

STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT CURVED HORNS AND GAY MARRIAGE: A NEW READING OF JUVENAL'S SECOND SATIRE*

ABSTRACT

*This article argues that one of our only pieces of evidence for Roman marriage between *cinaedi*, Juvenal's second satire, has been consistently misread and in fact describes a marriage between a *cinaedus* and a sex worker. It begins by providing the context for the passage in question and its traditional reading, and then demonstrates that the critical phrase *siue hic recto cantauerat aere* refers to financial, not erotic, exchanges. The article finally discusses the implications of this correction, which are far more substantial than one might expect for a contentious ablative.*

Keywords: Juvenal; *cinaedi*; satire; Roman gender and sexuality; marriage; prostitution

My intervention is straightforward. A cryptic line in Juvenal's second satire has been taken as evidence for sexual and matrimonial practices that are common in contemporary society but otherwise unattested in the Roman world. Specifically, when Juvenal describes the wealthy *cinaedus* Gracchus marrying a *cornicen*, he suggests that Gracchus' husband may have instead 'sung on correct bronze' (Juv. 2.118 *siue hic recto cantauerat aere*). Commentators have universally understood this passage to suggest mutual *fellatio*, or that the *cornicen* 'perhaps played on a horn that was straight'. I argue that this reading would be unfamiliar to Juvenal and his readers on philological, literary and historical grounds; instead, Juvenal references a common trope in imperial discussions of *cinaedi* (or men who derive sexual pleasure from being anally penetrated or performing oral sex) by suggesting that Gracchus' husband 'had sung for the right price'. Instead, then, of depicting a marriage between two *cinaedi*, Juvenal describes a marriage between a *cinaedus* and a man who penetrates *cinaedi* for money. This reading changes not only our understanding of the *cinaedic* society that Juvenal describes throughout the satire but also of the *cinaedus* as a discursive category within Roman thought.¹

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¹ The Latin term *cinaedus* is difficult to define precisely. It is often used as a term of abuse against men who do not act like men 'should', particularly in erotic contexts; accordingly, the term *cinaedus* can be applied to men who enjoy performing *fellatio* or being anally penetrated by other men, to men whose grooming habits and public comportment read as effeminate or excessive or to men who derive inappropriate pleasure from sex with women (among other offences). Because the term is exclusively invective (at least in Latin), there is a natural tension between its role in delineating the boundaries of an acceptable public masculinity and in specifying a particular disfavoured social group. See M. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1995), 62–81; J. Jope, 'Lucian's triumphant *cinaedus* and rogue lovers', *Helios* 36 (2009), 55–65; T. Sapsford, *Performing the 'Kinaidos': Unmanly Men in Ancient Mediterranean Cultures* (Oxford, 2022); C.A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (New York and Oxford, 2010²).

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Having explained what this article sets out to accomplish, however, I should also explain what it does not. Juvenal is an author of no small craft, and his dense web of allusion, intertext and invective has drawn a great deal of attention from scholars of imperial literature² and especially of satire.³ That is not my project; my interests are primarily historical.⁴ This is not to say that I will here take Juvenal as an eyewitness to the events he claims to describe, but rather that I assume he knew what his audience would find funny. For Juvenal's jokes to land, he would have had to describe events his audience found plausible or logical (even if the logic were that of a dream); his writings can tell us, if not about how people actually lived in Rome, about how they thought other people secretly lived, or how they would live if they could. Those are the questions I use Juvenal to answer. As such, I am not particularly concerned with Juvenal's imbrication within other literary traditions except inasmuch as they explain otherwise puzzling representational or lexical choices, and—for the purposes of this article, at least—I do not argue that Juvenal did or did not mean what he said.⁵ I refer to the narrator of the satires as 'Juvenal'; that does not indicate a commitment to reading the author and speaker as coterminous, so much as an interest in different questions (and a desire to be easily understood).

I

When Juvenal describes a wedding reception for two men at 2.117–42, he references an established literary—if not social—practice. While we have no evidence of Romans using marital terminology to refer to their own same-sex partners, a number of imperial writers talk about other people's homosexual marriages, or pointedly cast those people's

² I think in particular of S.H. Braund, *Beyond Anger: A Study of Juvenal's Third Book of Satires* (Cambridge, 1988); T. Geue, *Juvenal and the Poetics of Anonymity* (Cambridge, 2017); C. Keane, *Figuring Genre in Roman Satire* (New York and Oxford, 2006); *Juvenal and the Satiric Emotions* (New York and Oxford, 2015); D.H.J. Larmour, *The Arena of Satire: Juvenal's Search for Rome* (Norman, OK, 2016); C. Nappa, *Making Men Ridiculous: Juvenal and the Anxieties of the Individual* (Ann Arbor, 2018); J. Uden, *The Invisible Satirist: Juvenal and Second-Century Rome* (New York and Oxford, 2015).

³ Especially K. Freudenburg, *Satires of Rome: Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal* (Cambridge, 2001), 229–97; M. Plaza, *The Function of Humour in Roman Verse Satire: Laughing and Lying* (New York and Oxford, 2006).

⁴ For a more historical analysis of Juvenal's *Satires*—albeit one about which I hold some methodological reservations—see J. Gérard, *Juvenal et la réalité contemporaine* (Lille, 1976); see also F. Bellandi, *Etica diatribica e protesta sociale nelle satire di Giovenale* (Bologna, 1980); A. Galimberti, 'Adriano e Giovenale', *MedAnt* 16 (2013), 87–99; L. Perelli, *Protesta sociale e poetica nelle satire di Giovenale* (Turin, 1972).

⁵ An enormous and influential strain of scholarship takes the narrator of the *Satires* not as Juvenal but instead as a persona: see the essays collected at W.S. Anderson, *Essays on Roman Satire* (Princeton, 1982), 197–486, as well as M.M. Winkler, *The Persona in Three Satires of Juvenal* (New York, 1983) and L.C. Watson and P.A. Watson, *Juvenal Satire 6* (Cambridge, 2014), 35–48. In particular, taking Juvenal as mocking his narrator's disgust for his subjects has allowed readers to imagine him as deceptively sympathetic to contemporary audiences; see, for example, M. Broder, 'The most obscene satires: a queer/camp approach to Juvenal 2, 6, and 9', in D. Dutsch and A. Suter (edd.), *Ancient Obscenities: Their Nature and Use in the Ancient Greek and Roman Worlds* (Ann Arbor, 2015), 283–309. For a more critical perspective on Juvenal and persona theory, see J.W. Iddeng, 'Juvenal, satire, and the persona theory: some critical remarks', *SO* 75 (2000), 107–29; Geue (n. 2), 7–11 and Uden (n. 2), 3–8 offer an overview of the debate around Juvenal's deployment of persona (as well as its ethical implications) and a more extensive bibliography.

