised by madness, rage and hatred (34-8). Furthermore, pagan celebration is a time for drunken revelry without limit (38-44). Most tellingly of all, since civilisation's morality is embodied in the sanctity of human life, Egyptians, by not paying mankind the respect it deserves, are by contrast not only pagan but uncivilised.

8.3.2 Civilisation and technology

---

The reader is familiar with the depiction of civilisation as the culmination of a civilising process. The raw material of mankind, according to the satirist, was worked upon by nature and the gods to achieve just such a state and the evolution of technology had a crucial role in that process. In some respects, it is made clear, the Egyptian tribes under discussion had also evolved technologically. A potted version of the process is laid out in their progression from bare fists to arrows in the satire’s central fight scene. The ‘nuda manus’ (54) progresses to primitive weapons (‘saxa’, 63), and thence to more sophisticated and reliable instruments of war: blades (73) and arrows (74). Technology for these people is a one-sided achievement, as is made perfectly clear in the satirist’s wry comment on Prometheus:

hic gaudere libet quod non uiolauerit ignem,
quem summa caeli raptum de parte Prometheus
donauit terris.

(84-6)

The way in which the satirist charts the escalation of violence also echoes Virgil’s account of a battle between the Trojans and the Latins. They too move on from improvised weapons. But the scene is also placed in the broader context of the evolution of violence, from the

---

45 Hes. Heph. 2-7; Lucr. 5.1241-96; Blundell 168-9: points out the destructive nature of fire itself. It also reminds men of their previous privileged state where fire was not needed.

hunting of animals to the killing of men. Moreover, the fight culminates in a bloody death.

While the Egyptians may have had the fire to forge their weapons, their unwillingness to use it in the preparation of their ghastly meal is used as a sign of their evolutionary and cultural backwardness. Clearly we are not meant to believe that the act would have been acceptable if the cannibals had, for example, carefully cut the flesh into goujons and accompanied it with a daring raspberry coulis, but the introduction of the cauldron introduces a sideways swipe at their culinary gaucheness as well as their plain savagery. Here we see the satirist at his most ghoulish, applying the delicacies of polite behaviour to apparently grave issues. This might be called 'black' or 'sick' humour, but at the heart of these touches lies the satirist's healthy disrespect for his own moral superiority.

In terms of technical evolution, cooking and forging go hand in hand: both having developed from the discovery or gift (depending how you look at it) of fire. Towards the end of the satire, the evolution of technology is reintroduced in a description of the progression from forging agricultural implements to making swords (165-8). The real thrust of the Prometheus comment becomes clear. The satirist asks the reader to look closely at assumptions that do not bear scrutiny. Technology is used to show the ambivalence of a notion such as 'evolution'.

48 Ibid. 533.
49 Lucr. 5.1110-4, the Promethean gift of cookery.
It is simultaneously constructive and destructive. Prometheus' activities can be seen as wholly disastrous for himself and humanity. Men today, the satirist extrapolates from the Egyptian example, have chosen the destructive option because they are undergoing a process of moral devolution. Egypt may be his chosen focus, but the development of weapons is common to all men. Again, as in previous satires, the poet's whole world suffers in the moral comparison with an unimpeachable moral past. The cannibalistic episode has effectively become a sign of the times.

8.3.3 Boys, beasts and men

Having shown that Egyptians are less than men in religious and social terms, the satirist assigns them a corresponding place on the scale of physical development. Implicit in the state of manhood ('uirtus') were notions of moral fortitude combined with bravery and physical strength. These had to be used with the proper justification, and were the personal embodiment of Romanity, as contrasted with the qualities of the 'un-Roman'. As Dauge comments (423), 'La 'virtus' est donc le règne du principe divin en l'homme, l'ordre intérieur, et l'activité juste qui en découle: tel est l'idéal du Romain. Il n'y peut y avoir, sinon que la déchaînement de

50 Cf. Hes. Theog. 535-93; Plato Protag. 321c-d; Aesch. Prom. 436-506; Blundell, 171; the battle against the gods. 51 Cic. Mur. 10.23; Fin. 5.13.38; Off. 15.46; Font. 13.29; Tusc. 2.18.43.
A standard of physical strength is represented in Satire 15 by Turnus, Ajax and Diomedes, three great rock throwers of epic, who like their Egyptian counterparts share an opposition to the forces of civilisation. By comparison, the satirist can sneer, the Egyptians do not match the strength of the worthy opponents of civilisation of previous times:

",, nec hunc lapidem qualis et Turnus et Aiax,
uel quo Tydides percussit pondere coxam
Aeneae, sed quem ualeant emittere dextrae
illis dissimiles et nostro tempore natae.

