

**Martial the Book Poet:
Contextu(r)alising the Flavian Poetry Book**

Submitted by Sam Alexander Hayes to the University of Exeter
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Abstract

This thesis explores how the reader is invited to read the books of Martial's *Epigrams*, arguing that the epigrammatist has arranged the poems in his *libelli* in a specific order that rewards a sequential reading of the text from start to finish. Instead of viewing Martial as an anthologist who collated a series of occasional poems for their later publication, the thesis demonstrates that the poet showed awareness of his epigrams' position within a larger 'contexture', and that he primes the reader throughout the *Epigrams* to envisage the books as thematically unified wholes. By viewing the *Epigrams* as a text to be read from beginning to end, rather than a text to be excerpted and anthologised, one can read each epigram in the wider context of its book, and better appreciate that book's structural unity.

Chapter one introduces the issues at stake in how one reads a book of epigrams, and provides the thesis' methodological approach. Special attention is paid to the phenomenology of reading as a hermeneutic act, drawing together approaches to the *Epigrams* from classical scholarship as well as from reception and comic book theories to detail the method of 'cumulative reading' employed in the thesis. The second chapter then examines how Martial characterises the *lector studiosus* in his text, and how this depicted reader acts as a model for the actual reader to follow in their own sequential reading of the *Epigrams*. Chapter three focuses on *Epigrams 7*, demonstrating that the opening poems of the book establish the emperor Domitian as a thematic centrepiece around whom the rest of the book's themes cluster. The fourth chapter also examines book 7, demonstrating how two different uses of watery motifs develop their individual thematic unity across the book, while also linking themselves back to the book's opening imperial cycle to craft an overarching structural unity for the *libellus*. Chapter five then gives an overview of the larger structure of the *Epigrams*, arguing that the paratextual prose prefaces in books 1, 2, 8, 9, and 12 reinforce the individuality of the books they precede as well as establishing their own place within the wider corpus. Overall, this thesis puts the epigrammatic *libellus* back into the context of late first century AD book culture, emphasising that Martial paid attention not only to his epigrams' position within their own books, but also their place within the wider corpus.

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A Note on Abbreviations & Translations

All journal abbreviations follow *l'Année Philologique*. Ancient authors, inscriptional catalogues, and papyri are abbreviated following the conventions listed in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Where the *OCD* does not provide an abbreviation I have opted for conventions seen in contemporary scholarship (e.g. V. Fl. for Valerius Flaccus). The numbering and text of Martial that I use is in accordance with Shackleton Bailey (1990). All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

Reading a Book of Epigrams: Problems, Theories, Method

At first glance, [the *Epigrams*] seem to be disordered, arbitrary collections of occasional poems, and it is actually possible to read all the individual epigrams in isolation. Closer examination, however, does reveal connections between the poems so that it becomes equally possible to read each *epigramma* as a part of a greater work with a complex structure. (Lorenz 2004, 259.)

[Martial's] method is juxtaposition rather than subsumption, and his books are impossible wholes. My initial question, 'How does one *read* a book of epigrams?' might be answered quite simply by replying that one can't. (Fitzgerald 2007, 198. Original emphasis.)

In short, little in the surviving corpus of Martial's epigrams leads us to believe that he intended his collection as a whole to be read as a unified work, and there is much to suggest that he did not. (Bodel 2015, 40.)

The question of how to approach the individual books of Martial's *Epigrams* has sparked much controversy in recent years. The crux of the debate is that a unified book composed of highly individualistic poems constitutes a paradox. Epigram is closure versified, a moment frozen in carefully crafted verse that seems to celebrate its individuality as aesthetic perfection.¹ It is pertinent to note, however, that the genre of epigram was not as concretely defined in Martial's day – Pliny the Younger, for instance, observed that his addressee might describe his own hendecasyllabic poems as epigrams, idylls, eclogues, or simply as short poems – and that the modern understanding of epigrams as short, self-contained poems has been heavily influenced by Martial himself.² Indeed, while it is true that many of Martial's poems are short and self-contained, others are written as pairs or sequences, and some even refer to their specific position within the epigram book.³ The awkward truth remains that while Martial did indeed write epigrams he also wrote books of epigrams. The present thesis aims to resolve this apparent paradox.

This introductory chapter explores how to approach the 'impossible whole' of a book of epigrams, and argues that one can read a book of epigrams as a structurally unified poetry book. To help chart a course through a myriad of methodologies and theories, this chapter is divided into two halves: the first considers how the structure of the *Epigrams* encourages a sequential approach to the

¹ Cf. Samuel T. Coleridge's *An Epigram*: "What is epigram? A dwarfish whole | its body brevity, and wit its soul."

² Plin. *Ep.* 4.14.9: *sive epigrammata sive idyllia sive eclogas sive, ut multi, poematia*. Rimell (2008) 6-7 & Fitzgerald (2007) 25 note Martial's formative influence on the modern epigram. Sullivan (1991) 270-9 describes the impact of Martial on renaissance epigrammatists.

³ Further discussed below, pp. 17-28. For now it suffices to mention Mart. 4.89.1-2's jesting address to the *libellus* that it has already reached the rollers at the end of the scroll, and so cannot keep going even if it wanted to.

text, while the second explores how the act of sequentially reading a work composed of various smaller texts takes place on a cognitive level. Section one therefore analyses the current scholarly landscape (the *libellus* and book theories of composition, theories of sequentially reading Martial, and William Fitzgerald's crisis of juxtaposed opposites), considers the features of the *Epigrams* that encourage a specific, sequential approach to the text, and applies contexture theory to understanding Martial's overall structure. Section two then lays out the methodology that I will be applying in subsequent chapters to the *Epigrams* by analysing the act of sequential reading, explains how comic book gutter theory can aid a reading of Martial (and any contexture), and concludes with a definition of the 'cumulative reading' model that I use with Martial. While the *Epigrams* is ostensibly a non-narrative text composed of an assortment of smaller poems, this thesis argues that its poems can still suggest to the reader a sense of forward momentum that rewards a cumulative reading of the text, and ultimately conveys to the reader a sense of the text's overall unity.

The Debate: Scholarly Viewpoints on Martial

The debate concerning how one reads the *Epigrams* tends to revolve around two main points – whether Martial wrote his individual poems for the book form or simply collected them afterwards, and whether the books are conducive to a satisfying reading experience. Over time scholarship has treated Martial's books more and more as the primary context for his poetry, but there is still some reticence towards viewing the *Epigrams* as a unified work that emulates the more precise structural techniques of Augustan poetry books. The sheer number of poems available to the reader frequently frustrates those looking for a central technique in Martial beyond *variatio*, and has led to the systematic anthologisation of Martial's work.⁴ By de-anthologising Martial, however, and by bringing the poems back into the context of their original books, it is possible to analyse the books on their own terms and not on those of the Augustan age. This section surveys the scholarship of the last decades to highlight key discussions that have taken place concerning Martial's status as a book poet, and offers up some new insights into Martial and his *Epigrams* with the lessons learned from these various approaches.

Perhaps the most significant issue concerning how one reads the *Epigrams* is how one understands the books and poems' individual composition. If the poems were written with the book in mind then it is far easier to argue for a coherently structured text. The question of composition was most strongly raised by Peter White, who found it confusing that the epigrammatist should flatter so many different patrons in the same book.⁵ To White, these repeated dedications provide evidence that the poems must have been written for other books (*libelli*) sent to individual patrons prior to the collation of these epigrams for later publication. It certainly seems to be the case that the *Epigrams* as they are extant today were not the only context in which the individual poems existed. Statius and Martial both

⁴ I discuss anthologisation further at pp. 11-2 and in chapter 5's introduction.

⁵ White (1974) 40.

overlap on a number of occasional poems, and for the death of Lucan Statius seems to state that Polla Argentaria requested the *genethliacon*'s composition for a specific celebration of the epicist's life.⁶ Nevertheless, White places far too much emphasis on the individuality (and apparent occasionality) of epigram as a form, as his treatment of epigrams 4.82 and 7.26 shows. Both poems serve as dedicatory poems to patrons: the former asks Rufus to send the book to Venuleius, the latter praises Apollonaris and dedicates to him "this thing" (*hoc* v.3), which White interprets as the book. For White it makes little sense for Martial to dedicate the text to anyone so late in the work, or to address poem 7.26 to rush to meet (*conveni* v.1) Apollonaris if the poem is the twenty-sixth epigram of the book.⁷ White's interpretation of these dedicatory poems is far too literalist in seeing these poems as individual texts with only one purpose (i.e. to supplicate the poet's patrons). In the wider format of the book these epigrams also develop the general literary theme of book publication. 4.82, for instance, utilises the theme of literary dedication to a revered member of society as a closural motif for the book, as seen elsewhere in Martial's work.⁸ Secondly, as Don Fowler points out, the *hoc* to which Martial refers at 7.26.3 need not be the book but could equally refer to the poem itself.⁹ Furthermore, this poem on the reconciliation of the poet and his invective language immediately follows an epigram that describes the principle point of epigram as a genre that stings its targets, and as such builds upon the previous poem's attention to the tension between generic and societal norms with poetry. While White's argument for non-extant *libelli* and alternative performance contexts for individual poems highlights the tension between epigram's inherent individuality and the communality it gains when placed in a book, it does so at the cost of devaluing the broader context of the book that their very inclusion in a book of epigrams provides.

A strong counterargument to White's *libellus* theory was not launched until the 1990s, when Fowler devoted an article to the *Epigrams*' publication history. At the centre of Fowler's argument is the view that the individual poems "are not a log of 'real' social relations, but texts which simulate and construct a social world whose textual existence is brought before the reader at every turn."¹⁰ Indeed, by Fowler's reckoning, between ten and fifteen percent of Martial's *Epigrams* concern themselves with the business of books, reading, and publication, all of this drawing attention to the work's book form and, as Luke Roman notes, engaging in a literariness that the text paradoxically disavows.¹¹ The challenge of reading the *Epigrams* is to reconcile the purely literary elements of the text with those that purport to a reality beyond the text itself. For White the repeated references to patrons throughout the

⁶ Stat. *Silv.* 2.praef.23-5 (Polla's request for a *genethliacon*). Both poets treat the following themes: the death of Claudius Etruscus' father (Mart. 7.40 & Stat. *Silv.* 3.3), Lucan's birthday (Mart. 7.21-3 & Stat. *Silv.* 2.7), the death of Glaucias (Mart. 6.28-9 & Stat. *Silv.* 2.1) & the eunuch Earinus (Mart. 9.11-3, 9.16-7, 9.36 & Stat. *Silv.* 3.4).

⁷ White (1974) 47-8.

⁸ Mart. 7.99's dedication of the book to the emperor, for instance.

⁹ Fowler (1995) 49.

¹⁰ Fowler (1995) 51. For general agreement (balanced by wariness of the sometimes hypertextual approach of Fowler) cf. Roman (2001) 113-4. Roman (2010) 92-7 explores some of the implications of a textualised Rome.

¹¹ Fowler (1995) 31 & Roman (2001) 129.

book is indicative of the impossibility of a book of epigrams, but for Fowler the poems addressed to various patrons could easily be literary exercises in and of themselves.¹² Fowler's point is largely rhetorical – a high proportion of the patrons and friends that Martial addresses in his poems can be reconstructed as real people – but it does reveal the danger of reading the *Epigrams* too literally.¹³ The characters that appear within the *Epigrams* are caricatures based on a reality so temporally remote that historical reconstruction from the text is difficult. Thus while the *Epigrams* frequently evoke a myriad of potential reading contexts where the reader might encounter the text, the reader of the *Epigrams* as they are extant encounters them in the book form.¹⁴ Indeed, these books survive in a surprisingly uncomplicated manuscript tradition of three recensions, with most of Martial's *oeuvre* (besides *Epigrams* 10 and the *Liber Spectaculorum*) transmitted in almost the same sequence that the modern editions print.¹⁵ If the *Epigrams* were encountered in the micro-editions that White espouses, then a wider variation of surviving texts might be expected. Ultimately the veracity of White's *libellus* theory is unprovable, but the survival of the *Epigrams* in sequential book form at the very least encourages a closer analysis of the books as books of carefully positioned poems.

The most pronounced movement towards an appreciation of the *Epigrams* as a structured text has principally taken place in the German scholarly tradition. Building on the previous work of Johannes Scherf and Elena Merli, Sven Lorenz has convincingly argued that while each epigram can be read in isolation they also contribute to the overarching structure of the book in ways that can be best appreciated through a sequential reading of the text.¹⁶ To illustrate his point Lorenz demonstrates how the key motifs of the first poems of book 4 act as a prologue for the key themes of the rest of the book, programming the reader to look for links between the individual epigrams.¹⁷ What separates Lorenz from Mark Greenwood, who also charted the motif of water in book 4, is an appreciation of the book's macrostructure: whereas Greenwood focuses primarily on identifying a cycle of epigrams with a similar topic, Lorenz shows the effect this series of poems has on the reader's understanding of the book as a whole.¹⁸ This appreciation of the bigger picture is also apparent in the recent work of Niklas Holzberg (Lorenz's doctoral supervisor), who moves even further beyond the book to examine the corpus as a whole. As well as identifying potential middle sections between and within books, Holzberg has

¹² Fowler (1995) 38.

¹³ White (1975) reconstructs the literary circles that Martial, Statius, and Pliny the Younger operated within, noting that while there is no overlap between Pliny and Statius a few names appear in both the *Letters* and the *Epigrams*.

¹⁴ Cf. Fitzgerald (2007) 142.

¹⁵ On the manuscript tradition for Martial, see Bowie (1988) 6-11, Coleman (2006) xx-xxv (on the *Liber Spectaculorum*), Henriksén (2012) xliii-xlv & Shackleton Bailey (1990) v-vi. As Bowie (1988) 6 notes, "the textual tradition of Martial is unusually satisfactory."

¹⁶ Lorenz (2004) 259, quoted in full above. Scherf (1998) 128-33 offers a taxonomy of book structure techniques in Martial which, while sometimes prescriptive, offers a good introduction to the topic. Merli (1998) 141 proposes that the *Epigrams* be unshackled from Augustan ideology of the perfect book, suggesting instead that sequentiality is an innate quality of Martial's structural poetics.

¹⁷ Lorenz (2004) 263.

¹⁸ Greenwood (1998) & Lorenz (2004) 275.

theorised that the *Epigrams* should be read as a *Dodekalog* composed of four separate triadic book sequences.¹⁹ Holzberg and Lorenz have both shown that readings of the *Epigrams* as intricately structured poetry books can furnish fresh insights into the poems beyond their basic, individual interpretation.

More recently, however, William Fitzgerald has shifted the debate away from the question of the books' intentional structuring towards their success as a unified whole. In *Martial: The World of Epigram*, Fitzgerald concludes that Martial's books frustrate a coherent act of reading because they encourage an addiction to epigram (a desire to read just one more poem), rather than a consistent reading experience. To him, the sheer volume of potential links between epigrams is too dizzying for the reader to provide an overriding sense of order, and leads to a reading of the *Epigrams* as an ever-shifting kaleidoscope of poems, ready to change whenever the reader reads another epigram.²⁰ For Fitzgerald the *Epigrams*, like other miscellanies that he analyses in his most recent monograph on variety in Latin literature, does not encourage traditional ideas of unity because the themes of each book overlap and "constellate in their shifting configurations."²¹ The crux of the matter is one of aesthetics; Fitzgerald argues that variety is "a *form* of unity, not a lack of it" that binds the text together through its juxtapository elements, and constantly forces the reader to update their own perspective of what each book of the *Epigrams* is.²² While I broadly agree with Fitzgerald that readers of the *Epigrams* (and any text) constantly update their understanding of the text as they read it, I do not agree with his conclusions that Martial's variety is too overwhelming for the reader to produce a comfortable understanding of the collection's unity.²³ Early on in his work on Martial, Fitzgerald describes reading a book of epigrams as similar to eating a box of chocolates, or to reading a newspaper filled with various different stories – the reader (or consumer) works their own leisurely way through both at their own discretion.²⁴ The *Epigrams*, however, do not encourage a 'pick and choose' approach to their consumption. As I discuss in other chapters, for instance, Martial strives for a sequential reading of his poems, and the opening to book 7 creates a thematic centrepiece around which the rest of the text orientates itself.²⁵ In particular, this sequential development of themes and ideas rewards such a reading, and creates a more stable understanding of the book as a unified entity. Each epigram can theoretically be read in an infinite

¹⁹ Holzberg (2004) explores middles in Martial, inspired by Mart. 1.57.3 (p. 250) whose position at the centre of book 1 and statement of '*illud quod medium est*' are highly suggestive of careful structural positioning. For the *Dodekalog*, see Holzberg (2002) 135-52, or (2004) 249 for an abridged version in English. Sapsford (2012) 228-47 offers a reading of the *Epigrams* as an epic in 12 books akin to Vergil's *Aeneid*.

²⁰ Fitzgerald (2007) 198-9. The kaleidoscope image is borrowed from Plinian scholarship, specifically Henderson (2002) xi, on which I say more below pp. 16-7.

²¹ Fitzgerald (2007) 69. Cf. Fitzgerald (2016) 185 on juxtapository readings of miscellanies that consider such "shifting constellations."

²² Fitzgerald (2016) 185 with original emphasis. On Martial's use of juxtaposition as a structural device, see Fitzgerald (2007) 106-38.

²³ I further discuss the phenomenology of reading below, pp. 28-40.

²⁴ Fitzgerald (2007) 2 & 7 respectively.

²⁵ See esp. chapters 2 & 3.

number of ways in light of every other poem in the book (and corpus), but the books themselves offer a comfortable, preselected unit for the poems' consumption. For my understanding of the *Epigrams*' structure, positionality is key – the placement of each poem in a specific position (however flippant that original placement may have been) creates a specific, sequential path through the book that the reader is strongly encouraged to follow. This sequential pathway further reduces the limitless chain of associations that Fitzgerald finds problematic for Martial's reader, while also embracing the juxtaposed variety present in the epigram collection.

At the root of Fitzgerald's concern about the feasibility of a book of epigrams is the genre's susceptibility to anthologisation (itself a hermeneutic act that judges the collection's unity). The individuality of each poem encourages the reader to create their own links between epigrams, between adjacent poems but also across the corpus. With a corpus of over 1500 epigrams spread across fifteen extant books it is understandable why Martial's work is frequently excerpted: all English translations besides the three-volume Loeb edition offer a selection of the poet's work rather than a full corpus, and the Cambridge Latin Text of Martial (entitled *Select Epigrams*) goes as far as to remove the poems from their original sequence and reorder them by theme.²⁶ Such anthologisation serves a purpose: ordering the poems by theme helps the scholar to analyse the poet's attitudes to sexual topics, patrons, the emperor, and so on, and every scholar 'anthologises' to a degree by selecting excerpts to discuss in their writing, but the fact remains that Martial tends to be an author who is anthologised more than he is approached in the context of his numbered books. A direct result of anthologisation is that aspects of the poet's work inevitably falls through the gaps – there is no evidence of Martial's prose prefaces in Patricia & Lindsay Watson's selection of the *Epigrams* beside an aside in their introduction, for instance – and so the concept of the whole (both book and corpus) is an impossibility to the anthologising reader.²⁷ I do not mean that scholars have wilfully ignored the books of the epigrams – Fitzgerald, for example, dedicates a whole chapter to the construction of *Epigrams* 1 – but that scholarship may have avoided seeing a consistent book structure partly because of the process of anthologisation.²⁸ Furthermore, while there is strong evidence of textual excerption in antiquity, the practice was depicted as an alternative to a deep reading and understanding of the text, and does not impact upon the composition of the various excerpted works as unified texts.²⁹ A useful *comparandum* here is the scholarship on Pliny's *Letters* which, after convincing studies showed that the books of the *Letters* have consistent internal, artistic structure, has begun to produce individual commentaries on its individual books rather than selections of letters, with Christopher Whitton emphasising the literariness of Pliny's

²⁶ Shackleton Bailey (1993), Watson & Watson (2003).

²⁷ Watson & Watson (2003) 30.

²⁸ Fitzgerald (2007) 68-105.

²⁹ Hutchinson (2008) 15 & 31 discusses excerption in the 3rd century BC and the late Republican *Auct. ad Her.* 4.7 (the latter noting that only those well-read could excerpt at will). Plin. *Ep.* 2.5.12 reports that books of prefaces were circulating at his time because "some part is judged to be complete/perfect [a pun on *perfecta*] even without the rest." Cf. Whitton (2013) 119.

work even in the title of his commentary (settling on *Epistles* 2 rather than *Letters* 2 as a translation of *Epistulae*).³⁰ Thus, in light of the modern habit of anthologising Martial, this thesis aims to reclaim the book as the primary context for the constituent poems that make up the *Epigrams* as a whole just as Plinian scholarship has with the *Letters*. Martial was a writer of books of epigrams, not a collector of epigrams in subsequent books.

One of the key issues of this dispute, and a reason for Martial's tendency to be anthologised, is that the *Epigrams* is a non-narrative text. Readers might be tempted to apply a temporal framework to the text revolving around the advancement of the poet's career that falls into the chronological publication of the books, but there is no distinct central plot line.³¹ This may partly explain why Martial's *Epigrams* are more likely to be anthologised than, say, Vergil's *Aeneid* or Tacitus' *Annals*, but it does not prevent a successful sequential reading of the text. A modern parallel for a collection of texts grouped together to form a larger unit that demonstrates how non-narrative media can still be enjoyed sequentially is the music CD. The music CD generally comes in two main forms: the album, a collection of recent songs gathered together for first publication; and the 'best-of' compilation, gathering together a selection of the artist's (or various artists') work from across their career. Both types of music CD have structural parallels in ancient texts – the 'best-of' compilation of various artists is mirrored by the *Palatine Anthology*'s collation of various Greek epigrammatists from throughout antiquity, while the album has its parallels in most poetry books (Ovid's *Amores*, Propertius' elegies, and Martial's *Epigrams* all conform to this model). Importantly, both the best-of collection and the album can show internal structuring, but it is the album that preserves the original presentation (in sequence) of the artist's individual tracks. Key themes and melodies in the album/symphony develop and recur across multiple tracks, building an overall sense of togetherness whilst also retaining the overall independence of each song.³² The listener can skip tracks, but they can also enjoy them sequentially with the general progression of the album's overall theme(s).³³ Not every album will necessarily show direct progression across tracks, but the opportunity is there to be exploited. Songs on a CD, like individual poems, hang in the empty space between other tracks, each an individual unit in their own right but also a part of a larger unit (the album).

One example of a music artist exploiting the progression of a CD to create the impression of a unified series of songs is Muse's 2009 rock album, *The Resistance*. What is particularly striking about

³⁰ Gibson & Morello (2012) is a pioneering study, and the chapters of Marchesi (2015) show how far this branch of Plinian scholarship has come. On the preference for 'epistle' over 'letter', see Whitton (2013) 4-6. Roy Gibson is currently preparing a commentary on book 6.

³¹ For a timeline of the *Epigrams*' publication, see Fowler (1995) 32-3.

³² Elbow (2006) 635 draws a direct parallel between musical composition and writing, urging a messier model of the work's structure should be understood because readers do not understand works in simple terms. On this kind of reading experience (and the phenomenology of reading) see below, pp. 28-40.

³³ The physical aspects of the bookroll also further enforce sequentiality on the reader and make skipping more difficult. See below, p. 18.

the structure of *The Resistance* is its mixture of songs intended for release as stand-alone singles ('Uprising', 'Resistance', and 'Undisclosed Desires', the first three tracks of the album) alongside tracks that were clearly designed with the album form in mind.³⁴ The fourth track, 'United States of Eurasia', merges almost imperceptibly with the fifth, 'Guiding Light', by using the sound of a jet plane to transition between the two songs and bridge the traditional moment's silence between tracks. The progression of individual songs then continues until the final three tracks ('Exogenesis Symphony' parts 1-3) establish a more classical music feel that builds with a combination of various key themes towards the album's definitive terminus. Yet this classical mood is not created solely in the final triad of tracks. At the end of 'United States of Eurasia', the track's outro includes a performance of Chopin's *Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2 in Eb*, which in turn pre-emptly the classical symphony at the album's end. The ultimate result of the inclusion of songs that break down barriers between one another and thematically link together is to join the whole album together with a certain unity, a distinct '*Resistance-ness*'. Even though the first three tracks were co-released independent of the album they are subsumed by the greater whole. While Martial's books contain a greater number of constituent parts than the traditional music album there are similarities here. The poet frequently breaks down the barriers between epigrams by ending or beginning adjacent poems with similar language, urging the reader to form a connection between the two epigrams and thus producing the momentum to carry on.³⁵ Similarly, the poems commissioned by Polla for the celebration of Lucan's birthday (7.21-3) are bound closer to the rest of the book's interest in celebrating literary figures including Valerius Flaccus (7.19), the poet Juvenal (7.24), and the practice of writing epigram in general (7.25-6). With Martial's *Epigrams* the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts, and each poem is infused with the flavour of its specific book. It is to this greater whole that I now turn.

The Classical Contexture: Theory, Parallels, Significance

In his 1985 book, *The Poem and the Book: Interpreting Collections of Romantic Poetry*, Neil Fraistat set out to develop a discourse with which to analyse collections of poetic texts. To this end he defined such a poetic text as a 'contexture', "a larger whole fabricated from integral parts."³⁶ By Fraistat's own admission, such a definition is deliberately vague so as to encapsulate the equally vague body of a contexture, but it does stress the key positionality of each constituent part. For the sake of clarity, I use 'contexture' to refer to any literary work (a macrostructure) which is itself composed of individual texts (its microstructure) in a specific order. Fraistat himself noted that contextures are not as tightly bound together as a story with a continuous plot (such as the *Iliad* or Herodotus' *Histories*), and as such they

³⁴ Muse (2009). Like individual epigrams each track can also be enjoyed in- and outside the context of the album/book.

³⁵ Maltby (2006) is an excellent study of such linkage in Martial, focusing on names as linking devices. At pp. 159-61 he highlights the lexical linkage of names and other vocabulary in the sequence of Mart. 5.43-8, and at pp. 163-4 he comments that the *basiationes* of 7.95.17 could then transition to the name of the deceased child Bassus at 7.96.1 (much like Muse's transitioning jet plane).

³⁶ Fraistat (1985) 4.

can both tempt and defy articulation of an internal structure by bombarding the reader with information.³⁷ Even so, as he would later conclude, the reader is as much responsible for the development of the book's continuity as the author, and develops an understanding of the texture of the book from identifying its important themes, contrasts, and repetitions as well as reading a book's prefatory information (if indeed there is any).³⁸ Fraistat's theory of the contexture can thus provide a useful way of approaching the *Epigrams*. If each individual poem is considered with the whole in mind (by asking where the poem sits within its contexture and how that affects its interpretation), then otherwise unrealised intratextual relationships can be observed. The concept of the contexture thus helps to recontextu(r)alise Martial's *Epigrams* as collected, ordered books.

Evidence for contextures in antiquity is widespread, and the terminology has been applied in a classical context before. Fraistat's theorisation of contextures of Romantic poetry opens with a brief discussion of Hellenistic poetry collections; William Anderson provided a broad overview of the poetry collections in the Augustan period; and Regina Höschele has analysed the *Palatine Anthology* in light of Fraistat's theory.³⁹ In particular, Höschele observes that a central challenge with reading a contexture is that its internal structure does not readily reveal itself at the first reading, requiring its reader to reread the text carefully to understand its structural techniques.⁴⁰ There are numerous examples of classical contextures offering a rich tapestry of genres – Ovid's *Amores* and exilic poetry, Vergil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, Propertius' elegies, Statius' *Silvae*, the letters of Cicero, Pliny the Younger, Fronto, and Sidonius Apollinaris, the *Palatine Anthology*, the *Priapea*, and the Milan Posidippus papyrus to name but a few. Each of these contextures varies in overall structural unity, in the number of authors present, in authorial or non-authorial arrangement, but it is interesting to note that if a poetic contexture does not exhibit the structure of the "perfect" Augustan poetry book (for which Vergil's *Georgics* overwhelmingly often appears as the example) it is deigned disorderly and, as such, lacking in unity.⁴¹ Certainly, one principle difference between Martial's *Epigrams* and Vergil's *Georgics* is the sheer quantity of individual poems, but this does not necessarily mean that a reader cannot find unity in the *Epigrams*. Furthermore, a text need not show complete and perfect artistic arrangement to exhibit a kind of structure, and thus a unity. To judge every poetry book that followed the *Georgics* by the same standard of structural precision seems inordinately prescriptive to say the least, and denies post-Augustan poets (who had long been denigrated as 'Silver Age' artists) the capacity to react to the Augustan model.

³⁷ Fraistat (1985) 14. Cf. Fitzgerald (2007) 198-9 who comments that the reader is overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of data from the *Epigrams* and as such cannot read a book in the same way as a normal book.

³⁸ Fraistat (1986b) 7-8.

³⁹ Fraistat (1985) 6-7, W. Anderson (1986) & Höschele (2010) 17.

⁴⁰ Höschele (2010) 18: Die Kontextur eines Gedichtbuchs erschließt sich freilich nicht auf dem ersten Blick.

⁴¹ A point observed by Merli (1998) 140 & Barchiesi (2005) 320 who notes that this approach now "sounds intolerably idealizing and even fetishistic." Otis (1964) 151-4 & Wilkinson (1969) 71-5 both celebrate how books of the *Georgics* form balanced pairs and interlocking groups like a musical symphony.

One of the issues for considering Martial's contexture against previous models of the epigram book is that the structure of the Catullan corpus, his only Latin predecessor that survives in any significant quantity, is exceedingly controversial. The extant corpus of 116 poems has survived on one manuscript, and the 2400 lines of poetry that this encompasses is almost double the size of the majority of Augustan poetry books.⁴² Nevertheless, there does appear to be some level of arrangement in the collection, and scholarship tends to split the book into three sections: the *polymetra* (1-60), the 'long poems' (61-68), and the epigrams (69-116). These three sections are each seen as an individual 'book' of Catullus, though the precise nature and division of the poems amongst these 'books' is much debated.⁴³ It is clear that Catullus had some understanding of his poems in their book form, but it is uncertain how far the book (or books) Catullus produced resembles the extant collection. His opening poem's programmatic statement (emulated by Mart. 1.1) that his book is a luxury good freshly smoothed down with dry pumice attests to his poems' collation, and his sixteenth poem alludes to poems on kisses that the reader will have already read, but the nature of Catullus' survival makes it impossible to be empirically sure of his original book structure.⁴⁴ At the very least, the mangled state of the three 'books' in one manuscript, thrust upon one another with wholly violated book boundaries, has changed the way the ancient text is received in the modern context. In fact, this mangled textual tradition resulted in the earliest *editio princeps* of Catullus running poems together, misunderstanding the addressees of poems (the *titulum* 'ad Romulum Catamitum' applied to c. 29 stands out here), and creating further textual difficulties that subsequent editors have since taken great pains to smooth out.⁴⁵ One thing the mangled textual tradition demonstrates is that if there ever were three books of Catullus there is now one surviving text of nearly 2400 lines extant.

The Milan papyrus of Posidippus' epigrams that was published in 2001 has also seen discussion of its arrangement in recent years which shows how the act of collation can imbue a collection with a wider unity. The papyrus itself shows signs of edited arrangement (with poems divided up according to their thematic type and exhibiting a thematic progression across epigrams), but since the poems are only preserved on this papyrus, and because both ends of the papyrus scroll (which would include some biographic information) are lacking, commentators are only able to state that the text appears to be authorially arranged.⁴⁶ As with the Catullan corpus the poems have been edited to encourage a reading of the poems as a collected unit, but it is impossible to prove definitively who this editor was, and

⁴² Skinner (2007) 37.

⁴³ Skinner (2007) 39-41 provides a good summary of the scholarly landscape on this issue. Cf. Holzberg (2001) 37, who argues that book 2 should be composed of Cat. 61-4 as a compilation of marriage poems using Sappho as a model, and book 3 of Cat. 65-116 united by the poems' elegiac metre.

⁴⁴ Cat. 1.1-2: *cui dono lepidum novum libellum | arida modo pumice expolitur*. Cat. 16 alludes to the *mollis* theme of Lesbia's kisses at Cat. 5 & 7.

⁴⁵ Gaisser (1993) 26-31 narrates the history of the *editio princeps* and the impact upon its readers' interpretation of Catullus.

⁴⁶ Gutzwiller (2005b) 289-90 & 311 ultimately argues that this text is authorially arranged, but notes that her argument is based on a subjective reading of the text more than a fully definitive identification.

whether the poems were originally composed for the book itself. Nevertheless, as Fraistat notes, the very placement of poems beside one another in a contexture tempts the reader to find connections between them.⁴⁷ Indeed, western readers tend to try to read for unity as much as possible, and the reduced cast of characters in Catullus' corpus compared to Martial's (as Lorenz observes) can make for a more unified reading experience of his poems over the later *Epigrams*.⁴⁸ However mangled the extant text of Catullus is today, in its potentially disordered format, it is clear that the poet was of great importance to the Flavian epigrammatist. No less important to current scholarship on Martial, however, should be the lessons learned from analysing his republican predecessor. It is clear that the contexture retains some unity by its very collation (whether by author or other editor), and as such the text should be approached as a collected book of poems more than as a collection of individual items.

A useful contemporary parallel to Martial's poetic arrangement is Pliny's *Letters*, a ten book collection of prose epistles that has increasingly been studied as an artful collection. Although the epistolographer claims in his first letter that he arranged his letters as they came to hand rather than in a specific order, recent work has shown that this claim is little more than a literary conceit common to programmatic passages – the writer claims a lack of arrangement to bring the reader's attention to the work's overarching structure.⁴⁹ Indeed, Ilaria Marchesi has shown that Pliny's artistic arrangement is similar to that of the (perfect) Augustan poetry book, and Roy Gibson has noted Pliny's innovation in arranging his collection according to theme rather than addressee.⁵⁰ Furthermore, a significant preoccupation of modern studies in Pliny concerns how to understand the act of reading a collection, and has materialised in the search for an appropriate metaphor for this experience. The traditional model of a mosaic, with each of the letters constituting an individual tile in a larger whole, has been critiqued as far too static a description of the reader's shifting understanding of the whole text.⁵¹ John Henderson's model of an ever shifting kaleidoscope has gained much ground (and influences Fitzgerald's interpretation of the *Epigrams*), but, as Ruth Morello has commented, neither this image nor that of the mosaic truly captures the smaller linkages between the individual letters in the same way as her own preferred model – the photomosaic.⁵² None of these suggested models is perfect, but they

⁴⁷ Fraistat (1985) 11. Cf. McCloud (1993) 73 on the juxtaposition of comic book panels, on which more below, pp. 33-8.

⁴⁸ Lorenz (2007) 429. On western readers and their quest for unity (a beginning, middle, and end to each narrative text), see Sharrock (2000) 13-6. On the dangers of readers finding the links they want to in a book of epigrams, see Lorenz (forthcoming): "once one starts looking for links between poems in a collection, one will certainly find them."

⁴⁹ Plin. *Ep.* 1.1.1: *collegi non servato temporis ordine... sed ut quaeque in manus venerat*. On which see R. Gibson (2014) 37-8 & Bodel (2015) 49.

⁵⁰ Marchesi (2008) x & R. Gibson (2014) 53. Notwithstanding the debate over the identity of Cicero's editor, Grillo (2015) demonstrates that Cic. *Ad Fam.* 1 also has a thematic structure. Letters 1-9 are all addressed to one addressee (Lentulus), which inform the reader's approach to 1.10's letter to Valerius (pp. 666-8).

⁵¹ Gibson & Morello (2012) 1.

⁵² Henderson (2002) xi, Morello (2015) 179-80. Note that Whitton (2013) 12 offers both the kaleidoscope and mosaic models side by side. On Fitzgerald's use of the kaleidoscope metaphor when analysing Martial, see n. 20 above.

do reveal scholarship's movement from reading the *Letters* as a collection of individual texts towards a more nuanced understanding of the positionality of each individual letter within the book and the wider collection itself. Morello's photomosaic model does, however, capture the individuality of each constituent part, the perspective of the larger whole, and the fluidity of the reading experience suggested by Henderson's kaleidoscope. As Morello notes, one of the challenges of reading a letter collection (as indeed with any text) is demonstrated by Peter Elbow's analogy of an ant walking across a painting – the reader, like the ant, can never understand the whole at any one moment.⁵³ Only by progressing across the entire work can the ant/reader have any real understanding of the whole work, but even then their view is distorted by the weight of the information they have received.

It is precisely these sorts of issues that I want to explore in Martial's *Epigrams*. Unlike a painting, a text (explicitly or not) encourages a certain reading approach that will aid its reader in their gradual appreciation of the whole. Writing for an audience of writers, Elbow asks how he might write with his readers in mind by questioning how one might paint for ants; one can invert this question to consider how Pliny or Martial (or any other author of a contexture) wrote for their audience with the book form in mind, if at all.⁵⁴ In the next chapter I will analyse how Martial characterises how his Model Reader approaches the text; here I will briefly lay out how the poet structured his books to reward a sequential reading. To this end I will now examine how the primary evidence (the text and its own material composition) can encourage not only a conception of the *Epigrams* as a whole, but a whole that invites sequential reading.

Sequential Elements: The Physical Book and Structural Devices in Martial

The very format of Martial's work encourages the conception of his books as unified texts. Contexture theory shows that the very collation of epigrams creates a sense of unity, but Martial's structural techniques help to cement this in the reader's mind (guiding the ant across the painting, to use Elbow's imagery). Not only does the poet make reference to the books themselves by their number, he also makes a series of jokes reliant on the reader's sequential progression through his text, varies the flow of poems by alternating length and metre, pairs epigrams to great effect, uses 'bridge epigrams' to transition between themes, and, most of all, crafts cycles that provide a thematic progression that acts as a quasi-narrative to lure the reader into reading more. All of these techniques are used by the author to produce a coherent sequential reading experience, but it is also worth considering how the production of texts in a scroll format encouraged a sequential reading pattern for the reader, while also impacting on ancient compositional practices. By considering the ancient text in its material context, the modern reader can better understand how the ancient reader might have approached reading the *Epigrams*.

⁵³ Elbow (2006) 621, cited in Morello (2015) 179-80.

⁵⁴ Elbow (2006) 622.

The defining feature of the ancient bookroll (usually made from papyrus, but at times from parchment or other materials) was its linearity. These scrolls were formed from continuous sheets of papyrus that were glued together and then wrapped around a wooden roller, with the writing ordered in adjacent columns of a consistent width.⁵⁵ As Martial's *Epigrams* was a verse text, each poem would have been separated by a short space indicated by a *paragraphos* (a horizontal line in the margin, visible in figs. 1-2 below), and the pentameter lines of his elegiac couplets would have been slightly indented (as with the Gallus fragment, fig. 2).⁵⁶ For the reader to access the text they would have to unfurl the papyrus scroll linearly and furl up the part of the text they had just read as they progressed, in a manner similar to the more modern (but now defunct) VHS tape. As John Van Sickle notes, when the reader reached the end of the bookroll the act of rewinding the scroll for storage and later use "would enhance awareness of sequentiality, of the similarities and contrasts among segments, beginnings, ends, in short of what makes the content of the roll an articulated ensemble - a book."⁵⁷ Similarly, as the reader unrolled the text to read the work, the physical enactment of sequential movement through the bookroll would reinforce the text's conception as a sequential entity. Readers can, of course, always skip through a text, avoiding the boring or long poems (as Martial complains in 6.65), but to do so the reader is forced to progress through the text in sequence, even if they do not actually read the poems. At a base level the scroll encourages a sequentiality which is easier to violate in the later codex book where the reader can simply flick through the pages.⁵⁸ Moreover, this sequentiality of textual access would have shaped the way authors wrote their texts as well. Just as Homeric texts are full of standardised formulae and epithets to act as memory aids for an oral performance, so too could the author composing for the bookroll use the physicality and sequentiality of the bookroll to augment the impact of their poetry upon the reader.⁵⁹ Even with the adoption of the codex form as a more common mode of writing, a transition towards a modern understanding of a book of poems as an object that the first-time reader could dip in and out of would not have been immediate. In short, the physical nature of the bookroll's sequential use would have had a strong impact upon the reader's initial approach to the text.

⁵⁵ On the general characteristics of the bookroll, see Johnson (2010) 17-22 & Winsbury (2009) 15-7.

⁵⁶ On the *paragraphos*, see Johnson (2010) 20 & R. D. Anderson *et al.* (1979) 129.

⁵⁷ Van Sickle (1980) 6.

⁵⁸ Morgan (2007) 265, influencing Fitzgerald (2016) 183, observes that unrolling the bookroll took care (even with practice) and would limit attempts to skip ahead through the text. I return to the sequentiality of Martial's bookroll in chapter 2.

⁵⁹ On oral performance as an explanation for repetitive structuring in Homer, see Clark (2004). I will further discuss Martial and the physicality of his text in a moment.

Image Removed Due To Copyright Restrictions

Figure 1 - The characteristics of the bookroll, from Johnson (2010) 19.

Image Removed Due To Copyright Restrictions

Figure 2 - The 'Gallus fragment' (PQaṣrIbrîm 78-3-11/1, LI/52), Plate IV in R. D. Anderson *et al.* (1979). *Paragraphoi* highlighted by the present author.

While the bookroll was the dominant medium for texts until the rise of Christianity in the third century AD brought about a systematic preference for the codex book, there is some evidence for the presence of the codex in Flavian Rome.⁶⁰ The primary evidence for the existence of codices of Martial appears in *Epigrams* 1.2.3-4, where the poet describes a new *libellus* which “parchment (*membrana*) compresses into small pages”, and which can be grasped by a single hand rather than the book boxes that hold greater poets like Vergil. Elsewhere in the *Epigrams* Martial specifies characteristics of a bookroll (such as the bosses on the roller stick at 4.89 and 11.107), but it is in the *Apophoreta* that the epigrammatist describes other codices which appear to be selections from major authors (14.184, 186, 188, 190 & 192). While these poems have long been seen as evidence for the codex as a “still-born” experiment in a new medium, Sarah Blake argues that Martial’s poems are actually part of a literary game playing off parchment’s associations with erasure.⁶¹ Blake believes that Martial’s references to ‘*membrana*’ in these epigrams do not attest to readily-available editions of the ‘Great Works’ of Livy, Vergil, and the rest, but rather that they refer to student copy-books which could be written over and erased at will. As such, Martial’s depiction of these texts as *membranae* could instead be part of the poet’s attempt to destabilise the traditional relationship between text and reader as a way of deconstructing the canonical

⁶⁰ On the rise of the codex alongside Christianity, see Cavallo (1999) 71, 84-6 & Winsbury (2009) 25-6.

⁶¹ Roberts & Skeat (1983) 29 & Howell (1980) 105-6. Blake (2014) 83-4, citing Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.1-4, *Ars P.* 389-90, Mart. 14.7 & Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.31-3.

supremacy of these works, while also promoting his own literary output.⁶² Indeed, Blake also comments that instead of referring to the codex form, the *membrana* to which Martial refers at 1.2.3 could be a parchment covering for the papyrus scroll, which was a common practice at the time.⁶³ Blake's arguments do not give definitive proof of the non-existence of codices in the Flavian era, but at the very least it is surprising that there is no stable evidence for literary codices until Ulpian in the third century AD.⁶⁴ Galen's recently discovered treatise *On Avoiding Distress* does make reference to parchment codices (διφθέρας πικτάς PA. 33), but, as Matthew Nichols notes, this is in accordance with the pragmatic tradition of medical writers to use such codices as working notebooks.⁶⁵ Furthermore, while a fragment of a historical papyrus codex on the Macedonian Wars recovered from Oxyrhynchus dates to the late first and early second centuries AD, it is very revealing not only that references to codices in literature are so slim until the third century (Pliny, for instance, is silent), but also that to date no codices have been recovered from the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum (covered by pyroclastic flow a mere fourteen years before Martial began circulating his work).⁶⁶ Thus while Martial seems aware of parchment as a writing material, it seems unlikely that the poet worked with the codex in mind. I do not deny that Martial wrote for numerous contexts and could have appeared in different formats, but in my opinion it is most useful to consider Martial as a poet who wrote primarily with the bookroll (and its sequentiality) in mind.

That Martial is hyper-aware of the placement of his poems in their constituent books has been argued before, but that the poet often focuses on the specific numbering of his books reveals his planned interest in writing the epigrams for the book itself.⁶⁷ At the end of book 2, for instance, Martial jokes that Regulus can remove one iota from the title (turning *Epigrammata II* into *Epigrammata I*) to make this the first book, just after celebrating his receipt of the Right of Three Children (*ius trium liberorum*) from the emperor shortly before writing his third book, punning on the similarity between *libri* (books) and *liberi* (children).⁶⁸ Besides making numerical jokes, the epigrammatist also makes reference to specific book numbers in throwaway comments about the corpus as a whole: in *Epigrams* 12 he refers to his previous two books as numbers ten and eleven (*undecimi... decimique libelli*, 12.4(5).1), and epigrams 5.2, 6.1, 7.17, 8.praef.4, and 10.2 each provide the book number in which they are found, reinforcing the exact positionality of the book (and reader) in the corpus as a whole. This is particularly striking because it demonstrates the poet's own self-referentiality and acknowledgement of his books of epigrams as belonging to a larger whole, but it also plays into traditional 'bookish' wordplay that

⁶² Blake (2014) 84-5 & 90.

⁶³ Blake (2014) 78.

⁶⁴ Blake (2014) 69, later concluding at p. 91 that the evidence for literary codices in the first century AD "is deeply compromised and should be reconsidered." Cf. Fantham (2013) 13 & Winsbury (2009) 15 for the evidence.

⁶⁵ Nichols (2010) 381-2. On parchment as a material for poetic composition cf. above n. 61.

⁶⁶ POxy. 1.30 which, as O'Hogan (2015) notes, has a similar script to PHerc. 817.

⁶⁷ Roman (2001) is seminal.

⁶⁸ Mart. 2.91-3. On the pun, see Fitzgerald (2007) 136 & (concurrently) Hinds (2007) 134.

abounds in post-Alexandrian book poetics. By opening a book with a reference to the book number, the poet makes a bold metapoetic statement even as they draw the reader in. Thus the first word of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* ἀρχόμενος (beginning) was translated by Valerius Flaccus as *prima* (first), with the game continuing into book 3's opening word *tertia* (third).⁶⁹ Similarly, the Augustan elegist Propertius famously opened his first book of elegies with the phrase *Cynthia prima* (Cynthia first), expressing not only the origin of his fictionalised love affair but also of his first book, which he later refers to as the *Cynthia* at 2.24.2.⁷⁰ Martial plays numerous games with numbers throughout the corpus, as Victoria Rimell has shown, but by referring to his books by their numbers both in- and outside of the relevant book (as 12.4(5) demonstrates) Martial shows a wider awareness of the poems within the contexts of the book and corpus as a whole.⁷¹

Martial is thus aware of the book as the key format in which his readers encounter his epigrams, but he also displays an expectation that his books should be read in sequence. Although the poet invites certain characters to skip his poems, these statements are always part of a joke or attack on lazy readers, such as 6.65's aside to Tucca that the poet will keep writing long epigrams even though Tucca may skip them.⁷² In fact, Martial protests from the outset that he aspires to be read through like his great literary predecessors,⁷³ and at many points across the corpus the epigrammatist makes jokes that rely on sequentiality to make sense, or that are nuanced by earlier poems in the book. In book 3, for instance, Martial restrains himself from including any obscenities in his poems until after 3.68, a mock-warning to *matronae* to stop reading in the style of the *Ars Amatoria*'s own prohibition to married women.⁷⁴ Each following poem includes some kind of obscenity (*cunnus*, *cinaedus*, and *mentula* all appear), and then at 3.86 the poet remarks that he has caught the *matrona* in the act of violating his instructions (*ecce, legis* v.2) but that he will allow her to read on anyway.⁷⁵ At 4.81 Martial similarly makes a joke against an imagined Fabulla who has taken advice from an earlier poem (4.71) that women should refuse sex with their lovers to add to their allure far too literally. In this later poem Martial chastises Fabulla, but also makes reference to her having read the poem, not heard it (*legisset* v.1). Poetic sequences abound in the *Epigrams*, but the sequential development of themes and the poems' own acknowledgement of their sequentiality suggests that the book was expected to be read in numerical order.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.1, V. F. 1.1 & 3.1.

⁷⁰ Prop. 1.1.1. On the debate over the ancient title of Propertius' first book, see Heyworth (2012) 227.

⁷¹ Rimell (2008) 94-139. At pp. 122-39 Rimell uses Mart. 2.93 as part of a wider argument about book 2's preoccupation with the number 2.

⁷² Mart. 6.65, directly after a 34 line poem. On the insincerity of Martial's invitations to skip, and the characterisation of bad readers, see chapter 2.

⁷³ Mart. 1.praef.13, 2.praef.16 & 2.1.2.

⁷⁴ See Hinds (2007) 124 on the allusion to Ov. *Ars Am.* 1.31-4.

⁷⁵ On the author's (in)ability to control his reader here and elsewhere, see Hayes (forthcoming).

⁷⁶ On poem sequences (*Gedichtreihen*) in Martial in general, see Scherf (1998) 131-3.

As well as expecting the reader to approach his text sequentially, Martial also uses a series of devices to produce a sense of momentum that encourages their progress, the most-remarked of which is his use of *variatio*.⁷⁷ As I have already stated above, the epigrammatist's thematic shifts are infamous, but the poet also varies the length of his poems and the metre he uses. As the following two graphs (figs. 3-4) demonstrate, in book 7 (the book on which I focus in chapters 3-4) the poet regularly alternates between long and short poems, and punctuates epigrams in the standard elegiac metre with hendecasyllables and scazonic verse:

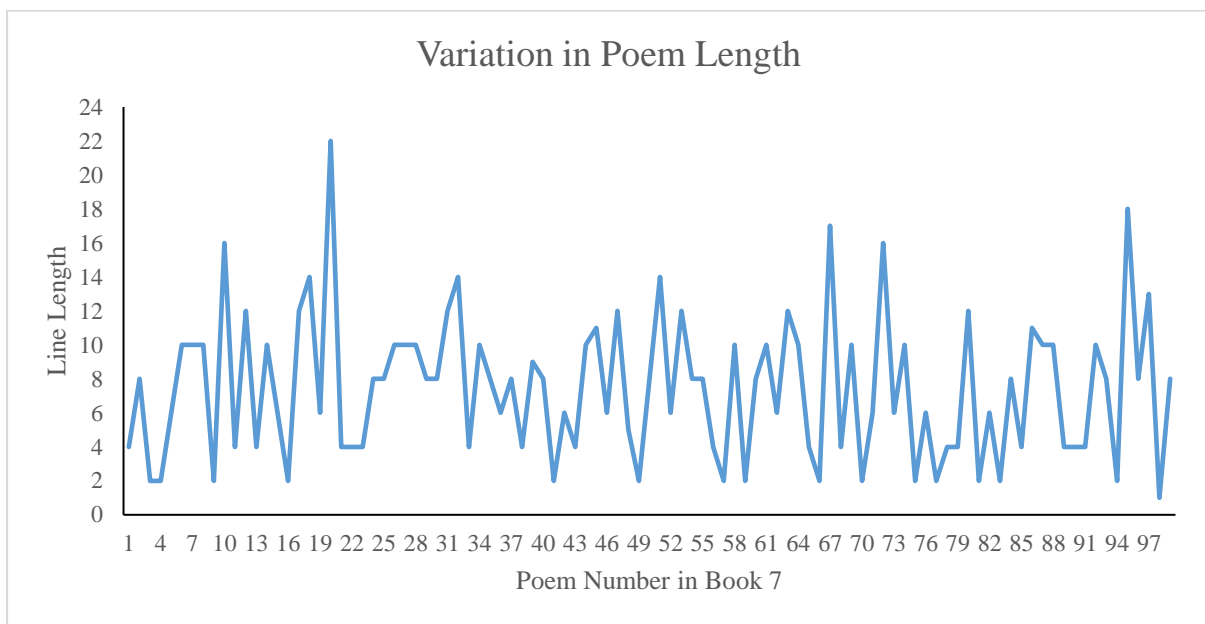


Figure 3 - Line length across book 7

⁷⁷ Fitzgerald (2007) 7, Henriksén (2012) xxxiii, Scherf (1998) 120 & Sullivan (1991) 219 all remark on the centrality of *variatio* to Martial's structural technique. Mart. 8.praef.8-11 & Plin. *Ep.* 4.14.3 both attest to *variatio* as a feature of nugatory verse.