erotic choices as those of a ‘bride’ and a ‘groom’.⁶ Suetonius describes Nero making his eunuch Sporus into a bride and parading him through the streets of Rome (*Ner. 28 per sollemnia nuptiarum celeberrimo officio deductum ad se pro uxore habuit*) before himself taking on the female role in his marriage with Doryphorus. ‘Just as he had married Sporus, so was he married to Doryphorus, and imitated the cries and forceful shouts of maidens being deflowered’ (*Ner. 29 sicut ipsi Sporus, ita ipse denupsit, uoces quoque et heulatus uim patientium uirginum imitantes*).⁷ The *Historia Augusta’s uita Heliogabali*—likely based on the work of the Severan historian Marius Maximus⁸—refers to courtiers boasting about their own homosexual marriages (*Heliogab. 11 maritos se habere iactarent*), while Elagabalus’ paramour Zoticus is described as so powerful that courtiers treated him as the emperor’s husband (*Heliogab. 10 Zoticus sub eo tantum ualuit ut ab omnibus officiorum principibus sic haberetur quasi domini maritus*).⁹ Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Courtesans* provides one of very few depictions of marriage between women, with Megilla insisting on being known as Megillus and boasting of her marriage to Demonassa (*Dial. meret. 5.3 Μέγιλλος γὰρ ἐγὼ λέγομαι καὶ γεγάμηκα πρόπαλα ταύτην τὴν Δημόνασσαν, καὶ ἔστιν ἐμὴ γυνή*).¹⁰ Furthermore, Lucian’s *True Histories* suggests at 1.21 that marriage between men is a common practice in the fantastical all-male society of the moon. Finally (for now), Martial twice refers to men who perform masculinity to the outside world while playing the bride in private (1.24 and 12.42):

aspicis incomptis illum, Deciane, capillis,
cuius et ipse times triste supercilium,
qui loquitur Curios adsertoresque Camillos?
nolito fronti credere: nupsit heri.

Decianus, do you see that man with unkempt hair
whose gloomy brow you fear,
who speaks of the Curii and the Camilli, champions of liberty?
Don’t trust appearances; yesterday he was a bride.¹¹

barbatus rigido nupsit Callistratus Afro,
hac qua lege uiro nubere uirgo solet.
praeluxere faces, uelarunt flammea uultus,

⁶ See, for example, R. Taylor, ‘Two pathic subcultures in ancient Rome’, *JHSex* 7 (1997), 319–71; Williams (n. 1), 245–52. On the strict differentiation between these two roles in Roman discussions of same-sex weddings, see G. Gellérfi, ‘*Nubit amicus*: same-sex weddings in imperial Rome’, *GLB* 25 (2020), 89–100, at 95–8.

⁷ See also Tac. *Ann.* 15.37 (describing a similar relationship between Nero and a Pythagoras).

⁸ See T. Barnes, *The Sources of the Historia Augusta* (Brussels, 1978); A. Birley, ‘Marius Maximus: the consular biographer’, *ANRW* 2.34.3 (1997), 2678–757.

⁹ To be clear, our sources on the reign of Elagabalus—particularly textual ones—are unreliable at best; I offer this more as an example of discursive tendencies in Latin literature than in the service of any claim about Elagabalus or his court. See M. Icks, *The Crimes of Elagabalus: The Life and Legacy of Rome’s Decadent Boy Emperor* (London and New York, 2011); A. Scott, *Emperors and Usurpers: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio’s Roman History Books 79(78)–80(80) (A.D. 217–229)* (New York and Oxford, 2018), 105–10; M. Sommer, ‘Elagabal: Wege zur Konstruktion eines “shlechten” Kaisers’, *SCI* 23 (2004), 95–110.

¹⁰ On classical female homoeroticism more generally, see B.J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago and London, 1996), 29–188; J.P. Hallett, ‘Female homoeroticism and the denial of Roman reality in Latin literature’, *YJC* 3 (1990), 209–27.

¹¹ Juvenal appears to reference this line directly at 2.8 (*frontis nulla fides*); I thank James Uden for calling my attention to this intertext.

nec tua defuerunt uerba, Talasse, tibi.
 dos etiam dicta est. nondum tibi, Roma, uidetur
 hoc satis? expectas numquid ut et pariat?

Bearded Callistratus was the bride to stern Afer,
 Under the rules by which women tend to marry men.
 The torches gleamed, veils covered faces,
 and words did not fail you, Talassa.
 Even a dowry was given! Does this not seem
 To be enough for you, Rome? Do you expect him to give birth?

A debate persists about the meaning of the rituals these authors describe. While few argue that same-sex marriages were formally recognized in imperial Rome—despite Martial’s use of *lex*, Roman marriage law was too gendered to neatly apply to unions of two men or of two women¹²—classicists such as Bruce Frier, Amy Richlin and Craig Williams (as well as legal historians such as William Eskridge) have argued that male/male weddings could have happened regardless, as expressions of affection and communal celebrations.¹³

This account of same-sex weddings is familiar to modern readers: perhaps too familiar. When we imagine a modern same-sex marriage, we imagine both parties as part of the same stigmatized group (specifically, that of non-heterosexuals or queer people).¹⁴ Modern accounts of same-sex weddings as sites of resistance or community-building implicitly presume this endogamy, and accordingly that when a society refuses to recognize such unions it does so because of distaste for, or discrimination against, both parties. By contrast, our surviving accounts of Roman same-sex weddings typically describe only one partner as failing to meet social expectations, with the other (the masculine partner in a marriage between men, or the feminine in a marriage between women) coming in for far less abuse.¹⁵ Elagabalus’ courtiers wear feminine hairstyles (*caput reticulo componerent*) as they discuss their *maritos*, about whom nothing else is said. Lucian’s object of mockery, Megillus, masculinizes her name while referring to Demonassa as ἐμὴ γυνή. Finally, Martial uses *nubo* to clearly indicate role differentiation in the marriages he describes.¹⁶ In each case the receptive or penetrated

¹² See generally S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (New York, 1991), 37–51. An unpublished paper by Bruce Frier makes this point in more detail; see B. Frier, ‘Roman same-sex weddings from the legal perspective’ (1994). Cf. J. Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (New York, 1994), 80, arguing that Roman same-sex marriages constituted ‘publicly recognized relationships entailing some change in status for one or both parties’ (emphasis added); this view, however, has been largely rejected by the field.

¹³ See J. Colin, *Juvénal et le mariage mystique de Gracchus* (Turin, 1955) (reading the union as specifically religious in nature); W.N. Eskridge, ‘A history of same-sex marriage’, *Virginia Law Review* 79 (1993), 1419–513, at 1445–7; A. Richlin, ‘Not before homosexuality: the materiality of the *cinaedus* and the Roman law against love between men’, *JHSex* 3 (1993), 523–73, at 548; Williams (n. 1), 245–52. Sapsford (n. 1) argues that the category of *cinaedi* is at least partly defined by public performance, but, given how many of Juvenal’s *cinaedi* ‘perform’ in secret, we should see them as nevertheless largely defined by sexual preferences or activities. On the idea of hidden practices in the second satire, especially, see C. Nappa, ‘*Praetextati mores*: Juvenal’s second satire’, *Hermes* 126 (1998), 90–108. The comparison to modern contexts—in which same-sex weddings served as commitment ceremonies and sites of protest long before the unions they commemorated were recognized by the state—is instructive. See N. Ben-Asher, ‘Who says I do?’, *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 21 (2009), 245–60, at 255–9.