(65-8)

This marks the destruction of the Egyptians in their own terms (as imagined by the satirist). It seems that these two tribes confuse aggression and savagery with bravery. Their conscious terms of self-appraisal are tied up with physical maturity (59); a one-sided and wholly laughable conception of manhood. We see that they are in fact effeminate (50), cowardly, and moved by hatred and hunger for revenge (36-7) which is totally misconceived as worthy warfare.

The satirist couches his description in epic parody, yet would have us believe that these events actually happened. The unfortunate mistake of some historians to overdramatise their accounts was ridiculed by Lucian. In

52Verg. Aen. 12.896; Il. 7.268; Il. 5.302 respectively.
his Quomodo historia conscribenda sit, he describes one historian’s account of the death of Severianus. Lucian blames him most for dying without first cutting the throat of the historian who put on the show. The satirist seems to be writing for an audience that would have appreciated Lucian’s joke. Thus the Egyptians’ failure to meet the rigorous standards of the epic hero is not only a dig at them but at the satirist also.

The Egyptians’ failure is made all the funnier because the satirist endows them with a consciousness of their own values. The most recent anterior state for grown men is boyhood.53 Thus the vicious Egyptians believe, we are told, that they are only scrapping boyishly if their fights produce no corpses.54

Weapons, the satirist suggests, are a product of a savage streak in man’s character. This savagery in its Egyptian manifestation takes on an animal quality, ‘dira feritas’ (32), or ’saeuitia’ (54)55 as contrasted with properly motivated bravery. Animals are already associated in the reader’s mind with Egypt through the satire’s introduction and the reputation already held by that country. Bestial imagery recurs frequently and is especially vivid in the narrative of the ghastly act. The

53 Cf. Lucr. 5.886-9, differential growth rates of men and animals.
54 Cf. Robins, 109: on the changing face of football violence in the 1980s, and the arrival of the ‘hard man’, ‘terrace aggro was robbed of its playful quality of ritualized wargame’.
55 Cf. Anderson, 143.
cannibals gnaw on the bones of their victim (81) and lap up the last drop of his blood, scooping it up from the ground (92). This picture is a clear marker on the way to Juvenal's final detrimental comparison of modern man with the most dangerous, toothy and carnivorous of beasts: serpents, tigers, lions, boars and bears. Not surprisingly, all mankind suffers in the comparison (159-64).

Acts of cannibalism are frequently associated with the animal world. In Ovid's Metamorphoses 6.636-7, Procne is likened to a tigress as she kills her son Itys to serve him up to his father:

>nec mora, traxit Ityn, ueluti Gangetica ceruae, lactentem fetum per siluas tigris opacas...

Animal imagery helps to make sense of extreme and senseless cruelty on the part of human beings, harking back perhaps to primitive man's closeness to the animals; not necessarily in any 'Darwinian' sense, but as one of the animals before he was picked out for special treatment by the gods.

The ancient writer would also be aware of the fact that some animals eat other animals, and that some animals eat men, given half the chance. The combination of these two models, together with observation of beastly behaviour in wild animal shows, is all that a writer would need to

---

56 Cf. the animal tendencies of Homeric heroes, II. 22.345, Achilles wants to eat Hector raw. He lets the dogs do it instead.
58 Cf. Blundell, 79-83: teleological versus evolutionary theory.
conjure up a vivid representation of cannibalism.

Now, according to the satirist, man differs from the animals thanks to the divine gifts of intellect and feelings:

separat hoc nos
a grege mutorum, atque ideo uenerabile soli
sortiti ingenium diuinorumque capaces
atque exercendis pariendisque artibus apti
sensum a caelesti demissum traximus arce,
cuius egent prona et terram spectantia.

