

Chronological list of those commentators who refer to satire

- 1) **Ennius** (c.239-169 BCE)-used *satura* as title of four books of poems of various kinds.
- 2) **Pacuvius** (c. 220-130 BCE)-titles include *saturae*.
- 3) **Lucilius** (168-102 BCE) 30 books of *saturae*
- 4) **Marcus Terentius Varro** (116-27 BCE)-wrote 150 books of prosimetron called *Saturae Menippeae* and four books of *saturae* without qualifying adjective. Cicero gives Varro lines in his *Academica Posteriora* I.8 concerning Menippean Satire (below).

in illis veteribus nostris, quae
Menippum imitati non interpretati
quadam hilaritate conspersimus,
multa admixta ex
intima philosophia, multa dicta
dialectice, quae quo facilius
minus docti intellegerent,
iucunditate quadam ad legendum
invitati.

*And yet in those old works of ours which we
composed in imitation of Menippus, not
translating him, sprinkling a little mirth and
sportiveness over the whole subject, there
are many things mingled which are drawn
from the most recondite philosophy, and
many points argued according to the rules of
strict logic; but I added these lighter matters
in order to make the whole more easy for
people of moderate learning to comprehend,
if they were invited to read those essays by a
pleasing style, displayed in panegyrics, and
in the very prefaces of my books of
antiquities. And this was my object in
adopting this style, however I may have
succeeded in it.*

- 5) **Publius Terentius Varro Atacinus** (82 BC - ca. 35 BC)-used *saturae* to designate his poems.
- 6) **Horace** (65 BCE-8 CE) First to use the term *satura* in *Satires* 2.1 and 6.
- 7) **Titus Livy** (59 BCE-17 CE)

Players were brought from Etruria to dance to the strains of the pipe without any singing or miming of song, and made quite graceful movements in the Etruscan style. Then the young Romans began to copy them, exchanging jokes at the same time in crude improvised verse, with gestures to fit the words. Thus the entertainment was adopted and became established by frequent repetition. The native actors were called *histriones*, because the Etruscan word for an actor is *ister*; they stopped bandying ribald improvised lines, like Fescennine verses, and began to perform *saturae* or medleys amplified with music, the singing properly arranged to fit the pipe and movement in harmony with it. Some years later, Livius first ventured to give up the *satura* and compose a play with a plot...

(7.2.4-10)

- 8) **Quintilian** (c. 35-100 CE)

Satire, on the other hand, is all our own. The first of our poets to win renown in this connexion was Lucilius, some of whose devotees are so enthusiastic that they do not hesitate to prefer him not merely to all other satirists, but even to all other poets. I

disagree with them as much as I do with Horace, who holds that Lucilius' verse has a "muddy flow, and that there is always something in him that might well be dispensed with." For his learning is as remarkable as his freedom of speech, and it is this latter quality that gives so sharp an edge and such abundance of wit to his satire. Horace is far terser and purer in style, and must be awarded the first place, unless my judgment is led astray by my affection for his work. Persius also, although he wrote but one book, has acquired a high and well-deserved reputation, while there are other distinguished satirists still living whose praises will be sung by posterity. There is, however, another and even older type of satire which derives its mixture of prose as well. Such were the satires composed by Terentius Varro, the most learned of all Romans. He composed a vast number of erudite works, and possessed an extraordinary knowledge of the Latin language, of all antiquity and of the history of Greece and Rome. But he is an author likely to contribute more to the knowledge of the student than to his eloquence. The iambic has not been popular with Roman poets as a separate form of composition, but is found mixed up with other forms of verse. It may be found in all its bitterness in Catullus, Bibaculus and Horace, although in the last-named the iambic is interrupted by the epode.

(10.1.93-96)

9) **Pomponius Porphyrio** (3rd c. CE); a school commentary on Hor. that comes to us in original form (Conte). First occurrence of adjectives *satiricus* and *satirice*.

10) **Diomedes** (4th c. CE) (may have derived info. from Varro). Note how he does not refer to a dramatic origin as Livy does.

satira dicitur carmen apud Romanos nunc quidem maledicum et ad carpenda hominum uitia archaeae comoediae caractere conpositum, quale scripserunt Lucilius et Horatius et Persius. et olim carmen quod ex uariis poematibus constabat satira uocabatur, quale scripserunt Pacuuius et Ennius. satira autem dicta siue a Satyris, quod similiter in hoc carmine ridiculae res pudendaeque dicuntur, quae uelut a Satyris proferuntur et fiunt: siue satira a lance quae referta uariis multisque primitiis in sacro [0486] apud priscos dis inferebatur et a copia ac saturitate rei satira uocabatur; cuius generis lancium et Vergilius in georgicis meminit, cum hoc modo dicit, «lancibus et pandis fumantia reddimus exta» et «lancesque et liba feremus»: siue a quodam genere farciminis, quod multis rebus refertum saturam dicit Varro uocatum. est autem hoc positum in secundo libro Plautinarum quaestionum, «satura est uua passa et polenta et nuclei pini ex mulso consparsi». ad haec alii addunt et de malo punico grana. alii autem dictam putant a lege satira, quae uno rogatu multa simul comprehendat,

quod scilicet et satira carmine multa simul poemata comprehenduntur. cuius saturae legis Lucilius meminit in primo, «per saturam aedilem factum qui legibus

soluat», et Sallustius in Iugurtha, «deinde quasi per saturam sententiis exquisitis in deditionem accipitur».

A verse is called 'satire' among the Romans (now, indeed, an abusive verse), and composed for the purpose of harping on the faults of men in the manner of ancient comedy, the sort that Lucilius and Horace and Persius wrote. And Satire used to be called a verse, which was established from various poems, the sort Pacuuius and Ennius wrote. [The poems] are called satire either from Greek Satyr plays, because similarly in this kind of poem absurd and scandalous things are spoken, which are brought forth and come about from Greek Satyr plays; or they may derive from a full platter of many and varied first-fruits which was offered to the gods among the ancients in religious ritual; and from the abundance and fulness of the thing, was called 'satura'. Vergil is mindful of this sort of dish in his

Georgics, when in this manner he says “we give the smoking entrails on wide dishes” and “we will offer dishes and cakes.” [Satire may also derive] from a certain kind of sausage, which, presented with many things, Varro says used to be called ‘satura.’ This, however, is written in his second book of Plautine Questions, “satire is a grape, raisin-wine and pearl-barley and the nuts of the pine sprinkled from honey-wine. To these definitions some also add kernels from the red apple. Others think that ‘Satire’ is derived from the lex satura [full law], which encompasses many things in one bill, because of course in the satire verse many poetry forms are also encompassed. Lucilius is mindful of this satire law in the beginning, “who may absolve from the laws an aedile elected by tacked procedure” [interpretation uncertain], and Sallust in the Jugurtha, “then, just as if through the tacked law, with opinions sought he is taken in surrender.”

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