¹⁴ See E.K. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley, 2008³), 91–2.

¹⁵ Gellérfi (n. 6), 96.

¹⁶ On the gendered valence of *nubo*, see Treggiari (n. 12), 79.

male is portrayed as a *cinaedus*, complete with the abusive tropes that accompany such a designation (moral incontinence, hedonism, effeminacy),¹⁷ whereas his insertive or penetrating counterpart—the ‘husband’—is portrayed as conventional in his desires, if occasionally mocked as a stud for hire¹⁸ or as a lovestruck youth.¹⁹ If these two spouses were as different from each other in their tastes, pleasures and social lives as men and women were thought to be, it is hard to see them as part of the same ‘subculture’ (to quote Amy Richlin) and thus to see the relationships these authors describe as specific to, or contained within, that subculture.²⁰

II

Enter Juvenal. Juvenal’s second satire is, by far, our most extended account of a Roman marriage between men. It invokes many of the tropes seen in the marriages discussed above: Juvenal consistently describes one party with feminizing language (for example at line 120 *noua nupta*), while showing him paying a dowry to the other (117 *quadringenta dedit Gracchus sestertia dotem*), and feminizing his appearance. The poet even makes a crass joke about the effeminate partner’s inability to bear children at lines 137–8. Juvenal innovates on the form, however, in some important ways. For one, Juvenal’s marriage is an unusually public affair; it is communally celebrated by the cabal of hypocritical *cinaedi* who recur throughout the text.²¹ While Juvenal refers to the wedding as a secret from the majority of unsuspecting Romans, he claims that such ceremonies will soon become a feature of the city’s social calendar: ‘these things will happen publicly, people will even want them entered into records’ (136 *fient ista palam, cupient et in acta referri*). No other author is nearly so explicit in claiming that *cinaedi* fraternize and imagine themselves as a cohesive subculture. While it may be tempting to say that this portrayal simply reflects the broader obsessions of the second satire, it is nevertheless remarkable that Juvenal felt his charge would stick. The second satire complicates our understanding of *cinaedi* as social fact, moving

¹⁷ See M.W. Gleason, ‘The semiotics of gender: physiognomy and self-fashioning in the second century c.e.’, in D.M. Halperin, J.J. Winkler and F.I. Zeitlin (edd.), *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton and Oxford, 1990), 389–415; J. Walters, ‘Invading the Roman body: manliness and impenetrability in Roman thought’, in J.P. Hallett and M.B. Skinner (edd.), *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton and Chichester, 1997), 29–43; Richlin (n. 13); Sapsford (n. 1); for a complicating view, see D. Kamen and S. Levin-Richardson, ‘Revisiting Roman sexuality: agency and the conceptualization of penetrated males’, in M. Masterson, N. Sorkin Rabinowitz and J. Robson (edd.), *Sex in Antiquity: Exploring Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World* (Abingdon and New York, 2015), 449–60.

¹⁸ Williams (n. 1), 83–6.

¹⁹ The most famous example here, of course, being Marc Antony’s putative lover Curio: Cic. *Phil.* 2.44–5; on the sexuality of the second *Philippic*, see H. Fertik, ‘Sex, love, and leadership in Cicero’s *Philippics* 1 and 2’, *Arethusa* 50 (2017), 65–88. Nero is the only example of an active partner in a male/male marriage who is criticized as sexually deviant, but his case is so unusual—and so closely interwoven with orientalizing eunuch tropes—that Nero’s attraction to Sporus was likely not Suetonius’ primary concern. See Williams (n. 1), 251–2.

²⁰ Richlin (n. 13), 530.

²¹ The second satire is famously meandering, but returns to two main themes; the hypocrite and the *cinaedus* (who are often the same). See Braund (n. 2), 9 (referring to the narrator as ‘made incoherent by his anger towards homosexuals’); E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (Berkeley, 2013²), 120; Nappa (n. 13); J. Walters, ‘Making a spectacle: deviant men, invective, and pleasure’, *Arethusa* 31 (1998), 355–67. Both Sapsford (n. 1), 163–88 and Richlin (n. 13), 541–54 take the poem to straightforwardly attack *cinaedi* as a group, de-emphasizing hypocrisy and disguise; cf. Plaza (n. 3), 158 (‘[T]he main vice remains cross-dressing.’).

from the language of pathologized individual desire to something more organized: from antisocial to contrasocial.²²

In addition, the second satire has been taken as our best surviving evidence for cinaedic endogamy: in other words, for one *cinaedus* marrying another.²³ Cinaedic endogamy would transform our understanding both of the lived experiences of the Roman *cinaedus* (since *cinaedi* would be able to find romantic partners within their own ranks, rather than seducing or hiring outsiders) and of the basic criteria that marked a man as *cinaedus* within Roman imaginations. After all, penetrative sex requires a subject as well as an object; if Juvenal thought that two men who enjoyed being penetrated would marry each other—and presumably engage in marital relations—then there was vastly more space for what we might call ‘role egalitarianism’ in Roman ideas of homosexual relationships than previously assumed.²⁴

This reading rests on a brief and nasty joke at line 118. The full passage (2.117–21) reads as follows (with the critical clause left untranslated):

quadringenta dedit Gracchus sestertia dotem
cornicini, siue hic recto cantauerat aere;
signatae tabulae, dictum ‘feliciter’, ingens
cena sedet, gremio iacuit noua nupta mariti.
o proceres, censore opus est an haruspice nobis?

Gracchus gave 400,000 sesterces as a dowry to a horn-player,
or perhaps he *recto cantauerat aere*:
The tablets have been signed, congratulations wished,
The huge feast is laid, and the new bride sits in the husband’s lap.
O Chiefs, have we need of a censor or an oracle?

That there is a pun is clear enough. The most apparent meaning of line 118 is that Gracchus’ husband may not have played the curved *cornu* but instead the straight, trumpet-like *tuba* or *aes rectum*.²⁵ However, this observation is too banal, and too disconnected from the poem’s broader invective project, to serve as anything other than the staging ground for a double entendre. As for that double entendre, Braund translates the line ‘or it may have been on a straight horn that this man played’,²⁶ and Williams and Nappa (among others) follow her in taking Juvenal to suggest that the *cornicen* is himself a *fellator*.²⁷ The syntactical claims required to justify this reading are clear enough to a contemporary audience. The verb *canto* primarily denotes musical performance and specifically oral performance; for a musician like the *cornicen* such performance might entail putting an instrument in one’s mouth, and Braund argues that Juvenal uses *recto aere* to mean ‘something straight, hard, and pointy’—namely, an erection. I propose, instead, that Juvenal refers to the *cornicen* performing or feigning

²² See J.R. Clarke, ‘Representations of the *cinaedus* in Roman art: evidence of “gay” subculture?’, in B.C. Verstraete and V. Provencal (edd.), *Same-Sex Desire and Love in Greco-Roman Antiquity and in the Classical Tradition of the West* (Binghamton, NY, 2005), 271–98; Taylor (n. 6), 327–8.