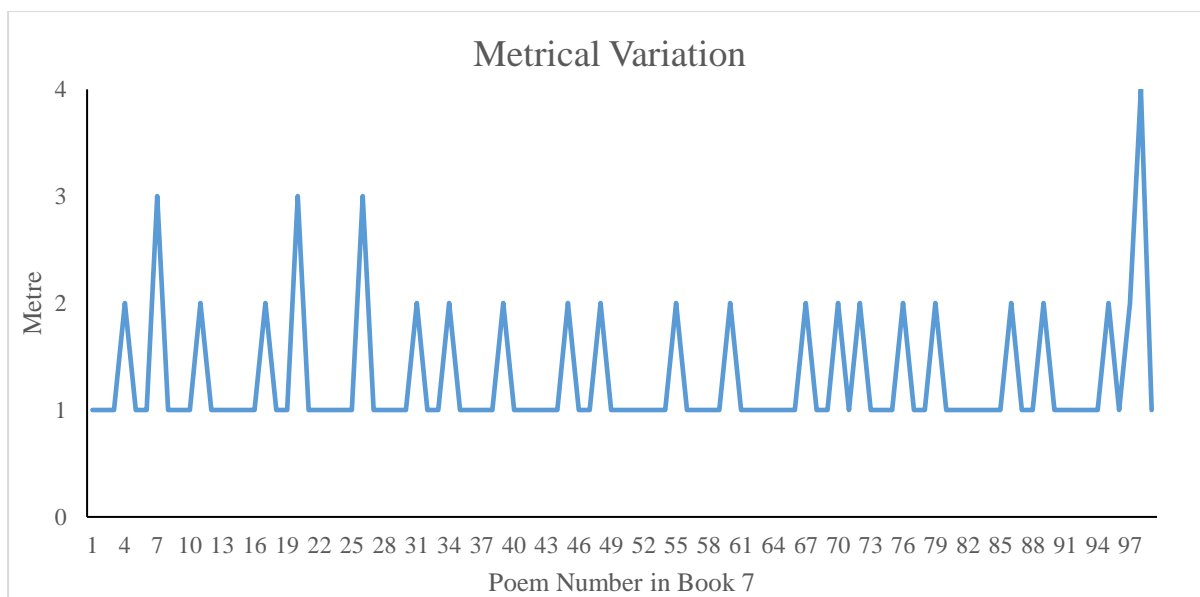


Figure 4 - Metrical variation across book 7 (1 = elegiac couplets, 2 = hendecasyllables, 3 = scazon, 4 = hexameter).

Broadly speaking Martial tends to juxtapose a long poem with a much shorter epigram, which helps to tackle any potential feelings of boredom (as the poet himself admits at 1.118, 2.praef, 2.1, and 2.6). Plateaus of equally long poems (7.6-8, 21-3, 27-9, 55-6, 79-80, 87-8, and 89-91) are rare, which reflects his marked style of variation, and the jaggedness of the graph demonstrates the poet's penchant for juxtaposition of line length as well as theme. Martial himself notes that his readers are concerned about the length of epigram (at 2.77, for instance), but scholars have also long debated what constitutes a 'long' epigram.⁷⁸ The markedly regular variation of metre in book 7 is also intriguing. Elegiac couplets are Martial's usual metre, but it is noteworthy that scazons and hendecasyllables are never found adjacent to one another, and the single hexameter line in the book (7.98) is similarly bounded by elegiacs. Nevertheless, metrical variation occurs at regular intervals of a few poems, which would aid the variation of an oral performance of the poems (as well as their physical presentation given the indentation of pentameter lines on the papyrus). What comes across from the metrical arrangement of book 7 is that a book of Martial's *Epigrams* is richly varied, but in regular patterns. Rimell has already commented that Martial's books are a structured mess, an "ordered disorder, or disordered order" that only pretends to be as destabilised as they actually are, and these graphs of book 7 encourage such an interpretation.⁷⁹ Martial's poems cover a wide range of themes, but their regular variation in metre and line length reveals that each epigram was carefully placed into its surrounding context.

This careful placement also becomes apparent when examining the wider thematic structuring of his books, in particular with poetic pairs that share a thematic or narrative element.⁸⁰ Such pairs often

⁷⁸ Morelli (2008), in which Scherf (2008) considers what constitutes a 'long' epigram in Martial.

⁷⁹ Rimell (2008) 156.

⁸⁰ For a catalogue of epigram pairing strategies in Martial, see Scherf (1998) 128-31.

appear adjacent to one another as a variation on a theme, such as the two metrically different poems on the death of Glaucias at 6.28-9, or the couplets on Domitian's breastplate at 7.1-2, increasing the significance of the subject matter to the reader and book due to the increased time devoted to each topic. Other epigram pairs, however, are spread out further across the book, revisiting an earlier topic to remind the reader of what has gone before (such as the warning poems 3.68 and 3.86, discussed above, or the addresses to Cerdo at 3.16 and 3.99), or framing other poems in a chiasmic structure. These latter pairings invite the reader to consider the framing poems in light of the epigrams they surround, and thus encourage a more fluid association between the poems in the reader's mind. In book 7, two poems on Philaenis (a woman whom Martial attacks for her transgressive homosexual activities) encircle another pair of epigrams on more traditionally moral Romans.⁸¹ As Holzberg has noted, the poems encourage a collective reading not only through their juxtaposition of moral values, but also in the potential wordplay of their characters' names – Philaenis is juxtaposed with *Pantaenis* and *Theophila* in 7.69, whose names contain the roots of Philaenis' own name.⁸² The end result is a sequence of four poems “clearly interlinked by a web of names and linguistic associations” that encourages a unity at the microstructural level of the poems themselves that lends itself towards an overall unity for the macrostructure of the book.⁸³ By focusing the reader's attention on a short section of the book, warping how the reader approaches nearby epigrams or reminding the reader of earlier events in the book's thematic sequence, epigram pairs form a vital part of the epigrammatist's repertoire for constructing each book's unity.

Another strategy the poet uses to construct a progressive sense of unity in his books is by using intermediary poems to ‘bridge’ between separate themes and encourage the reader's transition between them. Christian Schöffel has already observed the inclusion of bridge epigrams (*Brückenepigramme*) between the prose prefaces and the rest of the book to encourage a “seamless” transition from prose to verse, but these bridge poems also appear in other positions throughout the corpus.⁸⁴ One such example is the series of epigrams in book 2 that move from a discussion of errors in the text to Postumus' *os impurum*. The series begins at 2.8, which states that any grammatical or lexical flaws in Martial's book is the fault of a bad copyist, while acknowledging that the fault of bad poems remains the poet's. This epigram firmly establishes the theme of writing poetry, which then continues in 2.9 – the bridge epigram between 2.8 and 2.10 – whose focus on writing to Naevia (*scripsi rescripsit nil Naevia*) links this poem to the preceding piece, but shifts the subject towards a question of whether or not Naevia will ‘give’ the poet her sexual favours (*dabit... dabit* vv.1-2) in return. At 2.10 Martial stops writing about writing, and instead describes how Postumus has a habit of ‘giving’ half-kisses (*basia... das mihi* 2.10.1) to the

⁸¹ Mart. 7.67-70.

⁸² Holzberg (2006) 147.

⁸³ Holzberg (2006) 148.

⁸⁴ Schöffel (2002) 55. For further discussion of bridge epigrams between Martial's prefaces and the rest of the book, see chapter 5. I also examine 7.36's role as a bridge epigram in chapter 4.

poet even though he would rather not be kissed at all. By placing 2.9 between these two poems the poet helps smooth the transition from writing to various types of ‘giving’, but also helps the reader understand the joke about Postumus in 2.10. The similar lexical features of 2.9 and 2.10 in the realm of ‘giving’ suggests to the reader that Postumus perhaps gives his kisses too freely, and that the reason Martial avoids his kisses is because his mouth has been in contact with other people’s genitalia (as he then goes on to suggest at 2.12 & 2.21-3). In fact, combining the themes of writing and sexual favours across these three poems could also encourage the reader to reflect on the Ovidian line *non meus est error* at 2.8.3, which reminds the reader of Ovid’s infamous exile in the wake of Augustus’ disapproval of the erotodidactic *Ars Amatoria*.⁸⁵ Without 2.9’s language of writing and giving, however, the transition between these poems would be far more disjointed, and the wider unity of the sequence would be lost. Strong juxtapositions certainly occur across Martial’s corpus, but epigrammatic bridging also provides a recurring sense of unity to poetic sequences without which readers of the *Epigrams* would be less inclined to view the books of poems as anything more than anthologies. Moreover, the sequential progression of these themes (from writing, to writing and giving, to giving) further encourages the use of a sequential reading approach as a method of reading the *Epigrams* as a unified collection.

Epigrammatic bridges, pairs, and stylistic variation are all features of Martial’s poetic arrangement, but perhaps the most discussed feature of the collection is its inclusion of ‘cycles’ of thematically linked poems. The term itself was adopted in the 1950s by Karl Barwick to explore the unity of the Catullan and Martalian corpora. Barwick’s original definition is loose, referring to cycles as “groups of poems which somehow fit closer together” in theme, but the scholar’s actual identification of specific cycles has been critiqued for its overly prescriptive requirements that epigram cycles need to adhere to one specific metre, or for ignoring the cycle’s interplay with the rest of the collection.⁸⁶ Furthermore, as with all terms relating to the structure of contextures, the definition of an epigrammatic cycle often struggles with being either too broad an overview to be helpful or too specific to apply in every case. Thus Lorenz’s definition that cycles include “all groups of epigrams, adjacent poems, or scattered pieces that display a common theme or motif, common use of language, or common structural features”, while better formulated than Barwick’s, is unsatisfactory due to its open-endedness.⁸⁷ The main issue at stake is how many poems can be grouped together until they form a cycle; most scholars would not describe a pair of epigrams (such as the Glaucias poems 6.28-9) as a cycle, and while the poems celebrating Lucan’s birthday (7.21-3) share a strong central theme they do not suggest much more than variation of a theme. Scholars nowadays easily identify epigrams 1.6, 1.14, 1.22, 1.44, 1.48, 1.51, 1.60, and 1.104 as the famous ‘lion and hare’ cycle, but (as I outline below) there seems to be

⁸⁵ Hinds (2007) 131 highlights a particular allusion here to Ov. *Tr.* 2.207-8.

⁸⁶ Barwick (1958) 284: Gruppen von Gedichten, die irgendwie enger zusammengehören. For such critiques of Barwick’s definition, see Garthwaite (2001) 46 & Henriksén (2012) xl. For some, however, Barwick remains the standard text: Fitzgerald (2007) 107 n. 2 & Galán Vioque (2002) 9 n. 73.

⁸⁷ Lorenz (2004) 257.

more keeping these poems together as a cyclical group than their shared subject matter of a lion and a hare interacting in the arena.

The solution to the issue of cyclic identification, and the reason cycles are so significant to the structure of Martial's *Epigrams*, lies in their use of thematic progression. As I have previously intimated, Martial's thematic progression is central to providing an underpinning quasi-narrative structure to his books, encouraging the reader to carry on to see what happens next (or what the poet chooses to do next with the motif). In the lion and hare cycle, for instance, Martial introduces the theme of Domitian's magnificent power at the games in holding back the jaws of the lion (1.6) before associating the emperor's might with the lion and the hare's slowness with Dacians at 1.22. As the book continues Martial notes that the lion only devours prey it deems worthy of its attention (1.60 & 1.104.11-22), evoking the emperor's power as well as Rome's superiority over Dacia. Over these eight epigrams Martial has developed the stage-game of hares jumping through the jaws of lions into a political statement. By contrast, one might examine a famous series of poems in the *Palatine Anthology* which all discuss the same subject matter – the apparently lifelike statue of a cow sculpted out of bronze by Myron – but which offer nothing more than variation on a theme.⁸⁸ The *Anthology* certainly exhibits levels of structuring and restructuring, but thematic progression does not occur at anywhere near the same frequency as a structural tool as it does in the *Epigrams*.⁸⁹ Thus, due to the importance of thematic progression to Martial's books, I find Christer Henriksén's definition of the epigram cycle to be most helpful, that epigram cycles are:

such groups (1) as consist of at least three poems with a common theme, (2) as develop the common theme either linearly (focusing on the end of the group), or concentrically (the last poem of the cycle looking back to the first), and (3) in which each poem has a distinctive position which cannot be arbitrarily altered.⁹⁰

Henriksén's definition fully acknowledges that Martial's poetry books should be read as structured books and that epigrammatic cycles hold a crucial role in their overall unity. His third point, that each poem has a distinctive positionality within the fabric of the text and the sequence of the cycle, coheres with Fraistat's comments on the contexture that each poem's placement is carefully contrived to enhance or frustrate overall unity.⁹¹ Furthermore, Henriksén's definition works well with a sequential reading approach as, if every poem in a cycle (and the book) has a very specific position within the cycle (and book), it follows that there is a logical reading order to each cycle and book. Readers can still easily move between poems as they wish, skipping the long ones if they desire, but the layout of each cycle in a sequential order reinforces sequential reading as a valid lectorial strategy, and thematic

⁸⁸ AP 9.713-42 & 9.793-8.

⁸⁹ On the traces of previous structures in the *Palatine Anthology* before recollection, see Höschele (2010) 13.

⁹⁰ Henriksén (2012) xxxvii.

⁹¹ Fraistat (1986b) 9-11.

progression's role as a coherent unifying force in the *Epigrams*. This thematic progression can circle the reader's attention back to the first poem in the series, what Henriksen terms a 'concentric' cycle, which also reinforces the reader's concept of the cycle (and by extension the book) as a unified unit; by seeing the relation of the final poem to the first the reader has a much stronger sense of the whole. Cycles are thus central to the overall layout of Martial's book, existing as a series of strong thematic units around which the other poems are situated. Multiple cycles can exist across a text, unfolding in a sequential order or spread out across the book, overlapping with one another to form a complicated sense of a whole, but a whole nonetheless. As I shall demonstrate in chapter 3, the whole unity of book 7 depends upon its opening cycle of poems; by frequently returning to the same theme across the book the poet reminds the reader of the work's beginning, but also shows a development of a micronarrative. In a non-narrative corpus like the *Epigrams* such thematic progression has an enormous impact on the reader's sense of the text's unity.

Martial's structural techniques thus encourage a reading of his books not only as unified texts, but as sequentially arranged contextures. His variation of metrical style, poem length, and theme all point towards a strategy of maintaining interest in the work through constant change, but this change is not entirely random. Thematic pairs appear together or surrounding other poems, augmenting their basic interpretation through juxtaposition. Epigrammatic bridges help the poet to transition between radically different topics with ease in sequential order. Epigram cycles provide a thematic backbone to the text that ensures a continuous momentum for the reader's progression through the book. Most of all, however, the poet's repeated self-awareness of the book as the reading context for his poems and his reliance upon the sequential ordering of his epigrams to make jokes upon this very format show that Martial designed his books with a sequential reading approach in mind. In the modern age the boundaries between individual poems and books are far less stable given the codex edition's capacity for easy non-sequential browsing and the transition towards easily-searchable ebooks, but the papyrus scroll's requirement that the reader sequentially unrolls the book to access the text reinforces the approach that Martial recommends for his readers. Martial's book aspires to be read all the way through (*perlegitur* 1.praef.13) from start to finish, and its structuring rewards such an approach. Such an aspiration, however, requires the reader to be able to conceive of a multivalent text like the *Epigrams* as a whole through such a reading. Only by understanding the phenomenology of sequential reading can the act of reading the *Epigrams* (in antiquity and modernity) be understood.

Reading in a Straight Line? The Phenomenology of Sequential Reading

Thus far my discussion has focused solely on the general layout of the individual books of Martial *Epigrams* as structural units, concluding that they encourage a sequential reading approach through their very form. The rest of this chapter, however, shifts its focus onto the reader themselves to consider not only how a reader reads sequentially, but also how they can sequentially read a book of epigrams.

The method of ‘cumulative reading’ that I propose here argues that, although a reader may take a linear approach to reading the text, their understanding of that text does not develop in a solely linear fashion. As the reader progresses through the work their mind makes connections between its various themes and events from across the whole book, creating a constantly evolving, multi-directional mental image of the text as a whole as they progress linearly through it.⁹² A reader’s interpretation of the text is a constant and gradual process, but in a book of epigrams this generation is most encouraged and pronounced at the spaces between poems where the reader naturally pauses (for however short a time) and reassesses their mental ideation of the book as an overall unit. The reader compares the poem they have just read with what they recollect from the preceding epigrams (in the book and the overall corpus), and thus updates their interpretation of the work’s meaning and structural unity as they read. For the rest of this chapter I focus on various theories of reading to further define this cumulative model, and to establish the methodological approach I use in a sequential reading of the *Epigrams* throughout this thesis.

The model of cumulative reading that I promote here, with its focus on the role of the reader in the creation of a text’s meaning, derives from the critical schools of reader response criticism and *Rezeptionstheorie* advanced by literary theorists in the late twentieth century.⁹³ After Barthes’ influential essay on the ‘Death of the Author’ established that the intent of the author could not be reconstructed from the text itself, and as such could no longer be argued to be the primary force in the creation of a work’s meaning, scholars began to question from where else meaning in texts could originate.⁹⁴ The two remaining agents in literary criticism, the text and the reader, then logically came under consideration as creators of textual meaning. Rather than stressing that either text or reader was the sole party involved in interpretation, however, Wolfgang Iser proposed a model defining the act of reading as a process of mediation between reader and text (a model to which I return below).⁹⁵ In essence, criticism moved away from trying to unlock the original/intended meaning within a text towards an exploration of the effect texts have upon their readers, a movement (as Stanley Fish puts it) from exploring what a text ‘means’ to what a text ‘does’.⁹⁶ It thus follows that a reader’s understanding of a text is partly experiential, developed over time from their engagement with the text (and others), and always evoking a slightly changed response that is reliant on the responses they previously experienced. In short, their reading is cumulative.

⁹² Cf. Fitzgerald (2007) 69’s “shifting configurations”, discussed above, pp. 10-1.

⁹³ Holub (1984) xii-iv regards the two schools of thought as similar but ultimately different categories of criticism by contrasting the evolution of *Rezeptionstheorie* as a literary movement set firmly in post-war Germany against reader response criticism’s lack of an overt initial agenda. Nevertheless, the two schools are linked by their principal values.

⁹⁴ Barthes (1977). The development of reader response theory and *Rezeptionstheorie* is far more complicated than a brief summary here can cover. Holub (1984) provides a detailed introduction to the field.

⁹⁵ Iser (1978) 9-10.

⁹⁶ Fish (1980) 2-3.

That the reader is involved in the text's interpretation is now taken for granted, and it can explain the plethora of interpretations of each text over time, but exactly where and how these interpretations originate has been hotly contested. A text is not fully in control of its own interpretation, as readers' judgements of the text's meaning (and its worth) impact upon how they approach the text and how they interpret it. Fish in particular champions this viewpoint, arguing that interpretive communities are partly responsible for the production of a text's meaning, as the habits of a reader's community will prejudice that reader's approach to a text even before they read it.⁹⁷ I agree to a point – one need only consider how far Callimachean and intertextual turns have affected how Classicists tend to approach Latin literature (both of which affect how I approach Martial's use of the water motif in book 7 in chapter 4). Nevertheless, while the interpretive community provides a frame of approach to the text, this text must have some kind of inherent core of meaning that ensures that when the reader sees 'water' they understand 'water' and do not (unless prompted otherwise) understand 'fire'. Indeed, Umberto Eco argues that while words have a theoretically unlimited semiosis (an unending chain of signification) there has to be some way in which interpretations are constrained.⁹⁸ As such, Eco views reading as a mediation between the expectations of the author (which cannot be reconstructed from the text itself), the words on the page of the text, and the reader's act of interpretation.⁹⁹ Reading is a creative act on the part of the reader, but one should not forget that the reader follows hermeneutic pathways that are set out for them, not only by their reading community but also by the text itself. What has become clear from reader response critics and reception theorists alike is that reading is an act of synthesis that draws from the text, social attitudes to reading, and the reader's own experience of the text and literature in general. My own 'cumulative' reading model therefore bears in mind that the reader's sequential progression through a book is based on a cumulative, developmental understanding of the book's identity, but also that this reading is also affected by the reader's previous experiences with related texts, as well as the influence of their reading culture and of their general reading history. Each reader's interpretation of any text is individual, but it is also restricted to some extent by what the text contains.

So far my exploration of cumulative reading has focused on general theories of how readers negotiate meaning with a text, but the process of how that happens is equally important. This process, known as the "phenomenology of reading", is the reader's act of linking the constituent parts of a text together (its words, sentences, paragraphs, and chapters) to gradually develop an understanding of the

⁹⁷ Fish (1980) 14.

⁹⁸ Eco (1990) 6-7.

⁹⁹ Eco (1990) 50-1.

text as a whole.¹⁰⁰ By exploring this phenomenology, one can further understand how texts affect readers and how readers come to perceive texts as wholes.

Iser's central concept of the phenomenology of reading argues that while readers read they have a projection of the text in their mind which constantly updates as they progress through the work. For Iser, the reader has a 'wandering viewpoint' of the text, which he defines as their "continual interplay between modified expectations and transformed memories" of what they have already read.¹⁰¹ Thus, although the reader progresses linearly through a text by turning pages or unrolling the scroll, their understanding of the work's key themes adjusts on a more sporadic basis as aspects of the text remind them of previous events and frustrate or confirm earlier presumptions.¹⁰² The cycle of poems on Postumus in book 2 of the *Epigrams* (which I discussed above) can be used to explain the development of a reader's 'wandering viewpoint'. At first Martial simply states that he prefers not to kiss Postumus (2.10), piquing the reader's interest but not satisfying their curiosity. At his next appearance (2.12) Postumus appears soaked in perfume, which Martial judges as evidence for the character's desire to cover up an offensive smell from within, triggering the reader to update their viewpoint and to begin considering what smell could cause the poet to avoid Postumus' kisses. Significantly, while Martial states his concern about Postumus' overly sweet-smelling kisses at 2.10 he leaves it to the reader to understand the joke that his character has an *os impurum* caused by oral sex. The poet heavily implies that the man's mouth is the source of the stench, but it is the reader who has to make sense of the joke. When the poet repeats the Postumus theme at 2.21-3 the reader's viewpoint of the cycle is reinforced – Postumus' kisses are to be avoided – but never beyond implication (2.23 stresses that the epigrammatist will not name his subject to avoid litigation, again strengthening the concept that Martial's complaints amount to defamation). The poems never explicitly say that Postumus performs oral sex, and instead compel the reader to add to the meaning of the text itself to make sense of it. Similarly at 2.21, the reader calls to mind their previous readings of Postumus (2.10 & 2.12) to make sense of the joke; although the sequential reader of book 2 progresses linearly through the text, their understanding of its key themes (e.g. the Postumus cycle) forges links between poems that bypasses the direct sequence of epigrams. The reader's understanding of each poem takes into account the epigrams that border its edges, but also relies on a memory of other items that preceded that poem's reading. The reader's ideation of the book is thus cumulative, updating with new information and prepared to adapt whenever similar themes and/or language are encountered. Furthermore, when the reader goes back to reread these

¹⁰⁰ Although Iser (1978) never overtly defines what the 'phenomenology of reading' precisely means, his section title at p. 105 ("Phenomenology of Reading: the Processing of the Literary Text") makes it clear that he is exploring the cognitive reading process. Holub (1984) 89 describes Iser's 'wandering viewpoint' (which I examine in the next paragraph) as a concept central to Iser's phenomenology of reading.

¹⁰¹ Iser (1978) 111.

¹⁰² Cognitive studies have also shown that readers develop hypotheses for a text's structure as they read, and constantly check and revise these viewpoints based on future input as they receive it. Cf. Elbow (2006) 629.

poems they will enjoy the text in a more experienced way, understanding that for Martial the act of avoiding kisses is synonymous for the kisser's mouth being befouled by oral sex.

A cumulative reading of any text, then, must acknowledge that while the sequential reader progresses linearly through the text their perception of that text is not bound to the progression of that sequence (the fourth poem of the book, for instance, might remind the reader of the work's second poem, bypassing the third in the process). This argument is central to discussions of intratextuality, which explore how a text forms links between separate parts of itself through lexical and thematic similarity. Indeed, in her overview of intratextuality Alison Sharrock observes that readers do not approach texts as a simple causal chain but instead are able to join together links that could be spread apart very widely over the course of the text.¹⁰³ It follows that:

reading intratextually means looking at the text from different directions (backwards as well as forwards), chopping it up in various ways, building it up again, contracting and expanding its boundaries both within the *opus* and outside it.¹⁰⁴

For Sharrock reading is not a passive process, but an active attempt by the reader to produce a mental image of the text's unity in order to make sense of the whole work. As she notes, western readers are trained to search for a comfortable unity in a text, but there does not need to be a comfortable unity present in every text.¹⁰⁵ If the *Epigrams* do indeed have an overall unity that encourages their reading as a collected text (rather than a collection of texts) it is a weaker one than that of traditional, more narratively driven genres like epic.¹⁰⁶ As such it is perhaps unsurprising that scholars describe the apparent chaos of the *Epigrams* as the defining feature of its overall structure (or lack thereof). For Rimell, the chaotic variation of subject matter is akin to a jostling crowd that represents an "ordered disorder, or disordered order" that only simulates a lack of structure.¹⁰⁷ For Fitzgerald this jostling is described as a structural tactic of juxtaposed opposites that, while aesthetically engaging, does not lend itself to a coherent overall structure.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, it was this apparent chaos in the repeated rededication of individual books of the *Epigrams* that led White towards his theory of the existence of privately produced *libelli* to explain why Martial might publish such an unruly collection.¹⁰⁹ Yet, as Alessandro Barchiesi comments on the Posidippus Milan papyrus, "plasticity and instability of the overall design does not mean bad quality", and scholarship on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* has noted the appeal (and challenges) of a narrative epic whose emphasis on transformation problematize traditional concepts of

¹⁰³ Sharrock (2000) 35-6. Cf. Fish (1980) 46 on the multi-directionality of reading.

¹⁰⁴ Sharrock (2000) 5.

¹⁰⁵ Sharrock (2000) 33-8. This also demonstrates how one's reading culture prepares the reader for a certain way of thinking about texts – Sharrock's point is that western readers crave unity far more than eastern readers, which in turn affects how authors from these regions of the world approach writing (and understanding) texts.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. my earlier discussion of the 'perfect' Augustan book, p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Rimell (2008) 12 (on the crowd as a model for the *Epigrams*) & 156 (disordered order).

¹⁰⁸ Fitzgerald (2007) 7 & esp. 106-38.

¹⁰⁹ White (1974) 44 & 47-8. On the *libellus* theory, see pp. 7-9 above.

poetic unity.¹¹⁰ Martial's *Epigrams* at times push this structural plasticity to its breaking point, but the epigrammatist nevertheless encourages that his poems be read as a carefully collected text with a design behind the poems' placement. In fact, this very plasticity can encourage the reader to search for a continuity between the individual poems and explore potential intratextual connections.

On the larger scale of the book itself, Sharrock's description of multi-directional intratextual reading is a useful model for conceptualising the plurality of potential links that the reader can create between different sections of the work. For a sequential reading of a book of epigrams, however, this wide-ranging understanding of the macrotext (the book) is complemented by the reader's reaction to the microtext (its individual poems). At a basic level, the reader judges one poem against those in its vicinity, weighing these poems against not only the rest of the book but their immediate context as well, engaging in the creative act of forming a hermeneutic bridge (however weak) between these poems. In his analysis of the phenomenology of reading Iser proposed that in the empty spaces (*Leerstellen*) in a narrative, the spaces between appearances of characters where events that happen 'off-stage' are unexplained, the reader is stimulated "into filling the blanks [*Leerstellen*] with projections" themselves to make sense of what is not said in the text.¹¹¹ Iser's *Leerstellen* help to explain how readers make sense of gaps of exposition in the narrative on a broad level across the whole text, but the concept of the reader filling in blanks in the narrative can also be applied to gaps between epigrams as well.

One useful analogue for exploring the role of the reader filling in the gaps between sequentially ordered poems is the comic book.¹¹² Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, a seminal work on the structure of comic books, seeks to define how comics encourage their reader to make sense of their combination of text and image, himself combining both text and image to draw out and depict his key points as he makes them. One point that McCloud focuses upon is the act of linking individual panels of comics together to create a sequential narrative. McCloud's approach to analysing comic books is primarily focused on its visual aspects, but there are underlying similarities between epigram books and comic books that allow the use of a similar method for analysing the *Epigrams*. If a comic book is, in McCloud's words, composed of "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer", then the individual panels of a comic can be seen as integral, ordered parts of a larger contexture just like the poems in the *Epigrams*.¹¹³ There are some obvious differences – comic books belong to a combined visual and textual medium while Martial's poems are solely textual, and Martial's books are non-narrative texts while comic books (often termed graphic novels) are usually driven by narrative progression – but the

¹¹⁰ Barchiesi (2005) 338. Feldherr (2002) 170 & 179 especially emphasises that the key principle of transformation in the *Metamorphoses* encourages new interpretations with every rereading of the text.

¹¹¹ Iser (1978) 168.

¹¹² Sapsford (2012) 29 also links Iser and McCloud's arguments together in a discussion of reader response theory, but I develop these ideas further here.

¹¹³ McCloud (1993) 9.

transition between comic book panels and epigrams shares the same root process. Furthermore, unlike Morello's model of the photomosaic for the classical contexture, the comic book model retains the intrinsic presence of gaps between epigrams – in contrast the photomosaic has no gaps, only overlapping images.¹¹⁴

To explain how a reader transitions between images on the comic book page McCloud literalises the hermeneutic gap in cognition as the physical gap between the panels itself, which he defines as the 'gutter', the blank space where "*human imagination* takes two separate images and *transforms* them into a single idea."¹¹⁵ Whereas Iser's wandering viewpoint is a constant update of lectorial projections, McCloud's theorisation of the gutter envisages a continuous string of individually linked panels. Both theorists describe a similar cognitive act (the creation of unity from individual semantic elements) but on different levels that help emphasise certain aspects of the phenomenology of reading: McCloud focuses on immediate cognition, Iser on overall thematic flow. This is apparent from McCloud's example for his explanation of the gutter. The artist makes a simple point: between two panels (reproduced in fig. 5 below), one which depicts a man swinging an axe at another character and shouting "now you die!!" the other cutting to a night-time cityscape echoing with a scream, the reader understands the death of the second character even though it is not explicitly depicted. McCloud explains that although he drew the axe being raised "I'm not the one who let it *drop* or decided how *hard* the blow, or *who* screamed, or *why*. *That*, dear reader, was *your special crime*, each of you committing it in your own *style*."¹¹⁶ The artist thus draws the general overview of what happens (an axe is swung with a threat of death, a scream echoes) but the reader decides/interprets the specifics themselves (specifics that are heavily suggested by the author but not detailed by them). For McCloud the gutter between panels encourages a progression in time or a scene change, but the details of what happens, the links between panels, are realised in the creative mind of the reader.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ On the photomosaic, see pp. 16-7 above.

¹¹⁵ McCloud (1993) 66 with original emphasis. The passage discussed here is reproduced as fig. 5.

¹¹⁶ McCloud (1993) 68 with original emphasis.

¹¹⁷ McCloud (1993) 68-9.

Image Removed Due To Copyright Restrictions

Figure 5 - Explanation of the 'gutter' in McCloud (1993) 66.

While McCloud's discussion of comic book gutters is a useful depiction of how reading takes place, Neil Cohn has recently challenged McCloud on the matter, arguing that the empty space of the gutter holds no meaning and that it is the shared content and union of McCloud's panels that provide the idea of an axe murderer without explicitly showing such an event.¹¹⁸ Similarly for epigram, one cannot see the link between two poems until the second has been read. Nevertheless, the gutter between panels and comics is the perfect moment for the reader to pause and think, to update their wandering viewpoint of the work, and to review what they have seen. Cohn is right that McCloud does not depict a murder that he nevertheless encourages the reader to imagine, but McCloud is also correct that it is the reader who focuses on any salient details (the depth of the axe blow, the pitch of the scream, where the blow hits, etc). As I argued above, reading is a mediated act of interpretation between the text and its reader, of which neither takes the full responsibility. Cohn critiques McCloud for overemphasising and over-literalising the role of the gutter in creating unity between panels, but by doing so he passes over its importance; the gutter is structurally integral for any comic book. Each panel depicts a moment separated from the next by a gutter, and in passing over the gutters between moments the reader joins them conceptually together in an unconscious act. Cohn is correct that a blank space cannot itself contain any inherent meaning (besides emptiness), but what his criticism of McCloud reveals is that the gutter is important, although not the precise understanding of the gutter that McCloud reaches. It is not the gutter between two panels (or two poems) that provides a specific moment for the reader to string the sense together between these images, but the gutter which immediately follows them. In the intermediary gutter between panels the reader prepares their expectations of the following panel to follow on narratologically, but these projections are updated in the gutter immediately following the two panels in order to construct the reader's individual interpretation of what has been depicted for them (I depict this below in fig. 6). Similarly for a reader of epigrams, individual textual units that hover in empty space, the gutter immediately following two poems is the place where the reader can pause and attempt to link the poems they have just read into their overall viewpoint of the text's unity. Iser observed that the presence of blanks was pivotal in the reader-text relationship, with their presence stimulating "the process of ideation to be performed by the reader on terms set by the text."¹¹⁹ Likewise for comic and poetry books, the gutter is integral for the reading experience and the construction of the work's overall unity, a space for the reader to recollect how their expectations have been realised or thwarted.

¹¹⁸ Cohn (2010) 135-6.

¹¹⁹ Iser (1978) 169.

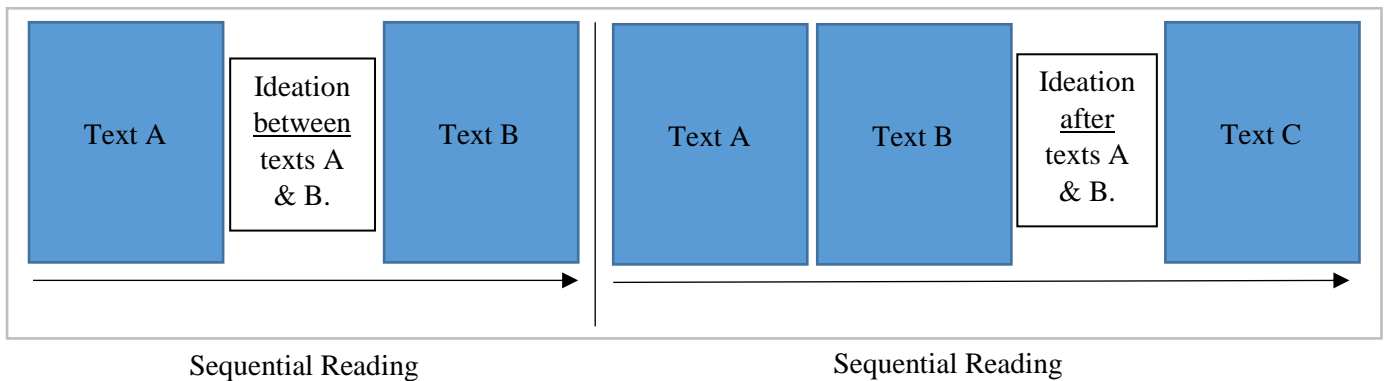


Figure 6 - Lectorial ideation of links between texts A & B and their contexture within the ‘gutter’. McCloud’s view (left) versus my own (right).

Furthermore, the existence of a hermeneutic gutter between epigrams explains Martial’s characteristics of epigrammatic bleeding and the jarring impact of his thematic juxtapositions. These interpretive spaces between poems act as a boundary space between each epigram, but their presence also encourages the reader to look for linking factors between the individual poems (indeed, this is McCloud’s whole point in fig. 5). Even if the poems are not directly relatable (or appear completely antithetical to one another), their very placement in sequence with a hermeutic gap/*Leerstelle* between them encourages a level of mutual belonging, however weak that might be. This has been observed in studies of the contexture, but McCloud has also argued for this overall unity in panel transitions that enact what he terms the “non-sequitur”.¹²⁰ For McCloud “such transitions may not make ‘sense’ in any traditional way, but still a relationship of *some* sort will inevitably develop... By creating a *sequence* with two or more images, we are *endowing* them with a *single overriding identity*, and *forcing* the viewer to consider them as a *whole*.”¹²¹ The juxtaposition of diversely themed epigrams thus encourages the reader to look for a link, to read for the whole, even if that temptation is ultimately denied. Nevertheless these poems are endowed with a specific position in the book and the larger corpus, which in turn attributes to them a sense of overall belonging. At the end of book 7, for instance, the general closural feel of the book is interrupted in the penultimate epigram itself. 7.97 celebrates the audience the poet will receive as the book is sent to Umbria, 7.99 focuses on the emperor reading the book and summing up the poet’s merits. In contrast, 7.98, a single hexameter line, simply states “you, Castor, buy everything: thus you will end up selling everything.”¹²² This poem has no direct link to the epigrams

¹²⁰ Fraistat (1985) 7 & McCloud (1993) 72, cf. n. 47 above.

¹²¹ McCloud (1993) 73 with original emphasis. McCloud’s speech at this point is delivered not just by the artist’s avatar but by an array of intentionally bizarre images across a series of panels, evoking the spirit of the non-sequitur if not the reality (the continual flow of understandable speech denies a truly random sequential experience).

¹²² Mart. 7.98: *omnia, Castor, emis: sic fiet, ut omnia vendas.*

either side of it, and the fact that it is a monostich compounds the issue further by offering few options for potential lexical interplay.¹²³ Even so, the poem's very presence at the end of the book invites the reader to consider the potential roles that the epigram could play: it could offer a witty break from traditional closural poems to reinforce their own closural nature through juxtaposition; it could remind readers of the short poems that punctuate the book and the *Epigrams* and fittingly round off the book that way; or, alternatively, the poem could be out of place in the corpus (which is unlikely due to the stability of the manuscript tradition).¹²⁴ The accuracy of these potential conclusions is of less consequence than the reader's need to produce them: the placement of this poem beside other poems suggests an overarching order and a structure, and invites the reader to use their own creativity to fill the gutters between these epigrams.

The process of reading a book of epigrams is thus one of constant change and development, which is not as chaotic as it might appear at first. The epigrams' arrangement in a sequence creates a degree of unity and consistency in and of itself. The reader does, as Fitzgerald has observed, bring their own experience of reading other poems to the act of reading a collection of epigrams (those poems which they have read so far in the book, but also those they have read before that might influence their current interpretation of the text), but the sequence itself limits the potentially limitless chain of associations the reader can create.¹²⁵ Of course if the reader departs from this sequence their view of the epigrams may change, but the book itself (and its overall structure) is rooted in a sequential reading approach. Whether one reads sequentially or not, however, reading is always a cumulative process – the reader's perspective on a text and its structure is developed as they progress through the text, constantly updating their wandering viewpoint as they are reminded of an earlier theme or character. In particular, it is in the gutters between poems that the reader of a book of epigrams is invited to reflect upon what they have so far experienced. At this point their expectation of the text's identity is frustrated or satisfied, and their horizon of expectations is accordingly updated to accommodate what they have read. Each poem in Martial's corpus has a triple identity – it is independent, it has a specific position in the book, and also in his overall literary output – and as they progress through the text the reader's understanding of these three roles is updated. Reading a book of epigrams, then, can be a disjointed experience, but it need not be an unstructured one. The reader's understanding of each poem and the corpus can change over time, but the sequence remains in place (just as when a reader's perception of the *Aeneid* dramatically changes whether or not they deem it a 'sincere' political work – their interpretation of the whole epic radically shifts, but the text is still structured and unified).

¹²³ On lexical puns and repetitions as a method of aiding sequential linkage of epigrams (particularly with the names of characters), see Maltby (2006) 161-3.

¹²⁴ See n. 15 above on Martial's manuscript tradition.

¹²⁵ Fitzgerald (2007) 198.

This thesis argues for a sequential, cumulative reading of Martial's *Epigrams*, and embraces the concept of a book of epigrams as a structured *libellus* to recontextualise the *Epigrams* as a contexture. Over the next four chapters I outline various arguments to examine not only how the epigrammatist portrays the act of reading the *Epigrams*, but also how he structures his individual books and the wider corpus to create an overarching sense of unity for his reader. In chapter two I focus exclusively on Martial's *lector studiosus* as a figure within the text, demonstrating how Martial uses the language of the tomb and spectacle to characterise his own reader as a subordinate figure in the relationship between reader and author to encourage them to undertake a sequential reading of the text. Chapter three then focuses on book 7 to analyse how the epigrammatist's opening 8 poems establish a thematic centrepiece which holds the rest of the book together, linking the thematic progression of this book to the emperor's victorious return journey from his campaigns along the Danube. In chapter four I return to the same book to explore how the poet uses the motif of water to further bind the book together, both over the course of the book with a broad Argonautic theme, but also by uniting a non-thematically linked sequence of poems to aid the reader's progression through the epigrams. My final, and longest, chapter takes a broader view of the corpus by analysing how the prose prefaces introduce the books they precede but also situate these books firmly within their place in the wider sequence of Martial's poetic publications, problematizing their own paratextuality by utilising the epigrammatic bleeding that usually appears between poems, but that here occurs between books.

My chapters cover the length and breadth of Martial's epigrammatic corpus in its explorations of themes of reading and its discussion of the paratextual prefaces in my second and fifth chapters, but the central two chapters use book 7 as their case study. To analyse thematic progression and book unity in particular detail I have decided to focus in on one book, but many of the general observations I make about cyclic development can be applied to the other *libelli*. There were several reasons for focusing on book 7 in particular. In general, discussions of Martial's book structure have focused on book 1, which Fitzgerald deems Martial's "masterpiece", or on book 4 when analysing its progressive water cycle, so analysing another book was preferable.¹²⁶ I lighted on book 7 partly due to its centrality in the corpus – this book marks the apex of Martial's poetic career and Domitian's political power, and the start of the final triad of books on the emperor that build to a fever-pitch at book 9 – but the book itself (like my study) is especially concerned with literary matters. This is a book where Martial makes reference to Lucan (7.21-3), Valerius Flaccus (7.19), and (probably) the satirist Juvenal (7.24 & 7.91), and which emphasises the poet's literary fame at Rome in the form of Pompeius Auctus (7.51-2) and away from the city in his Umbrian audience at 7.97. Despite book 7's interest in these broad literary concerns and its own self-awareness as a poetry book, Guillermo Galán Vioque's commentary on book 7 pays far

¹²⁶ Fitzgerald (2007) 68. Both Greenwood (1998) and Lorenz (2004) examined the water motif in book 4. Cf. pp. 9-10 above.

more attention to the individuality of each epigram than the larger structure of the book.¹²⁷ As such, I decided to explore book 7's thematic structure in more detail to show exactly how one can read for the book in Martial. What I hope this thesis brings out in its focus on book 7 and the wider corpus is a sense of the ever-present tension in Martial between the small individual unit (the poem/book) and the larger whole (the corpus), even as I detail how the poet (and the reader) can overcome the apparent contradiction of a book of epigrams.

¹²⁷ Galán Vioque (2002) 9-12 examines the "subject-matter and ordering" of book 7, but notes (p. 9) that the book "does not follow predetermined rules or respect a fixed criterion." He identifies several common themes in this section, but generally prefers in-depth analysis of the individual poems rather than the book's overall development in his commentary.

(Re)Constructing a Reader: Literary Fame & *lector* in Martial's *Epigrams*

Contemporary Literary Fame in Martial and Pliny

Among the Latin poets Martial is unique in the celebration of his own literary celebrity and the physical movement of his texts across the Roman world. His famous opening lines “here he is, whom you read, whom you ask for, known throughout the world, Martial” are a bombastic introduction to the poetic persona and his literary success, but also demand the question of just how famous the poet actually was in antiquity.¹ The poet engages with his anonymous reader (the *lector*, i.e. the reader who is constructed within the text) over the course of his *Epigrams*, and repeatedly asserts the spread of his work and his fame to all reaches of the empire.² While the exact distribution and readership of Martial's poetry is ultimately unknowable, his consistent engagement with an anonymised reader reflects the general trend in literature of the first century AD to report an ever-widening audience at Rome and into the provinces. In this chapter I explore how Martial addresses and characterises his *lector*, and how this reveals a strategy to attempt to guide the actual reader of the *Epigrams* towards a specific, sequential reading approach to the text. Overall, the poet's attempts to exert influence over the reader by creating a model for them to follow in the text itself are indicative of growing concerns over misinterpretation that come with an increasingly widening general circulation of his text.

Martial's claim to be known throughout the world with a kind of fame that most poets achieve posthumously (1.1.4-6) strongly conforms to the *topos* of eternal literary fame in Latin literature, but he also states his success in more materialistic terms. Long before the fall of the Republic, Ennius supposedly wrote for his epitaph that he would “continue flying, alive, through the mouths of men” because of his poetry.³ This *topos* continued in the Augustan era when Horace claimed to have “erected a monument more perennial [*perennius*] than bronze” with his *Odes* (alluding to this Ennian tradition of fame with an onomastic pun), and Ovid ended his *Metamorphoses* with a prolonged statement on his achievement of eternal life through his poetry.⁴ For Martial, however, fame was to be enjoyed by the living, and in this respect his formula “*toto notus in orbe Martialis*” closely echoes (yet juxtaposes itself with) similar refrains in Ovid's work, particularly in his exilic verse.⁵ Martial was heavily influenced

¹ Mart. 1.1.1-2: *hic est quem legis ille, quem requiris | toto notus in orbe Martialis*. Morelli (2005) 165 observes that Martial did not influence tomb inscription until end of the fourth century, when it became more of an aristocratic trend to model inscriptions on his poetry. Neger (2012) 14 reads *toto notus in orbe* as an obvious joke to draw the reader into the work. Williams (2004) 260-1 notes the possibility that Mart. 1.1 could have been published for a later, second edition of the text.

² Mart. 1.1.4, 1.113.4, 2.8.1, 4.55.27, 5.16.2, 7.12.12, 9.praef.ep.6, 10.2.4-5, 11.2.7, 11.16.1 & 11.108.2. Cf. Larash (2004) iv n. 1 for a summary of poems that address the *lector* and the act of reading in general.

³ Enn. *Epigrams* 10 Warmington = 18 Vahlen, quoted in Cic. *Tusc.* 1.15.34: *volito vivus per ora virum*.

⁴ Hor. *Carm.* 3.30.1: *exegi monumentum aere perennius* & Ov. *Met.* 15.871-9. On Horace's pun on Ennius' name, see Feeney (1999) 17 n. 17 & Hardie (2007) 139.

⁵ Williams (2002) 426. Examples highlighted by Williams include: Ov. *Am.* 1.3.25, 1.15.8, 1.15.13; *Ars Am.* 2.740; *Rem. Am.* 363; *Her.* 15.28; *Trist.* 2.118 & 4.10.128. Cf. Mart. 5.15.12: “if glory comes after death, I am in no rush.”

by Ovid's portrayal of his own exile as a living death far removed from the city of Rome, and the Flavian poet took Ovid's language about life, death, and fame, and twisted it into a demonstration of how much more successful he was in contrast.⁶ This focus on contemporary fame, however, is also part of a larger engagement with poetic aesthetics. While Augustan poets praised literary fame (which was aimed at posterity), they tended to adopt an aesthetic of elite seclusion that damned literary celebrity (which was aimed at contemporary readers). Thus while Horace revelled in his creation of a grand monument at the end of *Odes* 3, at this book's beginning he professed a hatred of the *volgus*.⁷ Elsewhere in his poetry he denounces those that openly recite their work to all, and while elsewhere in the *Odes* Horace celebrates the fact that he will spread to the provinces and be read by Germans and Spaniards, he also depicts the thumbs of the *volgus* enjoying his poetry in the *Epistles* as a shamefully dirty (even sexual) act of fingering the sublime.⁸ As Luke Roman notes, Martial's discussion of his contemporary celebrity is a direct inversion of this Horatian model of elite restrictiveness that embraces the materialistic dissemination of his work to all, but I also believe that this is indicative of an era of a widening of readership at Rome and in the provinces.⁹

While the exact nature and presence of a 'book trade' in the first century AD is still hotly contested, Martial's claim to be read far and wide matches up to some extent to other evidence from this period.¹⁰ At the very least, it is striking that the first century saw a sharp increase in authors from Spain, the homeland of Martial, Lucan, the Senecae, and Quintilian, and that the emperor Trajan was of Spanish birth.¹¹ That such literary and learned figures could originate from the (admittedly rich and developed) provinces of Spain and prosper in the empire demonstrates that there was an increasing access to texts and the accoutrements of the elite in this period, perhaps borne from the spread of peace and prosperity that came from a more stable imperial system. Indeed, while Pliny the Younger's story of a Spaniard travelling all the way to Rome from Cadiz to meet the Augustan historian Livy smacks of the apocryphal, such a story could only exist and be treated as a legitimate tale in a society where books were circulating beyond "a small erudite urban elite."¹² To Pliny, the story is worth remembering because it is a remarkable example of a far-away reader choosing to engage with the physical author rather than their text, and it is significant that the Spaniard's knowledge of Livy only came from his

⁶ Rimell (2008) 184 & Roman (2001) 124. The ending of Ovid's exilic collection is particularly bleak, stressing that the poet has already lost everything to *Livor*: *Ov. Pont.* 4.16.47-52.

⁷ Hor. *Carm.* 3.1.1: *odi profanum volgus et arceo*.

⁸ Hor. *Serm.* 1.4.71-4, *Carm.* 2.20.13-20 & *Ep.* 1.20.11-2. On *contrecto* (present in this final example) as a byword for masturbation/stroking, see Adams (1982) 186. In Hor. *Ep.* 1.20.8 the reader is also described as the book's *amator*, which further sexualises the act of reading (cf. Mart. 7.97.10 for the same usage).

⁹ Roman (2001) 123.

¹⁰ Winsbury (2009) 63 & 179 and Hedrick (2011) 182-3 both deny the existence of a widespread book trade in this period due to the expenses in production. Iddeng (2007) 72 notes that the book trade must have been a small affair, but suggests that such a trade must have existed. Cat. 14.17-20's threat to rush to the *scrinia* of the bookshops and send Calvus a heap of worthless poets does suggest the practice of selling prepared editions of texts as well as made-to-order manuscripts.

¹¹ A similar point is made by Fantham (2013) 8.

¹² Iddeng (2007) 77 on Plin. *Ep.* 2.3.8.

own encounters with the historian's work.¹³ Thus when Martial and Pliny marvel that their works are sold and read as far as Vienne and Lyon in the southeast of France they are engaging in the stereotypical discourse of self-aggrandisement, as well as reporting the exciting news of their literary celebrity.¹⁴ Rex Winsbury maintains that Martial "presumably wasn't sure" whether he had actually reached Vienne since he reports that a rumour had reached him (*si vera est fama* 7.88.1), but it is noteworthy that the epigrammatist finds the rumour so compelling.¹⁵ Likewise, while Pliny expresses surprise at his news of a readership in Gaul it is because he did not know that there were bookshops in Lyon in particular (not because he could not conceive bookshops outside of Rome in the first place).¹⁶ Archaeological evidence for a book trade in Gaul and Spain is lacking, but the continued reports from the literary sources of a contemporary readership in these areas should not be dismissed out of hand. These authors are both engaging with the reality of a wider general readership.

Martial's depiction of his general readership is distorted and exaggerated by his continuation of the traditional discourse of literary *fama*, but it is worth noting that a similar self-reflection (and celebration) of literary celebrity can also be seen in Pliny's contemporaneous letter collection. In book 9, the volume in which Pliny has already emphasised that his poetry has spread to Lyon at 9.11, the letter-writer provides two anecdotes that testify to the spread of his work beyond the literary coteries at Rome. The first story is an episode that Tacitus has previously related to Pliny after a trip to watch the chariot-racing, and provides flattering proof of the senator's public identity as an author:

He [Tacitus] was telling me that a Roman equestrian had sat with him at the latest races, and that this man (after various and learned conversations) asked: "Are you an Italian or a provincial?" He replied "You know me, and indeed it is from your literary activities [*ex studiis*]." To this the man said: "You are Tacitius, then, or Pliny?" I cannot express how pleasing I find it that our names are given back to our literature [*litteris*] as if they belonged to the literature and not to men, because both of us are known from studies to these people, to whom we would otherwise be unknown [*ignotus*]. (Plin. *Ep.* 9.23.2-3)

Pliny then moves onto a manifestation of the *celebritas* (renown/celebrity) of his name at a private banquet he had attended. One guest who has never been to Rome before is invited to identify Pliny through broad discussion of his work, which has developed a following away from the capital:

Reclining with me was the notable Fadius Rufinus, and above him was a citizen of his municipality [*municeps*] who had on that day come to the city for the first time. Rufinus

¹³ Plin. *Ep.* 2.3.9.

