

Fraudulent Wealth on Display: Tableware Allusions in Juvenal's *Satire 5*

In *Satire 5* Juvenal expresses indignation at the inequality of a dinner hosted by one Virro and repeatedly berates Virro's guest, Trebius, for desiring an invitation to such a wretched dinner in which guests are treated nearly as slaves. The dinner-party theme in this satire highlights the larger etymological connection between satire as a genre and the *lanx satura* (a full dish), while the descriptions of food throughout the text express Juvenal's larger poetic program (Courtney, Gowers, Rimell). Juvenal also shows a satiric *indignatio* at Virro's role as patron through invocations of epic themes within the food catalogue (Morford). Food is a crucial programmatic element for this genre, but in *Satire 5* Juvenal suggests an equally programmatic significance for the tableware on which food is served. In this talk I focus on the *lanx* aspect of satire's *lanx satura* to show how Juvenal uses tableware to allusively gesture towards an idealized form of patronage that is emphatically absent from Virro's dinner party. Through his transformation of earlier literary descriptions of tableware, Juvenal not only portrays a grotesque version of patronage in this satire but additionally reveals Virro to be a fraudulent patron.

I begin by analyzing the Flavian antecedents for the tableware of *Satire 5*, including a Saguntine flagon (29), Vatinian cups (46-47), and a gem-encrusted goblet (39). These items all appear within pairs of rich and poor gifts in the tableware sequence of Martial's *Apophoreta* (Braund). Juvenal's allusions to this Saturnalian poetry book structured around reciprocal gift exchange cast the disparity between guest and host in *Satire 5* in greater relief. Further allusions call into question Virro's wealth, and in the second part of this talk I examine several Augustan and Flavian comparanda for Virro's goblet inlaid with amber, beryl, and jasper. Pliny the Elder's organization of gemstones in *Natural History* Book 37 offers a moral model for the ostentatious

wealth displayed on this goblet, and his remark on gem forgeries (*NH* 37.79) suggests that Virro's precious cup may, in fact, be fraudulent. The beryl and jasper in Virro's cup also recall gem catalogues from a fragment of Maecenas' poetry and Augustus' communication with this exemplary literary patron (Bellandi, Byrne). These fragments associate Maecenas positively with exotic wealth and Hellenistic ideals (Petraïn), and together the two fragments express an idealized model for friendship and patronage. By invoking the same imagery for a cruelly stingy patron, Juvenal offers the satiric inverse of this ideal. Finally, Virro's jasper directly alludes to Aeneas' jasper-studded sword from *Aeneid* Book 4 (Braund). While this epic allusion suggests the unattainable status of the host (Morford), it also points to a prime example of a failed guest-host relationship through the figures of Aeneas and Dido. Thus, while Virro's goblet may visually associate him with exemplary figures such as Maecenas and Aeneas, upon closer analysis the gems on his cup reveal him to be the opposite.

The Augustan and Flavian correspondences in *Satire 5* ultimately double Trebius' humiliation. He is not only made inferior through his status and poor treatment throughout the dinner, but he is made to feel this by a man whose status the reader should question. At the same time, Juvenal's tableware allusions assimilate portrayals of patronage and wealth from various genres so that collectively they amplify the grotesque qualities of the characters in his satire.

Bibliography

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