²³ Taylor (n. 6), 355 makes this statement most strongly, but see also Richlin (n. 13), 548.

²⁴ See Williams (n. 1), 252.

²⁵ Courtney (n. 21), 143 discusses several intertexts for the phrase *aes rectum* (all musical), but see in particular Ov. *Met.* 1.98 (contrasting the *tuba derecti* and the *aeris cornua flexi*).

²⁶ S. Morton Braund, *Juvenal Satires Book 1* (Cambridge, 1996), 154.

²⁷ Nappa (n. 2), 106 takes the line as ‘hinting, of course, at oral sex’; Williams (n. 1), 364 n. 15 notes the ‘odd implication that the trumpeter fellates his “bride”’ but still subscribes to the reading. Courtney (n. 21), 143 glosses over the wordplay completely.

romantic interest in exchange for *aes rectum*: ‘or perhaps he played the part [of the husband] for the right price’.

Scholia are of no use here,²⁸ but my proposed reading—with its accompanying implications for how we understand *cinaedi* to have lived and loved in imperial Rome—is better supported by the text on both philological and literary grounds. First, *cantauerat*. While the verb *canto* is occasionally used for instrumental performance, this usage is not at all common and appears nowhere else in Juvenal; it is by far the greatest semantic stretch in the pun of line 118.²⁹ Instead, *canto* typically denotes oral performance or singing.³⁰ Juvenal follows this pattern; if we examine other instances where Juvenal uses *canto*, we can see that he de-emphasizes instruments—the critical component for analogizing a *cornicen cantans* to a *fellator*—almost completely, and instead uses the term to describe public speech and song.³¹ In fact, Juvenal frequently juxtaposes performances described with forms of *canto* with instrumental performance, suggesting that he views them as distinct musical modes.³² *recto cantauerat aere* is unusual, but it seems more likely that Juvenal would use this idiosyncratic locution to analogize *tuba*-playing to something further within the semantic range of *cantare* (such as performing or singing) than to something equally outside of it (such as *fellatio*).

That semantic range is particularly restrictive in Juvenal. More than other authors, Juvenal frequently uses *canto* to describe false or misleading public statements. My first example of Juvenal’s use of *canto*, in the fourth satire, is perhaps the most obvious: ‘Begin, Calliope. You may also sit down; it is no time for singing, the truth is being discussed’ (4.34–5 *incipit, Calliope. licet et considerare: non est | cantandum, res uera agitur*). Juvenal here tells Calliope (Muse of the oral genre of epic) that the time is not right for performing (*cantandum*), because, instead, the circumstance calls for true speech (*res uera agitur*). In the eighth satire Juvenal argues that Orestes’ matricide was less obscene than that of Nero, because ‘he did not pollute himself with [slitting] Electra’s throat or with the blood of his Spartan wife, he poisoned none of his relatives, he never performed onstage as Orestes’ (218–20 *in scaena numquam cantauit Orestes*).³³ This is not the only time when Juvenal will use *cantare* to refer to stage acting; at 6.73–5 he claims that ‘some women would even stop Chrysogonus from performing’ (*sunt quae | Chrysogonum cantare uetent*) of whom his example,

²⁸ Ancient scholiasts do not comment on the passage at all, and the fifteenth-century Valla only suggests that the *cornicen* is *expertus, ut ait Probus, naturam eum quasi grande habere cornu*. See P. Wessner, *Scholia in Iuvenalem uetustiora* (Leipzig, 1967), 26.

²⁹ The *TLL* identifies only nine other such uses in all of extant Latin: *TLL* 3.289.12–21. Interestingly, Martial twice uses *canto* with reference to musical instruments, but each time the *cantans* is a poet and not an instrumental performer (Martial himself at 8.3.21 and Lucan at 10.64.4), and thus likely performs with musical accompaniment.

³⁰ T.N. Habinek, *The World of Roman Song: From Ritualized Speech to Social Order* (Baltimore, 2005), 66–74; M. Lowrie, *Writing, Performance, and Authority in Augustan Rome* (Oxford and New York, 2009), 112.

³¹ Juvenal uses *canto*-forms twelve times in the extant *Satires*: in addition to 2.118, see 4.34–5, 6.73–5, 7.59, 7.152–3, 7.193–4, 7.211, 8.220, 10.22, 10.178, 10.210–11, 11.180. See also 9.107 (referring to a cock’s crow as *cantum galli*); 9.150 (referring to the songs of the Sirens as *Siculos cantus*). On Juvenal’s attitudes towards this sort of theatrical performance, see C. Keane, ‘Theatre, spectacle, and the satirist in Juvenal’, *Phoenix* 57 (2003), 257–75.

³² Thus 7.59–60, which reads *neque enim cantare sub antro | Pierio thyrsumque potest contingere*, and 10.210–11, which reads *nam quae cantante uoluptas, | sit licet eximius, citharoedo siue Seleuco?*

³³ On the theatricality of the *cantatio* described here, see also S. Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1994), 50.

Hispulla, 'rejoices in her tragic actor' (*tragoedo* | *gaudet*). Finally, in the tenth satire Juvenal refers at lines 173–8 to the poet Sostratus performing (*cantat*) mythical history:

creditur olim
uelificatus Athos et quidquid Graecia mendax
audet in historia, constratum classibus isdem
suppositumque rotis solidum mare; credimus altos
defecisse amnes epotaque flumina Medo
prandente et madidis cantat quae Sostratus alis.

We believe that Athos was once crossed by sea
and whatever else lying Greece dares in its history,
that it was covered with those same ships
and that a solid sea was placed under wheels;
we believe that the deep rivers failed and the seas were drained
at the meals of the Mede, and whatever else wet-sleeved Sostratus sings
about.

Juvenal here explicitly concerns himself with truth and lies. He claims that the story of Mt Athos having been crossed by sea is believed (*creditur*) along with all of the other fictions told by lying Greece (*Graecia mendax*), so when he next says that we believe (*credimus*) the other tall tales of which Sostratus sings, we understand the content of Sostratus' songs to be no less fictional. To be fair, this usage of *canto* is idiosyncratic to Juvenal; by way of comparison, while Martial uses *canto* twenty-four times in his extant corpus he typically deploys it to emphasize the oral nature of the performance described and never in contexts that suggest falsity.³⁴ But it should not surprise us that Juvenal in particular might blur the lines between Roman public life and more traditional performance contexts; after all, the first satire explicitly parallels the mythical subjects of most poetry to the quotidian subjects of Juvenal's own (1.85–6). Given Juvenal's particular usage of *canto*, taking *cantauerat* to indicate *fellatio* would be very strange within Juvenal's corpus. Simply put, blowing on a horn is not the kind of performance that Juvenal envisages for *canto* anywhere else.