(142-7)

Animals do not, however, eat their own kind, as Seneca is at pains to point out.59 This unrealistic 'topos' is possibly part of Juvenal's complex play with literary reality versus the real world. Cannibalism by choice therefore places the perpetrator below all previously encountered forms of existence.60

8.3.4 Civilised accomplishments

Lucretius' resume of man's achievements encompasses Roman advances in the intellectual and creative field.61 Similarly, as foretold by Anchises in the Aeneid, Aeneas',

59 Ep. 95.311. Cf. Clem. 1.26.3; Ira 2.8.3; Plin. Nat. 7.5.
60 Cf. supra, 6.3.1, the treatment of Trebius by the satirist.
and therefore Rome's, divine mission involves much more than piety and bravery:

excudent alii spirantia mollius aera
(credo equidem), uiuos ducent de marmore uultus,
orabunt causas melius, caelique meatus
descibent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent.

(6.847-50)

Virgil's contemporary touchstone is Actium and the beneficial impact of that victory over Egypt on the stability of the Roman world.\(^62\) The Rome against which the satirist effectively pits his contemporary Egyptians is the embodiment of many of the qualities represented by Aeneas: the qualities which enabled Rome to vanquish Egypt once before. This Rome had passed on to its subjects a morality rooted in affinities with the best of Greek philosophy, especially Stoicism. It has spread rhetorical skills originated in Greece, a country which in previous satires frequently came under attack from the satirist (inconsistency is allowable, it seems, in the cause of denigrating a new target, and an even more foreign target):

\(^61\) 5.332-7, shipbuilding, music, natural science, and Latin literature.
\(^62\) Cf. Hardie, 130: on Augustan ideology, 'Actium .... was presented as a victory over the barbarian forces of Egypt and the East. Both Augustus and the Attalids effect a black-and-white definition of their regime by the emphatic definition of the enemy outsider.'
melius nos
zenonis praecepta monent.
(Juv. 15.106-7)

and he continues:

nunc totas Graias nostrasque habet orbis Athenas,
Gallia causidicos docuit facunda Britannos,
de conducendo loquitur iam rhetore Thyle.
(110-12)

So, the whole world, including even the most barbaric tribes, has shown itself to possess the basic stuff of humanity, and to be pliable to the guiding hand of Rome, and therefore can be deemed to be civilised. Even when guilty of cannibalism, the Vascones are to be pitied for not having the Stoic dogma that would have suggested they commit suicide before eating human flesh.

8.4 CONCLUSION: IS ROME REALLY CIVILISED?

Constantly in this satire, the poet brings in to question the Egyptian cannibal's qualifications as a human being. As we have seen, he is the raw material of manhood

---

63 Cf. Verg. Geo. 3.25, Britons are numbered among Caesar's vanquished enemies, also (28-9), the Nile billowing with war.
64 Cf. supra, 8.1.1.
without the divine spark; a creature that fails to meet the requirements of any other form of life. The irony of his condition is that he believes himself to be pious and manly; physically and technologically mature.

More specifically, he has failed to reach the standards of the hero of epic, such as Aeneas and Ulysses. In particular the former, whose mission climaxes in the following:

\[
\text{tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento} \\
\text{(haec tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem,} \\
\text{parcere subiectis et debellare superbos.} \\
\text{(Virg. Aen. 6.851-3)}
\]

Aeneas' greatest achievement is the building of a community that will eventually become Rome. The qualities which Aeneas embodies are fondly believed to be Roman qualities. By contrast, the cannibal is imagined to live in, and create a kind of wasteland.

Egyptians, by contrast, have no self-control (48), are wild (52), cruel (115), worthless (126) and mean (127-8). The civilised person, coming across the dead or the unfortunate feels pity, and expresses that feeling in wailing, groaning and weeping (131-140). The Egyptian mob, by contrast, quite literally hounds down the fallen and chews them up, expressing only uncontrollable anger (75-81). The picture that emerges is clearly Egypt versus the rest of the world.

