



The Invisible Satirist: Juvenal and Second-Century Rome

James Uden

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The Invisible Satirist offers a fresh new reading of the *Satires* of Juvenal, rediscovering the poet as a smart and scathing commentator on the cultural and political world of second-century Rome. Breaking away from the focus in recent scholarship on issues of genre, this study situates Juvenal's *Satires* within the context of the politics, oratory, and philosophy of Rome under Trajan and Hadrian. In particular, the book shows how Juvenal offers a distinctively Roman response to the Greek sophists and philosophers of the so-called "Second Sophistic." Whereas earlier studies argued for the satirist's adoption of an ironic persona in his poems, this book stresses the absence of any guiding, coherent first-person voice in his work, emphasizing instead the poems' plurality of voices and thematic preoccupation with performance and disguise. These sprawling rhetorical texts, intricately constructed but deliberately lacking any strong personal voice, ultimately communicate a sense of rootlessness and loss of identity—a sense of being invisible—within the cosmopolitan second-century world. The book will appeal to students and scholars of Roman satire, Imperial Roman culture, and Second Sophistic literature.

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