Another reading is available, however, which accords with Juvenal's focus on false public statements. Line 118 describes a wedding reception, almost certainly following some kind of ritual act.³⁵ Understanding the *cornicen* as feigning *affectio maritalis* in exchange for money requires him to have at some point falsely proclaimed that *affectio*, and that action accords far more closely with Juvenal's other uses of *canto*.

My proposed reading also explains the tense of *cantauerat*. Taking *cantauerat* to refer to *fellatio* would imply not that Gracchus' husband performed *fellatio* in the

³⁴ For example contrasting it with other types of speaking at 1.89.4–5 (*quereris* and *ploras*); with dancing at 2.7.5 (*saltas*); and most frequently with the silent enjoyment of poetry at 5.16.3 (*legis et tota cantas mea carmina Roma*), 6.60.1 (*laudat, amat, cantat nostros mea Roma libellos*), 7.51.7 (referring to memorization: *sic tenet absentes nostros cantatque libellos*) and 8.61.3 (*orbe cantor et legor toto*). Martial also uses *canto* at 1.76.3, 1.94.1–2, 3.93.9, 4.55.5, 4.61.9, 7.14.5, 7.17.10, 7.29.7, 7.88.5, 8.3.21, 8.61.3, 9.49.1, 10.64.4, 11.3.5, 11.20.8, 12.40.2, 12.53.4, 14.183.1 and 14.216.1. On similarities in language between Juvenal and Martial, see R.E. Colton, 'Juvenal's second satire and Martial', *CJ* 61 (1965), 68–71.

³⁵ While we do not know the precise contours of the Roman wedding, a number of sources (see, for example, Cic. *Mur.* 27; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 30; Val. Max. 10.7) refer to a spoken component. While the particular fragment of speech there attested is spoken by the bride, it seems inconceivable that the groom played no part in his own wedding. See K.K. Hersch, *The Roman Wedding: Ritual and Meaning in Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2010), 187–90.

context of his marriage to Gracchus but only, and specifically, that he had done so at some point before. This would be an odd claim to make about a man whose past is discussed nowhere else in the second satire; it says nothing about the actual marriage itself, but instead about the sexual history of a character who is otherwise not even given a name and who is otherwise described only with reference to his present sexual relationship.³⁶ However, any public profession of matrimonial intent would be completed by the time of the scene Juvenal describes; the *cornicen* had, at that point, ‘sung’.

Now, *recto aere*. Braund takes *aes rectum* as referring to the erect, ‘pointy’ penis upon which the *cornicen* had, perhaps, performed.³⁷ While my reservations here are more subjective than they are with *cantauerat*, taking *recto aere* as phallic requires a very laboured pun. *cornu* frequently serves as a metonym for the penis, from the ‘horny bow’ of Penelope’s suitors in Ovid’s *Amores* (1.8.48 *corneus arcus*) to Oenothea’s promise in Petronius’ *Satyrica* to give Giton ‘something hard as a horn’ (134 *illud tam rigidum quam cornu*).³⁸ Juvenal himself explicitly references this connection only a few lines above; at 2.90 a group of *cinaedi* expel women from their mock *Bona Dea* festival by announcing that ‘no flautress groans on a horn here’ (*nullo gemit hic tibicina cornu*).³⁹ By contrast, *aes* and *aes rectum* are not attested as metaphors for the penis. For such a pun to work, Juvenal’s reader would have to travel from the usual instrument of the *cornicen* (which Romans imagined as phallic) to its opposite (the *aes rectum* or the *tuba*), then analogize it *back* to the *cornu* and thus to an erection. In other words, the punchline to the joke—line 118, which Juvenal offers as a possibility that might reveal some hidden truth about the reality of the line before—is less phallic than its setup. While Juvenal clearly intends his reader to think of a musical instrument at 2.118, there is no reason why an *aes rectum* would be seen as more phallic than the horns *cornicines* usually blew.

Furthermore, even if *recto* has fairly obvious sexual connotations, specifying that the new instrument of the *cornicen* is made of bronze, in the absence of any established metaphoric vocabulary about the metal, simply confuses matters.⁴⁰ By contrast, if *aes* refers to the money that Gracchus gave to his new husband—to the dowry of *quadrigenta sestertia* Juvenal references at 2.117—as the price of the man’s *cantatio*, the joke makes sense. *recto aere* remains as a double entendre between the traditional instrument and another more scandalous reading, but that reading refers to money and not sex; like Martial’s Afer, Gracchus’ new husband has accepted money in exchange for (or in contemplation of) sexual services and Juvenal specifies that the price is fair.⁴¹

³⁶ On the bodily exposure of unnamed abject figures such as the *cornicen*, see Geue (n. 2), 74.

³⁷ Braund (n. 26), 154; on pointiness in phallic metaphor, see J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (London, 1982), 14–25.

³⁸ See Adams (n. 37), 21–2.

³⁹ Notably, Juvenal describes one of these men as wearing a golden hairnet (*reticulumque comis auratum ingentibus implet*), like both the ‘hair-netted adulterer’ (*reticulatus adulter*) of Juv. 6(Ox.), 22 and the courtiers of Elagabalus whom the *Historia Augusta* would describe centuries later. While the latter text is not explicit in its reference to Juvenal, commentators have noticed the intensely literary and referential character of the *vita Heliogabali*; see M. Bittarello, ‘Otho, Elagabalus and the judgment of Paris: the literary construction of the unmanly emperor’, *DHA* 37 (2011), 93–113; G. Mader, ‘History as carnival, or method and madness in the *vita Heliogabali*’, *CIAnt* 24 (2005), 131–72; Sommer (n. 9).

⁴⁰ This is especially true if we take Gracchus—the ‘bride’—as the object of the affections of the *cornicen*. Surviving invective against *cinaedi* suggests bodily debilities that would render *aere* spectacularly inapt, at least in the sense a sexual reading of 2.118 would seem to imply. Cf. Mart. 6.26.

⁴¹ This sense of *recto* as ‘correct or fitting’ may also reflect that Gracchus’ ‘dowry’ would be exactly enough to lift the *cornicen* into the class of *equites*: Braund (n. 26), 154; Courtney (n. 21), 142–3.

