

Juvenal wrote 16 satires in five books during the early second century CE. Satire 9, the final poem of Book III, offers an irreverent portrait of a client who sexually penetrates both his patron and his patron's wife and fathers his patron's children, but is now thrown over for a younger, prettier boy. Satire 9 is one of the three so-called profane satires of Juvenal, along with Satires 2 and 6, all of which include homosexual content and were omitted from influential nineteenth-century editions. In the twentieth century Satire 9 was seldom studied seriously and was often derided. In recent years, as Victorian taboos have receded further, scholarly attention to it has increased, but it remains a strangely elusive poem, an uncomfortable fit for some of the interpretive strategies of the postmodern era, including feminism, gender studies, and the history of sexuality. In particular, the sexual dynamics among Naevolus and his various partners have puzzled many readers. Naevolus refers to himself as a *cliens*, and although his companion is never referred to as a *patronus*, their relationship is clearly cast in terms of *clientela*, the traditional patron-client relationship, the demise of which is a recurring theme in Juvenal's satires. Critics of an earlier generation called Naevolus a "pervert," while more recent scholars, even those who are sympathetic to sexual minorities, struggle to characterize him, using terms like "hustler," "bisexual gigolo," or "rent boy" that strain the boundaries of cultural translation. Unlike the *cinaedi* who come in for satiric targeting in Satire 2, Naevolus is a straight-acting top, not an effeminate bottom. He violates standards of social stratification by penetrating his male patron, and he challenges notions of pleasure and vice by fathering his patron's two children, presumably with his patron's blessing and certainly to the latter's economic advantage under the Augustan legal regime that used inheritance as a cudgel with which to regulate marriage and procreation. This poem is a promising locus for a wide range of questions and concerns raised not only by queer theory and the history of sexuality, but also by literary theory, including the nature and function of satire itself. How are we to describe the gender and sexuality of Naevolus, his patron, and his patron's wife, and how are we to understand the dynamics of their relationship, as well as its private and public meanings? The poem might seem to take aim at a range of satiric targets, including pathic male homosexuality, adultery, the patronage system, effeminacy, and greed. But does the poem really target any of these behaviors or institutions for satiric ridicule? Is the notion of satiric targeting, so often invoked as a model for understanding how Roman satire works, even a useful paradigm for reading this poem? These are some of the questions to be considered as this paper rethinks homosexual behavior in Juvenal's ninth satire.