¹⁴ Mart. 7.88 & Plin. *Ep.* 9.11.

¹⁵ Winsbury (2009) 178.

¹⁶ Plin. *Ep.* 9.11.2: *bibliopolas Lugduni esse non putabam*.

was pointing me out to him and said "Do you see this man?" Much then was said about my literary activities [*studiis nostris*], and that man said "It is Pliny!" I will truly admit that I take great profit from my labour, for if Demosthenes was rightly pleased because an old Attic woman recognised him thus - "This is Demosthenes!" - then ought I not rejoice in the celebrity [*celebritate*] of my name? (Plin. *Ep.* 9.23.4-5)

Pliny's letter clearly links these two events together with the central theme of his literary celebrity, and there is a separation of Pliny the man from 'Pliny' the text. At §3 Pliny makes explicit the contrast that while a nameless citizen knows Tacitus and Pliny's *litterae*, they themselves are *ignoti* to him. Indeed, knowledge of both Pliny and Tacitus is achieved by *studia*, the act of reading itself, but also of writing and otherwise engaging with literature (Pliny's own *studiis* at §4 is a parallel to the *studiis* of the equestrian at §2), rather than direct interaction with the authors. This play on onymity and celebrity is heightened ever further by Pliny's choice to anonymise the men who identify both him and Tacitus: the *municeps* in the second anecdote can only be identified through his link to Fadius Rufinus, but Tacitus' equestrian is completely unknown. Indeed, the location of Rufinus' *municipium* is completely ignored. This may well have been known by the contemporary aristocrat at Rome, but not to the modern reader or to the general reader whom the epistolographer discusses in this letter. In short, Pliny's fame is in his name and his work, which exists in some form beyond the author's own performance of the text at its first recital.¹⁷ However widespread Pliny's *litterae* had become by this point (and it is unlikely that Rufinus' *municipium* was outside the Italian peninsula), it is clear that Pliny revels in the spread of 'Pliny' to the further reaches of the empire, and that even men who had never had the chance to visit the city before had some knowledge of contemporary literature.¹⁸ As William Johnson observes, Pliny creates in the *Letters* a "picture of the world as he wishes it to exist" with himself positioned as a 'Great Man' around whom literature and taste circulate, but the types of situations he portrays in this letter can be found across literature from the first century.¹⁹ Martial claims to be pointed out on the street by his fans, and Persius adopts a more Horatian disdain of those who enjoy public identification by their readers, which in itself suggests that these sorts of events were not uncommon.²⁰

This chapter is not so much about these kinds of events of public acclaim, but about how Martial treats the kind of reader both he and Pliny celebrate in their works. In particular, it focuses on the *lector studiosus*, not only the keen and avid reader of Martial, but a studied reader (like the anonymous reader of Pliny in *Ep.* 9.23) who engages in *studium* to truly understand the work and its author (or so the text claims). The anonymising effect of a widening general readership beyond the narrow literary cliques at Rome had an effect on the relationship between author and reader that was not always as positive as the

¹⁷ So H. Parker (2009) 212-3, *contra* Wiseman (2015) 9.

¹⁸ For a further comparison of Pliny and Martial's attitudes to their general readership, see Hayes (forthcoming).

¹⁹ Johnson (2010) 35.

²⁰ Mart. 5.13.3-4 & Pers. 1.28-40.

one Pliny portrays in *Letters* 9.23. The plagiarist and the *malignus interpret* are both figures of anxiety in the *Epigrams*, and, as I explain below, the poet's emphasis on the text's performativity, its inscriptional origins, and in the characterisation of a 'good' reader's characteristics represent a bid by the authorial persona in the text to exert some authorial control over the reader beyond the text itself.

All the Text a Stage: Martial's *lector* as Performer

Later on in this chapter I will explore how Martial encourages his reader to adopt certain characteristics of reading, but the next two sections examine the atmosphere the poet creates in the *Epigrams* to enforce an acceptance of this lectorial persona upon the reader. In particular, Martial typifies his poetry as an aural endeavour, with the *lector* as audience member and/or reciter to a group of people. To Martial the *lector* is not just a shadowy figure representative of anyone engaging with the text itself, but the person performing this text to themselves or others. Such an emphasis upon the text's performativity brings with it the expectations that readers would carry with them from attending recitations of unfinished works as well as the dramatic arts (in particular comedy). Indeed, Martial describes his book as a *theatrum* for his readers to enter at 1.praef.18, placing his whole work into the realm of spectacle and performance. While the poet revels in his ever-spreading *fama* which rattles across the world, highlighting the noise of his own poems' recitation, he also gives the reader a role to play within his own personal theatre as both actor and audience-member. For Martial all the text is a stage, and his readers are simply other players in the great spectacle he has prepared. Once the epigrammatist has his reader engaged in the performativity of his work (however fictive the reality of this might be when the reader approaches the physical text), they are drawn into the world of the *Epigrams* as the kind of *lector* the poet steadily defines as a 'good' Model Reader of the text.²¹

Part of the game that Martial plays with his reader involves the ambiguity of the term *lector*. This term, literally a "reader", evokes a variety of different contexts – not only any person who engages in some way with the text, but also in the specific context of a professional reader who reads the text out to others at a recitation, a banquet, or in any private context.²² These different contexts of orality and anorality, privacy and publicity, individuality and communality, have ambiguities similar to those in the modern English term "audience". An audience of a work (musical, textual, or otherwise) need not actually ever hear the work itself, or might also engage with the work in a more visual way (as with films, television, and computer games). In the ancient world, however, professional *lectores* (the term I will continue to use in this section for those slaves or freedmen who read to their masters) were a standard part of the staff – Pliny the Younger, for instance, found them so essential that they travelled

²¹ I discuss Model Readers in more detail below, pp. 59-70.

²² The Greek terms ἀναγνώστης (reader) and ἀναγιγνώσκειν (to read) have the same ambiguities; see Starr (1991) 337 n.1. The premise of Plato's *Phaedrus* is that Phaedrus wants to read a speech to Socrates in a private spot (228d-e). Similarly Lucian *Lexiphanes* 1 & 16 includes in his dialogue a reading out (ἀνάγνωθι, ἀναγνώσεως) of a text to an audience. The same verb (ἀναγιγνώσκειν) is used by Dio Chrys. *Or.* 20.10 to refer to a public poetry recitation, and by Ar. *Ran.* 52 to refer to Dionysus' private reading act.

everywhere with him alongside his note-takers.²³ Indeed, in a world before reading glasses the presence of professional *lectores* was essential, but ancient authors also describe the convenient use of such readers to access the text irrespective of the accessor's capacities of sight.²⁴ In short, reading in the ancient world was frequently a noisy business, and could provide a continuous hassle for those seeking privacy (even in the baths).²⁵ Thus when Martial celebrates that his book is sent to a town in Umbria and read everywhere (dinner parties, the forum, houses, crossroads, colonnades, and shops are all mentioned) he does not mean that his scrolls are being thumbed through in silence.²⁶ Instead something more dynamic and performative is imagined. Whenever Martial mentions a *lector*, therefore, the text's performativity is brought firmly to mind even if the text is actually being read to oneself.

That is not to say, however, that private reading did not occur or was unexpected in antiquity. Much debate has focused on a particular passage of Augustine's *Confessions*, where the bishop shows alarm that Ambrose was reading in silence.²⁷ As Alexander Gavrilo demonstrated in the 1990s, however, this is not a sense of alarm at the act of reading in silence itself (which Augustine himself shows proficiency for later in the *Confessions*), but of the act of silence in a context requiring oral readings and discussions of the Bible.²⁸ Silent readings were perfectly normal in antiquity, and there are numerous examples of Roman authors describing the practice as commonplace.²⁹ Martial too depicts solitary reading contexts, most notably in the case of women, following the elegiac tradition of authors like Propertius who imagined a *puella* whiling away the hours with a few of his elegies until her lover arrived.³⁰ Indeed, when Pliny the Younger complains that he has an eye ailment that makes reading difficult he complains that he can "study with [his] ears alone", which implies that individual reading of a text with one's own eyes was a perfectly normal activity.³¹ The vagueness of the term "read" (*legere*) and "reader" (*lector*) ultimately makes it impossible to prove one way or the other that texts were read out loud or in silence, but a mixture of the two is plausible.³² Whichever way one reconstructs

²³ Plin. *Ep.* 9.20.2. For professional *lectores*, see Starr (1991) 338. Pliny's contemporaries also made constant use of professional *lectores* – *Ep.* 3.1.4 describes how Spurrina has a book read to himself and to friends, 3.5.12 details how Pliny the Elder used to have books read to him even during his dinner.

²⁴ Winsbury (2009) 6. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 18.6 encourages dramatic texts to be read aloud to the orator. Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.16 observes that some texts are better understood when read to oneself, others when listened to. On these comments cf. H. Parker (2009) 200 & Starr (1991) 343.

²⁵ Hor. *Sat.* 1.4.75-6 & Mart. 3.44.

²⁶ Mart. 7.97.11-2: *te convivias, te forum sonabit | aedes, compita, porticus, tabernae.*

²⁷ August. *Conf.* 6.3.3-4.

²⁸ August. *Conf.* 8.12.29, on which see Gavrilo (1997) 63-4. Johnson (2010) 9 questions whether the debate over orality has led to deeper understandings of classical texts, and so instead shifts his analysis towards an investigation of ancient reading cultures. McCutcheon (2015) 3-17 provides an overview of the scholarly debate, arguing that book history should not be linked to narratives of intellectual evolution (pp. 19-20).

²⁹ H. Parker (2009) 196.

³⁰ Mart. 11.16.7-10. Prop. 3.3.19-20.

³¹ Plin. *Ep.* 7.21.1: *solisque auribus studeo.*

³² Sapsford (2012) 197 sees the constant use of the *os impurum* theme in Martial as a reminder that the reader is not currently using their mouth to express the text, instead preferring a silent reading model. This interpretation is too rigid given the prevalence of oral reading practices in the *Epigrams*, but does demonstrate the metapoetic potential of a readership capable of silent as well as oral reading.

reading in Martial, it is especially telling that the poet focuses so much on reading as an act of performing rather than of receiving the text; the noun *auditor* (“listener”) appears only three times in the corpus, while *lector* appears in eighteen poems, not to mention the numerous references to the act of reading itself.³³ As a poet, Martial is far more interested in discussing how his text is disseminated than in who necessarily listens to it – he is focused primarily on the text’s performativity and the reader’s role in that performance.

In fact, part of the performance that Martial focuses on is the noise that epigram makes when recited. Martial’s poetry resounds with *fama*, and by resounding it produces its own *fama*. This is particularly evident at the end of 7.97, where the poet has sent his *libellus* to a patron for their delectation. Martial describes how the book becomes known throughout the populace because of his patron’s love of its poems:

o quantum tibi nominis paratur!
o quae gloria! quam frequens amator!
te convivia, te forum sonabit,
aedes, compita, porticus, tabernae.
uni mitteris, omnibus legeris. (7.97.9-13)

Oh how great a name is being readied for you!
 Oh what glory! How frequent your lover!
 You the dinner party, you the forum will sound out,
 The houses, crossroads, colonnades, and shops.
 To one you'll be sent, by all you'll be read.

As discussed above, these lines imagine the recitation of the work in a variety of public spaces as the poet’s work multiplies in fame – sent to one man the poems are read by all the townsfolk. The verb that Martial uses to describe his poetry’s diffusion across the town – *sonare* – refers not only to the act of making a noise, but to a specifically metallic kind of noise. Throughout the *Epigrams* *sonare* stands as a synonym for *canere* and *legere*, but is also widely used to describe high pitched metallic ringing of bronze coins, iron weaponry, and bells.³⁴ For Martial and his poetry, *gloria* and a *nomen* are produced from the metallic ringing (and echoing) of his words by unknown and untouchable readers. These readers are as ephemeral as the voices of *Fama* herself, who in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* lives in a house

³³ Listeners: Mart. 7.52.6, 9.81.1 (in conjunction with *lectores*) & 12.praef.12. Readers: Mart 1.4, 1.113.4, 2.8.1, 4.29.2, 4.55.27, 4.89.7, 5.10.2, 5.15.3, 5.16.2, 6.85.2, 9.praef.6, 9.49.2, 9.81.1, 9.84.10, 10.2.4-5, 10.59.5, 11.16.1 & 11.108.2-4.

³⁴ Poetic recital: Mart. 1.61.6, 3.44.12, 7.46.5, 7.51.13, 7.97.11, 8.55.4 (to *sonare* epic is to play a military trumpet), 9.praef.ep.7, 9.11.15 & 10.45.2. Metallic sounds: Mart. 1.76.13 (bronze coins), 4.55.13 (weapons), 9.22.4 (chains), 9.59.18 (jewellery), 11.84.12 (weapons) & 14.163.1 (bell). The verb is also used for the howling wind (7.36.5), the clattering of dice (4.14.8), the cawing of birds (3.58.18 & 14.223.2), and undesirable sounds made by a vagina during sex (7.18.12).

that is “wholly made from ringing bronze” (*tota est ex aere sonanti*).³⁵ The shapeless form of *Fama* with her echoing multitude of voices provides an apt model for Martial’s description of his own literary celebrity – features of *Fama* in both Vergil and Ovid are her incorporeality and boundlessness, which evoke the overall intangibility of Martial’s own fame.³⁶ Indeed, when Martial reports that he is supposedly read in Vienne he remarks that this is the case “if the rumour (*fama*) is true” – contemporary literary celebrity beyond Rome was ultimately unknowable, so Martial had to rely on the news he was brought from abroad.³⁷ Martial’s *fama* and *celebritas* are untouchable, but he depicts their spread in a noisy fashion. Thus for the epigrammatist his work will resound (*sonare*) when it is recited, evoking the metallic ringing of *Fama*’s palace, and emphasising the overall performativity of the text.

While Martial’s *fama* and audience are ultimately intangible, his characteristic dialogue with a variety of speakers within the *Epigrams* is evocative of the back-and-forth audience participation at the *recitatio*. In an age before copyright and publishing houses the text’s first semi-public airing to an invited group of *amici* (the *recitatio*) was hugely significant, and the presence of the author reciting the work (or sitting nearby as a *lector* did the work for them) ensured a degree of control over the text’s reception.³⁸ At this event the text was presented as a work-in-progress to the criticism of the author’s peers before its final revisions prior to its distribution to friends and readers at large.³⁹ In fact, as Pliny reports, the audiences at *recitationes* were expected to engage with the speaker and offer their feedback as the recitation was progressing. In two letters in book 6 the epistolographer offers two vignettes from bizarre *recitationes*. In the first (6.15) an elegist is interrupted by his patron Javolenus Priscus, who makes a joke that throws off the whole recital. Pliny calls Priscus’ judgement into question not because of the interruption itself, but because the joke reflected badly on the patron and his client and resulted in the overall frosty reception of the text.⁴⁰ That audience participation was expected becomes clear two letters later, when Pliny lambasts those who do not speak up at all, seeing it as an abuse of *amicitia* and the height of selfishness to not offer one’s aid to the production of good literature.⁴¹ Thus when Martial shifts from addressee to addressee in his poetry it is plausible that he was anticipating the interactivity of the *recitatio* setting rather than preserving numerous *libelli* sent off to individual patrons; a performed

³⁵ Ov. *Met.* 12.46, adapting a motif from Verg. *Aen.* 4.183. On the metapoetic linkage of *Fama* and the epic poet, see Hardie (2012) 109 & 151.

³⁶ Ov. *Met.* 12.47-63 & Verg. *Aen.* 4.181-94. See Hardie (2012) 79-80 for Vergil’s boundless *Fama* and p. 152 for the contrast between both *Famae*.

³⁷ Mart. 7.88.1: *si vera est fama*. This uncertainty makes Winsbury (2009) 178 suspicious as to how far Martial can be trusted to report his own fame, but as discussed above at pp. 42-3, enough evidence from contemporaneous sources exists to trust a depiction of a widening readership.

³⁸ Plin. *Ep.* 9.34 describes an anxious Pliny considering using a *lector* to recite his own poetry, because his training as an orator apparently made his poetic recitations too stilted. On the *recitatio* and its social functions as represented by Pliny, see Johnson (2010) 53 & 55-6.

³⁹ Gurd (2012) 105 details the process as represented in Plin. *Ep.* 7.17. Cf. H. Parker (2009) 208 & Winsbury (2009) 99.

⁴⁰ Plin. *Ep.* 6.15.3-4.

⁴¹ Plin. *Ep.* 6.17.3: *ut inimicum relinquo ad quem tamquam amicissimum veneris*. The kind of praise Pliny expects of these men is given by Selius in Mart. 2.77.3-4, but only because the man is looking for a dinner invitation.

address to each major patron in the room would have offered much material for interactive joking as well as satisfying those whom the poet relied upon to ply his trade.⁴² Crucially, however, when the text is later taken and read by an individual reader (to themselves or other people) they are performing a pseudo-*recitatio*, with the poetic persona presiding over events and feigning the level of closeness present at the original event. As Sven Lorenz notes, when the text was published the ancient author forfeited control over the text's interpretation by the general audience (a concern raised by Martial about Rome's fastidious readers at 1.3).⁴³ But by focusing on a performative interaction between poet and *lector* that evokes aspects of the *recitatio* setting, Martial (or at least his persona) creates a closeness between himself and his *lector* that allows him to exert a level of influence over the text's reception.

Directly addressing the reader constitutes a metaleptic act of breaking the traditional barrier between author and reader, which also brings to mind the frequent metaleptic addresses to the audience in comic theatre as part of the strategy to ingratiate the audience with the playwright. From the very beginning of the *Epigrams* Martial describes his text as a *theatrum* where spectacles are displayed for the reader's enjoyment, further specifying that his poetry is "for those who usually watch Flora's games."⁴⁴ The Floralia themselves were associated with nudity, prostitutes, and lewd humour, and Martial continues the association of his verse with lowbrow theatrical performance in the second preface's description of epigram as a dancing girl, and in his frequent conflation of epigram with mime elsewhere.⁴⁵ The depiction of the act of reading as watching a spectacle (*spectet* 1.praef.18) thrusts the *Epigrams* into the world of performance, but it also shifts the *lector* from a position as actor to that of an audience member with Martial as the master of ceremonies. The audience member's role is not fully passive, however, if the prologues of Roman comedies are anything to go by, which urge the audience to quieten down and pay attention to the action on stage.⁴⁶ As at a *recitatio* the audience of a comedy was boisterous and interactive, and metatheatrical asides are a frequent feature of the genre. As Patricia Larash has observed concerning Martial's initial address to the reader at 1.1.4, though, the description of the reader as a *lector studiosus* also evokes the audience of Roman comedy, ever ready and keen for the jokes they know are coming.⁴⁷ The similarities can be pushed further, however. The start of the comic play appeals to its audience in a grand *captatio benevolentiae* that flatters and jokes with its

⁴² On the *libellus* theory, see chapter 1. Indeed, the shift from Stella (1.7) to Decianus (1.8) could then heighten the joke of 1.9 directed at Cotta – one can imagine an audience trying to identify the pseudonymous target amongst the recital's attendees.

⁴³ Lorenz (2002) 48-9. In fact, *recitationes* could also result in socio-political fallout as the setting of Tacitus' *Dialogus* demonstrates – the dialogue takes place after the *recitatio* of a play which praised Cato's suicide created a kerfuffle within the elite in Vespasianic Rome (§2).

⁴⁴ Mart. 1.praef.16-18: *epigrammata illis scribuntur qui solent spectare Florales. non intret Cato theatrum meum, aut si intraverit, spectet.*

⁴⁵ Mart. 2.praef.8-9. Mime: Mart. 1.4.5-6 & 3.86.3-4. As Larash (2004) 135-7 notes, Martial and the gravestones of *pantomimi* discussed their poetics and fame in remarkably similar ways. On the Floralia and its theatrical stripping, see Wiseman (2008) 178-9 & Ov. *Fast.* 5.347-50.

⁴⁶ For example, Plaut. *Poen.* 3-4: *sileteque et tacete atque animum advortite, | audire iubet vos imperator.*

⁴⁷ Larash (2004) 161-2 on Plaut. *Cas.* 12: *studiose expetere vos Plautinas fabulas.*

audience to draw them towards the playwright's side in the dramatic contest, so Martial's praise of his reader and his description of his work as a *theatrum* place the *Epigrams* into the same context. By opening his work in the style of a comic/mimic text, Martial plays the playwright and uses a comic opening in a bid to get his audience (depicted as his *lector*) firmly on his side. Martial's description of his work as the spectacles at the Floralia censors overly censorious readers (whom he ejects rudely at the preface), but it also sets the scene for a *captatio benevolentiae* aimed squarely at the reader. The *Epigrams* are depicted as a performance with the reader in an active role as the *lector studiosus*, but it is a role dictated by the authorial persona.

In the *Epigrams* the active reader can be a great boon (as I have shown above with 7.97's anonymous readers spreading Martial's *gloria* across the whole town), but the independent activity of the reciting reader is also a threat to the author's textual authority. In particular, Martial depicts his interaction with the reader as a mercantile, contractual relationship – the reader pays the poet, sometimes literally and sometimes in *fama*, and in return the poet gives the reader another poem. Thus the epigrammatist ends book 11 with a joke that since the reader does not want to part with coin he will not provide them with another poem, and haggles with readers over the material worth of his epigrams.⁴⁸ With his poetry monetised, Martial represents his loss of authorial control over the text and its misuse by others as a literal theft, and at 1.52.9 was the first author to apply the term *plagiarius* to the act. Such abusers of the text, those who freely recite the poet's work and claim it as their own, damage the poet's own *fama* and *gloria*, whether by denying the poet the celebrity he has striven so hard for, or by sullyng his poems by including them beside the plagiarist's original (and obviously worse) poetry.⁴⁹ The issue of literary recitation by a widespread audience is a matter of trust – not for nothing does the name of Fidentinus, the plagiarist *par excellence* in Martial, play on both *fidentia* (boldness) and *fides* (loyalty/faith).⁵⁰ By constructing a role for the reader in his text, Martial endeavours to avoid the actual reader becoming another Fidentinus.

I will discuss 'good' readers in Martial in my final section below, but it is worth discussing how Martial represents the 'good' amateur reciter of his poetry. The nameless Umbrian citizens of 7.97, sounding off (*sonabit* v.11) his poetry throughout the town's local gathering spots, represent the poetic persona's hopes for the work's success, but the example of a 'good' reciter of Martial defending the poet's work against potential plagiarists and other such 'bad' readers can be found earlier in the same book. In this poem Martial offers an alternative to the street-wise Urbicus who looks to acquire Martial's

⁴⁸ Mart. 1.117, 4.72 & 11.108. Cf. Roman (2001) 118 – Martial's monetisation of his poetry is a joke, but one that is foundational for his self-representation as an author.

⁴⁹ Mart. 1.35 & 1.72. On the damage to the poet's reputation, rather than his financial detriment (which would be impossible given the lack of royalties in antiquity), see McGill (2012) 91, *contra* Seo (2009) 572-6.

⁵⁰ So McGill (2012) 75.

work without payment. But for Urbicus paying no money comes at a terrible cost, and ensures that the poet has the last laugh:

*mercari nostras si te piget, Urbice, nugas
et lasciva tamen carmina nosse libet,
Pompeium quaeres – et nosti forsitan – Auctum;
Ultoris prima Martis in aede sedet:
iure madens varioque togae limatus in usu,
non lector meus hic, Urbice, sed liber est.
sic tenet absentes nostros cantatque libellos,
ut pereat chartis littera nulla meis:
denique, si vellet, poterat scripsisse videri;
sed famae mavult ille favere meae.
hunc licet a decuma – neque enim satis ante vacabit –
sollicites; capiet cenula parva duos;
ille leget, bibe tu; nolis licet, ille sonabit;
et cum 'iam satis est' dixeris, ille leget. (7.51)*

If it pains you, Urbicus, to purchase my trifles
And yet pleases you to know my lascivious songs,
You should search - and perhaps you know him - for Pompeius Auctus;
He sits at the first shrine of Mars the Avenger:
Drenched in law and refined by the varied uses of the toga,
This man is not my reader, Urbicus, but my book.
Thus he retains and recites my little books when they are absent,
So that no letter from my writings perishes:
In short, if he should wish it, he could appear to have written them;
But the fame he prefers to favour is mine!
You can bother him from the tenth hour - for he will not be free before -
A small, little dinner will hold you both;
He will read, you drink; although you won't want it, he will boom;
And when you say "now is enough," he will read.

Martial's portrayal of Auctus is ambiguous – he endlessly recites Martial, even when his audience wants the amateur to finish, and at 7.52 brings the poet's work to the attention of (potentially) overly serious listeners – but compared to Urbicus his actions are a defence of the epigrammatist's authority as a

literary figure.⁵¹ Urbicus is clearly being chastised here because he actively disdains (*piget*) parting with money for Martial's work, and actively seeks an alternative method of access. The poet's response is thus a barbed one, allowing Urbicus free access to the book (for Auctus is the text personified, a walking, breathing copy of the *Epigrams*), but making him suffer for his disgraceful attitude towards the poet. Indeed, Auctus' recitation is foreshadowed as a punishment through his association with the temple of Mars Ultor. This location is extremely apt, for Auctus becomes an avenger of the wronged Martial (whose name *Martialis* evokes the war god) ensuring that Martial's *fama* is unsullied and that Urbicus suffers for his miserly attitude to poetry.⁵² Urbicus' desire to acquire Martial's poetry for no expenditure breaks the poet's mercenary contract with his readers, and his punishment acts as a comic warning to those who would imitate him. Auctus' actions, by contrast, are unrestrained and overblown, but he is at least subservient to the poet's wishes.

Indeed, it is this subservience to the poet that characterises the 'good' reciter in Martial's *Epigrams*. As the word-made-flesh Auctus could pass off as the poet himself and contest his authority over the text (v.9), but instead he spreads the poet's *fama* on his behalf to those willing (or unwilling in this case) to listen to him.⁵³ This sort of action takes place elsewhere in the *Epigrams*, with Camonius Rufus also capable of reciting the poems from memory (with the same verb *tenere* used to describe Auctus' actions), and the now-errant fan Severus who used to take the poems with him to read in public places.⁵⁴ These actions are all directly related to the poet's spread of renown – with the death of Rufus Martial mourns a good friend and poetic ally, and Severus' advice to publish the *Epigrams* rings hollow if he does not actively enjoy the reading experience. Similarly Auctus is responsible for Martial's ever-widening *fama*, and just like the Umbrian townsfolk of 7.97 Auctus also rings out (*sonabit* v.13) the poems. It is significant here that Martial conflates the sound of epigram with the act of reading (*ille leget* v.14) and the decision to favour the poet's fame (*famae mavult ille favere meae* v.10). Indeed, both Victoria Rimell and Luke Roman have noted that the name of Pompeius Auctus itself is as potential wordplay here, emphasising the continuous augmentation (*auctus*) of the author's (*auctor*) poetic authority (*auctoritas*).⁵⁵ While Martial presents Auctus as an extreme example of amateur recitation amongst his crowd of adoring fans, his habit of ensuring that the poet's own *fama* is augmented by his appreciation is shown to be worthy of emulation. Auctus is an ideal reader and reciter of Martial's works because he is the perfect example of the mercantile relationship between author and reader seen

⁵¹ Galán Vioque (2002) 310-1 reads this poem as a critique of Auctus' actions and boring dinner recitals, but McGill (2012) 79 n. 33 sees this more as the "friendly and gentle teasing" of an *amicus*.

⁵² Sapsford (2012) 48 also notes that a temple to Mars brings the poet's name to mind here.

⁵³ To my knowledge, Sapsford (2012) 48 is the first to describe Auctus as "the word made flesh" in Martial. My arguments here expand on her original point.

⁵⁴ Mart. 6.85.9-10 & 2.6.5-8 respectively.

⁵⁵ Rimell (2008) 27 n. 24 & Roman (2010) 109.

elsewhere in the *Epigrams* – in exchange for Martial’s poetry he spreads the poet’s *fama*, and acts as a deterrent to more unscrupulous (and threateningly independent) readers like Urbicus.

Martial’s treatment of Auctus and Urbicus reveals a fundamental strategy in the poet’s depiction of his readers as reciters. The uncontrolled Urbicus who seeks access to the text outside of the epigrammatist’s model of *quid pro quo* is punished within the text and set up as a spectacle for loyal readers like Auctus who place great emphasis on their capacity to augment the author’s *fama*. By casting his readers in specific roles (as I will further highlight below in my discussion of the *lector studiosus* as a Model Reader) and using the metaphor of the *Epigrams* as a *theatrum*, Martial reveals his anxieties concerning a general audience even as he celebrates it. In theory the text, when in the hands of the *lector*, is completely removed from the poet’s control. They sing his poems in an act that threatens the traditional model of the author as sole mouthpiece of the text (as seen in Vergil’s *arma virumque cano*).⁵⁶ For Martial, his *fama* and *gloria* ring out across the land, emphasising the orality of amateur performance as well as the incorporeality of fame, and his poetic strategy is to try to claim some level of influence over how this *fama* develops. This technique of providing the *lector* with a role and a voice provided by the poetic persona, though, also utilises techniques from the sepulchral past of epigram. As I demonstrate in the next section, it is the treatment of the *lector* as the reader of the text in the same way that epitaphs depicted their reader that further reinforces this strategy of authorial control.

The Epigrammatic Tomb: Martial’s *lector* as Sepulchral *viator*

Martial’s discourse of his own literary *fama* is rooted in celebration of his talent’s recognition while he is alive, but it is the language of death that seeps into his poetry. This is partly a reference to the practices of earlier poets like Ennius and Horace (as seen above), but Martial was also embracing the origins of epigram as poetry physically inscribed on tombs to celebrate the life and achievements of the deceased.⁵⁷ For Martial, the joke of celebrating his own *fama* is that he can do so while alive in a form traditionally focused on praising those already dead. When Martial addresses his *lector* he does so in the guise of a tombstone addressing an unknown and unknowable passer-by (the *viator*), who provides an apt metaphor for the general readers far away from the city whom the poet can never directly meet. This focus on the distance between poet and reader is also heavily influenced by Ovid’s exilic corpus, wherein the elegist is incapable of directly engaging with the reader in his state of living death brought on by the lectorial misreading of his *Ars Amatoria*. The focus on an Ovidian milieu has a twofold effect: firstly, Martial highlights his success in contrast to Ovid’s failure, which he holds up as a distorted mirror to his own life; but Ovid’s failure also stands as a warning to the Flavian epigrammatist, and engenders a state of anxiety over the control of his own poetry’s reception. Martial conflates the Ovidian address to the distant *lector* with that of the epitaph to the *viator* to attempt a connection with the reader

⁵⁶ Verg. *Aen.* 1.1.

⁵⁷ Fitzgerald (2007) 26 & Rimell (2008) 52-3.

and to instruct them in proper conduct towards the text (and the poet buried behind it). Both Ovid and the epitaph sought to engage an unreachable reader and instruct them in appropriate treatment of the text; by combining these two traditions Martial re-emphasises his own concerns over his poetry's reception and his poetic persona's desire to control the reader's approach to the text.

That Martial's treatment of his *lector* is indebted to funerary epigram becomes clear from his first poem describing their relationship. From its opening line Martial's announcement of his own identity is shrouded in sepulchral *topoi*, and there is a strong contrast between the dead poets who came before and the breathing epigrammatist presented to the reader:

*hic est quem legis ille, quem requiris,
toto notus in orbe Martialis
argutis epigrammaton libellis:
cui, lector studiose, quod dedisti
viventi decus atque sentienti,
rari post cineres habent poetae. (1.1)*

Here's that one you read, whom you ask after,
Known throughout the whole world, Martial,
For his sharp little books of epigrams:
To whom, studious reader, the glory which
You gave him while alive and sensing it,
Few poets have after they are ashes.

As well as evoking famous epic introductory language (also seen at the inscriptional poem for Martial in 9.praef.), the opening *hic est quem legis ille* is highly epitaphic, and introduces the theme of the poet's pre-posthumous fame.⁵⁸ Examples of real verse epitaphs opening with *hic est ille/illa* abound in the *Carmina Epigraphica Latina (CLE)*, and there are numerous examples of Martial's other epitaphic poems within the *Epigrams* that open with a deictic *hic*.⁵⁹ Along with the focus on the poet's own *gloria* and the *cineres* of other poets this opening exhibits an overall epitaphic character, as Mario Citroni rightly observes.⁶⁰ Peter Howell, however, disagrees on the grounds that Martial "is concerned to praise himself, not bury himself" but this misses the wider point (and joke) of the epigram.⁶¹ For an audience readily familiar with epitaphic formulae (a certainty given the prevalence of roadside tombs in antiquity for purification purposes), the opening *hic est quem* would immediately evoke the full context of

⁵⁸ Mart. 9.praef.ep.5, to which Henriksén (2012) 9 compares the pseudo-Vergilian opening to the *Aeneid*. On this prefatory epigram's memoriality, see chapter 5.

⁵⁹ *CLE* 368, 999-1000, 1025, 1259, 1564, 1573, 1999 & 2091 (there are also numerous other examples opening *hic est*). Mart. 5.34.1, 6.28.1, 6.71.3, 6.52.1, 7.40.1, 7.96.1 & 10.61.1.

⁶⁰ Citroni (1975) 14-5: l'apertura con *hic* ha, naturalmente, carattere epigrafico.

⁶¹ Howell (1980) 102.

memorialisation and death.⁶² Martial is buried within his book, a work physically inscribed with his poetic achievements, and just like the *viator* his *lector studiosus* breathes life into his words (*viventi decus*) even as he himself breathes. For his contemporary readers this poem also enacts a triumphant cry (itself likely a joke) about the poet's own literary success – such celebrations of a poet's fame habitually occur at the end of a career or after his death, but here the poet is cheering at the very first line of the *Epigrams* proper.⁶³ The language of self-praise is interwoven with the language of death because of the context of memorialisation rather than despite it. Whether this is a joke directed at his first readers or a celebration of his acclamation as a writer following the release of the *Liber Spectaculorum*, *Xenia*, and *Apophoreta*, Martial makes it clear that his renown has the characteristics of a posthumous fame that he can enjoy while alive.

In essence, Martial enjoys a kind of living death as both monument and man, grave and poetry book, but the focus on death, living, and authorial distance from the reader also brings to mind Ovid's exilic corpus. Ovid frequently focused on the motif of exile as a wretched living death and on the need to anonymise his reader due to both the poet's lack of physical presence and the political danger associated with his work.⁶⁴ By positioning himself in the context of a positive living death, Martial marks himself out as a deliberately post-Ovidian poet whose work periodically remodels exilic themes to draw out the difference between his lot and Ovid's.⁶⁵ In particular, Martial's opening poem seems to take up where Ovid finished *Tristia* 4, with whose final poem Martial's first epigram is closely positioned.⁶⁶ At the end of the fourth book on his exile, Ovid acknowledges his own contemporary celebrity and thanks his own Muse because "you gave me while alive (what is rare) a lofty name, which Fame is accustomed to give after the funeral."⁶⁷ Like Ovid, Martial focuses on the rarity of pre-posthumous literary fame, but unlike Ovid the focus is entirely on the poet's own past. Ovid is abandoned on the coast of the Euxine and can no longer enjoy this fame, even though he celebrates his successes he has resigned himself to the end of his life and career. The Augustan poet then ends his final letter with thanks to his *candidus lector* (a term that Martial reuses to celebrate his own fame) and the statement that he of all his contemporary poets is read the most throughout the world.⁶⁸ Martial's epitaphic greeting is written against Ovid's mournful farewell, and offers the image of a successful counterpart to the elegiac failure of the Augustan poet. Elsewhere Martial toys with this Ovidian

⁶² On roadside tombs, see Erasmo (2012) 79, Henriksén (2006) 356 & Lattimore (1962) 230. On epigram's usage of tomb inscription as a literary game cf. Erasmo (2008) 181 & Fitzgerald (2007) 145.

⁶³ For this reason Neger (2012) 14 reads this whole poem as a joke not to be taken seriously.

⁶⁴ Death: *Ov. Tr.* 1.3.22, 1.3.89 & 5.1.11-4. Anonymisation of the reader for safety: *Ov. Tr.* 1.5 & 1.7.5-6. Claassen (1996) 577-9 demonstrates (with examples) how Ovid's depiction of exile as a living death is a development of Cicero's depiction of his own exile as a civic death.

⁶⁵ Cf. Roman (2001) 124.

⁶⁶ A point also observed by Citroni (1975) 15-6 & Larash (2004) 62-9.

⁶⁷ *Ov. Tr.* 4.10.121-2: *tu mihi, quod rarum est, vivo sublime dedisti | nomen, ab exequiis quod dare fama solet.*

⁶⁸ *Ov. Tr.* 4.10.128: *dicor et in toto plurimus orbe legor* & 4.10.131-2. Cf. *Mart.* 7.99.5, with a possible echo at 13.2.9: *candidus aure.*

parallelism, such as with the statement that incorrect Latin is the fault of his copyist – *non meus est error* – instead stating that neither the error of copying nor the error that led to Ovid’s exile are his.⁶⁹ Martial’s treatment of Ovid is playful, but it also comes with the hindsight of Ovid’s exemplarity as a failed predecessor – Ovid decries the reasons for his exile and blames the lack of understanding on the reader’s (and Augustus’) part.⁷⁰ In contrast, Martial writes against (and in response to) Ovid’s exile to ensure that lectorial misunderstanding does not damage his position as the true author of the text. Martial’s *theatrum* is built on the ruins of Ovid’s exilic verse, and reveals the dangers of an unknown audience at Rome and beyond even as he celebrates his success.

One further influence on Martial’s self-commemoration as a poet is the *topos* of the elegiac tomb. Like epigram, love elegy reflected and played on its metre’s inscriptional origins, and each major elegist commemorated their own future death in some way.⁷¹ In his third book of *Tristia*, for instance, Ovid plays on this inscriptionality when he asks his wife to prepare a tomb and its inscription for him which opens with the formulaic *hic ego qui iaceo*.⁷² This tradition can be traced as far back as Tibullus, whose single couplet forms the model for Propertius as well.⁷³ When these poets bury themselves (and in Propertius’ case his *puella* and poetry) they are playing a game that toys with the broader tradition in Latin poetry of erecting a poetic monument, looking forward to a future where they will be remembered for what they have written. As with Horace’s *monumentum aere perennius* (*Carm.* 3.30.1), the poem acts as the monument and metaphorical resting place for the poet; Tibullus’ “here lies Tibullus” (1.3.55) is both true and false, for the poet himself is not there, but his name and his poetry are. For Teresa Ramsby, the poetic epitaph is thus both a confirmation of the poet’s everlasting reputation and a request for that confirmation to be carried out by the reader.⁷⁴ Indeed, Ovid makes this relationship explicit when he openly describes his *lector* as a *viator* who then passes by (*transis*) the tomb itself and interacts with it.⁷⁵ When Martial takes over from the Augustan elegists he uses Ovid’s figure of a *viator* and places them, now as a *lector studiosus*, at the forefront of his text. Once again Martial inverts Ovid and now the other elegists – for them commemoration after death is imagined in the future, but for Martial this commemoration has already occurred. By becoming a quasi-(un)dead poet and enjoying his posthumous fame, Martial evokes this memorialisation but makes it far more contemporary than his

⁶⁹ So Hinds (2007) 131, comparing Mart. 2.8.3 with Ov. *Tr.* 2.207-8.

⁷⁰ As Roman (2014) 29 discusses, the idea of poetry as a ‘safe space’ for tranquillity and freedom was heavily compromised by the example of Ovid’s exile. Ov. *Tr.* 2.77-80, for instance, complains of an unknown figure misinterpreting Ovid when reading his work to the emperor. Of the similar threat of the *malignus interpres* in Martial’s poetry, see pp. 61-3 below.

⁷¹ Ramsby (2007) 1 & Yardley (1996) 267.

⁷² Ov. *Tr.* 3.3.73-6: *hic ego qui iaceo tenerorum lusor amorum | ingenio perii Naso poeta meo | at tibi qui transis ne sit grave quisquis amasti | dicere Nasonis molliter ossa cubent.*

⁷³ Tib. 1.3.55-6: *hic iacet immitti consumptus morte Tibullus, | Messallam terra dum sequiturque mari.* Prop. 2.13b.35-6: *et duo sint versus, ‘qui nunc iacet horrida pulvis, | unius hic quondam servus amoris erat* (his own tomb) & 4.7.85-6: *hic tiburtina iacet aurea Cynthia terra: | accessit ripae laus, Aniene, tuae* (Cynthia’s). Cf. Cat. 101, which memorialises the author’s deceased brother.

⁷⁴ Ramsby (2007) 112.

⁷⁵ Ov. *Tr.* 3.3.71 (*legat versus... viator*) & 76 (*at tibi qui transis*).

Augustan predecessors. Furthermore, once he has transformed his reader into a passer-by all of Martial's addresses to the *lector* acquire an aspect of the relationship between tombstone and *viator*, between exiled poet and distanced fan, and between contemporary writer and unknown general audience member.

Such a focus on the anonymity of one's audience is a key feature of epigraphic verse addresses to the *viator*, and it is particularly striking that Martial's description of his readers (known and unknown) adheres to this discourse. Shortly after 1.1, for instance, Martial addresses the emperor Domitian and bids him to treat the poet's work kindly "if, by chance (*forte*), you should happen (*contigeris*) upon my little books" (1.4.1).⁷⁶ Martial's language comes across as respectful to the emperor given his station, but the focus on a chance physical encounter with the text (*contigeris... forte libellos*) also evokes the same careful address to the unknown reader of epitaph who similarly chances upon the monument as they pass by.⁷⁷ Indeed, the chance meeting of text and reader (*contigeris... forte*) is indicative of inscribed epigram, whose reader must be attracted and encouraged to continue, a practice which Regina Höschele suggests as the origin of Martial's own concern that his *lectores* read his books all the way through.⁷⁸ Most significantly, this chance encounter with the reader typically means that the reader of the text (inscribed or written) is a person whose identity and actions towards the text cannot be known. A typical feature of inscribed epigram is the address of the reader in terms of their anonymity, focusing on them as a certain somebody, a "whoever you are" (*quisquis es*).⁷⁹ When Martial writes in the language of anonymous readers coming across his work by chance he is drawing a link between funerary and literary epigram, and encouraging the reader's approach to his text in the manner of a *viator*.

That Martial uses the language of tomb inscription to address his own readers is most apparent in his eleventh book, where he directly juxtaposes overtly sepulchral poetry with discussions of his own readership. Thus, when Martial comes to write a funerary poem for the pantomimist Paris at 11.13 he opens with the anonymous sepulchral address to the passer-by, who in the context of the book itself can only be the *lector*: "you, whoever (*quisquis*) wears down the Flaminian way, a wayfarer (*viator*), do not pass by the noble marble."⁸⁰ The poet then continues his use of sepulchral language in the next poem, a quick distich playing with the *sit tibi terra levis* theme at 11.14, before suddenly discussing the quality

⁷⁶ As Citroni (1975) 30-1 & Howell (1980) 114 both note, this opening couplet is remarkably similar to an address to Polla at Mart. 10.64.1-2, and uses the same verb *contingere*.

⁷⁷ Lattimore (1962) 230-4 lists numerous examples of this practice in Graeco-Roman tomb inscription. Fitzgerald (2007) 145 also makes this link between a road lined with epitaphs and a book of epigrams.

⁷⁸ Höschele (2007) 349. On this practice of *perlegere* in Martial, see pp. 63-70 below.

⁷⁹ Examples include CLE 1007, 1037, 1198, 1205 & 2174.

⁸⁰ Mart. 11.13.1-2: *quisquis Flaminiam teris, viator, | noli nobile praeterire marmor*. On a similar slippage between the reader of book and inscription, see Henriksen (2012) 2 on Mart. 9.praef.ep.

of his poetry at 11.15.⁸¹ Sudden juxtapositions are a feature of Martial's poetry, but here the sharp break in thematic progression highlights the poet's overt use of mock-sepulchral language at 11.16 to ward off unwanted readers, and emphasises that his poetry (and the act of reading it) is situated somewhere between literary and inscribed epigram.⁸² The latter poem's opening line "you, reader, who are too serious (*qui gravis es nimium*) can be gone from here now" is not only redolent of funereal epigram through its address to anonymised readers, but also through its subversion of the *sit tibi terra levis* theme that the reader has already encountered just beforehand at 11.14, a poem quipping that a short farmer should not be buried because the earth will be too heavy (*gravis*) upon him.⁸³ Martial chastises his readers for being too grave in almost the same breath as he discusses the graves of *pantomimi* and farmers, while also maintaining the overall anonymity inherent of sepulchral addresses to the *viator*. These poems toy with the origin of epigram as sepulchral, inscribed verse, but also make it clear that in book 11 as elsewhere, Martial addresses the *lector* in the same way as a tombstone does its passer-by, emphasising the distance between poet and reader and endowing the book with the status of a talking poetic object.

One further feature of the address to an anonymous *viator/lector* is the need to establish the authority of the epigrammatic voice and the role the reader is encouraged to enact in response to its words. Inscriptional addresses to the anonymised *viator* frequently include within their body an explanation of how the site is to be respected, or encourage the completion of a certain task. The examples I have cited above from the *CLE* demand the reader's attention and exhort them to read the text through to the end, but attempts can also be made to persuade the reader to pay homage in a certain way or even to bid them not to violate the site through urination.⁸⁴ Martial's command to the *lector nimium gravis* at 11.16 serves the same function, evicting readers who are unwelcome in the text, and in 8.praef. the poet even describes the entrance to the book as a site to be entered under the correct (i.e. non-lascivious) circumstances. As Larash rightly observes, the anonymization and homogenisation of the readership group in their collective address as *lector* has the rhetorical force not only of addressing his entire readership group at once, but also of providing them with the same authorial expectations.⁸⁵ Thus when Martial thanks his reader for being a *lector studiosus* who has given the poet a significant amount of *decus* at 1.1.4-5, the reader of the text is encouraged to take up the attributes of a *lector studiosus*. The conflation of the act of reading literary epigram with the act of reading inscribed, funerary epigram serves to highlight the differences between both practices and the absence of the

⁸¹ On this inscribed formula and its continuation in Latin poetry, see Lattimore (1962) 68-73 & Yardley (1996) 269-70.

⁸² Fitzgerald (2007) 106-38, describing juxtaposition at p. 106 as "one of the main constituents of Martial's epigrammatic world."

⁸³ The exact meaning is disputed, but Shackleton Bailey (1993) 3.329 suggests that the short farmer would find digging earth more difficult, hence his tomb's earth becomes *gravis* instead of the traditional *levis*.

⁸⁴ *CLE* 838 & *CIL* 4.8899. Pers. 1.112-4 describes a similar exhortation.

⁸⁵ Larash (2004) 3-5, also comparing Martial's use of *lector* with the epitaphic *viator*.

deceased from the literary text, but it also carries with it the cultural expectations towards the tomb.⁸⁶ To read Martial is to respect his *Epigrams* as a *viator* is expected to respect a tomb inscription. Ultimately this expectation is unenforceable – the plaintive request of the tombstone carries with it a degree of anxiety or frustration that the *viator* will ignore, or worse disobey, what is asked of them – but the power of addressing the *lector* as a *viator* would have been in that cultural expectation. The act of addressing a *lector* as a *viator* of the *Epigrams*, then, serves to shape the way the actual reader of the text approaches Martial's poetry.

As with his focus on the orality of the *lector* and the *Epigrams*, Martial's depiction of his reader as a *viator* encountering his text by chance ties into the poet's wider discourse of *fama* and his work's reception. By burying himself alive in the text, Martial invites his *lector* to show due deference to the text and take part in the act of memorialising the poet while he is alive. References to the practices of love elegy and, in particular, Ovid's exilic corpus reveal the influence of the tradition of poetic self-memorialisation that came before. However, unlike the elegists, Martial is focused both on his widespread literary *fama* whilst alive and on the need to address a reader he cannot know or touch. By inviting his *lector* to act as a sepulchral reader, Martial invites a comparison between the anonymity of the general audience and the reader of inscriptions by the wayside. Like these monuments, Martial's persona can only attempt to sway how his reader approaches the text. The power is ultimately in these readers' hands but, as I will demonstrate in the next section, Martial draws the reader into his text and invites them to adopt the persona of the *lector studiosus*, his text's Model Reader, as they read.

Constructing a Readership: Martial's *lector studiosus* as a Model Reader

So far in this chapter I have argued that Martial's depiction of reading the *Epigrams* is bound up in the language of literary *fama*, and exhibits features that suggest an interest in enacting some influence over the actual reader. In this final section I explore this idea further with the case study of Martial's *lector studiosus*, the character who appears in the poet's self-introduction in a bid to define his reader even as he defines himself. This figure is presented as the opposite of critics and malevolent interpreters of the text, and is flattered to such an extent that he becomes the text's Model Reader, a figure onto whom the actual reader of the text is encouraged to project themselves. This *lector studiosus* is described in terms that reveal the projected best reading practice of the text: they read the text sequentially from beginning to end, they praise the poet for his work, and they ensure that the epigrammatist receives the correct kind of *fama* for what he has written. By castigating 'bad' readers and inviting the *lector studiosus* to laugh at them, Martial works both to bring this unknown reader towards an authorially-preferred manner of reading as well as towards a more positive relationship with the poet himself. This simulated authorial presence is a snare for the actual reader, and works as a strong defence versus the uncontrolled reception of the text that a widespread general audience represents. Ultimately this characterisation of the *lector*

⁸⁶ Cf. Erasmo (2008) 181.

studiosus represents the ambition of the text to be read sequentially, but it also reveals the problems of lectorial misunderstanding and boredom that the *Epigrams* face from both modern and ancient readers.

The *lector studiosus* is a persona thrust upon the actual reader, a role they are invited to play out whilst progressing through the *Epigrams*, and which draws them into a specific way of appreciating the text. This figure is what Umberto Eco terms a ‘Model Reader’, which he defines as the reader whom the author presupposes for their text’s interpretation.⁸⁷ For Eco, the Model Reader “is a textually established set of felicity conditions... to be met in order to have a macro-speech act (such as a text is) fully actualized.”⁸⁸ A key issue with Eco’s core definition is that it revolves around what the “author presupposes”, which is ultimately unknowable from the text itself. However, all texts construct a Model Reader in some capacity, whether explicitly (as with Martial) or implicitly (as with this thesis), so Eco’s theory still stands irrespective of the issue of authorial intent. For the *Epigrams*, the *lector studiosus* represents this figure, who is depicted as understanding the poet and for being responsible for his literary success (*quod dedisti | viventi decus* 1.1.4-5). By praising the reader as a *lector studiosus*, Martial (through his poetic persona in the text) makes his Model Reader explicit especially in his opposition to the threatening and inept readers of the *Epigrams*. As David Lodge comments on *Tristram Shandy*, an address to the narratee delivered in contrast to foolish misreaders ensures that the reader will “feel privileged by [the author’s] confidence, and tacitly invited to distance [themselves] from the imperceptive reader.”⁸⁹ This Model Reader, principally the *lector studiosus*, but also exemplified by key named readers in the text, provides a textual exemplar for the actual reader to follow.⁹⁰ Indeed, when the authorial persona introduces itself beside (and dependent upon) the reader’s persona as a *lector studiosus*, it is difficult to accept one of these constructs without the other. As such, by exploring how Martial depicts his Model Reader in the text one can consider both how the text presents its desired readership as well as how readers approached texts in the Flavian period.

Martial specifies in his Model Reader a variety of characteristics, but most of all he highlights an attitude of friendship and defence of the author against anything that might damage his *fama*. The *lector studiosus* of Martial’s poetry is praised for the same characteristics as the reciter Pompeius Auctus described above, and frequently uses the language of friendship and love to construct a positive relationship with his reader.⁹¹ The *lector* is introduced as figure who gives Martial the *decus*, *gloria*, and *fama* that he craves (as well as representing that very *fama* by their readership of the text), and is also approached jokingly as a party to the more mercantile nature of Martial’s work, somehow expected

⁸⁷ Eco (1979) 7.