In achieving this contrast the speaker seems implicitly to accept anything done 'Roman style', even killing
perhaps. He draws constantly upon a pool of images of civilisation, apparently oblivious to the inconsistencies of his argument in his haste to use them against the Egyptians. The recognition of a wider moral, in which all killing is reprehensible, is not simply the gloss of the modern reader. Why put a sudden justification of militarism immediately after an invocation of pity? Why emphasise that the heroic ideal is an exalted state from which previously civilised men have fallen:

nam genus hoc uiuo iam decrescebat Homero;
terra malos homines nunc educat atque pusillos.

(69-70)

Furthermore, why mention Prometheus as a bringer of good, and project an ambivalent image of the warlike epic hero if not to hold up the satirist’s rabid anger for closer examination? Ultimately it becomes clear that the speaker has achieved a condemnation of everything and nothing. As in the lengthy attack on women in satire 6, no one emerges with a single saving grace, neither the victim nor the misogynist nor the xenophobic satirist.

The satirist’s continual assertion of contemporaneity and believability has caused the shadow of veracity to hang over this satire; it should not. In addressing the subject of cannibalism, the satirist is drawing his reader’s attention to the common currency of humanity, and to the humour and literary sophistication with which the

65 Cf. Corn, 71-4.
contrast between civilisation and barbarity can be drawn. Simply by asking the reader to believe first, that the act happened as described, and secondly that all Egyptians behave this way, the satirist is paradoxically creating a debate on credulity, not a debate on Egyptian morals.
9.1. FOOD IS POWER

As was suggested in the Prologue to this thesis, it is important to remember that the satirist is choosing the elements that make up the depiction of food in his satire. This is both a conscious and an unconscious process, in much the same way that the comments on food contained within this thesis are, to some extent, bound to be affected by the gender, experiences, and social and cultural background of the writer and the reader; especially, it might be said, when the subject is as personal and familiar as food. Therefore the reader of a food satire finds her/himself dealing with the personal and universal nature of food and eating.

The satirists for their part can be shown to be giving clear signals as to how the food satires should be read. The satirists show that they are not particularly interested in gluttony. Gastronomy, however (the wilful attribution of a disproportionate amount of importance to food), fascinates them. This is because the intellectualising of food, especially as displayed at the 'cena', can reflect the (mis)use of food to achieve selfish aims, such as the enhancement of power or its
acquisition.

So in the verse satires we see a number of power-relations at work, which have been corrupted: host and guest (perhaps patron and client); teacher and pupil; eater and eaten. These are designed to be judged against those power-relations that exist in the satirists' idea of the moral status quo. Furthermore, the satirists are interested in the vivid depiction of tensions (reflected in attitudes to food) between those who want power, but do not have it; those who already have power, and want to hold on to it; those who seize power; and those who will never have power. The satirist plays out the resolution of these tensions to a satisfactory (although not necessarily feasible or coherent) end, making use of polarisation and creating a rich subtext in the process.

Again and again the satirist forms his argument around the structures that accompany both the meal, and the organisation of food in society (in the case of satire's readership, a consciously 'civilised' society). These structures may be the courses of the 'cena'; the criteria within which the 'foodie' operates (gastronomy); or aspirations to the ideal meal, as seen sometimes in literature or rhetoric (e.g. the 'symposium' and 'convivium').

The natural tendency to organise and look for organisation in matters related to food therefore promotes a complicity between the satirist (who depicts food) and the reader (who by necessity knows something about eating). However, as we have seen, the satirist also uses thematic imagery to achieve moral and aesthetic
orientation. Thus extending (for those who knowingly partake of his fantasy) the scope of the 'food satire' beyond the 'mere' subject of what people eat.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

10.1 REFERENCE


CIL  Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum.


10.2 THE SATIRES: EDITIONS, TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARIES


10.3 OTHER AUTHORS


331

Keil, H (1895) *M. Porci Catonis De Agri Cultura* Leipzig


Kuhn, C.G. ed. (1964) *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia.* Hildesheim.


10.3 BOOKS AND ARTICLES.


Greenaway, P. (1989) The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover. [film], British Film Institute.


Shero, L.R. (1923) 'The Cena In Roman Satire'. CPh 18 pp. 126-143.


White, P. (1988) 'Amicitia and the Profession of Poetry.' JRS.