This reading has several philological parallels. *aes* as a metonym for money is extremely well attested,⁴² and *rectum* often denotes fairness, accuracy or precision (as at, for example, Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.168, Livy 45.37.5 and Tac. *Hist.* 1.14).⁴³ While ablatives of price usually accompany verbs of buying and selling, they not uncommonly qualify a good or service (as at Cic. *De or.* 1.126 or Livy 27.3.1).⁴⁴

My final observation is a broader one; construing the *cornicen* as a *fellator* goes against everything we know about cinaedic sexuality. In all of the examples discussed above, male/male ‘marital’ relationships feature strictly differentiated sexual roles mapping onto (or often dictating) broader differences in the partners’ gendered presentation. The *cinaedus* plays the bridal role in the couple, often using language that is lexically available to only one of the two men. Consider how Martial exploits the gendered connotations of *nubo* to clearly differentiate the two parties to the marriage. Even Nero is an exception that proves the rule: when Suetonius claims that Nero married Doryphorus as Sporus had been married to him, the biographer makes clear that both relationships featured strict role differentiation, even as Nero played opposite roles in each. Role-egalitarian homosexual relationships are simply not attested elsewhere, which militates against interpreting the dubious evidence of line 118 to constitute our sole surviving account.⁴⁵

To be fair, were I to rest my argument here I could be fairly accused of begging the question. If we take a practice as the norm within a society on the grounds that it is the only practice attested, but also treat sceptically accounts of other ways of living because they describe acts that make no social sense, we risk creating the unanimity from which we claim to reason.⁴⁶ That risk is heightened here, because Juvenal’s account in the second satire really is unique. The second satire describes cinaedic sociality in far more detail than any other extant source, and Juvenal’s account of in-group solidarity—*concordia inter molles*—bears no obvious parallel. Furthermore, Juvenal is perhaps the Latin author most likely to pull a sex joke out of thin air. But jokes require context, and it seems inconceivable that a reader without access to a long, modern tradition of role-egalitarian homosexuality would see line 118 as a reference to mutual *fellatio* without clearer guideposts than Juvenal here provides.

Instead, that reader would presumably contextualize the pun within Juvenal’s broader description of the relationship between Gracchus and his *cornicen*. Juvenal describes that relationship in ways that militate against reading the *cornicen* as a

⁴² *TLL* 1.1074–7.

⁴³ While this use of *rectum* does not elsewhere accompany the metonymic *aes*, the phrase *aes rectum* is sufficiently well attested as a synonym for the *tuba* that an author would only combine the two terms if—as I argue happens here—they were intentionally conflating the musical and the financial readings of the phrase.

⁴⁴ See also H. Pinkster, *The Oxford Latin Syntax* (Oxford, 2015), 1.1200–1.

⁴⁵ There are two possible exceptions to this rule, both cryptic. Suetonius describes Caligula as ‘sparing neither his own sexual honour nor that of anyone else’ (*puccitiae neque suae neque alienae pepercit*) and as having reciprocally pleased a M. Lepidus, a pantomime-actor named Mnester, and a number of Roman hostages (*M. Lepidum, Mnesterem pantomimum, quosdam obsides dilexisse fertur commercio mutui stupri*), while Seneca refers to wellborn young men who ‘wickedly satisfy their own lusts and those of others by exchange’ (*suam alienamque libidinem exercent mutuo inpudici*): Suet. *Calig.* 36.1; Sen. *Ep.* 99.13. The sheer numbers of partners listed in each, however, suggest that this boundary violation occurred in shorter encounters rather than in role-egalitarian relationships. See Richlin (n. 13), 539–40.

⁴⁶ T. Ilan, ‘Premarital cohabitation in ancient Judea: the evidence of the Babatha archive and the Mishnah (Ketubbot 1.4)’, *HThR* 86 (1993), 247–64, at 251–62 presents a useful introduction to this problem, albeit in the context of Jewish practice.

cinaedus and point instead towards more meretricious interpretations. For example, when Juvenal describes Gracchus at 2.120 as ‘newly married and reclining in her husband’s lap’ (*gremio iacuit noua nupta mariti*), Gracchus is explicitly feminized while his husband, just as explicitly, is not. Similarly, Juvenal differentiates at 2.137–8 between the terrified brides (*nubentibus*) and the husbands whom they wish, but are unable, to keep by becoming pregnant (*nequeant parere et partu retinere maritos*). Both jokes rely on the two men in these marriages being categorically different. Juvenal attacks the *mariti* in these marriages in all sorts of terms—in particular, as excessively socially mobile and as exchanging sex for money, both allegations visible throughout Juvenal’s work—but never feminizes them.⁴⁷ Furthermore, when Juvenal discusses the infertility of these marriages, he seems to suggest that the fault lies entirely in the unsuitability of the body of the *cinaedus*. This assignation of blame only makes sense if the sexual behaviour of the *maritus* is more ‘correct’ than his partner’s—that is to say, if he plays the insertive and inseminative role. In other words, taking the marriage of Gracchus as a union of *cinaedi* would require not only reading it as different in kind from every other male/male marriage described in extant literature but also reading Juvenal’s other claims about the marriages of Gracchus and his friends out of the text.

So, to sum up. Juvenal describes Gracchus’ husband, an unnamed *cornicen*, in harsh and somewhat laconic terms. I take Juvenal to accuse the *cornicen* of feigning marital affection in exchange for money, in contrast to other modern readers who—perhaps informed by modern homoerotic and homoromantic relationships—have understood the *cornicen* as a *fellator*.⁴⁸ I have argued that this latter claim is unsupported by the text. It requires Juvenal to use *canto* in a highly idiosyncratic fashion, accompanied by a sexual metonym otherwise unattested in Latin literature, in order to depict a sort of relationship of which no other example survives and which differs radically from that ascribed to Gracchus and his groom in the rest of the second satire. Gracchus’ *cornicen* is not a *cinaedus* but a mercenary; prior to the banquet Juvenal depicts, the *cornicen* has ‘performed’ (that is, professed his affection for, and marital intentions towards, the wealthy Gracchus) in exchange for a good amount, or an appropriate amount, of money.

III

So what are the stakes of this contested pun? I here suggest some implications of a correct reading of Juv. 2.118. The first is historical; the second satire has been taken as our most important evidence for *cinaedic* endogamy, and it should not be so taken. With Juvenal taken off the table, it seems almost certain that the *cinaedus*—whether taken as a discursive category Roman elites used to map the boundaries of normatively acceptable sexual desire,⁴⁹ or as an actual social group organized around that categorization and finding meaning within it—sought out non-*cinaedic* men as

⁴⁷ See Braund (n. 2), 164–8; T.P. Malnati, ‘Juvenal and Martial on social mobility’, *CJ* 83 (1987), 133–41, at 133–4; Nappa (n. 2), 186–8.

⁴⁸ Craig Williams raised a similar point in his review of Braund’s commentary, specifically noting that Braund’s use of modern terminology such as ‘homosexual’ in translating *cinaedus* subtly affected her reading of the second satire: C. Williams, ‘Review of *Juvenal Satires Book I*’, *BMCRev* (1997): <https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/1997/1997.07.09>.