⁸⁸ Eco (1979) 11.

⁸⁹ Lodge (1992) 83. As Lodge also notes at p. 81, the address to the narratee is a rhetorical device designed to influence the actual reader’s response to the text.

⁹⁰ Cf. Larash (2004) 12, who does not use Eco’s terminology but moves towards similar conclusions.

⁹¹ Mart. 5.16.2 (*lector amice*), 9.praef.ep.6 (*quem... lector amas*) & 10.2.4-5 (*lector, utriusque fave, lector, opes nostrae: quem cum mihi Roma dedisset*).

to have given (and to continue giving) money to the poet for his work.⁹² When the *lector studiosus* reads out Martial's poetry they give him the credit for his work and refuse to let it, and thus the poet, die away – even if the poetry is the epigrammatist's now neglected juvenilia.⁹³ Most tellingly, Martial sees his readership and the correct attribution of his *fama* as an essential foundation of his own identity as a poet. Indeed, Martial insults the poetaster Cinna who is said to write verses against Martial by simply stating that “he doesn't write, whose poems no one reads.”⁹⁴ A lack of a readership is a literary death in Martial, and a lack of an appropriate readership effects the same result. That the poetic and lectorial personae of 1.1 are so thoroughly intertwined is representative of this understanding of poetic identity and literary fame in Martial's work. Thus when certain readers choose to go against the poet's self-created self-representation, they are vilified by the poet and the *lector* is asked to defend against authorial oblivion and misrepresentation.

Most of all Martial defines his *lectores* by what they are not. The most ardent detractor of the poet's works, the *malignus interpres*, is represented as a character for his Model Reader to react against because of their potential threat to the poet's *fama*. This contrast between good and bad readership practices is brought into attention by the juxtaposition of 1.1 with the content of the prefatory letter to the book, which wards off certain reading practices. Prudish readers like Cato Uticensis are turned away, but so too is the *malignus interpres* whom the poet wishes “be absent from the frankness (*simplicitas*) of my jokes and may he not write into (*inscribat*) my epigrams: he who is ingenious (*ingeniosus*) with another's book acts wrongfully.”⁹⁵ This *lector ingeniosus* is too inventive with Martial's own books, and seeks to inscribe the *Epigrams* (a pun on the genre's inscriptional origins) with a new meaning in an act of contested authorship.⁹⁶ In contrast the Model Reader is *studiosus* and approaches the text without ill intent. Furthermore, as Peter Anderson explains, by naming this figure as an *interpres* Martial discusses practices of textual appreciation by grammarians and is thus “not warning off the malicious reader, but the malicious *exegete*, who intends to damage [Martial's] project.”⁹⁷ In phrasing his defence against improper reading practices in the manner of a grammatical discourse (thus, too, the focus on *simplicitas* in the same passage), Martial stresses that the act of a good or bad reader is firmly rooted in how they interpret and approach his works. The *lector studiosus* is keen to keep reading, and understands the poet's work through constant *studium*, while the *malignus interpres* writes into the text a new meaning which (given the frequency of double entendre in epigram) might be conceivable and thus more ruinous to the poet's reputation. Indeed, Martial goes on to dramatize a conversation between

⁹² Mart. 1.1.4-5 (fame), 10.2.4-5 & 11.108.4 (wealth).

⁹³ Mart. 1.113. Cf. Mart. 6.85.9-10, 7.51 & 9.49.2.

⁹⁴ Mart. 3.9.2: *non scribit, cuius carmina nemo legit*.

⁹⁵ Mart. 1.praef.7-10.

⁹⁶ The prefix *in-* is an emendation of *scribat*, which does not fit the overall prose rhythm or sense of the passage. See Citroni (1975) 9 & Howell (1980) 97, who both nevertheless retain *scribat*, and Shackleton Bailey (1990) 14, who prints the emendation.

⁹⁷ P. J. Anderson (2008) 210, drawing on a convincingly close reading of Sen. *Ep.* 33.8-9's discussion of grammatical readings. My emphasis.

himself and a *malignus* in book 7, carefully explaining that a compliment for Nero's hot-baths was not intended as a slight towards the current emperor's munificence (7.34). Martial's own claim in the first preface just before he introduces the *malignus interpres* figure is that he does not wish the kind of *fama* derived from insulting contemporary figures, but this is also a reputation for insulting others. As Philip Hardie notes at 10.3.9, Martial's wish to avoid a *nigra fama* for his poetry is not just a bad/black reputation but "a reputation for black (i.e. malicious) words."⁹⁸ Once again Martial's defence for his poetry is written in the language of *fama*: the *lector studiosus* ascribes to the poet a good *fama*, and a *fama* for writing good things, whereas the *malignus interpres* seeks to inscribe a new meaning into the poems and sully the poet's *fama* to better themselves.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that Martial encourages his Model Reader to defend him against these *maligni*, figures who are always an unknown, anonymised crowd like the poet's supporters. In these passages the poet always chooses a strong friend to defend himself, to encourage the actions of the *lector studiosus*, but also to ward off the *malignus* from their actions by his association with this upstanding figure. One example is that of Paulus, a friend and defence lawyer whom the poet wishes a plentiful Saturnalia before turning towards the issue of *maligni*:

*si quisquam mea dixerit malignus
atro carmina quae madent veneno,
ut vocem mihi commodes patronam
et quantum poteris, sed usque, clames:
'non scripsit meus ista Martialis.'* (7.72.12-6)

If any malignant should say they're mine,
Poems which drip with cruel venom,
Please lend me your defending voice,
As much as you can, but continuously, shout:
"My Martial did not write those!"

The charge of Martial's anonymised (*quisquam*) assailant is that his poems "drip with cruel venom", a reference to the harsh invective of figures such as Archilochus to whom the epigrammatist overtly alludes earlier in the book.⁹⁹ Martial here is defending against the assertion that he writes cruel (*atrox*) poetry which would give him precisely the *nigra fama* just discussed. Indeed, the poet draws a link between this theme and his first preface's call to *simplicitas* in book 10 where, again defending against the charge of poisonous verses, Martial announces that his epigrams "spare persons and speak out about

⁹⁸ Hardie (2012) 329.

⁹⁹ Mart. 7.12.6, cf. 10.33.10. As Galán Vioque (2002) 102 comments, Archilochus was famed for supposedly driving his skoptic target Lycambes to suicide.

VICES.”¹⁰⁰ Martial’s defence against this kind of libel in the present passage is to ask Paulus to speak in defence of his own claims of harmless jesting, and particularly focuses on the man’s distinctly legal capabilities. The voice that Paulus is to lend Martial is a *patrona vox* – the voice of a patron, but also the voice of a defence lawyer – and this voice, much like Pompeius Auctus’ amateur recitations, drowns out all opposition (*sed usque, clames* v.15) to silence the dissenting voices of the *maligni*.¹⁰¹ Most of all, however, Paulus’ presence in the text is a potent threat – by focusing on his successes in the law courts (again, similar to Auctus’ own actions in the *forum* at 7.51.5) Martial shows that he can mount a strong defence with an equally strong defence lawyer if needs be. Furthermore, by highlighting both Auctus and Paulus’ legal capabilities Martial makes the judgement of his verses’ quality and content a legal judgement as much as an aesthetic one. When Martial brings in his friendship of great men like Paulus, or Apollinaris as the assessor of his poems’ quality at 4.86 & 7.26, the poet also references these elusive *maligni*. Not only does the friendship of these great men defend against the filthy mouths of the *maligni*, it also defends against the potential dangers of an increasingly anonymised audience. Thus although the *malignus* does their best to overturn the poet’s *fama* through false accusation, the poet claims he can defend himself through the friendship of significant (and named) figures in the text who act as exemplary figures for the reader to emulate. Like Auctus and Paulus, the *lector studiosus* is encouraged to spread the poet’s *fama* in a positive way and to defend against slander.

One further quality of the Model Reader of Martial’s text is their capacity and willingness to read the text through from start to finish. From the very beginning of his *Epigrams* Martial aspires for the work to be read all the way through. Apologising for the prevalence of lascivious language in his epigrams the poet claims adherence to a number of predecessors whom he emulates in his work: “thus wrote Catullus, thus Marsus, thus Pedo, thus Gaetulicus, thus whomever is read through (*perlegitur*).”¹⁰² Catullus, Marsus, Pedo, and Gaetulicus are all read through, says the poet, and are the source of inspiration for his own approach to writing epigram (and for the expectation of his readers’ approach to reading epigram). Indeed, the verb *perlegere* and *pervenire* are frequently applied to the act of reading a text to fully appreciate it. At the end of book 4, for instance, Martial announces that “we have come all the way through (*pervenimus usque*) to the bosses” at the end of the papyrus scroll, and the same verb is used for the act of making it through the second prose preface.¹⁰³ At the beginning of book 2 of the *Epigrams* Martial opens with the concern that readers will not read all the way through (*perlegeretque*) a book of three hundred poems, and derides another reader for only pretending to read

¹⁰⁰ Mart. 10.33.10: *parcere personis, dicere de vitiis*. Cf. Mart. 1.praef.3-4: *cum salva infimarum quoque personarum reverentia ludant*.

¹⁰¹ OLD s.v. *patronus* 1 & 3. Note that *patronus* is feminised to agree with *vox*.

¹⁰² Mart. 1.praef.12-3.

¹⁰³ Mart. 2.praef.16 & 4.89.2. Moreno Soldevilla (2006) 542 notes that *pervenire* is often used as a metaphor for writing, but does not mention reading.

all the way through his work at 11.107 (itself pointedly positioned at the end of the book).¹⁰⁴ But it is the sign of a good, loyal reader like the poet's steadfast patron Stella in the final book who comes to the new text with tears in his eyes and who reads through (*perleget*) the work before passing it on to the senators, equestrians, and even the general populace.¹⁰⁵ Finally, the reader of the pseudo-Homeric *Batrachomyomachia* in the *Apophoreta* is invited to read all the way through (*perlege*) in order to understand trifling verse (*nugis meis*).¹⁰⁶ Exactly whose *nugae* the reader ought to *perlegere* is much debated here, as the adjective *meis* could be attributed to either Martial or the speaker of the *Batrachomyomachia*, but it is clear that the verb is associated with a full, detailed understanding of the text.¹⁰⁷ For Martial, the best understanding of the *Epigrams* comes from a reader like Stella who reads all the way through (*perlegere*) to appreciate the whole text.

While Martial generally aspires towards a complete reading of his text, he also seems to contradict himself by inviting readers to skip poems they find too long or boring. These contradictory exhortations occur so frequently that William Fitzgerald argues that Martial's general approach to his readers is that they "browse and graze" through the work.¹⁰⁸ That Martial makes these comments frequently suggests that lectorial skipping was present as a reading practice at the time, but it is important to note that every single invitation to skip certain poems is directed at a reader who fails to understand the generic rules of epigram, or who are otherwise seen as 'bad' readers, and who are always then subjected to some kind of invective humour.¹⁰⁹ In fact, the very form and placement of these poems, usually placed after the kinds of poems that the critics complain about, also adds to the joking point that 'bad' readers do not understand epigram. A seminal example comes in Martial's treatment of Tucca, who bemoans long hexametric epigrams just after Martial has written a long hexametric epigram:

*"hexametris epigramma facis" scio dicere Tuccam.
Tucca, solet fieri, denique, Tucca, licet.
"sed tamen hoc longum est." solet hoc quoque, Tucca, licetque:
si breviora probas, disticha sola legas.
conveniat nobis ut fas epigrammata longa*

¹⁰⁴ Mart. 2.1.2 & 11.107.1-2. Kay (1985) 285 notes that the roll is *explicitum*, the "vox propria for the completion of the unwinding of a roll."

¹⁰⁵ Mart. 12.2(3).15-6.

¹⁰⁶ Mart. 14.183.1. Leary (1996) 248 notes that such a command is not too strenuous an undertaking for a poem that survives at roughly 303 lines long, suggesting that the exhortation to *perlegere* is part of the joke here.

¹⁰⁷ I.e. whether the poem is a speaking object or a description in Martial's own voice. See Lóio (2014) 378, who focuses on whether or not Martial is attempting to place Homer alongside himself at the bottom of the generic ladder.

¹⁰⁸ Fitzgerald (2007) 2, cf. Larash (2004) 11 & 181. Fitzgerald (2016) 166 again notes that Martial frequently discusses lectorial skipping, but at p. 183 acknowledges the difficulty of skipping in the scroll format compared to the codex book.

¹⁰⁹ Larash (2004) 11 n. 71 notes the jocular nature of some of these poems but still reads them as honest advice to the general reader.

sit transire tibi, scribere, Tucca, mihi. (6.65)

“You make epigrams in hexameters!” I know Tucca says this.

Tucca, it’s usually done. In fact, Tucca, it’s allowed.

“But this one’s long!” This is also usual, Tucca, and allowed:

If you prefer shorter ones, read only the distiches.

Let’s agree that long epigrams are sanctioned

For you to pass over, Tucca, for me to write.

Martial’s joke in this poem is multifaceted, but works towards excluding Tucca from the rest of his poetry. Tucca’s complaints that Martial writes long poems and hexametric ones too are slowly explained to be incorrect concerns with the repetition of *solet... licet... solet... licetque*, and the placement of this poem after the longest poem of the book emphasises this disparity of Tucca’s expectations and what Martial claims are the rules of the genre. In fact, the poet’s grandiloquent (and flippant) closing suggestion that Tucca only read his two-liners works to exclude this failed appreciator of the poet’s art from the majority of the book – of the ninety-four poems in book 6 only 16 are distiches, and 6.65 itself would be ignored by such a restricted reading practice.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Martial’s response to Tucca’s complaint about length in line 3 is overly-long and protracted. Only the second foot of the line is spondaic, and falls over the statement “*hōc lōng(um) | ēst*” to ensure that the observation “this is long” is itself a long phrase within the longest line of the poem, with the hexametric nature of this line also serving to redouble the joke directed at Tucca’s concern.¹¹¹ By making fun of Tucca’s very complaint, and then sarcastically evicting him from reading the majority of the work, Martial demonstrates that the Model Reader should not skip any poem, no matter its length or metre.

Indeed, Martial makes similar jokes in all of his other poems directed at readers complaining about his overall length. Epigrams 1.110 and 3.83 both respond to readers unwilling to read long poems, and both of these epigrams also immediately follow a long epigram in the collection. At 1.110 Martial replies to Velox – “Swift” – in a single couplet, noting that Velox wants shorter poems yet writes nothing himself (thus practicing what he preaches).¹¹² Martial’s response to Cordus in 3.83 is more obscene, stating (again in one couplet) that if Cordus wants shorter poems he should make do with the poet’s command to fellate him.¹¹³ Neither poem can be read as honest advice to the reader here, as the poet others these figures by insulting them. When Martial does address readers in general who wish to pass by his long poems (*transire*, the same verb as above with Tucca at 6.65.6), he notes that he does not want readers with too fine a palate (*nimum lector gulosus*) but rather readers who eat the whole

¹¹⁰ Mart. 6.6, 6.9, 6.12, 6.24, 6.31, 6.41, 6.46, 6.48, 6.67, 6.69, 6.79, 6.84, 6.87 & 6.90-1.

¹¹¹ The rest of this line (besides the final foot) is dactylic: –uu | – – | –uu | –uu | –uu | – –.

¹¹² Howell (1980) 338 notes the onomastic wordplay here. Mart. 8.29 notes that brevity is pointless when one compiles a long book of brief epigrams.

¹¹³ See Fusi (2006) 497.

meal, including the bread.¹¹⁴ Martial repeats this image of the *lector* as dinner-guest rather than chef in book 9, and in light of these poems it is tempting to read his comment about canapés swooping by readers in book 7 as a metapoetic moment of self-reflection: the best *lector* should sit down and enjoy the whole text, not pass it by fastidiously.¹¹⁵ So 11.106 bids Vibius Maximus to pause and read only this poem, but expects that he too will *transire* (v.4) and miss out on the entertainment of the text. As Fitzgerald observes, since this poem is placed at the end of the book it is unlikely that Maximus would have stopped by this stage anyway, a point reinforced by its juxtaposition with the following poem on readers pretending to *perlegere* one another’s poetry – lazy readers, unlike those who have forged ahead through Martial’s whole text, are not real readers of Martial after all.¹¹⁶ Those that skip over Martial are like those that pass by monuments on the footpath, neglectful of the person behind the text. The Model Reader, the sepulchral *lector studiosus*, pauses to enjoy the whole text and to approach the poetic monument on its own terms.

There is, however, one poem where Martial appears to be sincere when he advises the reader to approach the text in their own way, and to shorten a lengthy book as they desire. At the start of book 10 the poet announces in a brief epigram how readers might approach this lengthy *libellus*:

*si nimius videor seraque coronide longus
esse liber, legito pauca: libellus ero.
terque quaterque mihi finitur carmine parvo
pagina: fac tibi me quam cupis ipse brevem.* (10.1)

If I seem too long a book and my ending too
Late, read a few: I’ll be a *libellus*.
Thrice and four times my column is finished with a small song:
Make me as short for you as you yourself desire.

At first glance this poem seems to encourage readers who find Martial’s books too long (like Velox and Tucca) to make the book exactly as they wish. Indeed, Ana Maria Lóio sees this poem as another example of the poet inviting readers to skip his poems as part of his “defense strategy against bad readers”, but the poet never speaks in the language of skipping here.¹¹⁷ Whereas in the poems cited above Martial encouraged ‘bad’ readers to only read certain epigrams and pass on (*transire*) to others, here the poet is inviting readers to stop at the bottom of the column of the papyrus scroll.¹¹⁸ There is no

¹¹⁴ Mart. 10.59.5-6.

¹¹⁵ Mart. 7.48 & 9.89. Cf. Gowers (1993) 248 on Martial’s poetry-as-food metaphor.

¹¹⁶ Fitzgerald (2007) 144-5. Cf. Höschele (2007) 353 on the similarities between Mart. 11.106 and addresses in funerary inscription.

¹¹⁷ Lóio (2014) 387.

¹¹⁸ Damschen & Heil (2004) 39-40 include a variety of interpretations of this poem, including that the *paginae* in book 10 may have been shorter than the other books of the *Epigrams*, but the argument that columns often ended with a poem is less farfetched.

sense of omission here, just a pause in the sequential act of reading Martial's *Epigrams*. A suitably 'bad' reader might not return to the book afterwards, but stopping at the bottom of a column provides the reader with a good reference point in the text at which to return to the reading experience. In short, the advice to stop at the bottom of a *pagina* and make the book shorter for the reader is an act of bookmarking, with the ability to return at a later point to the poet's helpfully sub-divided text. But what is particularly striking here is Martial's general air of magnanimity in allowing the reader to do as they please and to decide for themselves where the book's end is. Of course the real reader has full control over the text, and of course they can skip ahead or pause or leave whenever they choose, but in suggesting to the reader that they can stop whenever they wish the poet sets the reader a challenge. By telling the reader that they can stop at one of the three or four points where the column ends with the end of a poem there is a sense of pushing the reader to try to get this far, not to be a Septicianus (as at 11.107) who returns the unfurled *libellus* to the poet in order to feign having reached the very end of the text. This self-deprecatory attitude is characteristic of Martial's *Epigrams*, which acknowledge their own trifling nature and the presence of bad and boring poems, but it should not necessarily be taken at face value.¹¹⁹ This poem, as Rimell indicates, ends its first hexameter with *longus* and finishes with *brevem*, carrying out the act of shortening the *liber* into a *libellus* over the course of just four lines – the book itself should already be short enough for any reader.¹²⁰ Once again, the poet implies that the Model Reader of his text should be able to make their way through the whole text uninterrupted.

This concern with length and skipping also appears in Martial's two books of gift-poems, the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*. Like 10.1 both these books include introductory poems that encourage the reader to skim-read the text, suggesting that the *lemmata* (titles for the items the distiches describe) are there "so that, if you prefer, you only read the headings" or to warn readers of poems that might not be to their taste.¹²¹ This explanation of the *lemmata*, however, is a literary joke – in multi-authored collections such as the *Palatine Anthology* these *lemmata* identify the author of each individual contribution as an aid to the reader. In the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, singly-authored texts, these *lemmata* are present to explain what item is being described. Given that many of the poems are presented in riddling form these *lemmata* serve a very practical purpose to help the reader understand the text (as well as demonstrating the author's cleverness). Examples include 13.25's "pine cones" described in the poem as "the fruits of Cybele", or 14.12's "ivory cashboxes" which never specifies the material explicitly in the poem itself besides the statement that they should only hold gold coins.¹²² In the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* these *lemmata* are essential for the interpretation of the poems and the collection as a whole, and, as Sarah

¹¹⁹ Mart. 1.16, 7.81 & 7.90. Roman (2001) 123 sees this as a reversed Callimacheanism, with the big book not seen as an evil because of its aesthetics, but because of its potential to bore the reader.

¹²⁰ Rimell (2008) 67.

¹²¹ Mart. 14.2.2: *ut, si malueris, lemmata sola legas* & Mart. 13.3.7-8.

¹²² Mart. 13.28, 14.16 & 14.29 are a few other examples. Cf. Leary (1996) 58: "it was customary for the mottoes attached to gifts distributed at dinner to contain riddles."

Stroup argues, both these texts are artfully collected to provide a careful structure that encourages a sequential reading approach – the *Xenia* represents the progression of courses at a banquet, and the *Apophoreta* moves through various series of different quality gifts before ending at 14.223 with a scene of daybreak.¹²³ Similarly, Timothy Leary maintains that Martial’s suggestion to skip the short distiches in these books is disingenuous because of the small amount of effort required to read a book solely composed of distiches – readers approaching the light verse of the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* who grow bored at the very sight of a distich should perhaps not be reading light verse (or any verse) after all.¹²⁴ The inclusion of *lemmata* could certainly have aided the reader intent on browsing the collection for an appropriate epigram, but once again Martial’s magnanimity here and his self-identification of these books as collections of light-hearted fun suggests a reading of these poems as literary jokes.¹²⁵ The poet here wilfully misrepresents what his *lemmata* are doing in his own poetry, creating another joke for his learned readers to enjoy (and the not-so-learned to discover).¹²⁶ Thus while these comments demonstrate Martial’s awareness of skipping poems as a potential lectorial habit, they do not demonstrate his encouragement of that practice. If anything, this disingenuous advice can be read as an aspiration for these collections to be treated as works of poetry serious about their lack of seriousness. As ever Martial plays with his reader, but there is an expectation that the *studiosi* will understand the real purpose of the *lemmata* beneath his quips here, and his text is more carefully structured than a surface reading of these jokes might otherwise indicate.

Martial’s advice to certain readers to skip his poems can thus be read as a deterrent against just such a practice, and, alongside his favouring a reading approach that experiences the whole book, feeds into a broader concern over readers growing bored with the text. Lectorial boredom is a recurring theme in Martial’s earlier books, and concerns over poetic length come to a head in book 2 in particular, where Martial conflates the progression through a book of epigrams with the journeying of a *viator* past tomb inscriptions.¹²⁷ In this book’s preface the poet notes that Decianus’ desire for the author not to write a preface for a book of epigrams in the first place will ensure that readers “don’t come through to the first column worn out (*ad primam paginam non lassii pervenient* 2.praef.15-6).” These weary readers resurface at several points in book 2, with the first epigram bemoaning how a short *libellus* will still be seen as long, then a few poems later complaining that Severus, a formerly-ardent reader of the poet’s work, now yawns at the second column of text (like a worn-out *viator* just setting out from Rome), and

¹²³ Stroup (2006) 309. On the structure of these books, see Leary (2001) 10-2, Stroup (2006) 299-303 & Sullivan (1991) 12-3. Mart. 14.45-50 describes a variety of exercise equipment and 14.124-43 lists various items of clothing.

¹²⁴ Leary (1996) 58 & Leary (2001) 47.

¹²⁵ Mart. 13.1.4-8 & 14.1.7-12 define these collections as gambling frivolities and trifling poems.

¹²⁶ This wilful misrepresentation of the book’s structure is a theme of prefatory material in general, as I discuss in chapter 5.

¹²⁷ On the reading-as-wayfaring metaphor in epigram, see Höschle (2007), esp. pp. 350-4 on Martial, and Lattimore (1962) 126 on this motif in physical inscriptions.

much later with Cosconius grumbling about the poet writing long epigrams.¹²⁸ Cosconius is represented as a fool who would call a famous miniature statue of Brutus' boy too short and a Colossus too tall, and Severus is represented as a poor supporter of the poet, but the concern over lectorial boredom and the castigation of this as a lectorial failure suggests a real issue with the poet's desired full sequential reading of the text. Indeed, all of these issues converge in Martial's fake warning to the *matrona* in book 3, where the poet's discussion of the upcoming ruder poetry is likely to inspire her to read on, noting that: "if I know you well, already weary (*iam lassa*) you were laying aside my long little book. Now studious you'll read it whole (*totum nunc studiosa leges*)."¹²⁹ Titillated by the promise of more lewd poetry the *lassa matrona* has now become *studiosa* like the Model Reader in 1.1, eager to read through the entire book (*perlegere*) and enjoy all of its contents. However, this change has only happened by appealing to the woman's sexual appetites (lines 3-10 all tantalisingly allude to the *mentula* the *matrona* is urged to avoid in an Ovidian allusion to a similar mock-warning in the *Ars Amatoria*), and given Martial's consistent response to readers who complain about overly long poetry across the corpus it seems that there was some contemporary resistance to the concept of an artfully arranged book of epigrams.¹³⁰ The *lector studiosus* (and the *matrona studiosa*) are both invited to read the text all the way through without skipping epigrams or giving up halfway through the book, but the poet's need to emphasise these approaches as good reading practices reveals an underlying issue with some contemporary readers.

Overall, when Martial praises the *lector* he provides the reader of the physical text with a Model Reader to emulate in their approach to the text. Martial's *lector studiosus* is a central figure for this exemplary figure, always providing Martial with the correct kind of *fama*, and attributing the poet's poetry to him rather than trying to claim his renown for themselves as plagiarist. Thus the *lector* is set up in opposition to the *malignus*, who attributes to the poet a *nigra fama* and seeks to write their own authority into the text to subvert its meaning. While the *lector studiosus* is the positive result of a general readership that enjoys and celebrates the poet's talents it is the *malignus* who represents the darker side of a wider audience, and the lack of the poet's physical control over the text. This lack of control over the text and its reception is also seen in Martial's dramatization of audience responses to longer epigrams or epigrams that are considered otherwise unepigrammatic (such as the hexameters in 6.65). While Martial's Model Reader approaches the text with an aim to read all the way through there is the constant danger that readers might grow weary, or not engage with the poetic project in a serious enough way. By promoting himself as *toto notus in orbe* at 1.1.2 Martial makes a bold claim about his own contemporary celebrity (a claim that he was unlikely to ever truly validate), but also about the quality of his text – the claim of worldwide renown imbues the text with the qualities of the predecessors it

¹²⁸ Mart. 2.1, 2.6 & 2.77 respectively. I also discuss these poems in chapter 5.

¹²⁹ Mart. 3.68.11-2.

¹³⁰ Ov. *Tr.* 2.245-50 repeats Ov. *Ars Am.* 1.31-4 almost verbatim. On this Ovidian link at Mart. 3.68, see Fusi (2006) 435 & Hayes (forthcoming).

seeks to emulate. Thus while Martial writes that his poetry is all *nugae* it is with a view that he is the best of nugatory poets (such as at 9.praef.ep.) like Catullus, Marsus, Pedo, and Gaetulicus, who are read all the way through. Martial's Model Reader, then, will devour the text whole rather than skipping through to the juiciest delicacies, enjoying the entire banquet on offer in order to understand the overarching (and sometimes conflicting) project of a unified book of epigrams. Instead of a random selection of poems by the reader, for instance, a steady and systematic sequential reading of the text helps to forge an overarching sense of the work's unity. Readers can, of course, do as they please with any text, but by providing the actual reader with a poetic persona within the *Epigrams* Martial works towards exerting some level of authorial control over a readership group he may never meet in person.

Conclusion: the *lector* as Agent of the Poet's *fama*

As this chapter has demonstrated, Martial's discussion of his readership engages with and subverts the traditional Latin discourse of literary *fama*. In particular, the conflation of literary *fama* with contemporary celebrity places the poet in a distinctly post-Ovidian milieu, writing towards and against the Augustan elegist's exile. Martial's consistent demonstration of 'good' and 'bad' readers and their approaches to the poet and his work demonstrates a general wariness and concern over a broader reception than the narrow literary elite at Rome. For Martial there is no end to his imagined readership, all read him – young and old, men and women, urbanites and provincials – and as such the majority of his audience are unknown and unknowable. For such a poet, extremely aware of the dangers of misinterpretation of his poetry to his own *fama*, such an audience requires guidance towards an appropriate reading style of the text. Martial's readers in the text are a construct of the text itself, and as such each reading of the text re-constructs this image of the reader, but as this analysis has shown they are also indicative of broader concerns and issues of readership in the Flavian period.

One key aspect of this negotiation of authorial and lectorial control is Martial's depiction of his *lector* as a performer of the text, and in particular his focus on the sound of his *fama* ringing out across the world. When reciting a text the reader becomes an authorial influence over those listening, taking on the guise of the poet himself (which Auctus proudly relinquishes in 7.51). As a parallel to Vergilian and Ovidian *Fama*, Martial's general readers chatter and recite his poetry (and thus his *fama*) across the known world, spreading his text orally to others. As stated above, however, this does not necessarily mean that Martial's poetry was only intended for recitation. Instead, Martial's focus on the orality and the performance of his poetry in the spread of *fama*, and the depiction of his text as a *theatrum* to be enjoyed, places the reader into the guise of a performer working from Martial's script. As both actor and audience member in Martial's *theatrum*, the reader is prevented from ever assuming the full role of the text's author and forced to speak the poet's words with the understanding that these words are not their own. Indeed, that Martial places such emphasis on his role as the text's director and the *lector*'s subservience to his whims also reveals that while to some extent Martial depicts the relationship

between author and reader as a *quid pro quo* relationship of poetry for *fama*, he does so with the overall power over the text tilted towards himself. By encouraging his readers to speak out about the text in a certain way, and by giving them a role to play as the *lector studiosus*, Martial ensures that the *fama* that spreads is as positive to the poet and his identity as an author as possible.

In order to influence how the actual reader approaches his text, the epigrammatist adopts the model of inscriptional epigram to great effect. The sepulchral voice of the poet at 1.1 and the other addresses to the *lector* engage with an anonymous, unknowable readership physically distanced from the speaker of the text. By inviting the *lector* to stop and engage with the *Epigrams* as one would a tomb epigram the poet transforms the reader into a passer-by, and draws out a surprising number of similarities between the two figures. Like the *viator*, Martial's reader is at risk of passing the text by, of skipping epigrams and growing bored of traipsing past so many poems, and of ignoring the pleas made within the text to treat the poetic monument with the correct level of respect. Like a physical tomb inscription, the reader's voice brings the author back to life and ensures that his *fama* carries on to immortality. By burying himself within the text Martial thus ensures that his poetry is a *monumentum aere perennius*, and urges his readers to set aside their busyness (and business) to enjoy his poetry. Most of all, the instructional voice of the tomb poem rings out from the poet's pages, chastising those that disobey his wishes and encouraging the correct commemoration of his work. Martial uses the language of death to discuss living fame, but he effects some control over his posthumous reception as well by conflating the language of contemporary and posthumous *fama*. Martial's living death, unlike Ovid's, is represented as proof of his wide general audience across the empire.

Most of all, however, Martial's celebration of general readers and perpetual *fama* while living and in death revolves around the creation of textual strategies to encourage the reader of the physical text to do as the poet persona asks. Through his continuous praise of and directions to the *lector studiosus* and his patrons Martial builds up an image of the Model Reader in his text. By addressing the reader with praise and thanks from the very opening of the text, Martial encourages the reader to step over the threshold between the physical world and the textual world and adopt the persona of the *lector studiosus* as they read. The poet positions this figure against the threatening anonymised groups of *maligni* and plagiarists as a defence of his own *fama*, and by doing so creates negative *exempla* for the reader to react against. Thus the 'good' reader will continue to read Martial all the way through from beginning to end, attribute *fama* to the poet, and not attempt to harm his reputation. Nevertheless, the creation of a Model Reader in the text does not necessarily mean that every reader in antiquity approached the text in the ways the poet championed. If anything the opposite is true – the *lector studiosus* exists as a model for Martial's readers because to some extent a model needed to exist. Martial's complaints about *maligni* and plagiarists, while worded in such a way as to legitimise the poet

as an author worth plagiarising, demonstrate an inherent difficulty with imperial writing culture.¹³¹ To chastise skipping poems and valorise reading for the whole, Martial must have been fighting latent difficulties (present at his time and the present) with the concept of a book of epigrams, of his *nugae* being worthy of consideration as a literary form. Of course, this concern also comes from the self-deprecatory style of epigram and *nugae*, but these statements are so common in the *Epigrams* that they should be taken seriously. Martial was fighting not only for his *fama* as a well-read author, but also his *fama* for being a poet worthy of being read. Ultimately it is the reader who decides what and how much *fama* to give to the poet, but Martial's construction of the *lector studiosus* works to sway that reader into making a decision that is more favourable to the text.

¹³¹ McGill (2012) 77.

Getting with the Programme: The Domitianic Cycle in *Epigrams 7*

As this thesis consistently argues, Martial's poems should be considered in the wider context of the book in which they are found. Over the course of the next two chapters I will explore how Martial links his epigrams together into a unified contexture. Focusing on book 7 in particular, I argue that the sequential progression of interlocking themes throughout book 7 helps to create an overarching unity for the whole book, which is lost when epigrams are taken out of the specific context of their book. For example, at the end of *Epigrams 7* Martial sends his book to the emperor Domitian, expressing the hope that the courtier Crispinus might pass the *libellus* on to the *princeps* with a kindly word. The epigrammatist finishes this formulaic farewell to the book with the optimistic claim that Crispinus' intervention is enough, and that the book's good reception is dependent on "the god [i.e. Domitian] himself."¹ This poem represents a grandiose example of the poet's flattery of the emperor as a parallel to Jupiter, but an isolated reading of 7.99 misses the significance of the earlier poems in this book which gradually increase in panegyric praise of the emperor until, at 7.99, he becomes a Jupiter-on-earth sitting at court on the Olympian Palatine. As this chapter demonstrates, book 7 is composed in such a way as to impart a sense of unity to a sequential reading of the text, and it is in the *libellus*' programmatic cycle that Martial establishes the central themes of the book and creates a framework around which his other poems are positioned.

The Programmatic Procession: Mart. 7.1-8

The first eight epigrams of book 7 form a programmatic series of poems that establish Domitian as a central figure of the book and Martial's epigrammatic Rome. The key themes of the book are established in this opening cycle of poems anticipating the emperor's successful return from the frontiers, which focuses the attention of the reader squarely on the emperor. Martial sets the time period of the book firmly in December, and its geographic location in the Danube's Black Sea delta (both discussed further in this chapter's following sections), but these recurring temporal and spatial markers are so strongly associated with the emperor in this opening imperial cycle that the reader is invited to think of Domitian whenever they recur. The programmatic cycle of poems thus acts as a proem for the rest of the book, establishing the emperor's status in the text as a divine epic warrior whose anticipated return at 7.8 signals a change in focus back to the city of Rome itself, where the divine *princeps* exercises total control over the city. Within the space of eight epigrams Martial not only praises the emperor and assigns to him total control over his literary city, but also makes the emperor a key structural figure within the book. While books 4, 5, and 6 of the *Epigrams* in particular include panegyric for Domitian, book 7 takes this praise even further to create in these imperial poems a thematic core with which the rest of the book's topics interweave.² Whenever the reader is made to remember the emperor's supreme

¹ Mart. 7.99.8: *hoc satis est: ipsi cetera mando deo.*

² This practice continues in books 8 and 9, after which Domitian's assassination forestalled any further praise.

authority throughout *Epigrams* 7 they are reminded of this initial cycle and the opening of the book, and thus the book as a unified whole.

Martial opens his introductory sequence to book 7 with a pair of epigrams that focus on the emperor's breastplate. In these two poems the epigrammatist strongly establishes the emperor's divine military prowess as being superior even to that of the Olympian gods (though not surpassing that of Jupiter), and characterises Domitian as an Iliadic hero by making references to mythology and the events of the Trojan War. The first of these poems describes the breastplate in mythological terms, emphasising its divine associations with the goddess Minerva:

*accipe belligerae crudum thoraca Minervae,
ipsa Medusaeae quem timet ira comae.
dum vacat, haec, Caesar, poterit lorica vocari:
pectore cum sacro sederit, aegis erit. (7.1)*

Receive the bloody breastplate of belligerent Minerva,
Which the very wrath of Medusa's locks fears.
As long as it is empty, this, Caesar, can be called a cuirass:
When it sits on your sacred breast it will be an aegis.

The poet then moves on to the features of the *lorica*'s invincibility, certain that the breastplate will ensure the emperor's safe (and glorious) return from the battlefield. Significantly, this armour will prove to be greater than that of Mars, the god of war:

*invia Sarmaticis domini lorica sagittis
et Martis Getico tergore fida magis,
quam vel ad Aetolae securam cuspidis ictus
texuit innumeri lubricus unguis apri:
felix sorte tua, sacrum cui tangere pectus
fas erit et nostri mente calere dei.
i comes et magnos inlaesa merere triumphos
palmataeque ducem, sed cito, redde togae. (7.2)*

Impassable to Sarmatian arrows, cuirass of our lord,
And more trusty than the Getic shield of Mars,
Which, secure even against the blows of the Aetolian spear,
The gliding hoof of innumerable boars has woven:
Lucky in your lot, for whom it will be sanctioned
To touch the sacred breast and grow warm with the mind of our god.
Go as a companion and, unharmed, earn great triumphs

And return our leader, but swiftly, to a palm-embroidered toga.

Martial opens his book by superimposing the panegyric of his epigrammatic world onto real world events. The poet thrusts the reader into his contemporary political world, anticipating the emperor's successful conquest of the Sarmatians in the Second Pannonian War that had begun in May of AD 92 and that would continue until January 93, but adds a mythological epic mood to his elegiacs through references to direct divine agency.³ The emperor is urged to receive the breastplate of Minerva in 7.1 before the epigrammatist establishes the key themes of this cycle in 7.2: the emperor's divine military prowess, the Roman people's anxious expectation of his safe return from the frontiers, and Domitian's inevitable celebration of a triumph (represented by the *toga palmata* at 7.2.8).⁴ By blurring the boundaries between the mythological and physical worlds, Martial augments the emperor's position in the opening lines of the book to that of a divine epic hero on earth and ensures that the *princeps* becomes the supreme figure around whom the book revolves.

Indeed, what Martial portrays in the *Epigrams* is epigrammatic fiction superimposed onto the historical Rome. Historically, the Flavian epigrammatist has been viewed as a simpering toady to a tyrannical emperor given his extravagant flattery of Domitian, most infamously for his praise of the *princeps* as *dominus et deus* (Lord and God), but it is important to remember that Martial's language is part of the contemporary discourse of panegyric.⁵ When Martial praises Domitian as a god, most commonly as a parallel to Jupiter at Rome, he is using a style of language that stretches back to the Augustan poets' celebration of the emperor and which would continue (in similar vein) into the age of Trajan, with Pliny emphasising that while Domitian was flattered as a divine ruler it is Trajan that deserves the title.⁶ In fact, there is little evidence that the emperor Domitian ever actually spread the epithet "*dominus et deus*" any further than private conversations, which was exaggerated in the Trajanic era to shore up the present principate's legitimacy in the wake of Domitian's political assassination.⁷

³ On the Second Pannonian War, see B. W. Jones (1992) 152-3, although the specific historical details for this conflict are unfortunately scarce. Galán Vioque (2002) 6 uses the war to date book 7 to December of AD 92.

⁴ Though the emperor would in fact only celebrate an ovation for his victory: B. W. Jones (1992) 152. Henriksen (2002) 321 sees this as a direct parallel to Horace's expectation that Augustus would celebrate in triumph in *Carm.* 4.2 – the first emperor also only received an ovation. However serendipitous the parallel with Augustus in book 7 was, by book 8 Martial was certainly modelling himself as a Domitianic Horace: so Henriksen (2002) 337.

⁵ Mart. 5.8.1 & 7.34.8. Watson & Watson (2015) 32-6 ably summarise the challenges for a modern reader approaching Martial's flattery of the emperor. Nauta (2002) 412-9 addresses the issue of a poet's sincerity in panegyric, concluding that the speech act itself acts out the specific role of panegyric and is understood as such irrespective of the poet's personal feelings. A modern parallel would be the Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom's practice of writing praise poetry for the current monarch to commemorate events of national importance.

⁶ Plin. *Pan.* 2-3, later (31.1-2 & 88.8) describing Trajan as a Jupiter-on-earth. On this similarity to Martial's panegyric, see Braund (1998) 63. On Martial's Augustan predecessors, see Henriksen (2012) xxv-vi, citing Hor. *Carm.* 1.2.45, 1.12.49-52 & *Ov. Met.* 15.858-60, and Watson & Watson (2015) 34. Coleman (1990 [2000]) 39 argues that under Trajan "the atmosphere of sycophantic adulation" of the emperor intensified.

⁷ B. W. Jones (1992) 108-9. As Henriksen (2012) 280-1 notes, it is surprising that none of Domitian's most ardent detractors (Juvenal, Pliny, or Tacitus) refer to the title at all. On the condemnation of Domitian following his assassination, see Watson & Watson (2015) 33.

Most tellingly, when Martial announces an end to his use of the title in book 10, he does not reject his earlier poetry's value, but instead comments that the new regime is no place for such words as part of his adherence to the new political order.⁸ In the realm of panegyric the aim of the game was the supreme praise of the subject (akin to the elevated tones seen in funeral eulogy that would be considered gauche in everyday conversation). The result is that Martial creates an epigrammatic Caesar (a 'Domitian') in his poetry, an idealised representation of the emperor at his best and most powerful.⁹ When Martial praises Domitian as a divine, epic warrior superior even to Mars in the opening two epigrams of book 7, then, this should be seen more as a method of emphasising the emperor's martial prowess than a statement of belief in the emperor's living divinity. The emperor's breastplate is imagined as a divine set of armour that rivals the arms of Aeneas himself (discussed further below), but it would not necessarily have been seen that way in normal conversation.

By describing Domitian receiving Minerva's own divine armour, Martial opens his book in the manner of epic poetry. This armour has the exceptional status of being Minerva's aegis, the goddess' mythological shield, but Martial's choice of Minerva is significant given her status as Domitian's patron goddess.¹⁰ The emperor thus becomes his patron goddess' chosen warrior on earth, and Domitian's position as a divine hero is further reinforced by the poet's cunning hyperbole that the breastplate only becomes the aegis while it touches the emperor's sacred breast (7.1.4); it is the goddess who bestows her divine armour upon the emperor in vv.1-2, but it is his innate divine qualities that unlock the breastplate's full potential at vv.3-4.¹¹ Indeed, it is striking that Martial does not mention Domitian until line 3, until which time the recipient of the *lorica* is anonymous, and until which point the epigram is entirely situated in the realm of the mythological. The reference to Medusa at v.2 alludes to the standard imperial practice of including a representation of the monster (a gorgoneion) on armour as an apotropaic symbol, but placed beside the goddess Minerva in v.1 the gorgon comes alive, actively terrified of the armour on which she is found.¹² The representation of the emperor's armour thus becomes larger than life, and this description of a gift from the gods places Domitian into a sphere associated with epic. Both protagonists of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, fundamental poems of warfare in the classical canon, receive divine arms from their divine parents which ultimately prove to be impervious to their foes.¹³ By insisting that

⁸ Mart. 10.72.3-4: *dicturus dominum deumque non sum. | iam non est locus hac in urbe vobis*. The general complaint against Domitian at Mart. *Spec.* 33 also does not represent a later disavowal of this titulature. On the misattribution of *Spec.* 33 to this book, which she omits from her edition, see Coleman (2006) xx-xxi. Cordes (2014) 297 observes that through 10.72 Martial encodes in his previous poems a new negative meaning that was not present at their composition.

⁹ Lorenz (2002) 42 & 118-20 popularised the term '*epigrammatischer Kaiser*'. Cf. Garthwaite (2009) 416 & Henriksen (2012) xl for English accounts of this phenomenon.

¹⁰ Suet. *Dom.* 15.2-3 & Dio Cass. 67.1.2. Cf. Sullivan (1991) 138 & 144, and B. W. Jones (1992) 100.

¹¹ The description of Domitian's armour as an aegis is particularly apt as Jupiter (the god most compared to Domitian) was often depicted with the aegis. This aegis thus foreshadows the later description of Domitian as the Thunderer in book 7. Cf. Galán Vioque (2002) 54.

¹² Galán Vioque (2002) 49 discusses the gorgoneion in detail.

¹³ Hom. *Il.* 18.478-613 & Verg. *Aen.* 8.615-731.

Domitian's *lorica* is the very aegis of Minerva, and emphasising its invulnerability (*invia* 7.2.1, *securam* 7.2.3 & *inlaesa* 7.2.7), Martial sculpts the emperor at war into a model Achilles or Aeneas. Furthermore, the reference to the *ira* of the Medusa's petrifying locks at 7.1.2 brings to mind the driving wrath of these epic poems: the μῆνις of Achilles that propels the narrative of the *Iliad*, and the *furor* that Aeneas attempts to overcome in his quest to find a new homeland for his people.¹⁴ In the book's opening epigram pair Martial thus characterises the emperor not only as a divine agent worthy of the gods' attention, but also as an unstoppable epic hero.

In fact, Martial's emphasis on Domitian's invincibility serves to raise the *princeps'* martial prowess to a level greater than the god of war himself. In the first half of 7.2 Martial emphasises the *lorica's* own immunity to arrows (*invia* v.1) at the expense of Mars, claiming that the breastplate will prove more protective (*fida magis* v.2) than the god's shield. Indeed, Martial has in mind here a significant event in the *Iliad* where Diomedes (who is spurred on by the aid of Athena) strikes and wounds the war god Ares.¹⁵ In a subtle allusion to Homer, Martial suggests that Domitian is Minerva's new heroic champion capable of fighting off all that oppose him, and also that he will prove stronger than the god of war, capable of defending himself from attacks from the Aetolian spear of Diomedes. While both Guillermo Galán Vioque and David Shackleton Bailey note that the Aetolian referenced in v.3 could be Meleager, the epigram's direct statement that the emperor's breastplate will prove more defensible than Mars' shield fixes the reader's attention on the Iliadic conflict more than Meleager's hunt of the Caledonian boar.¹⁶ Here the epigrammatist's focus is on the emperor and the divine protection his armour provides. The poet emphasises that this protection will make Domitian unbeatable in battle, but also shows a general concern for the emperor's safety (*inlaesa* v.7) that recurs throughout this opening cycle. Although the emperor is a divine hero stronger than Mars, the people (and the epigrammatist) wish for their benevolent ruler to return home safely to rule over them once more (or so 7.5 will go on to claim).

As well as drawing direct parallels between Domitian and the gods, Martial reinforces his depiction of the emperor as a divine being in book 7's opening cycle with frequent use of religious language. By opening the book with the imperative form *accipe*, which Galán Vioque observes is "a formula typical of anathematic [i.e. votive] epigram, exhorting the god, ie [*sic*] Domitian, to accept the offering", Martial firmly roots his praise in the discourse of Roman religious utterance.¹⁷ Indeed, the

¹⁴ Hom. *Il.* 1.1, Verg. *Aen.* 12.950-1.

¹⁵ Hom. *Il.* 5.124-32 (Athena's intervention) & 5.855-9 (wounding Ares). Diomedes also attacks Aphrodite at *Il.* 5.330.

¹⁶ Galán Vioque (2002) 57 judges the reference to Meleager "more appropriate". Shackleton Bailey (1993.2) 73 n. 2 only suggests a Meleagrian allusion. Note, however, that the description of the Aetolian spear is sandwiched between references on the preceding and alternate lines to Mars and boars respectively, so both potential allusions could be present. Nevertheless, to my mind the strong Iliadic overtones of this cycle (as I continue to argue below) make the allusion to the Diomedes episode the stronger of the two.

¹⁷ Galán Vioque (2002) 49.

poet scatters these devotional imperatives throughout the initial cycle in his requests for the emperor's return, emphatically using the imperative forms *redde* at 7.2.8 and 7.5.3, and *veni* at 7.6.10 to request his imminent homecoming. By naming Domitian as a god (7.2.6) and addressing him in the careful, appropriately deferential, religious manner, Martial reinforces his characterisation of the emperor as a divinity in the book. Furthermore, the epigrammatist adds a religious element to the *princeps'* inviolability at 7.2.5-6 through use of the phrase *felix sorte tua sacrum tui tangere pectus / fas erit*. While the Sarmatians' arrows will be unable to penetrate the divine armour and harm the emperor's person, the *lorica* is allowed to touch him. As in 7.1, the breastplate is to be revered because it has contact with the sacred body of Domitian (7.1.4 & 7.2.5). The use of the religiously loaded term *fas*, which describes what is permitted by the laws of the gods rather than the laws of mankind (*ius*), lends to the emperor a sacrosanctity that further distances him from mortal affairs.¹⁸ Thus the poet manages to praise the emperor as an unconquerable military leader and as a divine agent above the machinations of the mortal. This is significant for the poet's own self-fashioning, however, for while mortals cannot hope to approach the emperor it is Martial who sings his praise and comes close to him in his verses. If the emperor is worthy of divine praise, the poet is worthy of singing it.

In the opening two poems of book 7, then, Martial firmly establishes the emperor as a key divine epic figure about to conquer the Getic peoples and return to Rome in triumph, as well as establishing his own poetic credentials. The reader is primed for the rest of the book's background narrative, and might expect this panegyric to continue apace for some time. Epigram, however, remains a genre of *variatio*, and the poet immediately frustrates the reader's horizon of expectations with another pair of poems that break the flow of this laudatory narrative. Both poems fixate on two individual poetasters whose morals are deliberately brought into question:

*cur non mitto meos tibi, Pontiliane, libellos?
ne mihi tu mittas, Pontiliane, tuos. (7.3)*

Why don't I send you, Pontilianus, my little books?
It's lest you send me, Pontilianus, yours.

*esset, Castrice, cum mali coloris,
versus scribere coepit Oppianus. (7.4)*

Since, Castricus, he was of bad colour,
Oppianus began to write verses.

Both poems are short, running to two lines each, and both introduce a recurring motif of the *Epigrams* – the poet's interaction with his literary environment. The first poem refers to the practice of contemporary authors sharing their poetry with one another, which Martial wants to avoid given

¹⁸ OLD s. v. *fas* 1a. Cf. Galán Vioque (2002) 59.

Pontilianus' lack of talent.¹⁹ The subsequent epigram, composed in the light-hearted and jocular metre of hendecasyllables, makes a veiled accusation that Oppianus is a cunnilinctor.²⁰ Playing on the trope that poets became pale from the extended amount of time they spend inside writing literature, Martial here comments that Oppianus only chooses to start writing poetry because he was already pale in the first place. This leaves the reader to conclude that Oppianus' pallor results from his habit of performing cunnilingus which, in Roman satire, proverbially turned men pale.²¹ In these two poems both Pontilianus and Oppianus are bad poets – the former writes dreadful poetry that Martial tries to avoid reading, the latter chooses to write poetry to hide his sexual proclivities and as such cannot be a man of talent. These epigrams thus represent a departure, albeit a very short one, from the high discourse of panegyric that the book has so far adopted.

While these two poems constitute a thematic break from panegyric and put the lofty language of epic firmly on hold for four lines of poetry, they do not prove disruptive to the emperor's image. In fact, the characterisation of Domitian as an inviolable *deus* far removed from the pettiness of mortal affairs is strengthened by his contrast to these poetasters. The gulf between the majesty of Domitian and the lowliness of Pontilianus and Oppianus is so vast that the reader is left to consider how much greater the *princeps* is by comparison. Furthermore, these poems serve to augment Martial's status as a man permitted to write about the divinity of the emperor, which the poetasters who are derided here are unworthy of doing. Indeed, Martial seems to show an awareness here that he should not offend the emperor's moralising nature. In book 8, the epigrammatist's prose preface begs the emperor's leave to vary his subject matter beyond panegyric which he comments "could tire you [Domitian] more easily than it would sate us."²² This statement is a clear attempt to mollify the emperor as the poet recognises the interests of his readers, who probably would not appreciate a book full of poems on one subject. As the epigrammatist notes elsewhere, a book is full of poems his readers will like and dislike, but it is not a bad thing to have a varied book.²³ Thus 7.3-4 do not necessarily constitute a lessening of the emperor's prestige in Martial's epigrammatic Rome; instead they embrace the inherent *variatio* of epigram and introduce another key theme in this book – the poet's engagement with literary society. Indeed, Martial immediately follows his opening cycle on the emperor's imminent return with an epigram on an atrocious orator (7.9), which brings the reader's mind back to these poems and the contrast between the high quality poetry written by Martial, and the lack of literary talent elsewhere in Rome. Finally, it is

¹⁹ Galán Vioque (2002) 63.

