

OMG! Juvenal Was Writing About Us!



by Armando Simón

I have been a bibliophile since the age of ten (and, yes, I did have a life and still do). Unfortunately, or fortunately, I was also bitten by the collecting bug since that age, hence

my collection of weapons, art, movies, minerals and, of course, books. Unfortunately, I have over the decades bought more books than I will be able to read, unless I reincarnate. Some books that I have bought I have read right away, others a few weeks or months later, and on a couple of occasions read a book that I bought 40 years prior.

Such is the latter with Juvenal's *Satires*. It's odd that I waited so long since I love satire but anyway, having just finished it, I am surprised at how his acerbic poems are so relevant now. He lashes out at hypocrisy, at skanky women, at parasitical women, at the farce of legal justice, at stupid sons, at false friends. Which, I guess, supports the saying that the more things change, the more they stay the same. After all, one is dealing with human beings. Here, then, are some of his bon mots:

- 1) But why do you suffer torments like these to pile up a mass of wealth, when obviously it's crazy—sheer madness—to pass your life in poverty just so you'll be rich when you die?
- 2) The softhearted gods have wrecked whole families, granting their own wishes.
- 3) When an empress sets a style, what women won't follow?
- 4) When an abortionist gets high prices to kill mankind in the womb.
- 5) There's nothing bolder than women caught red-handed; out of their guilt their rage and courage are drawn.
- 6) To find a modest woman, prostrate yourself at the door of Jupiter's shrine, sacrifice a gilt-horned heifer before Juno.
- 7) No one sinks all at once to the lowest depths of

sin.

8) The censor [court of law] punishes doves but readily pardons crows.

9) Worse by far are those who denounced With Hercules' wrath such vice, and while they talk virtue, bounce A stud on their wiggling behinds.

10) Honesty's praised, then left to freeze. Crime doesn't pay, except with huge mansions, gardens with trees, Fine tables, and old silver cups with goats embossed on each piece.

11) It's hard to keep from writing satire.

12) If you simply must appease Yourself with a wife and are devoted to one, incline Your head, submit your neck to the marriage yoke. You'll find No woman who spares the man who loves her. Though she glows With passion, she loves to torment and plunder her lover. So, The more he's good and desirable as a husband, the less Beneficial by far will be his wife. You'll never address A gift if she says no, never sell things if she objects, Never buy anything unless she consents. And she will select your friends for you and turn your now aged friend from the door That saw his beard first sprouting.

The more things change, the more they remain the same.

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