⁴⁹ Thus Gleason (n. 17), 392: ‘We infer the existence of a cultural norm of masculinity from accounts of deviations from it.’

sexual or romantic partners. As a result, understanding Juv. 2.118 as a financial reference complicates the connections that scholars such as Amy Richlin have drawn between the *cinaedus* and the contemporary ‘passive homosexual’.⁵⁰ Endogamy is one of the defining features of contemporary gay life, particularly regarding the sorts of rituals that Juvenal describes and that scholars have seen as resembling modern same-sex weddings. More specifically, marriage rituals between two members of a disfavoured group offer opportunities not only for celebration or pleasure but also for reinforcing group identity and strengthening communal bonds.⁵¹ By contrast, the marriage described in Juvenal is one between members of two discrete groups; while both kinds of wedding invoke the forms (to a greater or lesser degree) of more widely practiced marriage ceremonies, they do not do anything like the same work.

Even if we take a more abstracted view of the Rome that Juvenal depicts—as a monstrous reflection in the mind of a man too furious to be taken literally⁵² or alternately as, per Susanna Braund, a ‘channel through which views of Roman morality are constituted, rehearsed, reinforced, and transmitted’⁵³—Gracchus emerges as a very different character if we understand his affections to aim primarily outside of his own subaltern group. Gracchus becomes a *cinaedus* who actively seeks⁵⁴ to corrupt other sexual partners, and this (for example) accords far better with the predatory *cinaedi* of the sixth satire or the eunuch groom of the first.⁵⁵ Juvenal depicts *cinaedi* as a menace, not because they made their sexual partners into *cinaedi* themselves but because the pleasures they offered were categorically different from those that other Roman men could hope to provide, and thus destabilized the patriarchal erotics that the satirist claims to prefer.⁵⁶

Similarly, while I care more about Juvenal as a historical source than as a literary figure in his own right, understanding the *cornicen* as a sex worker opens up broader avenues for understanding the author’s invective project. Gracchus’ wedding is particularly important for Juvenal’s corpus because Gracchus himself is one of its few recurring characters; Juvenal describes him fighting as a gladiator at 2.143–8, and returns to the theme at 8.199–210. Effeminate gladiators may seem striking to a contemporary reader, but in the latter poem Juvenal calls attention not to Gracchus’ marriage but to his rank; he analogizes *Gracchus pugnans* to patricians acting onstage (8.190–2) and to the ‘musician/emperor’ (*citharoedus princeps*) of 8.198.⁵⁷ Gracchus’

⁵⁰ On the dangers and advantages of this sort of line-drawing, see, for example, M.B. Skinner, ‘Zeus and Leda: the sexuality wars in contemporary classical scholarship’, *Thamyris* 3 (1996), 103–24, at 110–13. D.M. Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago, 2002), 165–7 n. 33 makes a similar critique in harsher terms.

⁵¹ For an account of one such ceremony and its complex extra-legal functions, see D.B. Goltz and J. Zingsheim, ‘It’s not a wedding, it’s a gayla: queer resistance and normative recuperation’, *Text and Performance Quarterly* 30 (2010), 290–312.

⁵² See Freudenburg (n. 3), 242–5.

⁵³ S.H. Braund, ‘Juvenal—misogynist or misogamist?’, *JRS* 82 (1992), 71–86, at 80.

⁵⁴ On the *cinaedus* as ‘actively’ seeking to be penetrated, see Kamen and Levin-Richardson (n. 17), 453–5.

⁵⁵ Juv. 1.22, 6(Ox.).20–4. On the authenticity of the Oxford Fragment, see Courtney (n. 21), 256.

⁵⁶ W.R. Johnson, ‘Male victimology in Juvenal 6’, *Ramus* 25 (1996), 170–86; A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor* (New York and Oxford, 1992), 195–209. On Juvenal’s self-representation as moral arbiter, see K. Freudenburg, ‘Satire’s censorial waters in Horace and Juvenal’, *JRS* 108 (2018), 141–55.

⁵⁷ Courtney (n. 21), 122 notes the difficulties posed by the gladiatorial material for a reading of the second satire as primarily about homosexuality: ‘[t]he gladiatorial section has no clear function in a poem concerned with sexual immorality’. On Gracchus the gladiator, see R. Dunkle, *Gladiators:*

crimes implicate money, rank and sex—three of Juvenal’s favourite topics—and reading the *cornicen* as trading sex for cash makes clearer what the poet is trying to do.

Specifically, Gracchus and his *cornicen* have entered into a marriage driven by its *dos*. The enormous dowry at that marriage’s centre makes the feminized Gracchus by far its more powerful party,⁵⁸ but Juvenal later (2.137–8) suggests that *cinaedic* brides are desperately trying to entrap their husbands and thus may be as deluded about those husbands’ intentions as they are about their own reproductive capacities.⁵⁹ These delusions—a broader target of Juvenal’s pen—are here furthered by a legal institution that places men in their wives’ financial thrall. These desperate *cinaedi* then allow their husbands access to far more money than men of such character deserve; Juvenal writes frequently about men who rise above their station, and at 3.34–7 a group of *quondam cornicines* have risen to the rank of civic patron. These men are not (necessarily) sexually immoral but they do have more money than they should, and Christopher Nappa rightly notes that that latter failing is richer and more resonant in Juvenal’s corpus than simple disgust at *cinaedi*.⁶⁰ If we take the marriage of Gracchus as motivated by two men’s non-normative sexuality, it becomes something containable and contained; we take Juvenal to condemn an unusual social practice that he will never mention again. If, by contrast, we understand line 118 as condemning sexual commerce and the role of money in eroding traditional Roman social hierarchies, the marriage of Gracchus comes into alignment with the anxieties that animate the rest of Juvenal’s satires.

Consider, for another example, Juvenal’s most explicit discussion of male sex work: the ninth satire.⁶¹ The protagonist Naevolus complains that his patron, a wealthy *cinaedus*, is underpaying for sexual services and relying on his labour to maintain the public image of a virile husband and father (9.70–2, 82–3, 87–92):

‘uerum, ut dissimules, ut mittas cetera, quanto
metiris pretio quod, ni tibi deditus essem
deuotusque cliens, uxor tua uirgo maneret?’

...

‘nullum ergo meritum est, ingrata ac perfide, nullum
quod tibi filiulus uel filia nascitur ex me?’

...

‘iura parentis habes, propter me scriberis heres,
legatum omne capis nec non et dulce caducum.
commoda praeterea iungentur multa caducis,
si numerum, si tres impleuero.’ ‘iusta doloris
Naeuole, causa tui; contra tamen ille quid adfert?’

Violence and Spectacle in Ancient Rome (London and New York, 2013), 109–11; Larmour (n. 2), 148–55. On gladiators as sexually othered, see C. Edwards, ‘Unspeakable professions: public performance and prostitution in ancient Rome’, in J.P. Hallett and M.B. Skinner (edd.), *Roman Sexualities* (Princeton and Chichester, 1997), 66–95.

⁵⁸ See D. Konstan, ‘Sexuality and power in Juvenal’s second satire’, *LCM* 18 (1993), 12–14; Nappa (n. 2), 170–1.