²⁰ Morgan (2010) 68 describes the hendecasyllable as a metre typified by its levity, grace, intimacy, festivity and relaxed nature.

²¹ Galán Vioque (2002) 65. Cf. Mart. 1.77 & Juv. 2.50. Martial also draws a parallel between morals and colour at 1.96.8, where an anonymous false-moralist-cum-fellator is described as having green morals (*galbinos habet mores*), the colour green being a feature associated with femininity. Howell (1980) 307 notes that only men "of dubious reputation" wear green garments in Latin poetry.

²² Mart. 8.praef.8-11: *aliqua iocorum mixtura variare temptavimus, ne caelesti verecundiae tuae laudes suas, quae facilius te fatigare possint quam nos satiare, omnis versus ingereret.*

²³ Mart. 7.90.

worth noting that the poet's treatment of Oppianus' *cunnilingus* in 7.4 is highly euphemised, requiring the reader to link the claim of a pale face with the practice, and allowing the poet to enact a respectful tone for the emperor in his role as *censor*. As with books 5 and 8, where Martial announces he has removed the obscenity from his book out of respect for Domitian's moralising tendencies, the poet still encourages his reader to laugh, but not at the emperor, and not in such a way as to provoke his anger.²⁴ There is a sharp juxtaposition between high and low in Martial's placement of these poems, but it does not undermine the book's larger programme of praising the emperor's epic conquest of Thrace.

This sudden change of tone and subject matter also enacts a scene change between the Domitianic poems of the opening cycle, allowing the poet to change both the time and location of events by 7.5. At 7.1-2 Martial depicts the emperor about to depart, receiving the breastplate shortly before leaving for the frontiers, and begging his cuirass to leave but swiftly return with the emperor unharmed. Indeed, this return is hoped for as a matter for the not-too-distant future (*cito redde* 7.2.8). By 7.5 the poet fixates firmly upon Rome and its citizens, shifting his gaze from the emperor to the Eternal City, and emphasising that the citizen body requests the emperor's return from the barbarian lands of the north. Time continues to progress alongside the flow of these epigrams, with news reported at 7.6 that the emperor is proving victorious over the barbarians, then returning to the people's prayers for his safety, and the final expression of the public's joy on hearing the emperor will return at 7.8. Each of these epigrams thus stands as a point on a timeline progressing towards the emperor's return from campaign, and the reader's time spent reading 7.3-4 helps emphasise this progression in the epigrammatist's narrative. Furthermore, as both 7.3-4 are only two lines long, the break from the overarching narrative of Domitian's return from campaigning is relatively short. This gives the poet the opportunity to introduce some other themes for his book, but also ensures that the reader will not be too disoriented by the return to praise of the *princeps* at 7.5. Nevertheless, the reader experiences time passing in the gutters between these poems. Whenever the reader pauses to consider what they have just read, and as they update their horizon of expectations for the rest of the book, the physical time taken to interpret the text ensures a lengthening of their perceived narrative time.²⁵ Each epigram in the book represents its own 'present' moment in the book – 7.5 is perceived as occurring 'after' 7.4 in the text, which aids the conception by the sequential reader of time's passage in a linear manner, especially when the poet emphasises that the events of 7.6 follow those of 7.5.²⁶ Even though the poet does not stress a shift in time at 7.3-4, epigrams which need no concept of a temporal setting to make sense, the reader can still perceive a shift in time and space by 7.5 in their progression through the poems. Thus

²⁴ Mart. 5.2 & 8.praef.14.

²⁵ On these phenomena, see chapter 1.

²⁶ On temporal progression more is said below, pp. 102-4. Cf. McCloud (1993) 104 on the progression of moments in time across comic book panels.

when the poet reintroduces the theme of Domitian's anxiously awaited return at 7.5 there is a sense of temporal change enhanced by the placement of other epigrams between these two Domitianic sequences.

Indeed, while the subject matter of 7.3-4 represents a radical departure from imperial panegyric, the names found in these two poems still evoke the military activity that Martial reports taking place on the west coast of the Black Sea. As I have already noted in my introductory chapter, Martial sometimes aids his books' sequential progression with onomastic wordplay: Robert Maltby has argued, for instance, that the *basiatones* of 7.95.15 pre-empt the similar-sounding Bassus who mourns for his son at 7.96.1, and Niklas Holzberg has shown how the lexical similarities between the names of Philaenis at 7.67 & 7.70 and *Pantaenis* and *Theophila* at 7.69 encourage the reader to find connections between these poems' themes of female morality.²⁷ The effect of this onomastic interweaving between poems is to suggest a sense of continuity even if the subject matter of both epigrams is thoroughly different. Thus Martial's decision to name two characters of 7.3-4 Castricus and Pontilianus should be carefully considered. References to warfare and the Black Sea region (with its Getic and Sarmatian peoples) abound in 7.1-2 and 7.5-8 and, as I explore later on in this chapter, set the scene of the whole book in the shadow of Domitian's Danubian conquest.²⁸ The target of 7.3 is Pontilianus, whose name, a diminutive form of Pontianus, can be roughly translated as "the little man from Pontus" and thus evokes the Black Sea setting of the programmatic cycle. His name could also make reference to the exiled love poet Ovid, whose first exilic letters were titled *Letters from Pontus*, and play a part in Martial's general programme to display himself as a superior poet to his Augustan predecessor.²⁹ Either way, the name of Pontilianus continues the general Black Sea setting for the opening of book 7, and creates a bridge between 7.2 and 7.3 despite their radically different subject matter. Similarly, Castricus's name in 7.4 calls to mind a *castrum*, a military fort or (in the plural *castra*) a military encampment in general. Given that Martial's description of the emperor so far in book 7 has focused on Domitian's overwhelming military prowess in the Danubian region it is highly convenient that two of the three names in 7.3-4 evoke the same geographic area and military theme. The juxtaposition of these poetaster epigrams beside the course of Martial's imperial panegyric creates a break in continuity of subject matter, but the overarching theme of this opening cycle nevertheless continues to infect these poems and the reader's understanding of the book's unity. Through onomastic wordplay Martial ties these poems together to create a more unified opening sequence of poems.

²⁷ Maltby (2006) 163 & Holzberg (2006) 147 respectively. Cf. chapter 1.

²⁸ See pp. 95-102.

²⁹ Hinds (2007) 131 notes Martial's obsession with opening and closing books in a manner similar to Ovid's exile poetry. Roman (2001) 124 observes that "in general, Martial adapts motifs in the context of 'poetry in exile', and rewrites them in terms of 'poetry as usual'." Similarly, Mart. 7.44-5's praise of Quintus Ovidius following his friend Caesonius Maximus into exile under the emperor Nero could evoke the Black Sea given the resemblance of Ovidius' name to the Augustan elegist Ovid, who spent the last years of his life exiled to the very region.

Following this short break from panegyric Martial shifts his focus back to the Domitianic theme, this time devoting four poems to the anxious populace waiting to hear more news of the emperor's Getic campaign. These four poems serve as the climax of the programmatic cycle, and summarise the key themes to which the poet repeatedly returns over the course of his book. The epigrammatist continues to describe the emperor in epic language: he emphasises the importance of the Black Sea and introduces the month of December as a temporal setting for the book, and most of all stresses the divine nature of the epigrammatic Caesar. Indeed, the very structure of these four poems reflects this deification of the emperor; epigrams 7.5 and 7.7 both describe the prayers of the citizen body, with 7.6 and 7.8 acting as their responses, which provide progressive reports that detail the emperor's accomplishments and whether he will be returning to Rome. Martial opens this final sequence of the programmatic cycle with a direct address to the emperor, listing the prayers and anxieties of the whole Roman city and contrasting them with the barbarian the *princeps* faces in battle:

*si desiderium, Caesar, populique patrumque
 respicis et Latiae gaudia vera togae,
 redde deum votis poscentibus. invidet hosti
 Roma suo, veniat laurea multa licet:
 terrarum dominum propius videt ille, tuoque
 terretur vultu barbarus et fruitur. (7.5)*

If you regard, Caesar, the desire of the People and Senators
 And the true joys of the Latin toga,
 Return their god when their prayers demand it. Rome envies
 Her own enemy, although many laurels come:
 That barbarian sees the lord of the earth nearer, and
 He both fears and enjoys your visage.

This first prayer is then followed by a reported rumour of the emperor's return from campaign, pre-empting the verified news report in 7.8. The poet again emphasises that the whole city is expectant of the emperor's return, and predicts a glorious triumph when Domitian eventually does conquer the barbarian threat in the north:

*ecquid Hyperboreis ad nos conversus ab oris
 Ausonias Caesar iam parat ire vias?
 certus abest auctor, sed vox hoc nuntiat omnis:
 credo tibi, verum dicere, Fama, soles.
 publica victrices testantur gaudia chartae,
 Martia laurigera cuspide pila virent.
 rursus, io, magnos clamat tibi Roma triumphos*

*invictusque tua, Caesar, in urbe sonas.
sed iam laetitiae quo sit fiducia maior,
Sarmaticae laurus nuntius ipse veni. (7.6)*

Does Caesar, turned back to us from Hyperborean shores,
Now prepare to go down Ausonian roads?
A clear authority is lacking, but every voice announces this:
“I trust you, Rumour; you are used to speaking truth.”
Victorious writings bear witness to public joy,
The spears of Mars flourish with their laurel-clad tips.
Again, 'io!' Rome shouts great triumphs for you,
And invincible, Caesar, you resound in your city.
But now, so there may be greater assurance of our happiness
Come as a messenger of the Sarmatian laurel yourself.

Martial then chooses to change the mood, shifting the second prayer concerning Domitian's return from the north into scazonic metre. The limping final foot of each line emphasises the places in which the emperor is campaigning, moving from the Black Sea to the whole world, before focusing on the people's prayers and the ennui found in the city itself:

*hiberna quamvis Arctos et rudis Peuce
et unguarum pulsibus calens Hister
fractusque cornu iam ter inprobo Rhenus
teneat domantem regna perfidae gentis
te, summe mundi rector et parens orbis:
abesse nostris non tamen potes votis.
illic et oculis et animis sumus, Caesar,
adeoque mentes omnium tenes unus,
ut ipsa magni turba nesciat Circi,
utrumne currat Passerinus an Tigris. (7.7)*

Though the wintry Bear-star and wild Peuce,
And Hister warming to hoof-beats,
And the Rhine now broken by a thrice shameless horn
Hold you, mastering the kingdoms of a perfidious race,
You, the greatest commander of the earth and parent of the world,
You, however, cannot be absent from our prayers.
There with our eyes and minds are we, Caesar,
And so utterly do you alone hold the thoughts of all,

That the very crowd of the great Circus knows not
Whether Passerinus or Tigris runs.

Finally the poet announces the news that the city has hoped to hear since 7.5 – the emperor is due to return and a triumph is to be expected. In short order Martial firmly establishes the temporal frame of December, the emperor's divinity, and the associations between the expected triumph's ribaldries and the poet's own lascivious themes (as at 1.4):

*nunc hilares, si quando mihi, nunc ludite, Musae:
victor ab Odrysio redditur orbe deus.
certa facis populi tu primus vota, December:
iam licet ingenti dicere voce 'venit!'
felix sorte tua! poteras non cedere Iano,
gaudia si nobis, quae dabit ille, dares.
festa coronatus ludet convicia miles,
inter laurigeros cum comes ibit equos.
fas audire iocos levioraque carmina, Caesar,
et tibi, si lusus ipse triumphus amat. (7.8)*

Now, if ever, be merry for me, now play, Muses:

A victor is being returned from the Odrysian world, a god.

You first made the people's prayers certain, December,

Now you can say with a huge voice "He is coming!"

Lucky in your lot! You could not yield to Janus,

If you gave us the joy which he will give.

Garlanded the soldier will play with festive insults,

When he goes as a companion amongst the laurel-clad horses.

It is sanctioned to hear jokes and lighter poems, Caesar,

Even for you, if the triumph itself loves games.

Despite Domitian's physical absence from the city what comes across from these poems is his continued influence at Rome. The emperor is praised in each of these poems and addressed with his title Caesar five times (7.5.1, 7.6.2, 7.6.8, 7.7.7 & 7.8.9), but the focus on Domitian's absence and the citizens' longing for his return emphasises the assertion that the *princeps* belongs at Rome. Indeed, the first line of 7.5 depicts the city as a political whole – the emperor, the populace, and the senators – reminiscent of the formula *senatus populusque Romanus* (SPQR) that appeared at the bottom of every senatorial decree.³⁰ The desire of the senate and people is that Domitian returns to Rome, and the poet even

³⁰ Galán Vioque (2002) 69.

structures his lines to depict this desire. At 7.6.8, for instance, the phrase “*invictusque tua, Caesar, in urbe sonas*” physically surrounds the emperor with his city (*tua... in urbe*), the line’s structure reflecting its meaning to further reinforce the desire for the *princeps* to return to urban life. Indeed, the whole city is found listless at 7.7 – the fans at the Circus Maximus are only going through the motions of watching the horse racing, and without Domitian at Rome everything is meaningless. The emperor’s expected military success over the Sarmatians is still praised to the utmost, but the poet and Rome’s populace emphasise that the emperor’s place is in the city and not on the shores of the Black Sea, lost to a pseudo-Ovidian ‘exile’. As R. A. Pitcher notes, while the city longs for Domitian’s return here in the same way that Ovid longed for his own return in his exilic verse, the emperor has far more control over his return to Rome than the Augustan elegist.³¹ Yet there is also an opposition here between war and peace, presence and absence. Throughout the imperial cycle there has been a preoccupation not just with the emperor’s safe return, but also his return to the toga, the symbol of Rome and of peaceful governance. The final words of 7.2 are *redde togae*, and this desire to return the emperor to the Latin toga are expressed again in 7.5.2. Thus, the prayers of the Roman people are not only for the emperor’s safe conquest of the Sarmatians, but of a return to the *pax Domitiana* in its aftermath, and the benefits that a peaceful *princeps* can bring to the city (as at 7.61) and the pacified province (7.80 & 7.84). The imperial cycle therefore establishes the emperor’s military prowess, but also prepares the reader for the transition back to Rome, back to the kinds of jests that are experienced at the triumph after a conflict (7.8.9-10), and back to a glorious Domitianic peace where the emperor will once again sit atop the Palatine ready to enjoy Martial’s poems (depicted at 7.99).

Such a longing for Domitian’s return also includes a consistent crescendo in divine language used to describe the emperor, which reinforces the earlier statement at 7.2.6 that the emperor is a *deus* and creates a sense of unity across this sequence due to lexical and thematic repetition. Martial describes Domitian as a *deus* again at 7.5.3 and 7.8.2, and emphasises that the people are praying to him directly for his return through the polyptoton of *vota* (7.8.3) and *vothis* (7.5.3 & 7.7.6). Domitian’s power gradually grows as the poems progress, and so does Martial’s panegyric, describing the *princeps* as “lord of the earth” at 7.5.5, and as the “greatest commander of the earth and parent of the world” at 7.7.5. These statements put the emperor on a par with Jupiter as an equal counterpart on earth to the Olympian’s role in heaven. Notably, however, while Martial addresses Domitian as the Thunderer (*Tonans*) later in book 7 he never supplants the father of the gods as he does Mars, but is depicted as an earthly parallel to Jupiter.³² Nevertheless, Martial’s continued praise of the emperor in the imperial cycle sets up Domitian as a divine presence of great significance to the book. Perhaps most tellingly of all, the emperor is not named in 7.8 until the penultimate line – he is only known as *victor deus* (the victor, a god) at v.2 – and the reader must interpret the emperor’s identity for themselves based on the

³¹ Pitcher (1998) 69.

³² Mart. 7.56.4 & 7.99.1.

divine language the earlier poems have already used to describe the *princeps*. Martial thus builds a consistent picture of the emperor across these epigrams as a divine figure through a consistent repetition of key terms such as *deus* and *votis*, linking poems 7.5-8 to 7.1-2 and creating a strongly unified introduction to the book and its main background setting. By 7.8 the noun *deus* is so strongly associated with the emperor that any other use of *deus* in the book (such as 7.50.6's reference to Hercules as a *deus*) will remind the reader of the opening cycle and the book's overarching structure. By the end of 7.8, then, Domitian is not just a *deus* but the *deus* of book 7, whose awaited return from Sarmatia heralds in a focus on the city of Rome.³³

Similarly, Martial resolves the other hanging expectation from the opening epigram pair that the emperor will celebrate a great victory over the Sarmatians. Over the course of epigrams 7.5-8 the poet reinforces the *princeps*' characterisation as an unbeatable, epic warrior, and reminds the reader of his superiority to Mars. References to the anticipated triumph appear throughout the latter half of the cycle, with four descriptions of laurels (metonymic for the triumph) appearing on their own or attached to the soldiers' spears or horses.³⁴ These allusions to Domitian's success crescendo and eventually climax in 7.8.10 with an overt statement of Domitian's triumph, at which ribald jokes are permitted (and which serve as a reason to permit Martial's poetry), demonstrating that Domitian has proven to be as unconquerable as 7.1-2 promised. Indeed, by describing the emperor as both *invictus* and *victor* at 7.8.2 and 7.6.8 respectively, Martial not only reinforces the message of 7.2.1 that the emperor's armour (and thus his victory) is *invia*, but attaches to the *princeps* epithets commonly used as cult titles for Hercules.³⁵ I discuss Domitian's association with Hercules in more detail below, but this strategy of aligning the emperor with divine figures continues the programme, which the poet has established in 7.1-2, of portraying him as a figure as great as the Olympians themselves. Accordingly, the poet continues to show the emperor as a figure greater than Mars at 7.6.6 through reference to Domitian's triumphant soldiers. Here Martial observes that "the spears of Mars flourish with their laurel-clad tips", emphasising the emperor's military success with a metonymic use of the god's name for warfare, but by doing so (and with his previous observation at 7.2.2 that the *lorica* is more protective than Mars' shield) suggests that Mars' military aspect has shifted firmly to Domitian. These epigrams thus establish the emperor as triumphal in war and superior to Mars, a divine military force that has swept over the Sarmatians and achieved absolute victory.

³³ As I will further elaborate below, such is this cycle's impact upon the book's notions of godhood that the whole book is closed with the description of Domitian as Jupiter, and the final word of 7.99 (and the book itself) is "god" (*deo*).

³⁴ Mart. 7.5.4, 7.6.6, 7.6.10 & 7.8.8. On Domitian's decision not to celebrate a triumph, see n. 4 above.

³⁵ On the presence of temples to Hercules Victor and Hercules Invictus at Rome, see Ziolkowski (1988) 311 & 313, with the relevant primary material. *CIL* 6.331 attests the presence of a temple to Hercules Victor in the Forum Boarium from the late second century BC.

So far I have shown that the imperial cycle progressively develops the image of Domitian as a divine, epic hero whose conquest of Sarmatia is unstoppable by consistently using intratextual allusions to the initial epigrammatic pair. There are, however, other intertextual references in the latter half of the cycle that also reinforce Martial's characterisation of the emperor. As I already noted above, the phrase "felix sorte tua... fas erit" at 7.2.5-6 carries with it strong religious associations that help to solidify the poet's depiction of a divine Domitian, so the poet's decision to use the same language at 7.8.5 (*felix sorte tua*) & 7.8.9 (*fas*) is particularly loaded. Furthermore, the epigrammatist places the phrase "felix sorte tua" in the exact same metrical position at the start of the fifth line of 7.8, exactly echoing the earlier poem's celebration of the breastplate's ability to touch the emperor. This time, however, it is December that is *felix* for ushering in the news of the emperor's imminent return from campaign and ensuring the imperial presence for which the populace has so yearned. This repetition of language, line structure, and metre all serve to form a strong link between the cycle's opening and ending, but Martial here also creates an intertextual allusion to his fifth book of epigrams. In 5.3 the epigrammatist puts into the mouth of Degis, brother of Decebalus the king of Thrace, the praise that "my lot (*sors*) is better than my brother's, which is to be sanctioned (*fas*) to view so near that god (*ille deum*) whom he [i.e. Decebalus] worships from so far away."³⁶ As Alberto Cannobio comments, there is a definite link between the themes of 5.3 and 7.2 with an emphasis on the emperor's divine inviolability, but the force of this self-conscious self-allusion also augments the depiction of Domitian as a successful military ruler.³⁷ When Martial has Degis announce his lucky lot, the emperor had just negotiated a diplomatic victory in pacifying the Dacians along the Danube.³⁸ The link between 7.2, 7.8 and 5.2, then, suggests to the reader familiar with Martial's work that just as Domitian has conquered the Dacians before, so too will he conquer the Sarmatians. Similarly, just as Degis marvelled in awe of the divine Domitian at 5.3, so too does the barbarian foe in 7.5.5-6 admire and fear the emperor. These themes of the emperor's submission of barbarians along the Danube and his divinity appear in one poem of book 5, but in book 7 they set the tone for the whole *libellus*. By alluding to his own earlier poetry, Martial expresses the certainty that Domitian will be victorious because the poet himself has previously celebrated similar victories in the past.

Besides alluding to his own earlier work to further emphasise Domitian's martial success, the epigrammatist also makes a continued reference to Vergil in 7.6 to characterise the emperor as a new Aeneas. In this epigram Martial uses the epic term *Ausonias* at v.2 as a designation for the Italian people, and the final two words of the first line (*ab oris*) mirror those of the opening line of the *Aeneid*.³⁹ In

³⁶ Mart. 5.3.5-6: *sors mea quam fratris melior, cui tam prope fas est | cernere, tam longe quem colit ille deum.*

³⁷ Canobbio (2011) 99: il distico finale presenta diversi punti di contatto con il *makarismos* della corazza imperiale che si legge in 7.2.5s.

³⁸ Canobbio (2011) 91-4, Howell (1995) 79 & B. W. Jones (1992) 151 provide further details on this poem in light of the Dacian rebellion.

³⁹ On *Ausonius* as an epic epithet, see Galán Vioque (2002) 74.

fact, this replication of the end of Vergil's famous opening line is reinforced by the replication (in elegiac couplets, no less) of the metre of the epicist's opening five lines. Martial makes a few accommodations for the shift from hexameter to pentameter in the lines 3 and 5, but the first five lines of this epigram so closely mirror those of the *Aeneid* that they grant to the emperor an even more overt characterisation as an epic hero. For a comparison of these two texts a full quotation of the lines with their metrical notation is pertinent:

- ∪ ∪ | - ∪ ∪ | - - | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - -
arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris
 - ∪ ∪ | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - -
Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venit
 - ∪ ∪ | - - | - - | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - -
litora – mult(um) ill(e) et terris iactatus et alto
 - ∪ ∪ | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - -
vi superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram,
 - ∪ ∪ | - - | - - | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - -
multa quoq(ue) et bello passus, dum conderet urbem (Verg. Aen. 1.1-5)

And, in comparison, Martial's own elegiac version:

- ∪ ∪ | - ∪ ∪ | - - | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - -
ecquid Hyperboreis ad nos conversus ab oris
 - ∪ ∪ | - - | - - ∪ ∪ | - ∪ ∪ | -
Ausonias Caesar iam parat ire vias?
 - ∪ ∪ | - - | - - | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - -
certus abest auctor, sed vox hoc nuntiat omnis:
 - ∪ ∪ | - - | - - ∪ ∪ | - ∪ ∪ | -
credo tibi, verum dicere, Fama, soles.
 - ∪ ∪ | - - | - - | - - | - ∪ ∪ | - -
publica victrices testantur gaudia chartae, (Mart. 7.6.1-5)

By adapting the sound of the first five lines of the *Aeneid*, Martial evokes all of its associations with nationalistic epic when describing Domitian, setting up the emperor as a parallel for Aeneas, and the epigrammatist for Vergil. The rhythm is remarkably similar to that of the Vergilian hypotext – each hexameter line is metrically identical, and the pentameter lines differ only marginally.⁴⁰ In line 2, Martial deletes the fourth spondaic foot of Vergil's line (-us La-) and the final anceps half of the final

⁴⁰ The caesurae in the hexametric lines match too, and occur between the spondaic metra of the third foot.

foot (-it), adding another long metron into the second foot as was required for pentametric lines. The only other metrical difference in these lines occurs in the fourth verse, where the poet removes the spondaic fourth foot and the final anapestic metron of the hexameter original, as well as inserting a long metron into the third foot (which the pentameter demanded). The result is five elegiac lines that give a rhythm remarkably close to the Vergilian hexameter original, which would have had a similar effect to modern music adapting a phrase from an earlier piece (such as when Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard's 'The Battle' lifts the central theme from Gustav Holst's 'Mars: Bringer of War' to evoke the concept of Roman warfare for the film *Gladiator*).⁴¹ That Martial's readers (and listeners) would have noticed this metrical intertextuality is not implausible, given the fact that Vergil's *Aeneid* had been used as a school text almost as soon as it had been written, and that the first line of the work is found scrawled (and adapted) across much of Pompeii.⁴² As Kristina Milnor observes of such graffiti at Pompeii, the use of Vergil and the content of the line to which the graffiti alludes bears no necessary importance upon the graffiti itself, but rather summons up the idea and 'feel' of Vergil and epic.⁴³ For Martial, though, the *Aeneid* is extremely relevant for his programme of depicting the emperor as an epic hero. Just like the Roman people's mythic founding father Aeneas, Domitian is to travel towards Rome from a war in the east and as a military hero. The fit is not perfect – Aeneas was fleeing the destruction of his homeland – but it was immensely flattering to compare the present ruler of Rome with one of the city's mythic foundational heroes. Moreover, Martial's use of a Vergilian hypotext sits squarely within his technique of adapting Augustan poets for a Domitianic context. As Christer Henriksén demonstrates, across books 7-9 of the *Epigrams* Martial systematically develops the theme of the emperor's return to celebrate an *ovatio* (expected as a triumph, like Domitian's) from the fourth book of Horace's *Odes*.⁴⁴ Indeed, as Henriksén notes, Domitian (like most emperors) styled himself as a new Augustus, trying to regenerate Rome with a similar building programme, as well as aiming to have a positive impact on his people's morals, so it was only natural for Martial to adapt the themes (and rhythms) of Augustan poetics to fit into his Domitianic milieu.⁴⁵ By alluding here to Vergil and elsewhere to Horace, Martial styles himself as a *vates* worthy of singing the praises of a Domitian who is a reborn Aeneas and Augustus. In particular, in his allusions to the opening lines of the Romans' national epic, Martial sets the tone of Domitian's return from the east as an epic homecoming, and reinforces his tactic in the whole imperial cycle of converting a mortal emperor into a divine, military hero.

⁴¹ Zimmer & Gerrard (2000).

⁴² Milnor (2014) 236-7. Perhaps the most famous (and charming) adaptation is "*fullones ululamque cano, non arma virumque*" (CIL 4.9131).

⁴³ Milnor (2014) 247.

⁴⁴ Henriksén (2002).

⁴⁵ Henriksén (2002) 332-3 & 334. On Domitian as a self-stylised Flavian Augustus, see B. W. Jones (1992) 99. Domitian's building programme was monolithic, and the scale of recovery after fires and civil war (similar to Augustus, again) was huge. See B. W. Jones (1992) 79-94 for the extent of rebuilding, and Roman (2010) 90-2 for the ideological impact of rebuilding on Martial's poetics.

By the end of 7.8 and the close of the initial imperial cycle, Martial has impressed upon his reader the core themes of book 7. The emperor, so the poet constantly has reinforced, is a conquering, epic hero of divine power returning successfully from a pacification of the barbaric Sarmatians along the Danube. Having informed the reader of the *princeps*' imminent return to Rome from the frontier and from war, Martial then moves onto coverage of domestic matters to show a Rome and a Sarmatia at peace for the rest of the book. Although the focus of the book shifts, the impact of this cycle upon every poem that follows is profound. The imperial cycle provides a backdrop against which the rest of the book is set. Whenever the reader encounters Domitian, references to the geographic region of the Danube, or even the temporal setting of December that is established at 7.8, they are reminded of the imperial cycle, the book's beginning, and the book as a whole unit. The emperor appears in the first and last epigrams of book 7 to frame the whole *libellus*, but he also reappears frequently throughout the text, drawing the constituent themes of the work together to create a thematically unified whole. I have just shown how the imperial cycle fits together and creates the image of a divine, epic Domitian returning from the east. The rest of this chapter will examine how this cycle impacts upon the rest of the book through the emperor's repeated presence, continuous references to the region of the Danube delta, and a consistent temporal setting of December and Saturnalian revelry.

The Herculean Thunderer at Court: The Continued Characterisation of Domitian in Book 7

As discussed above, book 7's programmatic imperial cycle has already established Domitian as a divine figure on a level footing with Mars and Athena, but over the course of the rest of the *libellus* Martial marks out the emperor's role as an earthly Jupiter. While the description of the emperor at 7.7.5 as the "greatest commander of the earth and parent of the world" alludes to the emperor as a kind of Jupiter-on-earth, it is in the rest of book 7 that Martial makes this association more explicit. Over the course of the book Domitian assumes ever-increasing power as a quasi-Jupiter, eventually named as *Tonans* (the Thunderer) without any explanation that the reader should understand that the emperor is meant instead of the king of the gods. Similarly, whenever Hercules appears in book 7 there are hints that Domitian is an earthly parallel to the demigod. Martial flatters the emperor by crafting the image of Domitian as a divine being of the utmost power, but he also creates a figure of significant structural import to the book itself. The emperor-as-*deus* appears at the book's beginning, middle, and end, three central points of the text's overall structure, reinforcing the key themes of the book by encouraging the reader to think back to how the text began even as it progresses. Overall, Martial's deified *dominus* is an integral structural unit of book 7, whose importance to the contexture's overall unity cannot be overstated.

The emperor appears seven more times in book 7, and it is noticeable that the epigrammatist depicts him with ever-increasing divine powers, slowly producing the image of a Domitian whose

power rivals that of Jupiter himself.⁴⁶ At 7.34.8 Martial famously describes the emperor as “Lord and God” (*domini deque*), and across the rest of the book the poet gradually increases the praise for the emperor until he is indistinguishable from the king of the gods. Although the *princeps* is named by his earthly titles at 7.12.1 (*dominus*) and 7.60-1 (Caesar and Germanicus respectively), at 7.56.4 and 7.99.1 he is named *Tonans* (Thunderer), one of Jupiter’s primary epithets. Indeed, 7.60 addresses Domitian as Caesar, but presents him in stark opposition to Jupiter, ending with the simple statement that “about Caesar I ought to ask you [Jupiter]; about me I ought to ask Caesar.”⁴⁷ The rest of the poem is concerned with the poet observing that he and the rest of the city are overwhelming Jupiter with prayers for the emperor’s safety, while not praying for themselves. This closing statement places requests to the emperor into the same register as prayers to divinities, and suggests that Domitian has a certain level of divine power. Furthermore, this poem prepares for the subsequent epigram in which Domitian orders the streets at Rome to expand to turn the *urbs* from a *taberna* into *Roma*. The language of this poem is hyperbolic, with the poet granting the emperor the power to physically alter the city at will: “you, Germanicus, ordered the slender streets expand, and what was just now a path was made a road.”⁴⁸ The emperor who returned from his campaigns has now become a shaper of the cityscape, but the agency of the city’s physical change is the emperor’s desire, which once more brings order to a disordered space (now to Rome rather than Sarmatia).⁴⁹ Indeed, this placement of the divine emperor back into the civic space is central to these poems, and completes the *princeps*’ transformation into an earthly Jupiter at 7.74. This poem is framed as a hymn to Mercury in celebration of Carpus’ marriage to Norbana, but closes with the simple statement that Carpus (depicted as a pious high priest at v.9) “is himself loyal to Jupiter.”⁵⁰ The language of loyalty directly correlates to the *fida* of 7.2.2 and the *fiducia* of 7.6.9, lexically alluding to the imperial cycle at the book’s opening, and priming the reader for the association that Jupiter here is Domitian. Just as Hermes serves Jupiter (in heaven), so too does Carpus serve Jupiter/Domitian (on earth). Most significantly, by 7.74.10 Domitian is no longer a living, earthly parallel for Jupiter, but has become Jupiter himself. I will turn to 7.99 in a moment, but in book 7 Martial shows a gradual increase in the attribution to Domitian of the divine powers and roles associated with the king of the gods, reinforcing the depiction of the emperor as a divinely powerful figure, and reminding the reader of the deified Domitian who appeared at the start of the book.

⁴⁶ Mart. 7.12, 7.34, 7.56, 7.60-1, 7.74 & 7.99.

⁴⁷ Mart. 7.60.7-8.

⁴⁸ Mart. 7.61.3-4: *iussisti tenuis, Germanice, crescere vicos, | et modo quae fuerat semita, facta via est.*

⁴⁹ Roman (2010) 114-5 sees Mart. 7.61 as an example of Domitian re-ordering the boundaries in a disordered, epigrammatic Rome. His power, then, is exercised not just on the boundaries of the city itself, but on the chaos embodied by a book of epigrams. It follows from Roman’s analysis that Domitian is a structural, binding force in what could otherwise be a muddled mess. On this epigram’s play with the concept of borders and *limen*-ality, see Rimell (2008) 24-5.

⁵⁰ Mart. 7.74.10: *fidus et ipse Iovi*. Galán Vioque (2002) 427 proposes that Martial could be the priest dedicating his poetry to wisdom at v.9, but the demonstrative pronoun *hic* can easily refer back to Carpus. Neither reading, however, dramatically changes my interpretation of this passage.

Building on the emperor's relationships with divinities in the opening cycle of the *libellus*, Martial also draws implicit comparisons between Domitian and Hercules in book 7 that further support the poet's construction of the emperor as a divine force. As I have already noted above, the description of Domitian as both *invictus* and *victor* at 7.6.8 and 7.8.2 lends to the *princeps* epithets associated with cults of Hercules that were present at Rome.⁵¹ Associating the emperor with Hercules was fully in accordance with official propaganda from Domitian's principate; contemporary coinage and statuary frequently depicted the emperor as a new Hercules, and Martial would later go on to celebrate the erection of a statue of Hercules along the Via Appia that bore Domitian's features.⁵² Indeed, in 5.65 Martial had already compared to the specific Labours of Hercules in which the demigod defeated monstrous beasts a set of beast hunts presented by the emperor in the arena.⁵³ The praise of a ruler as a new Hercules was a standard literary *topos* that extended back to the Hellenistic period, but Martial was also engaging with a contemporary literary interest in the demigod.⁵⁴ In particular, when Martial introduces the character of Hercules in book 7 (after a brief allusion to the hills associated with him at Tibur in 7.13) the poet's use of the epithet *Tiryntius* (the man from Tiryns) for Hercules at 7.15.3 reflects a distinctly Flavian revival of interest in this word.⁵⁵ Specifically why this word was of such a Flavian interest is unclear (and merits further study), but the Flavian interest in Hercules likely reflects the emperor's own self-stylisation as a Herculean figure; a man who becomes a god after many martial successes is a highly suitable analogue for an emperor who expected to be deified upon death. Martial's two poems in book 7 on Hercules as the guardian of a fountain in a Roman estate, then, are loaded with distinctly Flavian political and cultural significance that a contemporary reader would easily have identified.

It is therefore all the more striking that Martial decides in 7.15 and 7.50 to depict the strongest of the Greek heroes in a domestic and erotic context. Following the announcement of the end of war and Domitian's expected triumph at 7.8, Hercules (like Domitian at 7.61) is shown not at war but in careful stewardship of a civic group. In 7.15 and 7.50, Hercules looms over the description of the gardens of Ianthis (the poetic name for the wife of Arruntius Stella, one of the epigrammatist's patrons), acting as a guardian to prevent the rape of the young boys depicted in statues surrounding a fountain by

⁵¹ See above, n. 35.

⁵² Hekster (2005) 206. Mart. 9.64-5 praise the sculptor's work and flatter the emperor for granting his fair features to the statue, on which see Henriksén (2012) xxix.

⁵³ Cf. Canobbio (2011) 502-3 & Howell (1995) 148.

⁵⁴ Henriksén (2012) xxviii & Sullivan (1991) 142.

⁵⁵ All cases where Flavian texts refer to Hercules as "the Tiryntian" are as follows: Mart.: 7.15.3, 11.43.5. Sil. *Pun.*: 1.508, 2.475, 3.433, 3.496, 6.628, 7.591, 7.645 & 8.216. Stat. *Achil.*: 1.260. Stat. *Theb.*: 5.376, 6.270, 6.485, 6.531, 8.456, 8.500, 8.745, 9.426, 10.889, 11.234, 12.60 & 12.583. Stat. *Silv.*: 3.1.1, 3.1.125, 3.1.135, 3.3.56, 4.6.89 & 4.4.102. V. Fl.: 1.107, 2.373, 2.574, 3.133, 3.161, 3.485, 3.565, 3.590, 4.5, 6.462, 7.623, 8.125. In contrast, the epithet *Tiryntius* occurs far less frequently in Julio-Claudian texts: Ov. *Ars.*: 1.187 & 2.221. Ov. *Fast.*: 1.547, 2.305, 2.349 & 5.625. Ov. *Met.*: 7.408, 9.64, 9.262 & 12.564. Pet. *Sat.* 124 & 139.2. Verg. *Aen.* 7.655 & 8.225.

any water nymphs in the vicinity.⁵⁶ This is an obvious allusion to the rape scene of Hylas in the *Argonautica*, which Martial himself makes explicit at 7.15.2 and 7.50.8, but which the poet also emphasises in the demigod’s pederastic urges in the final line of 7.15: “the Nymphs will do nothing: beware lest He wants something!”⁵⁷ Erotic poetics thus suffuse the poem, aided by the overt explanation at 7.14.5 that Ianthis is the woman that Stella sings of in his love elegies, and by the metapoetic potential of the statement that Hercules is worshipped in a *silva* – literally a wood, but potentially also a short poem written by Stella.⁵⁸ In light of Stella’s prestige as a contemporary love poet, Martial’s reader would be primed for a reading of Hercules in an erotic context – here the guardian is also a threat given his interest in sex with young boys, who are later described at 7.50.4 as a “Ganymedean chorus.”⁵⁹ Furthermore, given Domitian’s self-depiction as a new Hercules, and given Martial’s reference to Ganymede, the cup-bearer and boy-lover of Jupiter whom Martial later conflates with the emperor’s own favourite eunuch Earinus (e.g., at 9.36.9-10), it is tempting to read into the epigrammatic Hercules a shadow of the emperor. Indeed, the final statement of 7.15 that Argynnus should “beware lest He wants something” could be read as an oblique reference to the emperor’s sexual interest in youths.⁶⁰ At the very least, by 7.15 and 7.50 the emperor’s divine parallels are very much at leisure, enjoying the *pax Domitiana* in the wake of the Sarmatian campaign. Martial’s depiction of a literary, elegiac Hercules reflects the earlier desire for the emperor to return home to the toga, and to enjoy the literary world in which the poet revels rather than the warfare with which the book began. Thus Martial’s Hercules, another analogue for the emperor alongside Jupiter, also holds a more peaceful, civic role in book 7.

The association of Hercules with Domitian also has a strong impact on the overall layout of the *libellus*, as 7.50’s central position in the book demonstrates. In Latin literature the middle of the work, as well as its opening and close, was of structural importance, and was frequently used as a space for a second proem to reinvigorate the progress of the work (what Gian Biagio Conte has termed a “proem in the middle”).⁶¹ This preoccupation with the structural aesthetics of the poetic middle was still prevalent in Martial’s own time, as is the case in Valerius Flaccus’ *Argonautica* where another ‘proem

⁵⁶ On the identity of Ianthis (whose real name was Violentilla), see Galán Vioque (2002) 124.

⁵⁷ Mart. 7.15.8: *nil facient Nymphae: ne velit ipse, cave*. Cf. V. Fl. 3.535-97 for a contemporaneous account of Hylas’ rape.

⁵⁸ Mart. 7.15.3. Sadly none of Stella’s poetry survives. On wood, Statius’ *Silvae*, and metapoetics, see Wray (2007), esp. p. 132-6, who emphasises at p. 128 *silva*’s innate “woodiness” (its properties as a physical material) and “woodsiness” (its properties as a metaphor for poetic matter), as with its parallel Greek term ὄλη. I further discuss the metapoetics of *silva* in chapter 4.

⁵⁹ On Stella’s fame as a love poet, see Mart. 1.7, 6.21, and 7.14.5-6.

⁶⁰ Pace Galán Vioque (2002) 133 who prefers a simple solution that *ipse* at 7.15.8 refers to Hercules. The indeterminacy of the Latin means that my reading is also plausible.

⁶¹ Conte (1992), focusing in particular on Vergil’s *Georgics* (p. 150), the start of *Ecl.* 6, and on *Aen.* 7 (p. 152) as a new beginning announcing the start of the work’s second half. Martelli (2013) 82-5 ably demonstrates how Ovid in *Ars Am.* uses this ‘proem in the middle’ to imitate Vergil’s structural poetics. Holzberg (2004) 258 sees Mart. 7 as a halfway point for the *Epigrams* as a whole, and a new beginning for the project’s second half.

in the middle' can be found at the start of book 5, acting as a central point for the whole epic.⁶² In fact, Holzberg has already observed that epigram 7.50 stands at the exact centre of book 7, encouraging the ancient reader to draw a link between Domitian (at the book's opening and close) and the demigod (in the middle).⁶³ While Holzberg does not offer any further direct link beyond this identification, it is highly significant that Martial places the demigod in such an important structural position in the book. Indeed, this idea can be developed further: the central position of this poem in the book serves to reinforce the depiction of Domitian as a *deus* within a wider pantheon. Hercules sits at a central position between Domitian being depicted as a new Minerva and Mars in his triumph in battle (7.1-2), and as a Jupiter sitting atop the Palatine (7.99). These depictions of Domitian neatly frame the book (and this central appearance of Hercules), but Hercules also forms the central axis around which the book revolves. Given that Hercules, as noted above, was a frequent analogue for Domitian, and that Jupiter (another frequent analogue for the emperor) is evoked through reference to Ganymede at 7.50.4, there is a general allusion to the *princeps* here as well. As such, this poem helps to continue the progression of Domitian's characterisation over the course of the book, with a move further away from sources of conflict (the Second Pannonian War and the threat of mythic rape) towards a peaceful, literary depiction of the emperor at 7.99. Indeed, as the middle was frequently a place of significance in Latin poetry, Martial's reader would have been primed for these architextual poetics, ensuring that for the ancient reader the placement of Hercules at the precise centre of book 7 would have further reinforced the overall structural unity of the *libellus*.⁶⁴

It is with the close of book 7 that Martial rounds off his characterisation of Domitian and casts the reader's mind back to the *libellus*' opening, encouraging a cyclical understanding of the text and a enforcing a strong sense of unity on the collection. While Galán Vioque notes that this poem, which utilises the closural theme of sending the book away for its approval by the emperor, was "composed expressly as a closing poem" he does not make evident the precise ways in which the epigram collates and concludes the key themes of the book which were instigated in the programmatic cycle.⁶⁵ In this poem (7.99), Martial sends his book to Crispinus to pass on to the emperor with his full encouragement, deferring the ultimate judgment of the work to Domitian himself. Tellingly, in light of the earlier poems on the divine emperor, Martial utilises highly religious terms to depict the divine emperor at court in his divine palace on earth. Firstly, the *princeps* is overtly named *Tonans* in 7.99.1, and is not identified as Domitian until v.4 (a similar practice of delaying the emperor's name occurs at 7.8, as noted above).

⁶² Manuwald (2015) 6, although this is dependent on the belief that Flaccus' *Argonautica* was intended to be an 8 book work.

⁶³ Holzberg (2004) 256.

⁶⁴ As Holzberg (2004) 256 notes, "should we not assume that Martial's contemporaries would have been much better equipped and so quicker to appreciate his *arte allusiva* than we are today?"

⁶⁵ Galán Vioque (2002) 516. Martial uses the theme of sending the *libellus* off to the emperor or another patron as part of the closural sections of his books in Mart. 3.100, 4.86, 5.80, 7.80, 7.84, 7.97, 8.82, 9.99, 10.104 & 11.107 (this final example is ironic).

While the emperor has been carefully presented as an equal to Jupiter for the majority of the book (especially in the poet's prayers to Jupiter for Domitian's safekeeping and to Domitian for his own at 7.60), at 7.99 he is presented as a divine Jupiter himself. Martial specifies that this *Tonans* sits in his Parrhasian palace (on the Palatine hill), but a comparison to the home of the gods on top of Mount Olympus is implicit.⁶⁶ More explicitly, Martial flatters the emperor by referring to his divine person. At v.4, he stresses that the *princeps* is a divine being by describing his ears as such (*sacra Caesaris aure*), which carries out the same function as the description of his chest at 7.1.4 (*pectore sacro*). The use of the adjective *sacer* thus encourages the reader to cast their mind back to the opening of the book at its very end, emphasising the progression of the emperor from his warlike aspect abroad to his peaceful, civic role back at Rome (*placidum Tonans* 7.99.1), as well as the continuity of Domitian's characterisation across the book. By then choosing to end the poem and the book at v.8 with the word *deo*, Martial ensures that the reader is left with the firm message of the emperor's divinity. Not only is Domitian a god, he is also greater than Mars, aided by Minerva and Hercules, and acts as an equal to Jupiter himself. Structurally, this consistent characterisation of the emperor as a divine being, and the theme's continual development across the book, serves to unite the *libellus* as a textual entity. Martial's depiction of Domitian as a divine ruler of Rome is central to book 7's identity and, as I demonstrate below, ensures that the emperor impacts on the rest of the *libellus'* themes even when the *princeps* himself is not directly mentioned.

War and Peace along the Danube: Geopoetics in Book 7

As with the theme of a divine Domitian, Martial returns to the geographic region of the emperor's military campaign elsewhere in book 7 to remind the reader of the initial imperial cycle and thus tie the whole book more closely together. Across the imperial cycle Martial makes numerous references to the area of the Danube delta on the west coast of the Black Sea (in modern day Romania), setting a general scene for the emperor's military campaign against the Sarmatians in AD 92-3.⁶⁷ When Martial uses the same geospatial markers later in the book, he brings the broader political context of this military campaign to mind. As well as briefly alluding to Sarmatia in a catalogue of a woman's sexual exploits at 7.30.6, Martial returns to the region of the Hister (the poetic name for the Danube that Martial consistently uses) at 7.80 and 7.84 to depict the aftermath of war and the return to peace. As well as detailing the benefits of a subjugated province, Martial's resumption of his discussion of the emperor's campaign starts the gradual process of book 7's closure by bringing the reader's attention back to its beginning. This return from a focus on Rome to the Histrian region not only reinforces the poet's

⁶⁶ Indeed, 7.56 praises the architect Rabirius' work on Domitian's palace, claiming that Jupiter himself would ask for such a dwelling.

⁶⁷ Cf. n. 3 above.

depiction of a militarily successful divine emperor, but also works to further unify his epigrammatic contexture.

Geospatial markers for the Hister's delta on the west coast of the Black Sea and the remote north in general appear throughout the programmatic imperial cycle to evoke an atmosphere of northern exoticism. Martial uses a variety of terms associated with the geographic region: ethnic groups (the Sarmatians, Getae, Odrysians, and mythical Hyperboreans); contemporary regional names (Sarmatia and the isle of Peuce); the Bear-star Arctos, which has astrological connections with the north (the North Star, Polaris, is one of the stars that forms part of Ursa Minor); and the river Hister.⁶⁸ These reference points span a broad area (its extent is mapped in fig. 7 below) that give a rough idea of the region where the emperor was campaigning, which conforms to ancient poetic usage of distant geography to evoke the exoticism of the foreign as a way of highlighting its distance from (in this case) Rome.⁶⁹ Indeed, the practice of learning geography was a pragmatic task for the Romans, and principally tended to occupy those seeking strategic advantage on the battlefield – to the average audience member, it is likely that Martial's geospatial markers would have conveyed this idea of distance without needing to be specific.⁷⁰ Even today, with widespread detailed and readily available online mapping tools, people are far more likely to have a stronger geographic knowledge of their local area and country than of nations further away. The average western European, for example, will be able to name many of the states that compose the USA without knowing their specific locations, and might have the vaguest idea of the precise national borders that make up central Asia or the Baltic states. Thus when Martial speaks of Domitian's imminent return from the "Hyperborean shores" at 7.6.1 he is evoking the sheer distance that the emperor is from Rome – the Hyperboreans, after all, were a mythical people imagined to occupy the most northern extent of the world.⁷¹ When Martial later returns to the shores of the Black Sea, then, there is a return to a sense of exoticism and distance, which allows the poet to glory in the extent of the Empire (as I discuss further below).

Martial's decision to focus on the region surrounding the mouth of the river Hister also evokes a number of mythical connections that further strengthen his depiction of the emperor as a military hero. I will consider the exact intertextual links that Martial makes between Domitian's homecoming and the *Argonauticae* of Valerius Flaccus and Apollonius Rhodius in chapter 4, but the epigrammatist's choice to describe Mars' shield as Getic at 7.2.2 is equally significant. I have discussed above how Martial

⁶⁸ Sarmatians/Sarmatia: Mart. 7.2.1 & 7.7.10. Getae: Mart. 7.2.2. Odrysians: 7.8.2. Hyperboreans: 7.6.1. Peuce: 7.7.1. Bear-star: 7.7.1. Hister: 7.7.2. The poet's reference to the Rhine at 7.7.3 is not relevant to the current discussion as it refers to the three revolts that the emperor had recently put down near the river – two campaigns against the Chatti, and one against the rebellious Saturninus. See Galán Vioque (2002) 82 for details.

⁶⁹ Dueck (2012) 2 & 31-4 demonstrates that knowledge of distant geography in ancient Rome was relatively rudimentary.

⁷⁰ So Dueck (2012) 2 & 17. P. J. Jones (2005) 47 notes that rivers were used as an ethnographic marker, but also as a shorthand for the peoples who lived along it.

⁷¹ Galán Vioque (2002) 73.

depicts Domitian as a stronger military force than the god of war in this poem, but the connection of Mars with the Getae (a Thracian people who inhabited this area) is important. Mars' connections with Thrace were firmly established, given the myth that Hera gave birth to him in this region, yet by aligning Mars so explicitly with the Getae, a Thracian people, Martial further encourages the view that Domitian's military conquest is assured.⁷² The statement that Domitian's breastplate will be "more trusty than the Getic shield of Mars" (7.2.2) demonstrates not only that Domitian's armour will be superior to all of the Sarmatians' (applicable via the metonymic shift of Mars' shield to the armour of the whole region), but also that it will be the emperor that crushes them. Thus by associating Mars, a divine rival to the emperor's claim to martial prowess, the epigrammatist uses the geography of Domitian's campaign to show the military might the *princeps* wields as well as demonstrating how far from Rome he is fighting.

⁷² Galán Vioque (2002) 56 explains the god's mythic birthplace, using Hom. *Il.* 13.301 & *Od.* 3.361 as evidence.

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Figure 7 - Map of Scythia Minor, a section of fig. 23 from Talbert (2000). Important regions include: Danuvius/Istros/Hister (A3-4) with its mouth at C3; Sarmatica (C3, mid right); and Peuke Nesos (C3, bottom left corner). Note also the Getae towards the top of the map.

With the announcement of the campaign's success at 7.8 the poet's focus shifts back to Rome, so it is all the more telling when he returns to the Histrian region at 7.80 and 7.84 to discuss the impact of the *pax Romana* on the area. Martial's language evokes the earliest poems of the book, but also prepares the reader for the beginning of its end by the use of two *propemptika* (poems sending the book away to patrons).⁷³ In the first poem Martial revels in the peace that now dwells in the region, and offers Faustinus a new Histrian slave if he makes sure the book makes its way to his friend Marcellinus:

⁷³ Galán Vioque (2002) 455 marks the closural role of the *propemptikon* at 7.84, but 7.80 also fulfils this function.

