

*Cum Posces, Posce Latine: Affected Rusticity in Juvenal's Eleventh Satire*

Juvenal's eleventh satire is split into two parts: the first explains the necessity of self-knowledge as seen from the perspective of a bankrupted gourmand; the second, however, concerns the satirist's own invitation to a certain Persicus to share a modest dinner at his house. It is in this second section that Juvenal satirizes not only contemporary extravagance and obsession with foreign decadence but also the response of contemporary moralizing to these issues.

This latter part of the satire follows an established tradition of poetic invitation poems seen in Horace (*Ep.* 1.5) and Martial (5.78, 11.52) as well a prose example from Pliny's *Epistulae* (1.15) in which the host offers a frugal but morally superior experience. Juvenal appropriates many conceits of this topos, but in bringing to task the more scandalous interests of the addressee he also undermines his own claims to moral superiority. For example, rather than requesting that his guest excuse his poverty, Juvenal asks instead that Persicus test to be sure that Juvenal is not a hidden gourmand. This cues the reader to focus on various other forms of hypocrisy that are inherent in Juvenal's moral claims and sets the stage for an ironic undermining of the satirist's position. Moreover, the simple menu that Juvenal describes is conspicuous by its own manner of extravagance, including, for example, the fattest kid that not yet weaned and has more of milk than blood (11.65-8). He also seems keenly interested in the kinds of entertainment that he derides, spending considerably more time describing the prurient Spanish dancers than he does not provide than the reciters of Vergil and Homer that he does. Ultimately we learn that this simple rustic meal, which does not come from any market, has in fact been imported into Rome from his Tiburtine estate along with the Latin speaking attendants with their hair cropped short. This display of republican simplicity in fact reverses a joke from Martial's epigrams in which the

host at a villa imports all his food from the markets in Rome (e.g. 3.58). Additionally, while Juvenal's depiction of Rome here is one that applauds Hellenized gourmands, foreign luxuries, and Spanish dancing girls the location of his estate in Tibur and his philosophical leanings undermine his own claims to an authentic reincarnation of traditional Roman identity. Through this combination of *indignatio* and ironically undermined moralizing Juvenal satirizes not only the corrosive aspects of luxurious living but also the self-righteous reaction of contemporary moralists.