⁵⁹ See Hersch (n. 35), 37. In fact, children were one of the few circumstances that could permit a husband to retain a portion of his wife’s dowry after a divorce, as Juvenal and his readers would almost certainly have known. See Treggiari (n. 12), 350–4.

⁶⁰ Nappa (n. 13), 107: ‘If Juvenal truly attempted to satirize passive male sexual activity and its practitioners, and if that is indeed his main program here, he failed, and rather badly.’

⁶¹ On Naevolus as sex worker, see Courtney (n. 21), 424–7.

‘neglegit atque alium bipedem sibi quaerit asellum.’

‘But, as you feign ignorance of and dismiss my other services,
what price do you reckon for the fact that, had I not been
your attached and devoted client, your wife would remain a virgin?’

...

‘Do you reckon it worth nothing, ungrateful wretch, nothing at all
that your son or daughter was conceived by my effort?’

...

‘You have a parent’s rights,
and on my account you are inscribed as an heir
and take the whole legacy, plus escheats besides.
Many extra goods will be joined to those estates
if I fill out the household and make it three.’
‘You have good reason to be upset, Naevolus,
how does he reply?’ ‘He ignores me
and seeks another donkey on two legs.’

Naevolus is one of the very few characters whom Juvenal allows to speak at length, and most scholarship on the ninth satire has viewed his abject position (as a poor *cliens* forced into sex work) as analogous to Juvenal’s own perceived social marginalization.⁶² If we take the second satire’s marriage to be based on mutual affection, then Naevolus has no parallel within Juvenal’s corpus. Both Naevolus and the *cornicen*, however, trade sexual penetration—the privilege of socially dominant Roman men—for money.⁶³ The *cornicen* publicly marries Gracchus, while Naevolus privately satisfies his patron and impregnates his wife.

Both transactions are masked by Roman institutions with deep historical roots: marriage in the second satire, *clientela* in the ninth. In each poem the actual inversion that Juvenal critiques, the dependency of the insertive man on his nominally subordinated receptive partner, is hidden from public view. That perverse relationship, however, hides behind different fictions in the two poems. Gracchus presents himself as the weaker partner in his marriage, sitting in his husband’s lap and frantically seeking potions to stop him from leaving, but it is actually the *cornicen* who is unable to leave without financial ruin. By contrast, Naevolus’ dependence on his patron is a publicly established social fact, while that patron’s passivity and unwillingness to inseminate his wife remain hidden. Reading both passages in tandem reveals Juvenal’s concern with broader social distortions; these two relationships, similar in their lived realities, masquerade as, and thus corrupt, two very different institutions. The range of social practices encompassed by older, more upright forms of social life boils down to the one; whether marriage or patronage, Juvenal seems to say, it’s prostitution all the way down.⁶⁴

This is, of course, a truly weird thing to think about imperial Rome, and we might rather Juvenal thought something more familiar. Juvenal’s complex poetics often force

⁶² See, for example, T.H.M. Gellar-Goad, ‘Lucretius’ personified *natura rerum*, satire, and Ennius’ *Saturae*’, *Phoenix* 72 (2018), 143–60, at 155; R. Rosen, *Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire* (Oxford, 2007), 225; for a contrasting view, see Braund (n. 2), 135–6.

⁶³ On Naevolus’ participation in this exchange, see Nappa (n. 2), 186–9.

⁶⁴ This interest in hierarchy and submission as animating themes in the ninth satire in particular is by no means original to me, although the particular focus on *clientela* as a mask for other social relations is. See Bellandi (n. 4), 236; Uden (n. 2), 78.

his reader to resolve semantic ambiguities, and it can be tempting to do so in ways that produce a morality we recognize. This sort of domestication often invokes the Juvenalian persona⁶⁵ but can instead take the form it does here: of a satire *cantata* in the voice of someone like a modern homophobe attacking something like a modern homosexuality. I worry, though, about what we lose when we approach Juvenal in this way. The singular choleric worldview of the satires (whether Juvenal's own or a poetic project) makes them a remarkable artefact, and we should be cautious about sanding down their edges.

Furthermore and finally, accepting the radical strangeness of Juvenal's *cinaedi* can help us see the contingency of our own attitudes. Amy Richlin is right to note that the lives recorded in even hostile authors can help later readers better situate themselves within histories of human friendship and desire.⁶⁶ But this tool does not belong only to readers with the right kinds of friendship or desire. Even if Juvenal does not, in fact, depict a role-egalitarian homosexual relationship of the kind with which most of us are familiar today, there are other ways in which queer people have lived. Juvenal's *concordia inter molles* implies a mutual friendship and support that does not require romantic affection, and that engages closely with other marginalized people (particularly the enslaved or freed, or those engaged in sex work). I make no claim here about whether a subculture like the one Juvenal describes ever existed in Rome, but if it did it would have clear historical parallels; for much of 'modern' history, queer societies consisted of gender-nonconforming people who formed close social bonds with each other, while looking outside of that circle to find sexual partners who were often financially compensated and were understood as far less unusual in their desires and self-presentations.⁶⁷

So, then, earlier readings of the second satire have not simply read modern social practices 'into' the text,⁶⁸ but have read other social practices out. Katherine Franke and Michael Warner, among others, have written about contemporary society's desire to inscribe a narrow space for 'dignified' non-normative sexuality, and how this dignity-granting process necessarily consigns other ways of being to a greater abjection.⁶⁹ When we find sexualities like our own in ancient texts we foreclose these possibilities, and join in a discourse that implicitly ranks some ways of living above others. To end on a prescriptive note: if we wish to treat Juvenal as a chronicle of Roman practices that dared not speak their name, we ought to take those practices as we find them.

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⁶⁵ As sharply noted by Geue (n. 2), 10, suggesting that 'the detachable mask of the angry man makes the author figure more palatable to the predominantly liberal, knowing, ironising voice of modern Anglophone academia.'

⁶⁶ Richlin (n. 13), 571–2; for an enlightening study on how classical history informed the development of nascent non-heterosexual identities in the early modern West, see J. Ingleheart, *Ancient Rome and the Construction of Modern Homosexual Identities* (Oxford, 2015).

⁶⁷ See, for example, A. Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London, 1988); G. Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York, 1994); H. Ryan, *When Brooklyn Was Queer* (New York, 2020).

⁶⁸ A common accusation, particularly in the context of ancient queer history: see M. Nussbaum, 'Platonic love and Colorado law: the relevance of ancient Greek norms to modern sexual controversies', *Virginia Law Review* 80 (1994), 1515–651, at 1584.

⁶⁹ See N. Ben-Asher, 'Conferring dignity: the metamorphosis of the legal homosexual', *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender* 37 (2014), 243–84; K.M. Franke, 'Longing for loving', *Fordham Law Review* 76 (2008), 2685–708; M. Warner, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* (Cambridge, MA, 2000).