*quatenus Odrysios iam pax Romana triones
 temperat et tetricae conticuere tubae,
 hunc Marcellino poteris, Faustine, libellum
 mittere: iam chartis, iam vacat ille iocis.
 sed si parva tui munuscula quaeris amici
 commendare, ferat carmina nostra puer:
 non qualis Geticae satiatus lacte iuvencae
 Sarmatica rigido ludit in amne rota,
 sed Mitylenaei roseus mangonis ephebus,
 vel non caesus adhuc matre iubente Lacon.
 at tibi captivo famulus mittetur ab Histro,
 qui Tiburtinas pascere possit oves. (7.80)*

Since Roman peace now regulates the Odrysian Bear-stars,
 And the harsh trumpets have fallen silent,
 You can send this little book, Faustinus, to Marcellinus:
 Now that man is free for writings, now for jokes.
 But if you seek to recommend your friend's paltry
 Gifts, a boy shall bear my poems:
 Not the sort who, sated by the milk of a Getic heifer,
 Plays with Sarmatian wheel on the rigid river,
 But the rosy youth of Mitylenian slave dealer
 Or a Laconian, not yet cut up at his mother's command.
 And to you a slave will be sent from captive Hister,
 Who can pasture your Tiburtine sheep.

A few epigrams later Martial returns for the last time to this region, once again emphasising its subjugation while focusing on his own undying literary fame:

*dum mea Caecilio formatur imago Secundo
 spirat et arguta picta tabella manu,
 i, liber, ad Geticam Peucen Histrumque iacentem:
 haec loca perdomitis gentibus ille tenet.
 parva dabis caro, sed dulcia dona, sodali:
 certior in nostro carmine vultus erit;
 casibus hic nullis, nullis debilis annis
 vivet, Apelleum cum morietur opus. (7.84)*

While my image is being shaped for Caecilius Secundus
 And the picture breathes, painted by a shrewd hand,
 Go, book, to Getic Peuce and downcast Hister:
 That man rules these places with their utterly subjugated peoples.
 You will give small, but sweet, gifts to a dear companion.
 My face will be clearer in my poetry;
 Here, erasable by neither accidents nor the years,
 It will live, when Apelles' work will die.

Returning to a region recently wracked by war, Martial revels in the peace that was foreshadowed by Domitian's anticipated triumph at 7.8 while also celebrating his successful subjugation of the upstart barbarians. The first line of 7.80 is structured to make sure that this message of military success and fruitful peace is understood. The Odrysian Bear-stars that frame the present *pax Romana* recall the same language of 7.7.1 and 7.8.2 even as the poet draws a stark contrast between war and peace. Martial emphasises that the *otium* brought on by peace provides the perfect time for his own trifling verse – instead of holding the spears of war as at 7.6.6, the poet expects Marcellinus will thumb through his poetry at 7.80.4. Similarly, where Sarmatian men once fired arrows at the emperor (7.2.1) their children now play with hoops at 7.80.8. Martial's picture of the Histrian delta, then, is of a land fully subjugated after successful military campaign, ruled over by governors who extend his will (such as Secundus in 7.84). Indeed, the *ille* of 7.84.4 (like the *ipse* of 7.15.8) could be read as an allusion to the emperor's full control of the region, emphasised by the utter subjugation of its peoples (*perdomitis gentibus*). While the isle of Peuce and the Hister were once warmed by the constant hoof-beats of enemy cavalry (7.7.1-3), in these two poems the river is now a captive and has been utterly defeated.⁷⁴ Martial has thus tied the success of his poetry, the preserve of men at peace, to the success of Domitian's military campaign. Whereas the region at war gave the poet subject matter at the book's opening, it is the emperor's peace that ensures that the poet's fame will prosper and live on in a region carefully governed by the *princeps'* advisors.

Furthermore, Martial actively celebrates the return of empire and imperialism to this region in these two epigrams, and emphasises the emperor's successful role as a governor in the aftermath of his military success. In these two poems the epigrammatist demonstrates that the reintroduction of the *pax Romana* to the area brings with it a reintegration of the region into the empire's trade network. The ability to send poetry to an area itself commends the ease of access to the region, but it is the poet's discussion of slavery at 7.80 that is especially significant. In the final two couplets Martial lists the types of slaves that Faustinus can send to Marcellinus as well as what he can expect in return – Greek

⁷⁴ Mart. 7.80.11 (*captivo Histro*) & 7.84.3 (*Histrumque iacentem*). Note also that the hooves of 7.7.2 (*ungularum*) recall the hooves of the boars used to make up the emperor's breastplate at 7.2.4 (*unguis*), further reinforcing the cycle's interconnectivity and unity.

slaves from Mytilene and Sparta can now easily arrive at the Hister, and those recently subjugated by the emperor can be sent in return to Italy. This journey back to Tibur mimics the emperor's own return voyage to civilisation and peace, and celebrates the extent of the empire. A more tongue-in-cheek version of this interchange can be found at 7.30, where the Roman woman Caelia only sleeps with men from the furthest reaches of the empire, including an "Alan on his Sarmatian horse" (v.6).⁷⁵ Martial condemns Caelia's apparent disdain for Roman men, but she does exhibit the Roman practice of making use of the whole empire, including its recently pacified northeast. The benefits of military expansion are thus seen at Rome and in the provinces, demonstrating that Martial makes his poetry "coextensive with the emperor's armies", as William Fitzgerald notes in relation to epigram 11.3.⁷⁶ The empire at peace is an empire of interchange and safe travel, and it is worth noting that later in this book Martial also celebrates the circulation of his poetry in Vienne (a town in Gallia Narbonensis) at 7.88. By celebrating the empire's peace and the emperor's role in ensuring such safety, Martial also works to emphasise his own spreading fame (and thus his role as a poet worthy of describing the emperor's successes, as discussed above). The language and subject matter of 7.80 and 7.84 places these poems in dialogue with the programmatic cycle, and by doing so creates links between the beginning and the end of the book to reinforce its overall unity.

Martial's language of exchanging slaves at 7.80 thus mirrors the advantages of the empire's trade network and the emperor's return journey from the campaign, but it is also interesting to note that the announcement of the emperor's return also brings the cold of the northlands with it. The process of the epigrammatic 'bleeding' of themes from adjacent poems into one another in Martial's corpus is well established, and has been demonstrated above in my analysis of the programmatic cycle's progression of themes.⁷⁷ In this case, however, Martial collapses the boundaries between the Hister and Rome, almost as if the yearning of the emperor's swift return has transported the whole area back to the city. In essence, Rome begins to resemble the frozen river on which the Sarmatian boy plays in 7.80.8, and the chill of the Hyperborean lands is emulated by a strident Boreas that forces freezing cold rains over the poet's estate at 7.36.5. Vegetables become blanched by the winter's frosts, and the inhabitants of the Eternal City sport hazardous icicles on their cold-afflicted noses.⁷⁸ This cold weather is the preserve of a *horridus December* (7.95.1) and adheres to the book's temporal setting (which I discuss further below), but it is telling that the proverbially cold weather of the northlands has come back to Rome at the same time as Martial bids the emperor's own return from the region. Domitian takes the weather

⁷⁵ Galán Vioque (2002) 218-9 disputes the obscene double entendre here to the sexual context of 'riding horses' (i.e. the 'woman on top' theme), to which Shackleton Bailey (1993.2) 97 n. 47 obliquely alludes. But such innuendo was rife in Latin literature (particularly that describing Hector 'tamer of horses' and his wife Andromache, cf. *Ov. Ars Am.* 3.777-8), with Martial using this very joke at 11.104.14.

⁷⁶ Fitzgerald (2007) 141. This epigram proudly notes that even centurions stationed in the far north enjoy Martial's poetry.

⁷⁷ Fitzgerald (2007) 80 speaks of themes "bleeding" between epigrams and infecting one another to frustrate individual readings of the poems.

⁷⁸ *Mart.* 7.31.4-5 (vegetables), 7.37 & 7.95 (icicles).

with him, and further binds the themes of book 7 together, lending to the book an overall sense of unity that is created by the gradual aggregation of similar themes and motifs.

As with Martial's depiction of Domitian as a divine being, Martial's return to the geographic setting of his programmatic cycle occurs towards the end of the book, mirroring and contrasting itself with the *libellus*' beginning to create a symmetrical book structure and a more unified sense of the overall work. By emphasising the benefits of peace upon a freshly subjugated province Martial develops the narrative of the emperor's successes in and after the Second Pannonian War which acts as a narrative thread for the reader to follow. By using similar language and themes to the programmatic cycle in 7.80 and 7.84, Martial also reminds his reader of the book's opening to signal its impending closure, an act indicative of his careful layout and structuring of his *libelli*. The central themes of the programmatic cycle thus keep recurring across the book, but as I have just shown with the chill of the north reaching Rome, the emperor does not need to be directly mentioned for the themes that developed in book 7's initial cycle to continue across the book and remind the reader of its larger unity. As I argue in the next section, Martial also creates a temporal frame in the opening cycle that remains stable over the course of the book, ensuring that the context of the initial poems pervades the whole work even when references to the emperor himself are absent.

Moving Beyond Domitian: The Temporal Setting of Book 7

In the opening imperial cycle Martial establishes a broad temporal setting for the book to which he adheres throughout the *libellus*. In epigrams 7.7 and 7.8 Martial explicitly states that it is in the wintry month of December that the news of the emperor's impending return is announced. The poet then repeatedly makes reference to the month of December, winter, and the festival of Saturnalia across the book, and ensures that the whole work has a general wintry feel about it, even in the poems that do not express any temporality whatsoever. Interestingly, while the book exhibits a thematic and narrative progression as the poems develop along a general timeline of events (such as the peace that has spread to the Hister by 7.80 in the aftermath of Domitian's victory at 7.8), the *libellus* remains rooted in December, staying within this broad temporal frame. Each reference to December is thus reliant upon the programmatic cycle at the book's beginning, and while the temporal frame is not directly related to the emperor Domitian it is thoroughly dependent upon him.

The impact of this temporal framing on the epigrams in book 7 is particularly effective given the nature of time in these poems. While most of Martial's poems are staged in a specific or vague locational context, whether this is the emperor's breastplate at 7.1-2, the emperor's palace on the Palatine at 7.99, or a set of hot-baths at 7.35, a specific temporal context is not necessary to make sense of these poems. Without a precise overarching narrative plotline that is essential for each poem's existence and interpretation the majority of the *Epigrams* are (literally) timeless. Their atemporality makes it easier for the temporality of poems that specify their temporal context to be shared through

their close physical association with one another. In short, the temporality of epigrams ‘bleeds’ over into their neighbouring poems so long as there are no jarring inconsistencies.⁷⁹ Quite tellingly, none of the epigrams in book 7 place themselves into the context of spring or summer, which aids the overwhelming sense that this is a wintry book. It is not until 7.7 that a hint of temporality appears in the book, where Martial describes the “wintry Bear-star” (*hiberna Arctos* v.1) as one of the agents keeping Domitian away from Rome. Martial then explicitly states that the month in which the news of the emperor’s return is announced is December (7.8.3), and offers no other temporal marker until 7.21 (the birthday of Lucan, discussed in full below) and 7.28 (December again). Temporal markers in book 7 are thus a rare occurrence, and primarily revolve around the month of December itself, providing a *terminus post quem* for the reader’s conception of the book’s overall temporal setting.⁸⁰ While the majority of these poems are not reliant on the month of December to make sense, the absence of temporality in these poems encourages an association with the temporal setting unless proven otherwise.

Despite this adherence to a broad temporal frame, however, time in the *Epigrams* is not stationary. As I have discussed above, the programmatic cycle in book 7 exhibits a thematic and narrative progression, with the shift from Domitian’s breastplate to the people of Rome and the span of two intermediary poems enacting the passage of narrative time. This progression along a timeline of events, as can be seen in the prayer and answer poems 7.5-8, can be explained with the visual parallel of the passage of time in comic books. In a comic book the narrative is divided into individual panels (an analogue for Martial’s poems I have already used to discuss transitioning between textual entities in my introductory chapter). Each panel represents itself as a moment (or cluster of moments) in time, a subdivided unit for the reader to join with an adjacent panel to enact the flow of narrative and narrative time.⁸¹ When the reader reads a comic book page, they join individual panels together in their mind to create a timeline of events – the first panel takes place before the second, but much earlier in the narrative’s course of events than the fourth panel. Essentially, the movement from one panel to the next is the movement from one individual ‘present’ to another – the reader of *Epigrams* 7 experiences 7.1 before 7.2 both in terms of its narrative position and in terms of the time they take to read both poems, and understands 7.8 as a poem taking place more temporally removed from 7.1 than it is from 7.7.⁸² To the reader, each poem is a new ‘present’, and they contextualise poems such as 7.95 as occurring ‘later’ in the book than those closer to its physical beginning. Thus the *Epigrams* – a non-narrative contexture – can be understood to develop a thematic or narrative timeline simply through a direct reading from the first poem to the last. Like a comic book, the individual poems/panels are arranged to aid a sequential

⁷⁹ On epigrammatic bleeding, see n. 77 above.

⁸⁰ Indeed, this is a central factor for Galán Vioque (2002) 7’s dating of book 7 to December 92.

⁸¹ Eisner (2008) 26. Originally published in 1985, Eisner’s work was formative for the similar arguments made in McCloud (1993) 94-117.

⁸² Cf. McCloud (1993) 104: “In comics as in *film*, *television* and ‘*real life*’ it is always *now*. [panel change] *This* panel and *this* panel *alone* represents the *present*. [panel change] Any panel *before* this - - that *last* one, for instance - - represents the *past*.” Original emphasis.

reading, which in turn creates a sequential timeline of events that the reader experiences. Martial uses this sequential development of his book to great advantage, and creates the illusion of a passage of time. At 7.80, for instance, the gulf between this poem and 7.8 is so great in narrative terms (much greater than the gap between 7.2 and 7.5) that a return to blissful peace has far more structural impact on the book than it would have been if the poem had occurred at 7.10. This larger gap enacts a larger distance in narrative time, and makes the closural motif of the *propemptikon* more effective. Nevertheless, while the book's passage creates a sense of time passing, the book is firmly rooted in the month of December. Epigrams 7.80 and 7.84 are temporally and spatially distant from 7.8, but the reader is reminded again at 7.95.1 that it is still December. Events take place across the book and a sequential reading creates a sense of narrative progression, but always within the overarching temporal frame of December.

The most obvious way in which Martial suffuses the book with the temporal setting is in his references to December and winter in the book. I have already discussed how Domitian brings the weather of the north to Rome, but the poet also ascribes this chill to the winter month. The epigrammatist mentions the month of December six times in the book, and winter (*bruma*) twice.⁸³ Four of these poems emphasise the awful weather and the cold, and the chill of winter appears once more in a poem where no temporal setting is established, blanching vegetables for sale in the Subura.⁸⁴ This depiction of December is remarkably unflattering following Martial's praise of the month in 7.8.3 for sending the news of Domitian's return back to the city. Every poem that mentions December and winter after 7.8 bemoans the awful weather and chill of the month, and December is even described as being grim and horrid (*December atrox* 7.37.6, *horridus December* 7.95.1). These complaints about December's weather, however, do not constitute any kind of poetic attack on Domitian – instead, one can read the praise of December in the opening poems as a direct result of Domitian's success and return. Furthermore, the shift in tone seen in the poems about December is linked to the shift in the poet's subject matter as the poet moves away from panegyric for the emperor towards more humorous epigram. Accordingly, while 7.37 and 7.95 both describe horrendous weather in a context specific to December, they do so in the context of emphasising the hilarity of their scopic targets: two Romans with jagged, snot-infused icicles dangling from their noses. December and winter are both repeatedly mentioned to reinforce the overall temporal setting, but Martial's jocular treatment of the month's savage weather which (as I have already argued above) is also linked to the proverbial cold of the north, also overlaps with another key feature of the month of December – the Saturnalia.

Martial uses the Saturnalia in book 7 as an excuse for his own freedom of speech and licentiousness, linking the festival to the month of December and thus reinforcing the overall temporal theme. Although it is not until 7.28, an epigram offering seasonal well-wishes to Fuscus and judging

⁸³ December: Mart. 7.8.3, 7.28.7, 7.36.5, 7.37.6, 7.72.1 & 7.95.1. Winter (*bruma*): 7.65.1 & 7.95.1. The adjective *hibernus* (wintry) also appears at Mart. 7.7.1, 7.36.2 & 7.95.17.

⁸⁴ Awful weather: Mart. 7.36.6, 7.37.7 & 7.95.1. The cold: Mart. 7.31.4-5 (no temporal setting), 7.37.3 & 7.65.1.

his jokes of dubious quality, that Martial characterises book 7 as a Saturnalian work, the festival's themes of seasonal licence and gift exchange appear throughout the book. At 7.53 Martial complains about the Saturnalian gifts his friend Umber has sent, at 7.72 the poet wishes Paulus well for the month of December and hopes he receives valuable gifts, and at 7.91 Martial sends the satirist Juvenal a gift of nuts.⁸⁵ There is little doubt, as both Canobbio and George Harrison have demonstrated, that December is frequently found in Martial's poetry as a metonym for the Saturnalia, but if this is the case then it follows that the Saturnalia (like Christmas today) was equally evocative of the month of December, and thus of book 7's overall temporal frame.⁸⁶ Indeed, Martial repeatedly marks out his poetry as Saturnalian literature, making the end of the *Apophoreta* as well as books 4 and 5 of the *Epigrams* concurrent with the end of the festival, and ostensibly offering the distiches in his *Xenia* as alternatives for Saturnalian gifts.⁸⁷ In book 7 the *liberalitas* of the Saturnalia, a festival concerned with revelling in the carnivalesque inversion of social norms, is closely modelled on the ribald songs sung by soldiers at Domitian's triumph in 7.8 – this, the poet informs the emperor, is permitted, so the poet's work also ought to be.⁸⁸ In this poem December announces the emperor's anticipated triumph in January, and the Saturnalia (the festival most associated with the month) offers the occasion to revel in the emperor's success in advance of his return. Martial uses the excuse of triumphal songs to legitimise the licentiousness of his own poetry, but in so doing he marks out the month of December (and thus the Saturnalia) as a time for revelry, and the time for his poetry. December and Saturnalia are (in book 7 at least) one and the same.

Furthermore, *Epigrams 7* is a book obsessed with gift-giving which, while not always explicitly linked to the Saturnalia, evokes a key feature of the festival. As Citroni notes, book 7 features twenty-six poems that discuss gift-giving in some way, of which only three cannot be linked to the festival.⁸⁹ Saturnalian literature often makes reference to the practice of sending intentionally poor-quality poetry to friends (the English practice of reading out terrible Christmas cracker jokes may be an apt modern parallel), and book 7 includes several poems on the theme of terrible gifts.⁹⁰ In epigram 7.42 Martial acknowledges that he has sent bad poetry to his patron Castricus (whom the reader has already met at 7.4), offering the reader familiar with Saturnalian literature a view of the poor-quality poem from the sender's point of view. In this poem Martial stresses the insignificance of his verses, which he describes as puny (*tenuēs* v.3, itself an ironic Callimacheanism emphasising the poet's adherence to aesthetic

⁸⁵ Citroni (1989) 217 adds that 7.37, a poem requesting the gift of a cloak to the poet, is “probably” a Saturnalian poem too, but the link is not explicit.

⁸⁶ Canobbio (2011) 227 & Harrison (2001) 311.

⁸⁷ Mart. 4.88, 5.84, 13.3.5 & 14.223. Citroni (1989) 217 catalogues Mart. 4, 5, 7, 10 & 11 as distinctly Saturnalian books.

⁸⁸ Rimell (2008) 141. The poet also links his poetry to mime as well as triumph at Mart. 1.4.

⁸⁹ Citroni (1989) 217. These poems are: Mart. 7.3, 7.16-7, 7.26-9, 7.31, 7.36, 7.42, 7.46, 7.49, 7.52-3, 7.55, 7.68, 7.72, 7.77-8, 7.80, 7.84, 7.86, 7.89, 7.91, 7.97 & 7.99. Epigrams 7.80, 7.84 & 7.99 are, in Citroni's viewpoint, unrelated to the Saturnalia.

⁹⁰ Cat. 14 & Stat. *Silv.* 4.9 (acknowledged as a Saturnalian poem at *Silv.* 4.praef.23-5).

brevity) and bad (*mala carmina* v.5), and which is evocative of the theme of poor gifts for the Saturnalia – the poet complains of Umber’s shoddy offering at 7.53 and apologises to Juvenal for only sending him a few nuts, fruits which are themselves synonymous with utter insignificance.⁹¹ Gift-giving is thus a feature of book 7, and presented in the language of Saturnalian mock-exchange. Indeed, even epigram 7.16 – a distich in which Martial offers to sell his patron Regulus’ presents back to him for a measly profit – fits into this overarching Saturnalian theme. This poem is usually seen as the poet’s bitter complaint against the patron as, alongside 7.31, this is the last time Regulus appears as a patron in Martial’s poetry.⁹² Nevertheless, the poet’s offer to sell back his patron’s gifts for the money he claims to need engages in the inversion of standard social practices that so typifies the Saturnalia. With the announcement of December as a temporal frame for the book at 7.8, then, Martial prepares the reader for a Saturnalian revel. This revel seeps into the other poems of the book, and the poet’s attention to the festival’s distinct features of gift-giving and poor-quality gifts ensures that the book adheres strongly to this temporal setting.

While the majority of book 7 situates itself in the month of December and the Saturnalia, there are two poems in the book that refer to events outside of December and three that describe the celebration of Lucan’s birthday in November. The non-Lucanian poems mention other months in the calendar, but it is clear that they are remote from the ‘present’ time in the *libellus*. At 7.74.5 Martial makes reference to the Ides of May as part of a hymn to Hermes, whose mother (Maia) gave her name to the month. The subjunctive force of the verb *ormentur* in this line gives a generalised wish for the future rather than the present. Similarly at 7.95.18, a poem which reinforces the ‘present’ of December in its opening line, Martial orders Linus to forego his greeting kisses until his frozen nose thaws in the upcoming month of April.⁹³ The presence of epigrams 7.21-3 is more problematic, as these poems situate themselves in a festival celebrating the epicist Lucan’s birthday, which took place on the 3rd November.⁹⁴ The opening of 7.21 – “this is that day” (*haec est illa dies* v.1) – firmly situates the poem and its mini-cycle within the temporal context of Lucan’s birth, but does not specify when this actually is; only the reader knowledgeable of this festival would know the precise occasion celebrated here. Indeed, it is highly likely that this poem was originally presented at a commemorative event in honour of Lucan, with the poems commissioned by his widow Polla Argentaria.⁹⁵ Statius dedicates one of his *Silvae* to this very event, and in this book’s preface notes that the work was composed at the request of Lucan’s widow.⁹⁶ Whatever the event actually entailed, it is likely that Martial was asked to write for

⁹¹ Galán Vioque (2002) 484.

⁹² Galán Vioque (2002) 134.

⁹³ Mart. 7.95.1: *bruma est et riget horridus December*.

⁹⁴ The only ancient source for this date comes from Vacca’s 5th century *Life of Lucan: natus est III Nonas Novembris C. Caesare Augusto Germanico II, Apronio Caesiano consulibus*.

⁹⁵ Galán Vioque (2002) 168-9 discusses the event and its dating, Newlands (2011) 224-5 its celebration and the commemoration of famous figures’ birthdays in antiquity.

⁹⁶ Stat. *Silv.* 2.praef.23-5 (on *Silv.* 2.7). On such an interpretation of this sentence of the preface, whose main verb *consuleremus* is disputed, see Newlands (2011) 63-4.

the occasion too, and that these poems were later woven into the new context(ure) of book 7. These poems thus constitute a brief departure from December, although they do not make this explicit to the reader. The poet then quickly returns to his December theme with the Saturnalia at 7.28, ensuring that the majority of his book adheres to this temporal setting and creates an overall thematic unity for the book.

Time is generally an absent factor in Martial's *Epigrams*, unnecessary to the interpretation of most of his poems. Despite (and because of) this habitual atemporality, Martial's poems are easily drawn into a broader temporal frame that encircles the whole book. Announced at 7.8 and mentioned for the last time at 7.95, December dominates the *libellus*. The Saturnalia and its themes of gift-giving and licentiousness further spread the temporal setting of winter, and the reader is left with the sense that book 7 takes place in December. Time does seem to progress as the book's narrative theme of conquest and peace along the Hister develops, but the poet ensures that the book does not give way to January. Indeed, although Martial includes three poems on Lucan's birthday in his contexture, the rest of the book is overwhelmingly associated with December. As with Martial's repetition of the geographic setting, whenever December or Saturnalia is mentioned the reader's mind is inevitably drawn back to the announcement of Domitian's expected quasi-Saturnalian triumph at 7.8. Thus, although the temporal theme is not explicitly linked to the emperor and the book's programmatic cycle, Martial ensures that this cycle is essential for the rest of the book's interpretation.

Conclusion: A Web of Sub-Themes

In this chapter I have explored how the opening epigrams of book 7 influence the reader's understanding of the whole *libellus*. Martial's programmatic cycle establishes the key themes which provide a thematic core for the text, drawing together poems that otherwise might not have correlated into a unified whole. As the initial poems of the book develop, they build up a strong interconnected narrative of the emperor's anticipated return from a successful campaign over the Sarmatians on the banks of the Hister river, all set in the month of December. The praise of the emperor's divine power and heroic military prowess creates in Domitian a supreme military leader, whose martial feats are later matched in the book by a masterful handling of more domestic affairs (such as the city street edict of 7.61). The key themes of Domitian's return from victory, his divinity, the month of December, and the temporal setting are all reinforced in the imperial cycle by the repetition of specific key words. These words mark out the programmatic cycle as a strongly cohesive unit, and also prepare the reader for the same practice in the rest of the book. Martial brings the initial cycle to mind throughout the book by repeating these key phrases and themes, which creates a sense of thematic progression and the unity of a larger whole. However disordered the book may appear at first glance, the constant reminder of the work's opening themes creates an overarching cohesion, and ensures that the poems of book 7 have an innate quality of belonging to this specific book.

Epigram itself is not a narrative genre, but the arrangement of poems within the book creates a background narrative that takes place even while the rest of the book carries on. Epigrams 7.3-4 seem to occur during a shift in scene and time, for instance, which lends to the later poems in the book a narrative context against which they are offset. Domitian's return from the provinces is a slow, gradual process that takes place across the whole book – 7.8 announces that he will not return for his expected triumph until January at the earliest, and by 7.80 enough time has passed for the Hister to return to a flourishing peace. Indeed, the reader's progression through these epigrams creates a narrative timeline that unfolds as they unfold the scroll, and the creation of the sequence creates a journey for the reader to take. Themes progress across the book to aid this transition: the poet moves from describing war to peace, and the emperor changes from military hero to civic champion, all while his divinity grows across the whole book until he becomes a Jupiter-on-earth. Later poems are contextualised by what has come before – 7.28 revels in a Saturnalia that echoes the revelry of the soldiers' expected triumph in 7.8, and the chill at 7.36 is brought on by the north wind Boreas and December, combining two themes from the programmatic cycle in one poem. Martial's development of his themes thus takes on a quasi-narrative quality that pervades the book and creates a more unified contexture than a general anthology of poems.

Overall, *Epigrams 7* is a book woven together from a web of interconnected sub-themes. The individuality of the epigram is worn down by a consistent repetition of motifs and themes across the book. These themes – the emperor's martial prowess, his divinity, the December setting, the cold of the north – all develop at their own pace, at times overlapping (as with epigram 7.36's wintry northern chill), but emanating from the initial cycle of poems on the Sarmatian campaign. Martial's thematic and lexical repetitions occur so frequently that the reader is encouraged to think of their first appearance in the book, which creates a larger understanding of the whole book centred on the opening cycle. Domitian frames the *libellus*, his divinity boldly proclaimed as the final word of 7.99 and anticipated by the aegis he wears at 7.1, but he also pervades it. As has become apparent from my exploration of book 7's temporal setting, even themes that do not explicitly reference the emperor are dependent upon the epigrammatist's development of the imperial cycle – December is first mentioned in a Domitianic context, and so the repetition of themes related to December and the Saturnalia calls the emperor strongly to mind. By continually reminding his reader of the book's opening through a repetition of its themes and language, Martial ensures that his reader's ideation of the book's unity is periodically updated in a cyclical fashion. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, Martial also uses sequential thematic progression to develop the overall unity of the text as the reader moves through the *libellus*, ensuring a sense of continuity through the transition from poem to poem. It is with the imperial cycle, however, that Martial creates a frame with which he supports the rest of book 7, and which stands at the centre of his web of sub-themes.

Thematic Flow: Book 7's Water Cycles

In the previous chapter I demonstrated how Martial uses Domitian as the thematic centrepiece of book 7, framing the text with emphasis on his divinity and developing this depiction across the *libellus* to create a sense of thematic progression and contextural unity. Book 7, however, is not a work whose epigrams solely describe the emperor's grandeur. Over the course of the book multiple themes and motifs emerge and intertwine (indeed, the previous chapter considered how the temporal setting of December allowed for a progression of themes such as gift-giving that were all dependent on the opening cycle), with some themes developing sequentially, others more sporadically. In this chapter I consider how Martial uses the motif of water in book 7, which appears in roughly one quarter of the book's poems, and how the epigrammatist develops two major themes (the Argonautic return of Domitian, and a cycle on bathing and moral mixing) over the course of the book.¹ As I demonstrate, both themes link themselves back to the initial imperial cycle in some capacity, helping to establish the thematic unity of book 7 further, but their development as individual cycles in their own right ensures the poet's much-desired *varietas*. Not every poem in the book concerns itself with Domitian, but his influence nevertheless remains due to the poet's careful structuring of his *libellus*.

To consider the interplay between the themes that progress across the book and those that develop in a self-contained sequence, I have divided this chapter into three parts. In the first two parts I consider how Martial uses watery imagery to allude to the Argonautic myth (especially to Valerius Flaccus' contemporary *Argonautica*). As I demonstrate below, Martial uses the epic flavour of Jason and Odysseus' return journeys (highlighted in allusions to Flaccan and Homeric epic) to augment his previous characterisation of Domitian as an Iliadic hero in 7.1-2, while also engaging in a debate about poetic genres. The return to discussions of the *Argonautica* as a poem and as a poetic inspiration for the present work in poems that are scattered throughout the book thus encourage an understanding of book 7 as a unified text. The third part of this chapter focuses more closely on a series of poems that use a common motif of water to link the poems together through their sequential progression. The cycle moves from a description of a youth running past aqueducts in 7.32 to a man's submerged shoes in 7.33, before bringing the reader into the baths themselves (7.34-5), and then to the poet's rain-lashed country home at 7.36, before finally closing with the description of a *quaestor*'s runny nose at 7.37. Each poem focuses on a different watery motif, but throughout these poems there runs a general discussion of morals and social interaction, as well as a progression (as at the baths themselves) from hot to cold waters. By varying the same bathing motif across these six epigrams Martial invites the reader to draw parallels between the poems they have read, and to view them as a thematically-unified sequence within a thematically-connected book. This chapter, then, will chart the course of Martial's watery imagery in

¹ Water appears in 23 of book 7's 99 epigrams in some form: Mart. 7.7, 15, 19, 22, 30, 32-8, 44-5, 47, 50, 80, 82, 84, 88, 93, 95 & 96.

book 7 and explore how the various layers of its structure that develop throughout the book encourage the work's overall cohesion and textual unity.

Other scholars have previously remarked upon the leitmotif of water in Martial's poetry, but have tended to focus on book 4 in particular. In 1998 Mark Greenwood set out to identify what he termed a "mini-cycle" of three poems that directly address water in the second person in book 4.² Greenwood was mostly concerned with identifying a cycle of poems which "[seemed] to have escaped the notice of scholars", and does not directly address the further implications that this cycle has for the book, only that they provided evidence for the poet's interest in cyclical arrangement of his epigrams.³ Six years later Sven Lorenz took a more holistic approach to analysing water cycles in book 4, considering their role in constructing the book's interpretation as a whole.⁴ Lorenz identifies that nearly a quarter of the book's poems present watery imagery of some variety and focuses on the ways in which multiple cycles can interact and develop over the course of the book.⁵ The fact that both books 4 and 7 contain 23 poems that develop watery motifs behoves an investigation of book 7 in light of this previous examination of book 4. Identifying the poems in the book which contain watery imagery is ultimately dependent on the reader's judgement, but there is a coincidence here that merits investigation. Therefore, the present chapter aims to reopen a discussion concerning cyclical development through the leitmotif of watery imagery but in a manner that develops a consideration of why Martial uses water in this way.

Water held a strong metaliterary significance in Latin literature that was encouraged not least because the Camenae, the Latin goddesses who adopted the mantle of the nine Greek Muses, were themselves water nymphs.⁶ Such metaliterary associations were strengthened by the common poetic *topos*, dating from as far back as Hesiod, of depicting the acquisition of poetic inspiration as the act of drinking from springs sacred to Apollo, the god of poetry.⁷ When Martial discusses water, or uses watery imagery in his poetry, there is always a temptation to read him contributing to this established tradition of metaliterary water imagery. Indeed, as Prudence Jones demonstrates, watery imagery acquired metaliterary significance in both prose and poetic Latin texts. In the rhetorical tradition the flow of water corresponded with the flow of the argument, and the orator's persuasiveness or forcefulness in delivery was associated with the power of a large river. In Latin poetry, however, this

² Greenwood (1998). These poems are Mart. 4.18, 22 & 63.

³ Greenwood (1998) 368.

⁴ Lorenz (2004) 256 contrasts his view with that of White (1974) and his *libellus* theory, that cycles constitute remnants of individual poetry books sent to the poet's various patrons. For an in-depth analysis of the issues of *libellus* theory and cycles, see chapter 1.

⁵ Lorenz (2004) 261, for instance, explores the overlap of the motifs of water and black and white colour opposition in Mart. 4.2. At p. 261 n. 19 Lorenz lists all the watery poems in book 4 as: Mart. 4.1-4, 10-1, 14, 18-9, 22, 25, 30, 32, 42, 55, 57, 59-61, 63-4, 66 & 73.

⁶ The Camenae appear in Mart. 2.6.16, 4.14.10, 6.47.4, 7.68.1, 8.66.2 & 12.94.5. At 2.6 Camenae refers solely to the physical location of the spring just outside Rome, but at 4.14 & 7.68 "Camenae" is used as a metonym for Martial's verse itself.

⁷ Hes. *Theog.* 3. Cf. Pers. *prol.* 1's dismissive reference to the nag's spring (*fonte... caballino*) & Stat. *Silv.* 2.7.2-4's more reverent description of Mount Helicon's spring.

forcefulness was vilified, with a focus instead on the Callimachean aesthetic that a smaller, more focused stream (i.e. poem) was superior to a larger river that carried along much unwanted detritus in its path.⁸ Callimachus' poetic aesthetics were highly influential on the Latin poets, and his mantra of ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄστρον (the slender trickle, the pinnacle of excellence) took firm root in the Augustan poets and in epigram itself, the poetry epitomised by slender refinement.⁹ Nevertheless, while Martial fetishized brevity in his poetry (as 2.praef. and 2.6 make clear), he also criticised Callimachus' bookishness as being too removed from reality (10.4.12). Furthermore, this idolisation of *brevitas* at 2.6 is written in terms not of refined poetics but of necessity – the consumer of his day would not be prepared to read a long *liber*, and would scarcely manage a *libellus* one third of the length.¹⁰ While this may seem to suggest an aversion to Callimachean aesthetics, it is only due to Martial's focus on the 'real world' and utility. As Art Spisak notes, Martial's aversion to Callimachus at 10.4 is focused on his lack of bearing on real life, a relevance that the Flavian trumpets loudly and with some irreverence.¹¹ Martial still adhered to Callimacheanism as a general aesthetic of verse – at 9.50, for instance, his poetry is slicker and smoother than the lumbering clay giant of epic – but he blended it with his own particular brand of poetry that promoted itself as universally available (something that Callimachus and Horace would have viewed with horror).¹² This chapter argues that Martial wrote his *Epigrams* in a literary environment in which water was used as a metonym for poetry, and particularly against this Callimachean orthodoxy. As shall become clearer in the next section, however, Martial was still capable of banalising this aesthetic model even as he promoted it.

Making Waves: Sailing, *nostos*, and the Flaccan Intertext

A major theme in book 7 that incorporates a flurry of watery imagery related to the Danube river (known to the Romans as the Hister) is that of the emperor's return journey, cast in the epic tradition of the νόστος (or *nostos*, the heroic homecoming). Although evidence from Pliny's *Panegyricus* reveals that the emperor returned from his Sarmatian campaign via land, Martial makes such frequent references to the emperor's return and to mythic sea journeying that it is hard to ignore such a parallel here.¹³ Furthermore, given the poet's characterisation of Domitian as an Iliadic hero in 7.1-2 it is narratively appropriate for the epigrammatist to make references to epic naval journeying. After every *Iliad* there comes an *Odyssey*, and the end of the Sarmatian conflict is proudly announced at 7.8, ushering in a new phase for the book set in a world after the epic warfare described at its beginning. With the news that

⁸ P. J. Jones (2006) 51-4 (oratory) & 54-6 (Callimachean aesthetics).

⁹ Callim. *Hymn* 2.112. For a brief overview of the impact of Callimachus on Latin poetry and its interpretation in recent scholarship, see Hunter (2006) 1-6, after which Cowan (2014) 345-9.

¹⁰ Cf. Roman (2001) 123.

¹¹ Spisak (1994) 305, a point also suggested by Cowan (2014) 352. At Mart. 4.49 (a poem discussed by Spisak p. 303) the poet remarks that while people praise the useless great works they actually read and enjoy his *Epigrams*.

¹² Callim. *Epigr.* 28 Pf., Hor. *Carm.* 3.1.1. Everyone reads (and wants to read) Martial: Mart. 1.1, 3.95.7, 5.13.3, 5.16.3, 6.60, 7.97.13, 9.97.2 & 11.24.2. On literary fame and celebrity, linked to this idea of availability, see chapter 2.

¹³ Plin. *Pan.* 20.4-6.

Domitian is returning home, Martial soaks his book with imagery taken from famous *nostos* narratives, most especially from Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*. By alluding to these epic *nostoi* Martial further develops Domitian's characterisation as a mythic hero and parallel to Jason and Odysseus. Indeed, given that Martial emphasises that the emperor was campaigning near the Hister and Peuce (7.7.1-2) – the region of the Black Sea through which the successful Argonauts would sail to begin their *nostos* from Colchis – any reader familiar with Flaccus' contemporaneous *Argonautica* is invited to draw a parallel between the emperor and Jason, as well as between epigram and epic. Martial creates an Argonautic mood for book 7 and works to flatter the emperor even as he competes with and surpasses a rival poet, recently deceased and famously mourned by Quintilian in the *Institutes of Oratory*.¹⁴ Overall, this Argonautic mood seeps into the fabric of book 7 and pervades its watery themes, working to link the book together by progression of this *nostos* narrative, which itself depends on the programmatic imperial cycle.

References to the Argonauts and their adventures are scattered throughout the book – Hylas and Hercules appear by name in 7.13, 15 and 50, for instance – but the most explicit interaction with Flaccus' epic is at 7.19. In this epigram Martial commemorates the Argo, but through it Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* as well, encouraging the reader to draw a parallel between the unfinished nature of the epicist's poem and Martial's own *libellus*, which reports the news of Domitian's return from the Black Sea. In one short poem (which condenses eight books of epic into three short couplets) Martial subverts established generic hierarchies in grand Callimachean style, but he also invites the reader to compare the epic adventures of Jason with Domitian's Sarmatian conquests. As such, 7.19 is a useful text for exploring how Martial uses watery themes in book 7 to continue the opening cycle's mythological tone, and how he encourages the reader to think about literature in general even as his repeated themes help to construct the book's overall unity:

*fragmentum quod vile putas et inutile lignum,
haec fuit ignoti prima carina maris.
quam nec Cyanaeae quondam potuere ruinae
frangere nec Scythici tristior ira freti,
saecula vicerunt: sed quamvis cesserit annis,
sanctior est salva parva tabella rate. (7.19)*

A fragment which you would think a cheap and useless plank,
This was the first keel on the unknown sea.
What neither the Cyanean ruin nor the more sullen
Wrath of the Scythian sea could shatter long ago,
The ages have conquered. Yet although it has fallen to the years,

¹⁴ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.90.

A small tablet is more hallowed than the ship unharmed.

Ostensibly this epigram constitutes a celebration of the Argo with a reflection on how the ravages of time add value to physical objects. While it is possible (but unlikely) that Martial's poem refers to the purported preservation of an actual piece of the Argo, the similarities between this epigram and the opening lines of Flaccus' *Argonautica* instead encourage a metapoetic reading of 7.19.¹⁵ Indeed, as Andrew Zissos remarks, the contemporaneity of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* with the *Epigrams* alongside its contemporary cultural appeal, would have insured that any reference to the Argo or the Argonauts' journey would have brought the *Argonautica*, and particularly Flaccus' version, to mind.¹⁶ As both Zissos and Guillermo Galán Vioque independently argue, this poem constitutes a discussion of Callimachean aesthetics – the small *fragmentum* (i.e. the epigram) is of far greater value than the entire *ratis* (i.e. the *Argonautica*).¹⁷ It is hard not to see a reference here to Callimachus' doctrine that the tiny trickle is far more desirable than the rubbish-filled river (*Hymn* 2.108-12), especially when Martial compacts an entire epic journey into six lines of elegiacs. But although Martial is staging a generic contest against Flaccus and his epic here, I would also like to see this poem as an epitaph for the epicist and his unfinished work which the ages conquered (*saecula vicerunt* v.5) before it could be completed.

The openly metapoetic language that Martial uses in this poems ensures that whenever the poet refers to the physical structure of the 'Argo' he also refers directly to the poetic structure of the *Argonautica*. As Zissos has clearly shown, the words that Martial uses to describe planks of wood in this passage (*lignum* v.1 and *tabella* v.6), and which testify the existence of the "first keel to sail the unknown sea" (v.2), can both also refer to writing tablets.¹⁸ Indeed, it was an established literary metaphor to refer to writing poetry as sailing a ship.¹⁹ Furthermore, wood had long been a metaphor for subject matter in the ancient world – Aristotle used the term ὄλη (wood) to describe his political subject matter in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and Martial's contemporary Statius dubbed his collection of short *ex tempore* poems the *Silvae* (lit. 'woods') to evoke the idea of quickly drafted material.²⁰ When Martial

¹⁵ Galán Vioque (2002) 153 comments that there was a practice of revering relics associated with mythological figures in antiquity, including the Argo. Zissos (2004) 409-15 discusses the dynamic intertextual interplay between Mart. 7.19 and V. Fl. 1.1-4.

¹⁶ Zissos (2004) 409. Galán Vioque (2002) notes that the final version of the *Argonautica* was published at almost the same time as *Epigrams* 7. On the issue of the Flavian *Argonautica*'s dating and a summary of the scholarship on the topic, see Manuwald (2015) 4-7, who thinks it likely (p. 5) that the poem was circulated before the 90s AD in an unfinished state due to intertextual references to the poem in other Flavian texts.

¹⁷ Galán Vioque (2002) 153-4, Zissos (2004) *passim*.

¹⁸ Zissos (2004) 416-8.

¹⁹ Hor. *Carm.* 4.15.1-4, Ov. *Tr.* 2.329-30 & Prop. 3.9.3-4 all combine the motif of the ship of poetry with a *recusatio* against writing epic. Galán Vioque (2002) 154 lists general examples of navigation as a metaphor for poetry from Pindar to Ovid.

²⁰ Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1094b12. On Statius' *Silvae* and their title's association with quickly drafted poetic material cf. Wray (2007) 128-9. Wray ultimately concludes that while the *Silvae* expresses a native art rather than a sculpted one this does not deny the work a sense of quality (142-3). Both Cic. *De Inv.* 1.34 & Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.17 use the term *silva* to express the core 'matter' of literature in an Aristotelian sense. I also suggest that a reference to Stella's *silva* in book 7 is a potential allusion to the elegist's poetry in chapter 3.

refers to the remaining *fragmentum* of the original ‘Argo’ as both a *lignum* and (more explicitly) a *parva tabella*, he suggests to his reader that the ‘Argo’ is not only alluding to the ship, but also to the poem about the ship. The reader is left uncomfortably in the middle of the double entendre that Martial’s metapoetic language creates – the ‘Argo’ in 7.19 is at once the Argo and the *Argonautica* – because the poet has ensured that both readings are possible.²¹ Nevertheless, the poet’s fixation on the size of what remains – the *lignum* is a fragment, the *tabella* (already slender) is small (*parva*) – forces home the underlying message that this is a poem evoking Callimachean aesthetics. While the general consensus, Martial reports, is that this plank is cheap and useless (*vile putas et inutile*) the epigrammatist reminds the reader, casually addressed in the second person, that smaller is better. Indeed, Martial goes a step further and includes a religious element by stating that the *tabella parva* is more hallowed (*sanctior*) than the entire Argo/*Argonautica*. This element underpins the language of Latin poetics: poems were songs (*carmina*), but also incantations that were sung (*cantare*) by *vates* (bards/prophets).²² In a world where literature was created as a pseudo-religious act, the statement that the smaller is more hallowed (*sanctior*) than the larger takes on the tone of a careful literary comment that the ‘smaller’ is better than the ‘bigger’. Metapoetic language thus pervades 7.19, encouraging a reading that Martial is not simply describing a piece of driftwood but instead engaging with the discourse of poetic aestheticism.

The usual reading of this poem as a metapoetic statement about the superiority of epigram over epic concludes that Martial creates a rivalry with Valerius Flaccus (and epic in general) to match the supposed rivalry between Callimachus and Apollonius Rhodius.²³ Given a number of coincidences between *Epigrams 7* and the ending of Flaccus’ *Argonautica*, and the appearance of the dead Lucan at 7.21-3, however, I would like to nuance this argument. Instead of providing ‘evidence’ of a poetic rivalry between Flavian poets, I would rather see 7.19 as an epitaph for Valerius Flaccus that also seeks to finish what the epicist could not – the *nostos* of an epic hero from the shores of the Black Sea. As I have already mentioned, Quintilian famously mourns the death of Flaccus (which is usually taken as proof of the epicist’s untimely death) in his catalogue of canonical authors by stating “we have recently lost much in Valerius Flaccus.”²⁴ If, as Zissos maintains, contemporary reference to the Argo were to bring Flaccus instantly to mind, a reader of Mart. 7.19 could easily see references to a small fragment being worth more than the entire ship unharmed as an allusion to the unfinished nature of the Flavian *Argonautica*, which trails off around four hundred and sixty lines into book 8.²⁵ Indeed, the epic’s

²¹ Galán Vioque (2002) 153-4 briefly lists these possible readings: (1) the poem describes a revered relic of the Argo – as in n. 15 above; (2) the poem is an exercise in Callimachean aesthetics; and (3) the poem is a response to Cat. 4, another metapoetic speaking ship (*phaselus ille*). There is no need to decipher which is the ‘correct’ reading, however, as all three can coexist simultaneously.

²² A point which Wiseman (2015) 63-4 stresses is integral to the understanding of Latin poetry.

²³ So Galán Vioque (2002) 153 & Zissos (2004) 415.

²⁴ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.90: *multum in Valerio Flacco nuper amisimus*. Kleywegt (2005) xi is careful to note that while this passage of Quintilian appears to support the theory that Flaccus died young it does not provide definitive proof.

²⁵ Zissos (2004) 409.

premature end occurs just after Jason and his companions reached the isle of Peuce at the mouth of the river Hister, the exact geographic region where Martial portrays Domitian's campaign taking place.²⁶ With the emperor already depicted as an epic hero at 7.1-2, replete with divine weaponry, Martial carries on from where Valerius' work prematurely finished and joyfully envisages Domitian's imminent return to the capital.²⁷ There is a game of generic superiority taking place here – Martial suggests that he will finish what an epicist could not – but there is another element of commemoration at play. While Galán Vioque and Zissos both read 7.19 with Martial as the *parva tabella* against the *ratis* of epic, the unfinished nature of Flaccus' *Argonautica* rather encourages a reading of this poem where Martial is also commemorating the epic poet's untimely demise – Flaccus himself (and his poem) had quite literally been conquered by time (*saecula vicerunt*). Thus Flaccus' *Argonautica* itself is a *fragmentum* of what the finished work would have been, which, as a *parva tabella*, is revered far more than any 'unharmful ship' (*salva ratis*) that the poet might have created. Readers can be easily disappointed by any work that is overhyped, and an unfinished work teases them with the allure of what will never be. Moreover, as Martial celebrates the birthday of Lucan so shortly after this Argonautic poem and focuses on the damage that Nero did to Latin literature by enforcing the epicist's suicide (7.21.3-4) there is a general mood of literary commemoration at work here. In 7.19 Martial creates a Callimachean masterpiece, trumpeting the triumph of the small, refined work in a small, refined poem, setting himself up as an epigrammatic successor to epic, but also commemorating the recent death of a well-regarded Flavian poet.

The Callimachean metapoetic potential of this poem is further reinforced by the fact that it is framed by two poems which can also be read as an extension of the Callimachean ideal. In a light-hearted manner typical of his brand of epigram Martial juxtaposes the highly stylised, and high genre, poem on the Argo with two epigrams of a much lower tone. 7.18, perhaps the rudest poem of the book, lambasts a certain Galla for the noises her vagina makes during lovemaking. The poet remarks that while she herself is silent it is the "garrulity of your [Galla's] cunt" that is most alarming, and which entirely ruins the mood.²⁸ This poem sits in a sequence of epigrams that alternate between 'high' and 'low' tone – 7.16 is a touching dedication of the poet's work to his old friend Julius Martialis, 7.15 is a barbed joke at an old patron, and 7.20 (discussed below) is a satiric attack on a banqueter – but it also exhibits a hint of Callimacheanism that becomes apparent when read next to 7.19 (as their adjacent placement enforces).²⁹ The Alexandrian poet's renowned *dictum* that a big book is a bad book comes

²⁶ Mart. 7.7.1-2, V. Fl. 8.217-9: *insula Sarmaticae Peuce stat nomine nymphae... in freta per saevos Hister descendit alumnos*. Cf. fig. 7, above, for a map of this region.

²⁷ Mart. 7.8.7-10 predicts a triumph for the emperor. In fact, this theme of return unfolds over the triad of books 7-9 as Henriksen (2002) demonstrates.

²⁸ Mart. 7.18.8: *offendor cunni garrulitate tui*.

²⁹ The alternation of high and low tone is indicative of Martial's structural technique in the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, as well as other cycles (such as the opening epigrams of book 9, discussed in chapter 5). On the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, see Leary (1996) 13-21 & Lóio (2014) 376-81.

to mind – a criticism of an overly garrulous style of poetry.³⁰ The invective poem against Galla at 7.18, then, exhibits a comically-debased kind of Alexandrianism in which the aesthetics of her garrulity are questioned: she herself is silent, which is part of the problem (7.18.6).³¹ Callimachus’ key message is thus reduced to its core – garrulity is ‘bad’, brevity of speech is ‘good’ (although some speech is better than none). Further, the placement of 7.18 between two poems that discuss high literary culture encourages a reading of the present epigram as a literary metaphor. Just as Martial debases Callimacheanism in 7.18 he also raises its obscene language to a metaliterary level.

Martial also works to create a warped image of Callimacheanism in 7.20. This poem, another invective epigram, attacks Santra for his gluttonous thefts at a dinner party. The man stuffs his napkin with leftover food until it bulges with food plundered from all corners of the feast (7.20.4-15), and does not see the shame in claiming food that has been swept up by slaves with brooms or abandoned by the dogs (vv.16-7). In Callimachean terms, Santra’s gluttony represents an obvious problem to the aesthetic that ‘smaller is better’, but his ransacking of food that has been left as rubbish to the sweepers and dogs forms a parallel to Callimachus’ complaint that the Assyrian river – an overly large watercourse – sweeps along rubbish and refuse in its wake.³² While Santra’s gluttony is revealed in the poem’s final line not to be gluttony at all (his thefts are enacted to make money in the items’ resale the next day – 7.20.22), the overly rich food that he purloins (boars tonsils v.4, oysters v.6, cake v.7, and a sow’s womb v.11) alongside the extravagant length of the poem constitute a playful counterpoint to 7.19’s slender refinement. In fact, Santra’s gluttony spills over into the form of the epigram itself, which stands as the longest poem in the book by a large margin (22 lines to 7.95’s 18 and 7.67’s 17).³³ The reader will, just after reading a poem on small, refined poetry, understand that 7.20 is itself making a joke in the way it makes its joke: Martial uses a long poem to complain about the excessive insatiability of Santra.³⁴ As this brief aside on 7.18 and 7.20 has shown, the central theme of 7.19’s Callimacheanism spills over into its surrounding poems and creates a broader pattern that impacts upon its reader’s understanding of the book. These are not poems found in isolation, and each successive epigram changes the reader’s perception of the whole as they progress. Similarly, the Argonautic flavour of 7.19 appears at several points across book 7 and combines with the programmatic imperial cycle’s *nostos* theme to create an

³⁰ Ath. 3.72a (= Callim. fr. 465 Pf.) records that “the grammarian Callimachus said that a big book is the same as a big evil” Καλλιμάχος ὁ γραμματικὸς τὸ μέγα βιβλίον ἴσον ἔλεγεν εἶναι τῷ μεγάλῳ κακῷ.

³¹ On Martial’s tendency to banalise poetic predecessors, see Fitzgerald (2007) 167-90.

³² Callimach. *Hymn* 2.108-12, discussed above, pp. 110-1.

³³ Scherf (2008) 200 observes that in Martial’s corpus 94.7% of his epigrams are sixteen lines or fewer, so these three poems in book 7 can be dubbed ‘long’ epigrams (p. 215). As Cairns (2008) 55 notes in the same volume, only seven poems in the *Palatine Anthology* are fifteen or more lines long, and none of this length appear in the Milan Posidippus papyrus. Mart. 7.20 thus constitutes a departure from standard composition which plays into the poem’s theme of gluttony.

³⁴ Martial uses a similar tactic for responding to imagined complaints over the length of his epigrams, as I discuss in chapter 2.

overarching unity for the book. Each epigram represents a variation on a theme, but it is this underlying theme (Domitian's *nostos*) that unites the book.

Epic Spills over into Epigram: Martial's Mythical Rome

One of the side effects of Martial sprinkling Argonautic imagery throughout book 7 is that the worlds of epic and epigram collide to produce a mythical 'Rome' in the *libellus*. Similar to the depiction of Domitian as an epigrammatic Caesar (as detailed in the previous chapter), Martial's Rome is an epigrammatic version of the city built upon the foundations of his contemporary Rome. As such, while the poet's 'Rome' resembles the historical city, it is filled with exaggerated circumstances and impossible figures that, while they could never exist in the real world, become more believable in the world of the text against the backdrop of this familiar city.³⁵ In book 7 Domitian's conquest of Sarmatia is described in epic terms of *nostos*, but the mythical characters from this epic world spill over into the poet's epigrammatic Rome as well. A statue of Hercules becomes the Argonaut himself watching over Hylas, slaves named after monsters encountered on Odysseus' *nostos* become these very monsters, and fast-flowing rivers become Charybdean whirlpools threatening Martial's *amici*. By blending the epic tone of his initial cycle into the wider context of the book, Martial provides book 7 with a cohesive thematic unity, strengthening his earlier depiction of the emperor as a divine epic hero, ready to venture back and recivilise his homeland (like Odysseus with his Ithaca).

The key to understanding this continued overlap of myth and reality in book 7 lies in the overarching narrative of Domitian's victorious return from the Second Sarmatian War.³⁶ In 7.7.1-2 Martial set the scene of the emperor's conquest in the location and language of Jason's *nostos* in the *Argonautica*, focusing on the Danube river (as the Hister) and the isle of Peuce located just south of the delta.³⁷ While Argonautic and Odyssean motifs repeat across the book (as I show below), the Hister and Peuce only ever appear in the context of Domitian's military successes. The river and island both feature later on in the book in epigrams 7.80 and 7.84, which celebrate the *pax Domitiana* left in the emperor's wake, but which also remind the reader of the book's Domitianic frame. Tellingly, the Hister is captive (*captivo* 7.80.11) and downcast (*iacentem* 7.84.3) through the emperor's agency and, along with Peuce, its peoples have been utterly subjugated (*perdomitis gentibus* 7.84.4). Irene Mitousi recently observed that in his opening dedication of the *Argonautica* to Vespasian, Valerius Flaccus draws an analogy between Jason's journey and the emperor's own military action in the British Isles.³⁸ Martial's allusions to the *Argonautica* in *Epigrams 7* accomplish exactly the same thing. Domitian is a civilising and peace-making force in book 7, converting Sarmatian arrows (7.2.1) to Sarmatian toy hoops (7.84.8) and even

³⁵ Eco (1990) 75 observes that fictional worlds are parasitic, encouraging the reader to fill in unknown features within the text with material drawn from their own experiences of the real world.

³⁶ On this setting and the opening imperial cycle of book 7, see chapter 3.

³⁷ See above, n. 26.

³⁸ Mitousi (2014) 154 on V. Fl. 1.7-11. The expedition that Flaccus refers to is Claudius' invasion of Britain, in which Vespasian served in the army under Aulus Plautius' command. Cf. Mozley (1936) 2 n. 1.

civilising the once-unruly city of Rome itself by enforcing order on otherwise-cluttered streets at 7.61.³⁹ By placing Domitian's military success into a(n imagined) mythological context, Martial reinforces his depiction of the emperor as a truly epic hero in the initial imperial cycle, ready to restore his city to order upon his return. The monsters and watery threats that appear across the book remind the reader of the exciting dangers that an epic hero habitually encountered on his *nostos*, dangers that grip the entire populace of Rome with a quiet panic at 7.7.6-10, which prevents them from even enjoying their beloved chariot races. As a result, in book 7 the watery hazards of Hylas' and Europa's rapes, the towering Cyclops, the gnashing Scylla, and even the Charybdean whirlpool at Narnia all reinforce the general mood of epic *nostos* that draws the aquatic imagery of the *libellus* back to its Domitianic incipit.

A key motif of the overarching Domitianic *nostos* theme in book 7 is the dangerous threats that water hides or contains. The conscious overlap of this motif with the Argonautic strand of book 7 is most expressly made in the epigrams that deal with Hercules and Hylas, the only Argonauts who are mentioned by name in the book. Besides a throwaway comment to the "Herculean hills" at Tibur (7.13.3), Martial mentions Hercules and Hylas twice in book 7 in his ekphraseis of a fountain located in the garden of Violentilla, wife of the elegiac poet (and patron of Martial) Stella, which I have already mentioned in the previous chapter. Both poems (7.15 & 7.50) evoke the myth of Hylas' abduction in the *Argonautica*, in which Hylas wanders off to a pool to gather water while the Argonauts are preparing to spend the night on the shores of Asia Minor, but is pulled into its waters by a nymph, never to be seen again.⁴⁰ The first of Martial's pair of poems focuses more on the scene depicted by the statues that are incorporated into the fountain itself, and considers the potential Argonautic allusion in the sculpture:

*quis puer hic nitidis assistit Ianthidos undis?
 effugit dominam Naida numquid Hylas?
 o bene, quod silva colitur Tirynthius ista
 et quod amatrices tam prope servat aquas!
 securus licet hos fontes, Argynne, ministres:
 nil facient Nymphae: ne velit ipse, cave. (7.15)*

Which boy here stands by Ianthis' shining waters?
 Does he escape, a Hylas from his Naiad mistress?
 Oh it is well that the Tirynthian is worshipped in that wood
 And protects the amorous waters so near!
 Although you tend these fountains secure, Argynnus,

³⁹ On Domitian's enforcement of the *limina* and Martial's playful deconstruction of boundaries in 7.61, see Roman (2010) 114-5.

⁴⁰ Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.1207-357 & V. Fl. 3.535-600 record the episode, which leads to Hercules' decision to abandon the expedition.

The Nymphs will do nothing: beware lest He wants something!

The description homes in on the *puer* in the first verse, one of a series of statues that together form an elaborate scene with the fountain as its centrepiece (as the description of *niveis ministris* encircling the fountain at 7.50.3 makes clear).⁴¹ While the poem closes with the statement that Argynnus (the *puer*) should fear a threat from outside the fountain, the mythical threat of nymphs and *amatrices aquas* hangs heavily over this scene. Indeed, it is the potential threat of further abductions that Martial expands upon in his second epigram on the fountain:

*fons dominae, regina loci quo gaudet Ianthis,
gloria conspicuae delictumque domus,
cum tua tot niveis ornetur ripa ministris
et Ganymedeo luceat unda choro:
quid facit Alcides silva sacratus in ista?
tam vicina tibi cur tenet antra deus?
numquid Nympharum notos observat amores,
tam multi pariter ne rapiantur Hylae? (7.50)*

Oh fountain, in whose location queen Ianthis rejoices,
Glory of your conspicuous mistress and delight of your home,
Since your bank is decorated by so many snowy servants
And your waves shine with a Ganymedean chorus,
What is Alcides doing, sanctified in that wood of yours?
Why does the god occupy grottoes so near to you?
Does he keep watch for the known loves of the Nymphs,
Lest so many are seized together as Hylases?

These epigrams on Hercules and Hylas belong to a body of poems in book 7 concerned with watery dangers, and encourage this association through their interplay with Stella's status as a contemporary love poet, which lends to both poems a general amorous mood that complements the threat of the nymphs' aquatic rape. Love is in the air in both these poems – the waters themselves are amorous (7.15.4) reflecting the potential desires of the nymphs (7.50.8) – which is entirely fitting for an epigram pair written for the wife of an elegiac poet. Furthermore, Martial evokes the literary *topos* of the love elegists' use of pseudonyms for their *puellae* by giving Violentilla (little violent girl) the Greek pseudonym Ianthis (violet girl), but undermines the anonymity this pseudonym provides by associating

⁴¹ Galán Vioque (2002) 129-30 sets out the debate as to whether the *puer* at 7.15.1 is a statue or a slaveboy collecting water from the fountain. I find Shackleton Bailey (1993) 2.85 n.23's explanation of the *puer* as a statue most persuasive, given the scene in 7.50.3 where numerous snowy white (i.e. marble) attendants flank the fountain itself. Whether or not one identifies Argynnus as a living *puer* or a representation in art, the central allusion to Hylas and mythical abduction still underlines the present poem.

her with Stella in 7.14.⁴² Against this general background of elegiac allusions, the death of an anonymous *puer delicatus* who had the promise of being remarkably well-endowed at 7.14 reads as a pre-emptive warning for the abduction described in the following epigram. Indeed, when Martial chooses to refer to the cluster of statues as a “Ganymedeian chorus” (7.50.4) he brings to mind the myth of Ganymede’s rape by Jupiter.⁴³ Martial thus evokes a general amorous mood, but it is a threatening mood that is firmly fixed on the waters of Ianthis’ fountain, which evoke the treacherous waters of the Argonautica that threaten to overcome book 7 as a whole. The rhetorical question in the final couplet of 7.50 reveals the reason for Hercules’ presence – he is not there to rape the youths as 7.15 suggested, but to keep watch so that the danger of their rape by nymphs does not resurface. The waters, not the demigod, are a cause for concern. Hylas was originally abducted in an otherwise safe location, but the waters of the grove in which he was abducted proved to be more threatening than they appeared. In epigram 7.50 Martial suggests that this threat is still valid, and, alongside descriptions of other watery hazards in book 7, creates an atmosphere of epic *nostos* in which waters should be treated with care and suspicion.

The fountain of Ianthis, however, is not in a mythic grove but a Roman villa. Martial’s description focuses on a set of statues that create a mythic story, but blurs the borders between mythology and reality to further augment the epic nature of his book’s thematic progression. The Hercules that is described in these poems is a type of statue customarily kept in gardens of this period, but in the poem this statue assumes the role of the demigod himself.⁴⁴ Similarly the *puer* addressed in 7.15 is just a statue but takes on the role of a Hylas, as do the *ministri* in 7.50. Martial’s verses not only bring statues to life, they overlap reality with myth, making this statue of Hercules into Hercules himself, just as the poet creates an image of Domitian as a divine epic hero able to challenge Mars at 7.2.⁴⁵ The force of these personifications is metaphorical (of course Hercules does not walk the actual streets of Rome), but it creates a literary world within the *Epigrams* themselves in which the demigod is very much alive, and which further imbues the book with an overall Argonautic tone. While the ancient reader might have known that Martial was referring to a harmless statue scene in the gardens of a wealthy elite couple, his hyper-realistic language brings the scene to life and draws the reader into what Francesca Sapsford has dubbed the “Martialverse”, the reality of the *Epigrams* that is overlaid on the contemporary Flavian ‘real’ world.⁴⁶ Martial can quite easily describe the potential fear of Argynnus at 7.15, or suggest that the waters surrounding the Spanish town of 7.93.1 are a whirlpool (*gurgēs*) that

⁴² Mart. 7.14.5: *Stella cantata meo... Ianthis*. Cf. Mart. 6.21.1 for the first appearance of Ianthis, who is introduced as Stella’s wife. On this pseudonym, see Galán Vioque (2002) 124, who notes that according to Stat. *Silv.* 1.2.197–8 Stella (star) used the pseudonym Asteris (starry girl) in his own poetry.

⁴³ Galán Vioque (2002) 307.

⁴⁴ On these garden statues of Hercules, see Galán Vioque (2002) 132.

⁴⁵ On Mart. 7.2, see chapter 3.

⁴⁶ Sapsford (2012) 40, a point continued by Nisbet (2015) xxii: “Martial’s books are always teasing us with the hint that bits and pieces *might* be true, if only perhaps by accidental coincidence.” Original emphasis.

evokes the mythological parallel of Charybdis – exaggeration and personification are features of poetic language after all. Nevertheless, when Martial creates such a vivid picture of the ‘real’ world throughout his *Epigrams*, these mythological threats themselves become more ‘real’ by the juxtaposed realism of the rest of his text. When Martial names the statues as potential Hylases and Ganymedes, he flatters their owner by identifying them as mythic beauties, but he also invites the reader to entertain the possibility that there is a real danger lurking in the waters. The threat of watery hazards that typifies the *nostos* of an epic warrior, which Martial suggests is what the emperor is currently undergoing with news of his return after an Iliadic conquest in the imperial cycle, seeps into the more domestic poems of book 7, flooding the book with a general warning that water is dangerous.

Dangerous waters abound in book 7 in an Odyssean or Argonautic context that evokes the dangers of a *nostos* to further strengthen the overarching theme of an epic return journey for the emperor. Besides the Clashing Rocks (poetically described as the “Cyanean ruin” at 7.19.3) which threatened to sink the Argo on its journey to Colchis, Martial also alludes to the monster Scylla, the Cyclops Polyphemus, and the aquatic abduction of Europa.⁴⁷ As with Hylas these mythical watery hazards overlap with the ‘real’ world, imbuing the everyday with aspects befitting an epic *nostos* narrative. Thus at 7.38.1-2 Martial remarks that his friend Severus’ slave Polyphemus is so huge that even the Cyclops after whom he is named would marvel at him, but in his next couplet he conflates the identity of a second slave with his own eponymous monster. The poet simply states “but Scylla is no smaller. And if you paired the savage duo’s [i.e., ‘Scylla’ and ‘Polyphemus’] monstrosity each would become the other’s dread!”⁴⁸ Galán Vioque is quick to explain that Scylla is “the name of a female slave belonging to Severus”, which can be understood from the context of the passage, but it is telling that Martial conflates the real and epic worlds here.⁴⁹ By the second line of the poem the borders between mythical and real are already blurred with the assertion that the mythic Polyphemus would be amazed by Severus’ slave (*te mirari possit et ipse Cyclops*), but by line 3 the mythical and the real combine into the single form of Scylla (both slave and monster at once). This blurring is so pronounced that in the final couplet the poet refers to both Scylla and Polyphemus as *monstra*, punning on the slaves’ namesakes to transform both slaves into monsters in his epigrammatic world, overlapping reality with myth.

In fact, when the mythical Scylla appears for the second time in the book at 7.44.5 she appears as a physical location in the real world through which the very real Caesonius Maximus and Quintus Ovidius travelled when exiled from Rome by Nero.⁵⁰ Although Scylla’s famous counterpart Charybdis, the whirlpool opposite Scylla past which Odysseus and the Argonauts had to sail to reach their

⁴⁷ The Clashing Rocks, or Symplegades, are a key obstacle that the Argonauts overcome in both Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.537-610 & V. Fl. 4.637-702 as they pass through the Hellespont to reach the Black Sea.

⁴⁸ Mart. 7.38.3-4: *sed nec Scylla minor. quod si fera monstra duorum | iunxeris, alterius fiet uterque timor.*

⁴⁹ Galán Vioque (2002) 256.

⁵⁰ On the metonymic substitution of Scylla for Sicilia, see Galán Vioque (2002) 281.

destinations, does not feature in book 7, the hyperbolic description of the river outside the town of Narnia, where the same Quintus Ovidius spent his leisure time, as a sulphurous whirlpool (*sulphureo gurgite* 7.93.1) more than suffices to draw this mythic obstacle into Martial's epigrammatic world. Similarly when Atticus is praised for his exercise routine at 7.32 he is described as running "near the snowy waters of the [Aqua] Virgo or where the bull is hot with his Sidonian desire."⁵¹ The waters of the Aqua Virgo were renowned for their purity (hence their name), but Martial purposefully juxtaposes this virgin water with an allusion to the Portico of Europa on which there was painted the mythical rape of Europa (another virgin) by Jupiter in the form of a bull.⁵² Through the metonymic discourse of his poetry, however, Martial refers to both the Aqua Virgo and the Portico of Europa as the Virgo and the Sidonian Bull – Atticus does not run beside a depiction of the bull, he runs past the bull itself. Throughout book 7 Martial continuously blurs reality with myth, always using key figures from aquatic narratives evoking the realm of epic poetry, and by doing so returns the reader's attention to the Argonautic Domitian about to return from his Sarmatian campaign.

As I have established when discussing the opening imperial cycle, Martial characterises book 7 as a *libellus* very much concerned with the emperor's triumphant return from a victorious Sarmatian war, but he extends the hyperbolic language used to describe the emperor to transform everyday life at Rome into a mythological parallel to reality. Argonautic and Odyssean threats lurk beneath the waters (7.15 & 7.50), and hulking slaves become their monstrous namesakes (7.38), now found in the centre of Rome rather than at the fringes of the world. Indeed, the emperor's presence along the Hister ensures that this remote region of the empire becomes pacified and returns to a more realistic normality (7.80 & 7.84), while his absence leaves the city straining at its limits (7.61) and full of mythical dangers. Martial blurs mythology with reality in his epigrammatic Rome, helping to reinforce his depiction of the emperor as a divine epic hero by filling the city's streets with mythological figures from the *Odyssey* and *Argonautica*. By focusing on aquatic threats in particular, Martial manages to link more of his poems to the opening cycle through the consistent use of his water motif across book 7, emphasising both the emperor's expected *nostos*, and his military activity near the Hister. In the next section I move onto a sequential cycle in book 7 which focuses on bathing and moral mixing. This cycle is at first unrelated to the emperor or to the theme of *nostos*, but by its end it reminds the reader of the book's opening through a reference to the temporal frame of December, linking this individually developed cycle back to Domitian, book 7's central (and most structurally significant) figure.

Going with the Flow: A Sequential Water Cycle in Book 7

As well as gradually developing themes over the course of the book, Martial includes sequences of poems in his *libelli* that have a more immediate progression. One such series of epigrams occurs

⁵¹ Mart. 7.32.11-2: *sed curris niveas tantum prope Virginis undas | aut ubi Sidonio taurus amore calet.*

⁵² Frontin. *Aq.* 1.10 & Plin. *NH* 31.42. Cf. Galán Vioque (2002) 234.

between 7.32 and 7.37, a cycle which focuses on the public display of morals by individuals who mix in the city (and the waters of the baths), with warm waters denoting moral weakness, and cold waters indicating moral probity. The cycle itself begins at 7.32 with a character sketch of Atticus, a young philosopher who runs beside the cool waters of the Aqua Virgo, and contrasts him with the apparent laziness of youths who spend most of their time in or around the warm waters of Rome's hot-baths. The next poem then jumps to a skoptic attack on Cinna, whose mud-soaked toga drenches his pure white shoes and bathes his feet. Epigrams 7.34 and 7.35 then focus in on the hot-baths themselves, attacking two figures for their lack of moral virtue. Martial then ends his series with a sudden shock of cold water, first with the December rains at his own country villa at 7.36, and finally with the frozen icicle hanging from an ailing *quaestor*'s nose at 7.37. Martial uses bathing imagery throughout these poems to link them all together, placing the poems in an order that reflects the progression of a bather at the baths who moves from the warmer pools at 7.34-5 towards a sudden cold shower at 7.36-7, as well as using this shift in the temperature of his waters to emphasise a change from negative moral behaviour towards rustic and judicial probity. While these poems vary in their individual topics, Martial encourages the reader to form links between these epigrams by his repetition of key words and motifs, and thus to understand these individual poems as parts of a larger whole.⁵³ When Martial then reminds the reader of book 7's temporal frame of December, they are further encouraged to link this cycle (and the poems that surround it) back to the book's beginning, and from there to understand the whole collection as a unified text.

The first poem in book 7's sequence on bathing and moral virtue praises 'Atticus', whose exercise routine incorporates a ruggedly Roman simplicity, and who eschews what the authorial persona deems pointless and comfortable Hellenisms in the exercise ground. Atticus is sound of mind and body, and this is demonstrated most clearly through a contrast of hot and cold waters:

*Attice, facundae renovas qui nomina gentis
nec sinis ingentem conticuisse domum,
te pia Cecropiae comitatur turba Minervae,
te secreta quies, te sophos omnis amat.
at iuvenes alios fracta colit aure magister
et rapit inmeritas sordidus unctor opes.
non pila, non follis, non te paganica thermis
praeparat, aut nudi stipitis ictus hebes,
vara nec in lento ceromate bracchia tendis,
non harpasta vagus pulverulenta rapis,*

⁵³ Cf. Lorenz (2004) 261-2, who observes that in book 4 water and dampness aid the transition between poems without content-based similarities.

*sed curris niveas tantum prope Virginis undas,
aut ubi Sidonio taurus amore calet.
per varias artes, omnis quibus area servit,
ludere, cum liceat currere, pigritia est. (7.32)*

Atticus, you who renew the name of an eloquent family,
And do not allow a huge house to fall silent,
It is you the pious crowd of Cecropian Minerva escorts,
You that a private calm, you that every sage loves.
Yet the trainer with a cauliflower ear cultivates the other youths
And a filthy masseur plunders undeserved wealth.
No ball game, no featherball, no rustic ball prepares you
For the hot-baths, nor the blunted blow of a bare branch.
Nor do you stretch bent arms into sticky wrestler's mud,
Nor, roving about, do you seize handballs covered in dust.
Instead you run only near the snowy waters of the Virgo,
Or where the bull is hot with his Sidonian desire.
Playing at various skills, with which every sportsground serves,
Is laziness when one is allowed to run.

This epigram strikes up a stark contrast between the exemplarity of the active and philosophical Atticus and the ill-conceived, dirty exercises of his fellow-youths at Rome. At its heart this poem concerns itself with critiquing the activities of these youths, which are judged as laziness (*pigritia* v.14) against Atticus' purer exercise routine. Next to the muddy, sticky, and decidedly Greek style of exercise the youths engage in on the *palaestra* beside the Roman baths, Atticus' robust simplicity in running past the Aqua Virgo is distinctly Roman in character. Yet while this contrast is established, Martial complicates the poem by demonstrating an admixture of social customs that opens up this cycle on mixing and purity – Atticus, whilst descended from the noble Roman house of Titus Pomponius Atticus, the illustrious friend of Cicero who aided in the distribution of his literary works, has a name that literally translates as “the Athenian Man.”⁵⁴ Atticus' name, then, evokes Greek origins that are further reinforced by the gaggle of Athenian (Cecropian) philosophers that follows him around town. Just two poems beforehand at 7.30 Martial had already questioned the state of *Romanitas* through his sarcastic attack on Caelia, a Roman *puella* whom the poet criticises for sleeping only with non-Roman men. Martial continues this theme here, suggesting that ‘real men’ are absent from Rome, and that an exemplary figure can only be

⁵⁴ Galán Vioque (2002) 226-7. Note, though, Howell (2005) 29's comment that as Pomponius Atticus did not have children this Atticus cannot be a direct descendent, hence *renovas* (v.1).

found in the form of a man with a decidedly Greek name. Alongside this admixture of Graeco-Roman practices, though, Martial uses the motif of water as a visual marker to emphasise Atticus' moral purity.

Indeed, purity is central to 7.32 and establishes a firm contrast between the individual Atticus and the bands of exercising youths at the *thermae*. In a spoof of his contemporary exercise grounds Martial focuses on the filthy masseur (*sordidus unctor* v.6), the sticky wrestling mud (*lento ceromate* v.9), and the dust that the ball games produce (*pulverulenta* v.10). In contrast, Atticus' purity is established through his jogging route – the waters of the Aqua Virgo (as discussed above) were proverbially pure, and the immediate reference to the rape of the virginal Europa by Jupiter in line 12 further reinforces Atticus' own purity by association.⁵⁵ Even though Atticus is hard at work exercising there is no reference to any sweat, dust, or other grime, while the youths at the *palaestra* are mired in it. While Atticus' watercourse is more slender, it is also much cleaner (and more Callimachean) than the grand excesses of the baths at Rome, which carry much filth from those exercising beside them. Although Richard Prior argues that this epigram actually highlights Atticus' laziness in his frequentation of areas associated with laziness (the porticoes were locations of reading and the Virgo fed baths which were associated with lounging), and that the verb *currere* could be associated with attendance rather than literal running, his reading, which only focuses on the last four lines of this poem, does not take into account the strong contrast the poet creates between Atticus and his fellow *iuvenes*.⁵⁶ Martial does problematize the notion of what respectable *Romanitas* means in this poem with its aforementioned mixture of Greek and Roman practices, but Atticus' exercising is remarkably Roman (as I discuss in a moment), and the greasy exercise of this poem's *iuvenes* is clearly marked out as *pigritia*, which the poet emphasises is only playing (*ludere*) at real skills (*artes*). While Atticus is associated with philosophers at vv.3-4, this does not necessarily imply an inactive lifestyle – Pliny the Younger maintained that the daily routine of a scholar should include exercise of some form.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Atticus only runs beside the Aqua Virgo and the Porticus Europae (which Prior misidentifies as the Porticus Vipsania), both of which were located in the Campus Martius, an area synonymous with martial discipline and traditionalism, which is far from the laxity that Prior asserts.⁵⁸ Finally, if Martial were negatively comparing Atticus to the actions of the *iuvenes* at the sports ground then he would not need to focus on their dirt, or the rapacity of those surrounding them. To Martial,

⁵⁵ See n. 52 above.

⁵⁶ Prior (1996) 128-9.

⁵⁷ Johnson (2010) 37 comments on Plin. *Ep.* 3.1.4, where Vestricius Spurinna's paradigmatic daily routine includes exercise "designed to invigorate the *animus* as well as the body." At p. 42 Johnson observes that Pliny's own routine is modelled very strongly on Spurinna's at *Ep.* 9.36, and includes exercise. Pliny's *Letters* represent an educated ideal more than an accurate reflection of reality, but the association between physical and mental exercise is striking.

⁵⁸ Prior (1996) 126. On running in the Campus Martius, see Galán Vioque (2002) 233-4, citing Livy 9.16.13 & Cic. *Off.* 1.104.

Atticus' simple choice to run for free is commended over the now-fashionable muck of the exercise ground – as in the Callimachean 7.19, refined precision is far superior to a lazy sprawl of activities.

The opposition between Atticus and the *iuvenes* is further enhanced by the contrast between hot and cold waters (especially in a bathing context) that will continue throughout this watery sequence of poems. The waters of the Aqua Virgo were renowned for their frigidity as well as for their purity (the adjective *niveas* – snowy – v.11 is remarkably appropriate for capturing both of these features), and are balanced by the heat of Jupiter's desire for Europa (*calet* v.12) but also the waters of the baths where the *iuvenes* are exercising.⁵⁹ The baths that Martial describes in this epigram are *thermae* (v.7) and, while the exact distinction between *thermae* and *balnea* is disputed in scholarship, their name evokes hot waters.⁶⁰ That warm waters were regarded, as Nigel Kay writes, as “effete and enervating” is significant – the bathing and exercise practices that Atticus ignores are described as laziness (*pigritia*) against his own preference of running and partaking of the cool waters of the Virgo, which fed another set of baths.⁶¹ Elsewhere Martial describes a plunge in the cold waters of the Aqua Virgo or Marcia as a “Laconian” preference (6.42.16-8), in keeping with the rugged, martial hardiness that Atticus exemplifies, and which encourages another potential name pun in 7.32 (the Attic Man is rather Spartan/Roman in his bathing choices). The contrast with the languid pretenders, the *iuvenes* who engage in the warm waters of some unnamed *thermae* could not be clearer. In fact, the decision to describe Jupiter as growing hot (*calet* v.12) ties into the general associations of hot and cold water in the present sequence – the more erotically charged and morally dubious events of the cycle take place in warm waters. Laecania's sexual appetites are revealed in the *thermae* (7.35) while Martial's praise of Stella's virtuous gift-giving at 7.36 is accompanied by a cleansing cold rain shower (itself enacting the procession in the baths from hot to cold bathing areas). By associating Atticus' upstanding virtues with the cold and pure waters of the Aqua Virgo, then, Martial prepares the reader for this cycle's intermingling motifs of water, bathing, and moral mixing.

After 7.32's moralistic focus on the mixture of hot and cold waters it is difficult not to read 7.33, on the soaked waters of a filthy toga polluting and destroying a pair of shoes, in a similar light. Indeed, a series of intratextual links to the preceding poem warrant a closer look at this text, as 7.33 continues the preceding epigram's associations with the baths, and borrows much of its vocabulary to do so:

⁵⁹ Galán Vioque (2002) 234 & Kay (1985) 172. The chill of the Virgo reappears at Mart. 6.42.16-8, 11.47.6 & 14.163.

⁶⁰ Fagan (1999) 17 & Yegül (2010) 48 & 250 discuss the key differences. There is some confusion (even in the ancient sources) over the exact distinction between the two, but it seems likely that the term *thermae* was used to describe public, imperial bathing suites whereas *balnea* applied to smaller, private bath houses.

⁶¹ Kay (1985) 172.

*sordidior caeno cum sit toga, calceus autem
candidior prima sit tibi, Cinna, nive:
deiecto quid, inepte, pedes perfundis amictu?
collige, Cinna, togam; calceus ecce perit. (7.33)*

Since your toga is filthier than mud, but your shoe,
Cinna, is purer than the first snow,
Why, fool, do you bathe your feet with your lowered garment?
Gather your toga, Cinna; look! Your shoe is lost.

From the first word of this poem against Cinna, a frequent victim of invective poetry in the *Epigrams*, Martial creates lexical links to 7.32 that encourage the reader to approach 7.33 in light of the previous poem.⁶² Cinna's toga is described as *sordidior*, the comparative form of the adjective *sordidus* that described the avaricious masseur at the baths at 7.32.6. In the following line Martial then draws another parallel, this time with Cinna's shoe, which was purer than the first snow (*nive*) just like the snowy (*niveas*) waters of the Aqua Virgo at 7.32.11. Once again the poet juxtaposes dirtiness and cleanliness, and overtly encourages the reader to consider what happens when the two opposites mix. This mixing once again occurs in a bathing context – the verb *perfundis* refers to total immersion in water for bathing or soaking and is exceedingly rare in Martial, only reappearing in one other poem which describes the actions of a certain Lattara who “bathes in the icy Virgo.”⁶³ By metaphorically alluding to bathing here, Martial ably conveys how much water and filth pours out from Cinna's toga and onto his shoes, while also linking this epigram to his sequence on bathing.

The lexical links between 7.32 and 7.33 demonstrate just what is at stake in a sequential reading of Martial's *Epigrams*; the interpretation of the poems themselves is altered by each poem that is read before or after them, with the overall perception of the book in a continuous state of flux. When read in isolation, 7.33 is an otherwise innocuous attack on Cinna's foolishness, but when read beside its adjacent poem in a sequence laid out for the reader by the poet, the reader is encouraged to consider how these epigrams compare. In light of 7.32, Cinna's lack of attention (brought clearly into focus by Martial's imperative *ecce*) has wrought more devastation than the loss of a pair of shoes. Cinna has his priorities the wrong way round – the toga should be clean and his shoes dirty – but by paying more attention to his shoes, and engaging in the fashion of wearing his toga longer than was traditional (*deiecto amictu*), his poor choices have led to the ultimate mixture of pure and impure to the former's cost.⁶⁴ Although 7.32 censures the acts of the *iuvenes* at Rome by praising the individual acts of Atticus,

⁶² Galán Vioque (2002) 236-7 observes that Cinna is a pseudonym invented for Martial's joking epigrams. Various Cinnae appear across the *Epigrams*: Mart. 1.89, 2.53, 3.9, 3.61, 5.57, 5.76, 6.17, 6.39, 7.43, 8.7, 8.19, 10.21 (referring to the neoteric poet), 12.27 & 12.64.

⁶³ Mart. 11.47.6: *perfundit gelida Virgine*. OLD s.v. 2c.

⁶⁴ On the contemporary fashion of wearing one's toga down to the ankles cf. Galán Vioque (2002) 236, citing Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.143.

7.33 suggests that the likes of Atticus could be washed out and polluted by contemporary customs, much to the city's cost.

In the aftermath of Cinna's destruction of purity through an overflow of impurity Martial presents a very dubious Rome in 7.34. In this poem the author presents a morally grey predicament – Charinus has a reputation for being the worst man of all (*vir pessimus omnium*), but has recently won great praise for constructing a set of baths (7.34.1-3). To explain why bad men can achieve praise Martial alludes to Nero, who built the best hot-baths in Rome despite being a paragon of perversity (vv.4-5). The poet then defends his praise of the former emperor to an imagined misinterpreter of his poetry by emphasising that one can praise one bad man in comparison to an even worse one: "I do prefer the Neronian hot-baths, compared to the baths of a *cinaedus* [i.e. Charinus]." ⁶⁵ Branding Charinus as a *cinaedus* – an obscenity used to allege a man's submission to anal sex – immediately undermines the praise he has received, as this was one of the most aggressively obscene insults against men available to the Latin language. ⁶⁶ This poem represents a mixture of praise and blame, once again centred on the context of bathing. Just as Cinna mixed 'good' and 'bad' by soaking his pristine shoes with his grubby toga, so too does Charinus try to offset his negative role as a *cinaedus* with his positive construction of a set of baths. As with the filth on Cinna's shoes, however, Charinus' misdeeds will never wash out, however many sets of baths he builds.

Indeed, the links between immorality and bathing have strengthened over the course of these three epigrams. Whereas the poet opens 7.32 with a focus on the baths' exercise grounds and an oblique reference to the baths fed by the Aqua Virgo, and 7.33 describes Cinna bathing (*perfundis*) his shoes in his toga's filth, 7.34 physically places the discussion in the context of the production of *thermae* and *balnea*. As the sequence strengthens its focus onto the baths themselves (as I will soon demonstrate with an analysis of 7.35), the reader is encouraged to seek a unifying force behind the adjacent placement of these epigrams. In one way this thematic progression creates a sense of narrative – the poems flow ever onward, and the theme of moral mixture at the baths reaches its climax at 7.35 with its assault on Laecania. If the reader identifies the ruin of Cinna's shoes as a contest between purity and impurity as a parallel to the juxtaposition of the upstanding Atticus with the slovenly *iuvenes* of 7.32, they could also see 7.34 as a discussion of a Rome in which impurity reaps unjust rewards. As I have just mentioned, Martial works as a satirist to identify Charinus' misdeeds through the simple designation that he is a *cinaedus*, but it is significant that exemplary figures have disappeared. Martial

⁶⁵ Mart. 7.34.9-10: *Neronianas | thermas praefero balneis cinaedi*.

⁶⁶ Adams (1982) 132-3 maintains that when a sexual act is not made explicit the term *cinaedus* is used as a generic insult (e.g. in British English one might refer to another as a "wanker" without suggesting that they were known for being a masturbator, instead stating that they were in some way unpleasant or unlikeable). Similarly Williams (1999) 175 understands the term *cinaedus* as "a man who has an identity as gender deviant" rather than referring to any specific sexual act in and of itself. Cf. Galán Vioque (2002) 243.

is connecting the concept of moral impurity with the baths in these epigrams, but this impurity threatens to spill over into his representation of the city as a whole.⁶⁷

In particular, Martial focuses on the baths as a place of sexual transgressions in these poems, which encourages the reader to see this series as a more unified sequence. Sex is overtly used as a linking motif between epigrams 7.34 and 7.35 – 7.34's last word is *cinaedi*, while 7.35 begins with *inguina* (loins). Moreover, this thematic anticipation in 7.34 runs deeper through allusions to one of the epigrammatist's most frequent sexual *topoi* – the *os impurum*, or unclean mouth, which suggests a character's performance of oral sex.⁶⁸ At 7.34.7 Martial describes the malignant interpreter of his poetry as “speaking with a somewhat rancid mouth” (*rancidulo loquatur ore*), referring to the criticisms that pour out of it but also hinting that the man who badmouths Martial has a bad mouth due to his sexual proclivities. In earlier epigrams Martial has already associated ill-smelling mouths (or the attempt to hide foul smells) with the practice of fellatio or cunnilingus. In book 2 Postumus' kisses are avoided, even though (and precisely because) he takes efforts to sweeten his breath.⁶⁹ Similarly, Martial quips that while Zoilus' practice of washing his backside makes his bath filthy he would make the water even filthier by washing his head, suggesting that Zoilus is not just a *cinaedus*, but that he also has an *os impurum*.⁷⁰ A reader of Martial's earlier poetry would more easily see the suggestion here that the *malignus* has an *os impurum* too, and the presence of Charinus also strengthens this sexual association. Charinus' status as a *cinaedus* had already been established at 6.37 in sexually explicit terms, and at 1.77 Martial also explains that Charinus' pallid face was a result of his performance of oral sex on women. The *malignus*' dirty mouth, Charinus' prior associations with oral sex, and his current description as a *cinaedus* serve to prime the reader – for the following epigram, which works to unmask Laecania's own sexual transgressions.

In keeping with the rest of this sequential cycle Martial locates his invective attack on Laecania's sexual morals at the baths, this time setting the scene physically inside the baths themselves. Laecania, the only woman present in this whole poem, is attended by a slave whose covered genitalia are intended as an expression of the *matrona*'s sexual modesty but, the epigrammatist hints, actually reveals her to be a fraud:

inguina succinctus nigra tibi servus aluta
stat, quotiens calidis tota foveris aquis.

⁶⁷ Rimell (2008) 22-3 observes that in ancient Rome pollution was understood to be transmitted through physical contact, and that Martial associates baths and public toilets with “the unsavoury mingling of classes, influences and bodily fluids.”

⁶⁸ For the *os impurum* in Martial, see Sapsford (2012) 69-179 who tracks the development of this *topos* across the *Epigrams* as a whole. Richlin (1983) 26-7 notes that the *os impurum* in Martial occurs most frequently in bathing contexts due to a broader concern in the baths of contact (via transmission of dirt in the water) with another person's genitalia. Cf. Rimell (2008) 23-4.

⁶⁹ Mart. 2.10, 12 & 21-3. Cf. Williams (2004) 55.

⁷⁰ Mart. 2.42. Cf. Williams (2004) 155.

*sed meus, ut de me taceam, Laecania, servos
 Iudaeum nulla sub cute pondus habet,
 sed nudi tecum iuvenesque senesque lavantur.
 an sola est servi mentula vera tui?
 ecquid femineos sequeris, matrona, recessus,
 secretusque tua, cunne, lavaris aqua? (7.35)*

Your slave stands, his loins belted with black leather
 Whenever you warm yourself entirely in the hot waters.
 But my slave, so I may say nothing of myself, Laecania,
 Has a Jewish weight under his non-existent skin.
 But nude men, both youths and elders, bathe with you.
 Or is your slave's the only true cock?
 Why don't you, my lady, head for the female recesses,
 And secretly, oh cunt, wash in your own water?

This epigram revolves around the accusation that Laecania is not at all sexually interested in men, and engages in transgressive same-sex relationships, even though she pretends to have a stereotypical *matrona*'s modesty.⁷¹ It was an established practice that women attended the baths accompanied by slaves, but Martial here takes umbrage that although Laecania is at a set of mixed baths surrounded by men she insists, in a display of public modesty, to cover up her own attendant.⁷² While Fikret Yegül suggests that it is likely that each set of *thermae* had its own specific rules and that Romans would know where to go to find the experience that most suited them – as with nudist beaches today – it is highly unlikely that Martial is referring here to fully naked mixed bathing, as *nudus* can also refer to being scantily clad.⁷³ Although Garret Fagan thus reads 7.35 as an attack not on Laecania herself but on her choice of dressing her slave, this view does not take into account the epigram's obscene language, which forms a tricolon of ascending extremity (*inguina, mentula, cunne*) that ends the poem by addressing Laecania's genitalia directly.⁷⁴ By focusing on her vagina, and by using the obscenity *cunnus* to refer to it, Martial deliberately undermines the woman's status as a *matrona* which he had sarcastically established in the preceding line. These two vocatives (*matrona, cunne*) reveal that the fault here lies specifically with some issue surrounding Laecania's vagina, focusing the issue of this poem on sexual *mores*. Martial interprets Laecania's decision to belt her slave not as modesty, but out of a lack of sexual interest in men, as she is perfectly comfortable bathing with naked men, whose genitalia are not covered

⁷¹ Here I am avoiding terms such as 'lesbian' and 'homosexual' intentionally, as they are anachronistic labels. Langlands (2006) 6-7 provides a detailed summary of the scholarly debate.

⁷² Galán Vioque (2002) 244 & Yegül (2010) 35-6. Mart. 11.75 similarly advises a woman accompanied by a slave whose penis is covered by a *fibula* to remove her slave's covering. Cf. Kay (1985) 229.

⁷³ Yegül (2010) 34. On the connotations of *nudus*, see Fagan (1999) 25 & OLD s. v. 2.

⁷⁴ Fagan (1999) 25.

(v.6). To go further, Martial suggests here that Laecania is attempting to invade and supplant the male role not just in the bedroom but also in the bath house.⁷⁵ Martial's insistence that Laecania "head for the female recesses" (v.7) thus reinforces male dominance by sending her away to an established female zone, but also recognises her sexual transgressions by suggesting that this is her preferred location – in an area with women only.

The fact that this poem alleges Laecania's sexual interest in women has been observed by scholars before, but I would like to explore how Martial's language in this poem, pre-empted by the *os rancidulum* in 7.34, focuses in on Laecania's participation in cunnilingus.⁷⁶ The first hint of oral sex in this epigram is Laecania's name, which evokes the Greek verb λαικάζειν (the equivalent of the Latin *fellare*), meaning "to fellate."⁷⁷ While this could associate Laecania with fellatio, J. N. Adams argues that by the time *laecasin* had entered the Latin language through Greek it had become a general expression of contempt removed from its original meaning.⁷⁸ At the very least Laecania's name is connected to obscenity, and particularly to the act of oral sex in general, but it is the rest of the poem that establishes her involvement in same-sex cunnilingus. That Laecania apparently shows no interest in the Roman men at the baths is evidence enough for her sexual preference for women (v.6), but it is the final line of the epigram that drives the message home. That Laecania's bathing in the *feminei recessus* is to take place in secret (*secretusque*) draws attention to the transgressive nature of the action described, but the force of the poem's final punchline word *aquas* (like *cinaedi* in 7.34) encourages a reading of this line as an obscene joke. The word *aqua* (lit. "water") alludes to the general practice of washing after sexual activities, seen elsewhere in the *Epigrams* such as when Martial refers to washing out one's mouth after fellatio.⁷⁹ The emphasis that Laecania should wash out her vagina in her own water (*tua... lavaris aqua* v.8), however, focuses on what Martial constitutes to be her offending organ – her own vaginal secretions are mixing with the waters of the baths and having a polluting effect. Martial does not specify that Laecania herself performs cunnilingus, but it is telling that in a later poem in book 7 the poet mocks Philaenis who also engages in transgressive same-sex intercourse, and "thinks it virile to lick cunt."⁸⁰ Philaenis is derided for thinking herself a manly woman and revealing herself to be a submissive sexual partner nonetheless. In 7.35, Laecania is driven to the female portions of the

⁷⁵ Later on (Mart. 7.66.14-5) the epigrammatist depicts Philaenis, another transgressive woman, supplanting male roles in both private and public spheres.

⁷⁶ Galán Vioque (2002) 247, following Richlin (1983) 134, states that 7.35.7-8 is "a veiled accusation of lesbianism."

⁷⁷ Howell (2005) 28, correcting Galán Vioque (2002) 244.

⁷⁸ Adams (1982) 132. E.g. Petron. *Sat.* 32: "I say to the cold, 'blow me!'" (*frigori laecasin dico*). Indeed, there could be a play on the reader here who might expect that Laecania is associated with fellatio but is actually revealed to partake in cunnilingus.

⁷⁹ Mart. 2.50, on which Williams (2004) 178. On ablution after sexual activities, see Butrica (1999) 137-8 & Galán Vioque (2002) 248.

⁸⁰ Mart. 7.67.17: *cunnum lingere quae putas virile*.

baths because she desperately needs to wash out her vagina (and perhaps her mouth, too) following transgressive sex, revealed by her lack of interest in men.

After 7.35's descent into the warm *thermae* to discuss sexual impurity Martial suddenly switches the subject matter to a poem concerning Stella's gift of a set of roof-tiles to the poet to keep his villa dry in the December rains. The juxtaposition of hot and cold waters is stark, but acts out a juxtaposition present in the baths themselves, mirroring the transition of the bather from the warmer *caldarium* and *tepidarium* to the *frigidarium*'s cold plunge pool. To draw out this parallel, Martial continues to use bathing imagery to describe his rain-lashed estate, which aids the overlap of motifs across the series of poems to enforce a sense of their overall unity:

*cum pluvias madidumque Iovem perferre negaret
et rudis hibernis villa nataret aquis,
plurima, quae posset subitos effundere nimbos,
muneribus venit tegula missa tuis.
horridus, ecce, sonat Boreae stridore December:
Stella, tegis villam, non tegis agricolam. (7.36)*

When my rough country home refused to endure the rains
And moist Jupiter, and swam in wintry waters,
Very many tiles, which could let sudden showers pour off,
Came, sent from your munificence.
Look! Horrid December resounds with the howl of Boreas:
Stella, you cover the country home and don't cover the countryman.

The language of the baths still pervades this poem despite the poet's abandonment of the city. While Laecania wallowed to wash herself (*foveris, lavaris* 7.35.2 & 8), Martial's personified villa actively swims in the wintry waters (*nataret* v.2). Given that the deepest imperial *natationes* had a depth of 1-1.2m, swimming would not have been a standard activity at the baths.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the act of swimming involves the complete immersion of the body in water – the core feature and purpose of bathing itself – and as such, Martial's depiction of a villa swimming in water with a cold shower pouring off its roof-tiles thus represents a quasi-bathing experience. Furthermore, the frequency of watery imagery in the opening lines – rains (*pluvias*), wet thunder storms (*madidumque Iovem*), wintry waters (*hibernis aquis*), and sudden showers (*subitos nimbos*) – link this poem into the thematic sequential series that preceded it. Indeed, the cold waters seen in this cycle are all associated with the natural world rather than the crafted hot waters of the bath houses, highlighting the same contrast that was seen not long before with Atticus' rugged simplicity and the effected, lazy luxury of the *iuvenes* in the exercise

⁸¹ Yegül (2010) 16 argues that wallowing and wading would have been far more frequent in baths at these depths.

grounds of 7.32. As such, the reader is further encouraged to compare various parallels in this sequence that reinforce its overall unity. Atticus jogged past the freezing waters of the Virgo, and Martial's home (and the poet, requesting the further gift of a cloak in 7.36's final line) endures the icy rains of December, while Laecania and Charinus are both associated with warm baths and transgressive sexual practices in 7.34-5.⁸² Furthermore, in 7.36 Martial's decision to focus on his country estate serves to further heighten the moral authority of his authorial persona, as the countryside was synonymous with simplicity and moral rectitude, which itself provides another contrast to the lascivious, artificial bath setting of the preceding epigram.⁸³ In short, this poem's juxtaposition to the invective epigram against Laecania epitomises the tensions at play in the whole sequence between hot and cold, filthiness and cleanliness, and immorality and morality.

Martial's self-presentation here as a farmer sheltering from the icy December rains also forms a nexus of metapoetic *topoi*, which encourage further parallels between this poem and the earlier epigram on Cinna's ruined shoes. The most overt comparison is created via the lexical repetition of verbs with the root *-fundere*: while Cinna bathes his shoes (*perfundere*) with his dripping toga at 7.33.3, Martial's villa (through the timely receipt of roof-tiles from Stella) avoids being soaked by funnelling off (*effundere* 7.36.3) the wintry rains.⁸⁴ At a base level, Martial's *villa* survives in the same way that Cinna's *calcei* do not, because of adequate protection by its owner, but the metapoetic potential of water in Latin poetry (discussed above) and the repeated appearance of Cinna in the *Epigrams* as a bad poet encourages a deeper reading of 7.33 (in light of 7.36) as a critique of Cinna's poetic style.⁸⁵ Indeed, at 7.33.3 Martial has already made a mockery of Cinna for his habit of soaking his *pedes* with a soiled toga, referring to the ridiculous notion of soaking his physical feet with his garb, but also opening up a pun on the way that Cinna soaks his poetic feet (i.e. the metre in which his poetry is written), encased in snowy shoes, with soiled water.⁸⁶ Cinna's snowy shoes are of particular note here. In ancient literary criticism, stretching at least as far back as the 5th century BC, poets could be criticised if their style was too opaque or strained by describing it as 'frigid', such as the tragedian Theognis who was nicknamed "snow" (*χιών*) and criticised by Aristophanes for this very reason.⁸⁷ While Cinna foolishly lets his snowy shoes (themselves paralleled by the snowy cold waters of the Aqua Virgo in the preceding poem)

⁸² Galán Vioque (2002) 249 identifies Martial's request as a typical request for a toga, but as Howell (2005) 28 rightly concludes, Martial's request for a defence against the rains must refer to a cloak (*paenula*) instead. Cf. Watson & Watson (2003) 122.

⁸³ Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 75, for example, contrasts city and country life. While the city breeds luxury and avarice, "this rustic life... is the teacher of frugality, diligence, and justice": *vita autem haec rustica... parsimoniae, diligentiae, iustitiae magistra est.*

⁸⁴ The positioning of both verbs preceding the final word of the third line of their respective poems also creates a crafted parallel between these poems.

⁸⁵ Mart. 3.9 & 10.21.3-4.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Ov. Am.* 1.1.3 where Ovid famously quips that he was forced to write in elegiac couplets because Cupid snatched one of his 'feet' away (thus turning hexameters into pentameters in alternating lines).

⁸⁷ Olson (2002) 69 & 116 on Ar. *Ach.* 10-11 & 138-40 respectively. On criticising the 'frigidity' of an author's style, see Arist. *Rh.* 1405^b34-1406^b14. Quintilian uses the adjective *frigidus* to the same effect, often referring to trite jokes or witticisms, at *Inst.* 1.7.6, 6.3.4, 6.3.53, 6.3.55, 8.5.30, 9.3.69, 9.3.74, 10.2.17 & 12.10.12.

go to waste, Martial wisely protects his country estate from snowy and wet December with the gift of rooftiles from his patron Stella, who was himself a poet.⁸⁸ In this poem, then, Martial portrays himself as a stereotypically impoverished poet who nevertheless enjoys the simple rusticity of a *villa* resembling Horace's Sabine farm, and who engages in literary one-upmanship with another poet he has already depicted as falling afoul of the bad December weather, letting it pollute the quality of his already poor (snowy) shoes.⁸⁹ In his move from hot-baths to cold showers Martial not only contrasts his own rural simplicity with Laecania's urban corruption, he also returns to a previous metapoetic jibe against Cinna's drenched feet.

Indeed, epigram 7.36 contains numerous features that help to remind the reader of earlier poems in the sequence and that help to bridge the gap between 7.35 and 7.37, a poem on a *quaestor*'s frozen nose. The number of lexical and thematic repetitions from earlier on in this sequence provide the reader with a momentum to keep reading the poems in book 7 even as they reinforce the overall unity of this specific series (and through it, the book). I have already detailed a number of lexical links between this epigram and 7.33 and 7.35, but it is worth emphasising that other lexical repetitions exist in 7.36 as well as themes that prepare the reader for the next poem. In his language of Stella's patronage Martial brings his earlier epigrams strongly to mind – the *ecce* at v.5 that demands Stella's action recalls the same *ecce* at 7.33.4 that drew Cinna's attention to his shoes (offering another parallel between Martial's action and Cinna's inaction), while the gifts (*muneribus*) at v.4 echo the language of Domitian's gift-giving at 7.34.7. In short, this epigram on rooftiles serves as a nexus for Martial's themes in this sequence, encouraging the reader to recall the earlier poems in the sequence and compare those poems with this one. But epigram 7.36 also stands at a crucial point between 7.35 and 7.37, aiding the transition from harsh invective against Laecania in the baths towards the more gentle ribbing of a *quaestor* with a cold. In the latter poem Martial comments on the *madida fauce* (moist throat, 7.37.6) of December that caused the *quaestor*'s ailment, but this language is foreshadowed here in 7.36 with its description of a *madidumque Iovem* (moist Jupiter, v.1). In 7.36 Martial begins the thematic transition towards December's awful weather seen in 7.37, but he also combines this with the preceding epigram's bathing imagery by personifying his *villa*, which swims (*nataret*, v.2) in the cold rains. Epigram 7.36 thus stands as what Christian Schöffel terms a *Brückenepigramm*, or 'bridge epigram', a poem which stands between two other epigrams and helps the reader segue between their respective topics.⁹⁰ While epigrams 7.36 and 7.37 constitute a return to the temporal setting that opened the book as a method of establishing the *libellus*' overall unity (to which I myself return in a moment), 7.36's consistent lexical

⁸⁸ Martial also repeatedly states that bad poetry ought to be washed away: 1.5, 3.100, 5.53, 9.58.7-8 & 14.196. On the latter poem, see Leary (1996) 263.

⁸⁹ Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.1-19 & 59-76 depicts his Sabine farm as a rural idyll far removed from the tribulations of city life. On Martial's poverty in 7.36, see Watson & Watson (2003) 122-3.

⁹⁰ Schöffel (2002) 56, focusing specifically on epigrams that bridge between preface and main text. On introductory bridge epigrams and their role in drawing the reader into the main text of the book, see chapter 5.

interplay with the preceding and subsequent poems in this sequence helps to create an overall cohesion that holds this cluster of epigrams together.

While watery imagery flows through epigram 7.37 as much as 7.36, the double reference to December in these two poems redirects the mind back to the book's initial programmatic framework, establishing the overall unity of the book. The premise of the epigram is that a *quaestor* has told his associates that his signal for submitting a defendant to the death penalty is when he blows his nose (vv.1-4), but his colleagues restrain him from actually doing so because the winter weather has given him a cold which would result in numerous innocent defendants being wrongly sentenced (vv.5-8). This epigram's descriptions of the *quaestor*'s running nose (v.3), the icicle of frozen snot emanating from his nostrils (v.5), and the aforementioned *madida fauce* of the wintry winds (v.6) all link this poem to the wider motif of water in this sequence. As with the theme of epic *nostos* that pervades this book, however, the last two poems in this sequence link this watery cycle back to the the programmatic cycle's anticipation of the emperor's return. In this series, Martial's last two poems both refer to December (characterised as *horridus* at 7.36.5 and *atrox* at 7.37.6) in the context of foul weather. While Martial's references to the month help to reinforce the temporal setting that has already been established in 7.8.3, he modifies the December theme to fit into the overall thematic setting of his water cycle.⁹¹ As in the series of Odyssean and Argonautic poems that suggest that the emperor will undertake a *nostos* of epic proportions, Martial focuses in these two epigrams on the hazards of water, this time in the form of wintry weather. In 7.36 the winter rains lash down and threaten to submerge the villa and its owner, in 7.37 defendants could suffer an undeserved death (or offenders could be acquitted) due to the water flowing from the *quaestor*'s nose, invalidating his secret signal and justice itself. The temporal theme is thus adapted to comfortably form a part of this series of poems (just as 7.36 is inserted between 7.35 and 7.37 to help the overall flow of the series). Furthermore, by focusing on two slaves named Polyphemus and Scylla (both mythical monsters encountered during many *nostos* narratives) in the subsequent epigram, Martial further strengthens his association of water with danger, and provides a mythical flavour which, when combined with the reminder of the book's opening temporal setting, brings the reader's attention back to how the book began. By drawing the reader's mind back to the book's beginning, Martial combines two independent cycles of epigrams and reinforces the reader's sense of the book's overall unity.

What has become apparent over the course of this section, and this chapter, is that the epigrammatist links themes and topics together across book 7 both in a sequential series of poems (7.32-7) and in individual epigrams that share recurring watery motifs evocative of the emperor's epic *nostos*. In the latter case there is a general forward momentum across the book, but the poet also allows for readings of his poems in isolation – just as I have picked out a series of poems from the fabric of the

⁹¹ On the temporal setting of book 7, see chapter 3.

text to analyse how their imagery flows between the poems, so too have I selected individual poems from the book to tell a narrative of my own. Most significantly, however, my examination of the sequential series of poems from 7.32-7 has demonstrated that Martial's careful positioning of these poems in sequence, with interlocking lexical parallels, encourages a sequential reading of the book. In 7.32-7 Martial links a group of poems together with the same motifs and a shared overall theme, with the result that his thematic links become a narrative thread that aids the reading of his book as an epigrammatic narrative. The sequence of poems opens with Atticus avoiding the general bath culture (7.32), before offering a depiction of a metaphorical bathing of Cinna's shoes (7.33), then progressing to the baths themselves with their owners (7.34) and their clientele (7.35), before finally moving away to natural bathing and rainwater (7.36) and finishing with more wretched wintry weather (7.37). There is a sense of movement here, which challenges the epigrams' own individuality and helps the reader to construct the image of a book of epigrams as a series of highly individualistic poems that nevertheless belong together as a collection.

Ostensibly, none of the watery poems in book 7 have any direct relation to the emperor Domitian – the *princeps* is not present in any of these poems, nor does Martial repeat the fervid celebrations of the populace in response to the news of his return in 7.8. Nevertheless, these epigrams continue several of the themes that were established in the programmatic cycle, and as such are fully dependent on Martial's depiction of Domitian in these opening poems. Book 7 is an Argonautic book of epigrams, with Odyssean moments sprinkled along its course, evoking the epic *nostos* that has been anticipated for the divine hero Domitian in the *libellus*' beginning. Martial's epigrammatic Rome in book 7 is thus a response to the elevated language of the work's epic beginnings, with mythological threats teeming beneath the city's watery spaces, offering further challenges not just for its denizens, but also for the returning hero to vanquish. Similarly, the sequence of poems between 7.32 and 7.37 plays out its own individual thematic progression as the reader moves through its epigrams, with the cycle's focus on bathing and moral mixing shadowed by the sequence's own progression from hot to cold waters. With the series' final movement to cold waters, however, Martial brings the book's opening cycle back into focus with a reminder of the *libellus*' temporal setting of December, suddenly reminding the reader of the book's beginning, and making this cycle of poems reliant on the emperor as well.

As this chapter's analysis has shown, these poems demonstrate the "impossible whole" of a book of epigrams in a way that confirms the unity of a book of epigrams rather than frustrating it.⁹² Each of the individual poems of book 7's interlocking cycles retains its own individuality, but the poet's artistic arrangement of these epigrams in a specific order with their overlapping lexical and thematic repetitions encourages the reader to also imagine these poems as parts of a larger whole (or rather, the larger wholes of the cycle and the book). As I explored in my examination of epigrams 7.32-7, the

⁹² On the "impossible whole", see Fitzgerald (2007) 198. I give a detailed response to Fitzgerald in chapter 1.

overlap of themes and motifs from one poem to another helps to spur the sequential reader onward, and to develop their view of the book as a sequentially rewarding unit. Naturally the reader can read the *Epigrams* in whichever order suits them at that time, but the careful organisation of the work's individual poems within a crafted sequence rewards the sequential reader with a deeper understanding of the book as a unified whole. By its very arrangement a book of poems gains a level of unity, but Martial's *Epigrams*, perhaps because of their diverse tonality and subject matter, aim for an interlocking structure to provide the reader with some stability in an otherwise chaotic series of vignettes.

Blurred Boundaries: Structural Unity & the Prose Preface in Martial

It is the liminal zones at the beginning and end of any text which are the most crucial in terms of creating a sense of the work's overall unity. These are the spaces of absolute finality where the text is bordered by empty, textless space. For a sequential reading of any piece of literature it is these inceptive and closural spaces which offer the greatest opportunity to consider the text as a distinct, individual entity. As I have already shown in my previous chapters, Martial's placement of his poems in sequential order encourages his readers to see his books of epigrams as individual works, with book 7's key themes established at the book's beginning before it builds to a climax at its end. Each book, however, does not exist in isolation – book 7 of the *Epigrams*, for instance, falls halfway through a sequence of twelve books and also forms a part of his overall corpus of epigrammatic poetry (including the *Liber Spectaculorum*, *Xenia*, and *Apophoreta*). In this chapter I examine how individual books of the *Epigrams* use their initial boundary zones to create a sense of their own individuality whilst also promoting a sense of belonging to the overall corpus of the *Epigrams*. I focus on the work's prose prefaces, each explicitly bound to individual books in a way that emphatically pronounces each book's uniqueness. These prefaces belong to the body of epigrammatic poems that follow them in the text and promote their progression of themes, but they also constitute the initial definition of the following text, standing as separate textual entities. Due to the liminality of Martial's prose prefaces I will examine these introductory items as what Gérard Genette termed "paratexts", and consider how far they interact with, define, and stand independent from the poems that follow them.¹

Prefatory or introductory material is a common addition to modern texts. It offers an opportunity for the author to prepare their reader for what will follow, to thank relevant individuals/institutions for their assistance in the work's production (itself an act of self-promotion and legitimisation), and to say what could or should not be said in the work itself.² Ancient prefaces served a similar function, but were not common for most texts besides technical and scientific works, for which the tradition extended as far back as Archimedes in the 3rd century BC.³ The earliest extant Latin text with a prose preface is Hirtius' eighth book of the *De Bello Gallico*, which could have been predated, as Tore Janson notes, by Sulla's prefaced (but no-longer extant) memoirs of the Social Wars.⁴ Thus by the late first century AD prose prefaces in Latin had existed for around one hundred years, and Quintilian could easily open his *Institutiones Oratoriae* with a prefatory section dedicating the work to Marcus Vitorius with an explanation of the text's early publication and its overall aims.⁵ Nevertheless,

¹ Genette (1997) 2. For more on the paratext and the term's application to classical texts, see the following section, pp. 142-8.

² Genette (1997) 197 designates the "original authorial preface" as a preface written by the author that "has at its chief function to ensure that the text is read properly." Original emphasis.

³ Janson (1964) 19-24, summarised in Henriksén (2012) 2-3.

⁴ Janson (1964) 106 n. 1. On the dedicatory letter from Sulla to Lucullus, see Plut. *Vit. Luc.* 1.3.

⁵ Quint. *Inst.* 1.praef.6. The extant text also includes an overarching preface to the bookseller Trypho in epistolary form.

there are two features that make Martial's *Epigrams* stand out in terms of its prefatory material. Firstly, instead of having one preface that relates to the whole work or including one preface per book, only five of the twelve books of *Epigrams* are prefaced by a prose letter that explicitly focuses on the idiosyncrasies of his individual books. Secondly, Martial's *Epigrams* (along with Statius' contemporary *Silvae*) are the earliest extant poetic texts in Latin to compose their prefaces in prose.⁶ Prefatory material for verse texts was known prior to the Flavians, but only in verse.⁷ Thus the prefaces of the *Epigrams* and *Silvae* stand as an experiment in a new form, adopting techniques from serious technical and historical treatises to deliver an explanation of the poets' art in a sophisticated new way.

The prose nature of their prefaces lent to Martial and Statius a shared ability to discuss their own literature in a manner independent of pure poetic aesthetics. This is not to say that the prefaces are not artful. Rather, the prose nature of the preface encouraged a more analytical approach to defining the work and its genre. The preface to book 2 of the *Epigrams*, for example, is a brilliant inversion of the idea of a prefatory letter, a "Meta-*praefatio*" as Nina Johannsen terms it.⁸ In this letter, which I discuss more fully below, the poet uses his patron Decianus as a mouthpiece through which to voice generic concerns over the very inclusion of a letter within a book of epigrams (2.praef.1-11), taking his time to emphasise how pointless a long prefatory letter would be. The joke of this particular letter is that the poet ends with a promise not to include too lengthy a preface, which playfully undermines the whole piece by its self-contradiction (2.praef.14-6). In his second preface Martial shows an approach to discussing important questions of genre while maintaining the overall light-hearted approach of his poetry. This playful yet analytical approach is to be found in both Martial and Statius' use of prose prefaces, and both open their first book with a discussion of their collection's defining principles. Statius stresses the speed with which his *Silvae* were composed, and cites the precedents of the pseudo-Vergilian *Culex* and pseudo-Homeric *Batrachomyomachia* to defend his choice of writing lighter verse (while casually alluding to his previous composition of the epic *Thebaid*).⁹ In contrast, Martial opens by defending his decision to write epigram and promises not to write *ad hominem* attacks against contemporary figures before citing Catullus, Marsus, Pedo, and Gaetulicus as his own generic precedents.¹⁰ Both the *Epigrams* and *Silvae* are justified through reference to the acts of previous writers

⁶ As Johannsen (2006) 381 warns, though, one should not credit Martial with the invention of the use of prose prefaces in a verse text, as there could easily be texts no longer extant that began this practice. At any rate, the debate is of little relevance to the overall question of the impact of Martial's prefaces on the *Epigrams*.

⁷ For example, each of the garlands included in the *Palatine Anthology* was originally published with its own poetic preface, and all three (the first two of which predate Martial) are preserved as the collection's fourth book. Meleager presented a general dedication to the Muses and his friends (4.1.57-8), while Philip chose to present his whole garland to one patron (4.2.5). Verse prefaces also occur in each book of Phaedrus' *Fables*, and Persius' *Satires* are preceded by a choliambic preface.

⁸ Johannsen (2006) 81.

⁹ Stat. *Silv.* 1.praef. Speed and extemporaneity are expressed at ll.3-5 & 12-4, the *Thebaid* is mentioned at l.7, and ps.-Homer and ps.-Vergil at ll.7-8. Statius refers here to a *Batrachomachia*, but the poem he has in mind is clearly the parodic text generally known as the *Batrachomyomachia*. On the issue of the name of this text, see Leary (1996) 247-8.

¹⁰ Mart. 1.praef.6-7 & 12-3.

against whose backdrop the poets place themselves in an act similar to the traditional *recusatio* of Augustan poetics. However, unlike the *recusatio*, the prose preface defines the work by what it is rather than what it is not.

Despite the decision to write in prose, however, Martial's first two prefaces exhibit some overlap with the themes of the verse prefaces, or rather prologues, present in Roman Comedy. Martial makes this association explicit in his first two prefaces when he describes his book as his own theatre (*meum theatrum* 1.praef.18), and refers to the prologues of tragedy and comedy as *epistulae* (2.praef.4-5), the same term he uses for his own prefaces. The epigrammatist here is making a clear link between his work and the dramatic stage, and a glance at Terence and Plautus' prologues reveals some striking similarities in their subject matter. Terence's prefaces frequently defend the dramatist's creative choices and bemoan the accusations of certain *malevoli*, actions that are shadowed by Martial's complaints of his malignant interpreter (1.praef.8) and Statius' defensive stance in his fourth preface (*Silv.* 4.praef.26-37).¹¹ Furthermore, the Roman comedians also used the prologue as a space to toy with their audience's generic expectations, whether by hinting that they might be delivering a tragedy instead of a comedy (before blending the two together into a tragicomedy), or by refusing to provide a prologue in the prologue itself.¹² This playful approach to the prologue is also present in Martial's prefaces, such as in book 2, where the poet offers a preface explaining why he will not write a lengthy preface or in book 9 where the poet dismisses his "dearest brother" Toranius with a haughty "farewell and prepare a welcome."¹³ The key differences between Martial and the comedians, however, is the prefaces' placement beyond the borders of the text and their prose format. While the comedic prologues are physically attached to their text by their inclusion within the dramatic play (however (de)textualised the reader/audience's interaction with the play is), either at the absolute beginning of the play or about one hundred lines later (as in the case of Plautus' *Cistellaria*), Martial and Statius' prefaces exist on the fringe of their poetic text as separate literary entities. Their prose nature also marks the prefatory letters out as significantly different to the poetry they precede, and encourages a more technical tone. Strikingly, while Martial embraces a more serio-comic attitude in his prefaces Statius' overall tone is formal – a direct reflection of his prefaces' setting as letters for his patrons.

¹¹ Defence of the poet: Ter. *Eun* 1-19 & 35-45, *Haut.* 10-34 & *Phorm.* 1-23. Defence against *malevoli* in particular: Ter. *An.* 6-7 & *Haut.* 16-26. Definition of the generic aims of the poet: Ter. *Hec.* 16-27 & 49-57 (cf. Mart. 1.praef. *passim*). Sharrock (2009) 63, who then goes on (pp. 77-8) to argue that Comedy had a strong pedigree of defending against critics to mark out the playwright's position in comic aesthetics.

¹² Tragicomedy: Plaut. *Amph.* 50-9. Refusal to give a prologue in the prologue: Plaut. *Asin.* 8, *Pseud.* 1-2, *Trin.* 16-7 & *Vid.* 10-5 (this play's prologue is fragmentary, but makes clear that the *argumentum* will be delivered by the characters rather than the *prologus*); Ter. *Ad.* 22-3. Cf. Plaut. *Cist.* 149-53 where the *prologus* complains that his role has been pre-empted by another character. Sharrock (2009) 31 notes that over half the plays have no prologuic exposition, either because there is no prologue or because the *prologus* refuses to provide any relevant information.

¹³ Mart. 2.praef. *passim* & 9.praef.1 & 6.

One of the most significant similarities between Martial and Statius' prefaces is their strategy of defining the poetry they precede, applying a technical approach to which prose lends itself. By adapting the style of prose authors like Pliny the Elder (whose prefaces defined the text and its terms of use), Martial and Statius offer a straightforward explanation of their work's position within their respective genres.¹⁴ For Statius this offers the poet the opportunity to discuss his own work in a manner that would be inappropriate in the *Silvae* proper. Released from the generic restraints of his poetry, Statius can emphatically repeat the speed and extemporaneity of his *Silvae* in the first four of his prose prefaces – I discount the fifth preface here as it is likely a general letter included by a posthumous editor for publication – and establish their overall place as light verse that is not to be judged too harshly.¹⁵ Contrarily, Martial's poetry did not prevent such discussions of aesthetics – epigram is a genre well-accustomed to speaking about itself and its book culture, and Martial frequently takes advantage of this feature of the genre – but his prose prefaces still retained a level of separation from the main text.¹⁶ Decianus' protestation in the second preface that epigrams can “make a letter [*epistula*, i.e. preface] on whichever page seems best”, and speak for themselves without the rules that govern other genres (like tragedy or comedy) thus remains true, but playfully misunderstands the poet's aims in his longer prefatory letters.¹⁷ For Martial, the prefaces provided an opportunity to state his aesthetic values independently from the pointed delivery of his epigrams. As such, the preface to book 1 comes across as much as a plea to the reader as a statement of poetic values – the poet wards off the *malignus interpres* (1.praef.8) but also beseeches his reader not to act in that manner.¹⁸ Both poets exploit the technical nature of the prose preface to explore the questions surrounding their relationship with their own genre, but Martial's prefaces also engage in a more complicated interplay with his wider corpus.

It is this key difference in the solidity of each poet's paratextual boundaries that is the focus of this chapter. While Statius' prefaces mark themselves out as texts separated from the poems that follow them, Martial's prefatorial letters (as I continue to argue in the following section) break down this boundary between the preface and main text. Statius' first four prefaces always follow the same pattern, praising the dedicatee in broad strokes and then explaining to them (and so also the general reader) the social events that brought about the composition of each poem, bestowing a unity to the collection that

¹⁴ Plin. *NH* praef. 14 defines his own *Natural History* in terms of Greek “general education” (τῆς ἐγκυκλίου παιδείας) and at praef.17 describes the contents of the text as “twenty thousand facts judged worthwhile” (*viginti milia rerum dignarum cura*) which he has “collected into thirty-six volumes from one hundred choice authors” (*ex exquisitis autoribus centum inclusimus triginta sex voluminibus*).

¹⁵ Stat. *Silv.* 1.praef.3-4 & 12-4; 2.praef.9 (*adeo festinanter*), 12-3 & 17-9; 3.praef.3-5 & 10 (*statim*); 4.praef.9 (*maturius*). The fifth book's preface is a letter to the recipient of the first poem only, and does not refer to any of the following poems. The absence of a preface referring to all of the poems in the fifth book is usually taken as evidence for the book's posthumous publication and editorial collation. Cf. B. Gibson (2006) xxix.

¹⁶ Two examples are Mart. 1.16 (good, bad, and mediocre poems can be found in a book) and 2.1 (no one reads long poems and long poetry books these days). For a discussion of Martial's (ab)use of the genre of epigram to discuss the physical realities of the text in Flavian Rome cf. Roman (2001) 119-29.

¹⁷ Mart. 2.praef.4 (rules of tragedy and comedy) & 7-8: *in quacumque pagina visum est, epistulam faciunt*.

¹⁸ Again, this preface's behaviour is similar to the comedic preface, especially in its *captatio benevolentiae* that tries to win over the audience. Cf. Sharrock (2009) 23.

might not otherwise exist but also reinforcing the boundary between preface and poem.¹⁹ As such, *Silvae* 1's preface is introductory, book 2's briefly mentions Melior, book 3's flatters Pollius, and book 4's Marcellus (and through him the emperor). Martial, in contrast, varies each preface's central themes to reflect the unique nature of the subsequent book. *Epigrams* 1's preface acts as an introduction to the corpus and poet; book 2's discusses the aesthetics of poetic length and questions the need for prefatory epistles; book 8's re-establishes the letter form and prepares the reader for the sudden change towards a more reverent tone; book 9's establishes the monumentality of Martial's work; and book 12's prepares for the end of the dodecalogue and Martial's retirement to Spain and relative obscurity. Each of Martial's prefaces thus actively engages with the book that follows it on a thematic level. So while Statius sticks to a model prefatorial style to create a rigorous book structure, Martial's prefaces blur the boundaries between text and preface just as his poems blur the distance between one another, creating an idea of a larger, messier, whole.

Indeed, Martial's decisions to include poems within his prefaces (1 & 9), to refer to the following epigram (8), and to continue the topic of the prefatory letter in the next poem (2 & 12), all deconstruct the spatial distance between preface and text. As such, the poet's practice of undermining these textual borders results in prefaces that act not as gateways to new books but rather as bridges between stages of the overarching twelve-book *opus*. In this chapter I therefore explore how Martial's prefaces both encourage and discourage the idea of separate, individual books, and how they break down their textual boundaries as they mould them. My approach utilises a paratextual lens to examine the prefaces in terms of how they (de)construct the concept of the individual poetry books that comprise Martial's *Epigrams*. Overall, my analysis demonstrates that the poet's prefaces reinforce the concept of the corpus even as they craft the idea of each book's individual unity.

The Prose Preface as Paratext: Definitions & Methodology

Martial and Statius' prose prefaces belong to a subgroup of textual entities which literary theorists term the "paratext". Studies in the paratextual were initiated in the 1980s by Gérard Genette's book *Seuils*, translated in 1997 as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. Genette devoted his book to the paratext, which he designated as anything that constructs the identity of a text whilst not forming a part of the main text itself: the book's title(s), cover, descriptive blurb, prefatory matter, table of contents, and even the name of the author (if it is given) are covered by this term.²⁰ The paratext is what creates the identity of the text itself and, as Genette himself remarks, refers to a broad category of individual elements which are not all present in every text.²¹ Indeed, for ancient texts many of these paratexts which may

¹⁹ So G. Parker (2014) 127: "Without the unifying force of the prose prefaces, books of the *Silvae* would lack unity."

²⁰ Genette (1997) 1-15. Smith & Wilson (2011) 1-14 offer a concise and eloquent summary of paratextual terminology following more recent literary criticism.

²¹ Genette (1997) 3, cf. p. 8 where he describes all contextual affiliations (e.g. specific identities the author subscribes to) as paratextual.

have once existed (such as the tables of contents to Pliny's *Letters*) either no longer exist or, when they are present in the manuscript, are deemed too spurious to be included in critical editions.²² Other paratextual information that is familiar to modern readers, such as the book cover illustration, constitutes a more recent invention and addition to ancient texts for which there was no paratext in that form before.²³ Genette's "paratext" is thus an ever-shifting concept, changing with each new edition of the text and – in quite substantial ways – in the transition from the ancient scroll to the modern book.

Although nearly twenty years have passed since Genette's work was translated into English, research into classical paratexts is still relatively young. In 2014 Laura Jansen produced an edited volume that stands as a significant joint approach to the paratextual in Latin literature, including chapters whose topics range from the (potentially) ancient tables of contents for Pliny's *Letters* to the paratextual role of *sphrageis* in Augustan poetry.²⁴ Martial has largely been excluded from the discussion, although Grant Parker's discussion of the prefaces to Statius' *Silvae* does use the epigrammatist as a contemporary source of comparison. In Parker's view, Martial's prefaces vary so significantly in form from Statius' due to the variety of social contexts within which his books of poems operated, and due to the need to address such a broad group of patrons.²⁵ I seek to move beyond Parker's biographic reading of the prefaces as vestigial remnants of social connections and instead analyse the prefaces (as I do the poems themselves) as literary works, in order to gauge their impact on the identity of the book and their wider corpus. The text of the *Epigrams* that is now extant (itself the result of two thousand years of copying, editing, and critical discussion) is independent of its original function, and the letters to the poet's patrons are far divorced from their role of flattering the great men of his generation, a role that even in antiquity may have been less significant than modern critics judge.²⁶ As I see it, it is more useful to consider the prefaces as paratextual agents that craft the textual identity of their books than as artefacts of patron/client culture. Indeed, they are essential for the conceptualisation of a body of highly individualised poems as a unified series of texts.

Nina Johanssen's monograph on Martial and Statius' prose prefaces goes some ways towards exploring this aspect of the preface across the two contemporary poets. Utilising a broad paratextual methodology that is taken directly from Genette, Johanssen surveys both authors' prefaces in their individual context and in terms of how they reflect the key themes of the *Epigrams* and *Silvae* as a

²² On the tables of contents in the *Letters*, see R. Gibson (2014).

²³ Modern translations of ancient texts, for example, all have paratextual information separate from the original context that aims to guide the modern reader to a certain understanding of the text. The most obvious example is the cover illustration (often a bust or surviving ancient or renaissance artwork). Jansen (2014c) examines how modern paratextual practices might affect a modern reading of an ancient text, using Ovidian elegy as her focal point.

²⁴ R. Gibson (2014) & Peirano (2014).

²⁵ G. Parker (2014) 117 & 126.

²⁶ Indeed, as Johanssen (2006) 376 observes, only the prefaces to books 8 & 12 could be deemed dedicatory epistles with their focus on honouring the addressee over offering a broader reflection on the poet's work.

whole.²⁷ Johanssen's approach is to explore the prefaces through a series of intertexts (such as 1.praef.'s allusions to the techniques of verse satire and fable) to establish how the poet's authorial persona establishes a sense of canonicity for the entire corpus.²⁸ Her argument, however, is based on the idea that the prefaces stand disconnected from the epigrams that follow them. To Johanssen the authorial voice of the prefaces is strongly separated from the "Ego" of the poems, in which she sees the author's role more as character than authoritative force.²⁹ Where my analysis differs is in treating the boundaries between text and paratext as more fluid than firm, and seeing this plurality of 'Egos' as what constitutes the overarching persona of the poet (an 'Überego' so-to-speak) that ties the work together. I also explore to a further extent how a reading of the *Epigrams* as individual books or as a larger corpus alters the (para)textual function of the prefatory letters. While Johanssen does highlight the consistency of the relationship between the programmatic poetics of the prefaces and the subsequent epigrams, I would argue that the voice of Martial does not substantially change, nor does his persona's attitude to establishing its own identity.³⁰ One useful way to consider Martial's identity in the text here is through the work of Francesca Martelli, who recently examined how Ovid's poetic persona is constantly in a state of flux due to repeated statements about his work's revisions. For Martelli, there is a tension between the role of Ovid as an author and as a later editor, revising his own text and problematizing the overall unity of both his identity and the text's cohesion.³¹ Nevertheless, the reader always understands an identity of 'Ovid' in the text, just as the authorial *Ego* in Martial remains relatively stable; the Martial of 1.praef. is the same as the authorial persona at 1.16 dispensing wisdom about the genre, or the sycophantic client of Decianus at 1.39, or the sarcastic morning-caller at 1.70. The tone of the text may shift, but the voice remains constant. For me, what is so intriguing about Martial's prose prefaces is the way they encourage a view of the preface as a liminal zone between text and reader, reality and fiction, and text and paratext.

Indeed, what remains central to Genette's formulation of paratexts and the subsequent interpretations of his theory is their liminality. The paratext represents to its reader "an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside [of the main text], a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text)."³² For the *Epigrams*, though, liminality is already a central feature of poetic arrangement, with each poem enacting a beginning and an ending within the larger sequence of poems. The individual borders between epigrams are remarkably fluid, and the 'gutter' between each poem constitutes its own

²⁷ Johanssen (2006), esp. 38-45 (methodology), 58-121 (systematic overview of Martial's prefaces) & 122-239 (the prefaces and the main themes of the *Epigrams*).

²⁸ Johanssen (2006) 64.

²⁹ Johanssen (2006) 80 & 100.

³⁰ Johanssen (2006) 375-6.

³¹ Martelli (2013) 24.

³² Genette (1997) 2. Cf. Jansen (2014b) 5: "Paratexts are neither fully attached to nor detached from the text, but they conform to a liminal zone between its inside and outside."

liminal zone wherein the reader creates the identity of the wider text.³³ One of the questions I explore in this chapter, then, is how far the fluid boundaries of the *Epigrams* constitute a challenge to the separation of the paratextual from the textual. At the very least the shift from prose to verse marks a clear visual boundary between the two, but Martial problematizes this distinction with his own habitual practice of linking the textual elements of his contexture together through thematic and lexical repetition.³⁴ Although a paratext always remains liminal due to its position on the fringes of the text, Martial strains this liminality to its breaking point when his prefaces enact a gradual shift from paratext to text rather than erecting a solid boundary line between the two.

One of the key problems that Martial's prefaces constitute in relation to the issue of their paratextual status is their plurality; there are five prefaces to his twelve books rather than one overarching prefatory text. Strictly speaking, these prefaces are each 'peritexts' to the books they are attached to – paratextual items that are physically connected to the main text; their counterparts are epitexts, not connected to the text they describe (e.g. book reviews, or authorial letters describing the text).³⁵ Nevertheless, Martial's prefaces resist their own peritextuality by refusing to act as prefaces that are only situated at the opening of their respective books. Instead they identify as texts belonging to both their individual book and the larger corpus of the *Epigrams*, which provides each preface with a fixed place at the start of a book and a specific position within the twelve-book corpus. Book 2's preface, for instance, borders the start of book 2 but also directly follows the end of book 1. This conceptual issue, around which the whole question of structure within Martial's *Epigrams* revolves (i.e. how far individual poems can be grouped together to form cycles, then books, and then the overall corpus) is further compounded, or at least brought into sharper focus, by modern practices of arranging ancient texts. Whereas an ancient book of the *Epigrams* could have been contained within one papyrus scroll, the modern codex book frequently groups multiple bookrolls together.³⁶ Shackleton Bailey's Loeb edition, for example, is composed of three volumes that are divided between books 1-5, 6-10, and 11-14.³⁷ In such an edition, the preface's peritextuality is brought into question. The preface is no longer attached to only one book, but also exists as a prose text that continues the progression of texts beginning at 1.praef. and ending at 12.98. For the *Epigrams'* prefaces then, a decisive, unswaying definition of

³³ I also discuss this fluidity in chapter 1. Cf. Fitzgerald (2007) 80 on thematic "bleeding" between epigrams and McCloud (1993) 66 on gutter theory.

³⁴ Indeed, this blurring of borders would become even more pronounced if the book were being read out, dependent on what kind of pause the reciter left between the book's preface and first poem.

³⁵ This footnote, for example, is a peritext to the main text of this chapter. It highlights relevant points that are alluded to or not directly covered by the text itself. On peritexts and epitexts, see Genette (1997) 5.

³⁶ Van Sickle (1980) 6-12 judges the average length of a papyrus scroll of Homer to be 1000-2000 lines, with some papyri holding multiple books. With average book lengths in antiquity standing at c. 800-1000, Martial's books could easily fit on one scroll and perhaps fit two books to one papyrus. Martial's book lengths (not counting prefaces and prefatory epigrams) are as follows: 821 (1), 546 (2), 644 (3), 670 (4), 645 (5), 615 (6), 737 (7), 661 (8), 910 (9), 898 (10), 809 (11) & 719 (12). It should be noted that 11.65 & 12.38 are both lacunose poems. For a comparative list of predominantly Latin poetic book lengths, see Birt (1882) 291-3.

³⁷ The *Liber Spectaculorum* precedes book 1 in the first volume and the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* are included as books 13 & 14 in volume 3 (although they temporally precede and are not a part of the *Epigrams* proper).

the paratext or peritext is unhelpful given the fluid nature of the text's conceptualisation. The broader definitions of texts as liminal zones bordering the main text and physically attached to them still apply, but trying to firmly state the boundary between what is text and what is paratext would be detrimental. While Martial's prefaces problematize their own paratextuality, they remain sufficiently paratextual to be described as such.

In fact, although Martial blurs the boundaries between text and paratext with his prose prefaces he does suggest that there are marked differences between the two. Martial not only describes his prefaces as *epistulae* (letters), immediately ascribing to them a separate literary genre from that of epigram, but he also openly states a kind of separation from the main text.³⁸ By opening a book of epigrams with a letter Martial immediately challenges the reader's expectations, forcing them into a dialogue with the author (acted out between the author and the letter's textual addressee) rather than letting them start the text unopposed. This discordance is also made more apparent by the presence of the letter's superscript, outlining the epistle's sender and recipient, which is extant in the prefaces to books 2, 8, and 12, and included in some of the C^A manuscripts of book 1's preface.³⁹ This separation of prose letter from verse epigram is made more distinct by the poet's definition of the *epistulae* as text physically situated beyond the poems themselves. Book 2's preface describes the end of the *epistula* as an act of reaching the first column (*prima pagina*) of the poems that follow, and the epistle to book 9 speaks of its self-contained epigram as being "outside the series of columns" (*extra ordinem paginarum*).⁴⁰ Although the exact meaning of these statements has been debated, the language used specifies some level of division between the preface and subsequent epigrams, between the *Epigrams'* paratext and text. In his still influential 19th century monograph on the ancient book trade Theodor Birt was convinced that *extra ordinem paginarum* referred to a practice of writing on the outside of the bookroll, as with Polybius and Heironymus.⁴¹ But as Christer Henriksén more recently observed, Statius' remark that his preface to book 4 was "*in hoc libro*" suggests that the preface was physically within the scroll itself, with the *prima pagina* referring to the first row of poems immediately following the preface.⁴² Indeed, Martial's phrasing of *extra ordinem paginarum* (9.praef.1-2) and *ad primam paginam* (2.praef.15) does not reliably show that the preface was located outside the roll itself, and suggests that the preface may have stood in a separate column preceding the *prima pagina* of poems (see fig. 8 below). For Martial the prefaces were distinct paratextual entities positioned in such a way on the papyrus scroll that they were separate from the main text of his book.⁴³

³⁸ Mart. 1.praef.15 & 20; 2.praef.1, 4, 7 & 13.

³⁹ Cf. Howell (1980) 95 for further discussion of 1.praef.'s superscript.

⁴⁰ Mart. 2.praef.15 & 9.praef.1-2.

⁴¹ Birt (1882) 141-2.

⁴² Henriksén (2012) 6.

⁴³ Oliensis (2014) 222-3 argues for an anti-paratextual reading of Ovid's *Amores* in order not to over-privilege the paratext in interpretations of poems on the fringes of the book, but Martial's definition of his own prefaces as text on the fringes demands a paratextual reading here.

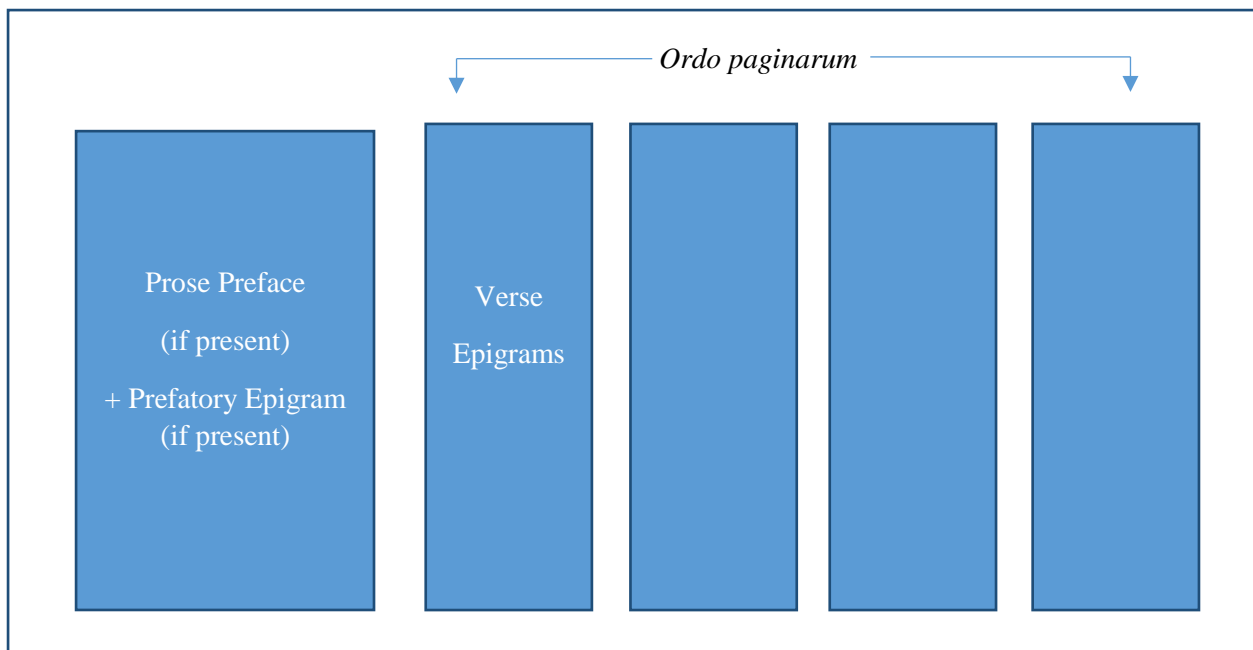


Figure 8 - A diagrammatic representation of a papyrus scroll of a single book of the *Epigrams* based on analysis of Mart. 2.praef. & 9.praef.

An intriguing letter written by Cicero also views the preface as a paratextual object that is distinct from the main text. In *Att.* 16.6.4, Cicero asks his friend Atticus (to whom he had sent a copy of his *De Gloria*) to rip out the *prohoemium* (i.e. the preface) and replace it with another one from a spare book of *prohoemia* that he kept separately to his other works. This letter, along with Martial's emphasis that the prose prefaces are beyond the text, suggests that the practice of treating the preface as a work somehow separate from the rest of the text (albeit still connected by the subject matter) was not unusual. Moreover, prose and verse were laid out in a different way on Latin papyri, with prose adhering to a stricter columnar order (and elegiac poems indented on the pentameter lines).⁴⁴ If this remained the case for Martial, placing the preface in a separate *pagina* to his poems would have made the scribe's job easier and also reinforced this conceptual separation. As the diagram in fig. 8 shows, the preface and subsequent poems are still part of the same material item as the book but remain both spatially and stylistically separate. By marking out the prefatory letters as texts that precede the first column of epigrams Martial creates a conceptual boundary between his prefaces and his poems, a boundary that was probably echoed by the arrangement of the text itself. Martial and Cicero may not have had specific paratextual terminology for their prefaces, but the poet's treatment of his prose letters as existing *extra ordinem paginarum* (and Cicero's cavalier attachment of *prohoemium* to its treatise) exhibits an understanding of these entities as distinctly paratextual units.

⁴⁴ Johnson (2004) 129. This pentametric indentation (alongside earlier Roman practices of placing interpuncts between words) is clearly present in the so-called 'Gallus fragment', fig. 2.

As I have already discussed, however, what stands out from Martial's prefaces is how frequently they transgress these boundaries between paratext and text. By including epigrams within his prefaces and engaging with the book's key themes before the first poem begins, Martial bridges the gap between text and paratext to imbue his prefaces with a mixed role within the text. As textualised paratexts (or paratextualised texts), the prefaces encourage the reader to question where the book begins, but also where it ends. These epistles act as introductory texts to the books they precede, but also engage with the book's overall position within the order of books within the corpus. My analysis within the following sections of this chapter thus explores each book's preface in the context of how it helps to construct the unity of its own book, but also how it relies upon how the corpus has so far developed. Like Martial's epigrams themselves, each individual letter constructs its own individual identity which is linked to its constituent book, and then its place in the overarching corpus of the *Epigrams* (and the rest of the poet's literary output). By repeatedly emphasising the prefaces' individual position within a larger contexture (that of the *Epigrams* as a whole unit), the poet constructs a tighter sense of his corpus' overall structural unity.

An Introduction to... What? Martial's First Preface

In its principal position at the opening of the entire corpus and as an introduction not just to the work but its authorial persona as well, it is unsurprising that of all of his prose prefaces Martial's first *epistula* has received the lion's share of recent scholarly attention.⁴⁵ This is the preface that most explicitly lays out the poet's programmatic approach to the business of writing epigrams, and is clearly positioned in such a way as to introduce not just the first book of the *Epigrams*, but also the corpus as a whole and the authorial persona. Addressed to the general reader of his poems (with some manuscripts preserving a superscript to the author's reader), the letter runs as follows:⁴⁶

spero me secutum in libellis meis tale temperamentum ut de illis queri non possit quisquis de se bene senserit, cum salva infirmarum quoque personarum reverentia ludant; quae adeo antiquis auctoribus defuit ut nominibus non tantum veris abusi sint, sed et magnis. mihi fama vilis constet et probetur in me novissimum ingenium. absit a iocorum nostrorum simplicitate malignus interpret nec epigrammata mea inscribat: inprobe facit qui in alieno libro ingeniosus est. lascivam verborum veritatem, id est epigrammaton linguam, excusarem, si meum esset exemplum: sic scribit Catullus, sic

⁴⁵ P. J. Anderson (2008) explores Mart. 1.praef. as a guide for his readers' approach to the text. Fitzgerald (2007) 68 chooses to analyse book 1 (and thus its preface) because he deems the work Martial's "masterpiece." In general, however, the prefaces have been overlooked in scholarly selections of Martial's *Epigrams*. Watson & Watson (2003) 30, for example, allude to the existence of some prose prefaces in a discussion of book structure, but do not include any of the letters in their commentary. Their decision is due to a desire to focus on the epigrams, but gives a lopsided view of the corpus nonetheless. In contrast, however, Nisbet (2015)'s recent translation of a selection of the *Epigrams* includes all prefaces besides the second. On the omission of 2.praef., see pp. 159-60 below.

⁴⁶ Howell (1980) 95. Cf. n. 39 above.

Marsus, sic Pedo, sic Gaetulicus, sic quicumque perlegitur. si quis tamen tam ambitiose tristis est ut apud illum in nulla pagina latine loqui fas sit, potest epistula vel potius titulo contentus esse. epigrammata illis scribuntur qui solent spectare Florales. non intret Cato theatrum meum, aut si intraverit, spectet. videor mihi meo iure facturus si epistulam versibus clusero:

*nosses iocosae dulce cum sacrum Florae
festosque lusus et licentiam volgi,
cur in theatrum, Cato severe, venisti?
an ideo tantum veneras, ut exires? (1.praef.)*

I hope that I have adopted in my little books such a moderation that no one who might think well of themselves could complain about them, since they play with safe reverence towards even the humblest personages – which ancient authors lacked so much that they abused not only real names but even great ones. May such fame remain cheaper to me and ingenuity be judged my last quality. May the malignant interpreter be absent from the frankness of my jokes and may he not write into my epigrams: he who is ingenious with another's book acts wrongfully. I would excuse the playful truth of my words (i.e. epigram's tongue) if the paradigm was mine: but thus wrote Catullus, thus Marsus, thus Pedo, thus Gaetulicus, thus whomever is read through. Yet if anyone is so ostentatiously severe that it is not sanctioned to speak Latin on any column [*pagina*] in his presence, he can be content with the letter or rather the title. Epigrams are written for those who usually watch Flora's games. May Cato not enter my theatre... or if he does enter, let him watch! I think I might rightly make an end to my letter in verse:

Although you knew the sweet ritual of joking Flora
And her festive games and the licence of the mob,
Why, severe Cato, did you come into the theatre?
Or... did you actually only come to go out?

Martial thus introduces himself and his work to the reader, with a preface that, as William Fitzgerald has observed, deconstructs its own prose nature via the inclusion of a poem at its close that pre-empts the 'first poem' of the book that follows directly afterwards (i.e. 1.1).⁴⁷ Rather than completely undermining the nature of a prose preface, however, the inclusion of the poem at the preface's close instead slowly enacts the transition from semi-serious prose introduction to semi-comedic epigram,

⁴⁷ Fitzgerald (2007) 70: "the preface undermines its own *prefatory* status by debouching into a four-line epigram, the first poetry of the book, but still the end of the 'epistle' rather than the beginning of the book of epigrams." Original emphasis.

shrinking the conceptual gutter between paratext and text. Martial's preface tricks the prudish, Catonian reader into reading an epigram alongside the letter or title (*epistula vel potius titulo*) with which he has already instructed them to finish. The reader would, like Cato Uticensis, have to leave the *Epigrams* having already entered their theatre – an act that Martial suggests is more about showing off than exemplarity, and thus from which he has removed the moral advantage. The would-be-prude is instead playfully encouraged to read on for fear of embarrassing themselves.⁴⁸ Moreover, by the end of the preface, the reader is already drawn into the world of the *Epigrams* into which they are about to plunge. Textual borders have shifted before the reading experience has officially begun. As I will demonstrate, Martial openly challenges the preface's liminality in terms of its relationship with the start of the book and the start of the *Epigrams*, whilst also introducing the author's persona as the fixed point around which his text revolves.

Martial immediately creates a tension in the letter's first line by evoking a plurality of different contexts to which this preface could refer. By describing his work as *libelli mei*, the poet reinforces the concept (itself perhaps a fiction) that this first book of the *Epigrams* belongs to a wider corpus of texts, that the author is already firmly established within the genre (as 1.1 will go on to boldly proclaim). There are various possibilities for what this group of *libelli* could be. Firstly, this could be a later preface attached to our extant copy of book 1, which the author has re-released after his work had become more established and some other books had already been published – the codex theory encouraged by certain interpretations of 1.2.⁴⁹ Alternatively, the poet could be including his earlier works and/or juvenilia (referenced in 1.113) amongst his own corpus of epigrams – the *Xenia*, *Apophoreta*, and *Liber Spectaculorum* had all already been published by this point. Another option, which the commentator Peter Howell champions, is that Martial is referring to his individual (and conveniently no-longer extant) *libelli*; the supposedly shorter, personalised books of poems sent out to his various patrons to curry their favour.⁵⁰ Indeed, Martial does suggest a variety of different material possibilities for his physical books within book 1 of the *Epigrams* – his book is held in one hand and made of or covered with parchment (*membrana*) at 1.2.3, 1.113 refers to his juvenilia, and 1.117 creates the image of a deluxe, beautifully produced copy of the text for an expensive five denarii.⁵¹ However, I am not convinced by the arguments for a codex edition based on the available evidence, or by the *libellus* theory espoused by

⁴⁸ Indeed, if poetry was as prevalently performed in the theatres at Roman festival games as Wiseman (2015) 164-6 claims, there is the potential here for a performative joke: the audience would be forced to stay for the whole reading or leave the *theatrum* branded as a Cato.

⁴⁹ So Fowler (1995) 33-5. The bold statement by Martial to “give book boxes to the great: one hand holds me!” (1.2.4) could easily apply to a codex or slender book roll (if this refers to the act of carrying the text rather than reading it). On the issue of whether Martial was writing for the codex form or the bookroll, see chapter 1.

⁵⁰ Howell (1980) 97. White (1974) 44.

⁵¹ Martial is imprecise with describing the price of his works. Mart. 1.66 states that a cheap copy of the *Epigrams* is worth 6-10 sestersii (1.117's 5 denarii is equivalent to 20 sestersii), and at 13.3 the *Xenia* is described as costing only 4 sestersii. But as Howell (1980) 351-2 notes, one ought not to take the epigrammatist too seriously about his prices; these poems are bound up in Martial's self-deprecation after all.

Peter White in the 1970s.⁵² As Fowler has more convincingly argued, the plurality of dedicatees of each book of epigrams does not necessitate a view of the *Epigrams* as a hodgepodge collection of previous editions intended for specific patrons – the books are far too well structured to suggest such a view.⁵³ Instead, it is more productive to consider how far (in the text that is extant) Martial’s work creates the idea of a wider corpus in which each individual piece circulates. While the poet could be referring to his earlier work, none of it had the danger of satiric content for which he has to ward off the *malignus interpretres* in this preface, and as such they would not be considered texts in which he had practiced *temperamentum*. Rather, this preface stands as an example of how Martial pre-empts the rest of the corpus, using this preface (more than the four that follow) to adhere most strongly to traditional prefatory strategies of informing the reader of the work, its content, and its application by the reader.

One further complication engendered by the plurality of contexts which Martial evokes with this preface is brought about by his references to his *epigrammata*. This term appears three times during the course of the preface (at 1.praef.8-9, 11 & 16), and refers generally to Martial’s poetic genre and specifically to the poems to be found in the book. However, given that the whole text has the title *M. Val. Martialis epigrammaton liber primus*, it is difficult not to try to read ‘epigrams’ here as ‘the *Epigrams*.’ Thus the final general statement that “epigrams [on the whole] are written for those who usually watch Flora’s games” could also carry a more authoritative and specific flavour that “the *Epigrams* [written here by Martial] are written for those (etc).” As Genette comments, the title of a book is central to how it is read, and the generic title of Martial’s *Epigrams* not only creates a variety of semantic impressions on the reader (short poems, inscriptional origins, witty, rude, etc) but also imprints upon the reader the idea of a wider body of texts existing beyond the present book.⁵⁴ Martial has already indicated a self-awareness about his text’s form in this preface by alluding to the epistle itself and the title of the work at 1.praef.15-6. For a text that is constantly playing metaliterary games (focusing on the materiality of the text’s production and distribution for instance), it is impossible to read these asides

⁵² Blake (2014) 78 proposes that a *membrana* could here refer to the cover-roll used to protect a bookroll rather than the material the text is written on. Her argument revolves around the lack of firm literary evidence for the codex before the early third century (p. 69). This is, however, problematized by the existence of archaeological evidence for the book roll in the late first/early second century AD, as recently discussed by O’Hogan (2015) with reference to POxy. 1.30. I also discuss this issue in chapter 1.

⁵³ Fowler (1995) 38 questions the need to rationalise the praise poems as epigrams sent prior to publication, and at p. 51 points out that the *Epigrams*, rather than embodying some sort of “social log” of social interactions, is a text that constructs a social world that is created by the reader upon reading. I would argue that while Martial could have sent epigrams to his patrons prior to publication, or written for specific events such as Lucan’s birthday (Mart. 7.21-3), the sequences and progressions of themes within the *Epigrams* suggests that the majority of poems were written for the book, and that the other more ‘occasional’ pieces were edited for or carefully placed into this collection prior to initial publication.

⁵⁴ Genette (1997) 2 states that: "To indicate what is at stake [with the paratext], we can ask one simple question as an example: limited to the text alone and without a guiding set of directions, how would we read Joyce's *Ulysses* if it were not entitled *Ulysses*?" The text has no identity without the title, which in itself radically and silently changes how the reader will engage with the text. Genette labels what I call “generic title” a “formal title” (i.e. one that refers to the form the text is written in – e.g. Epistles or Sonnets) at p. 12 and discusses the generic title in more detail at pp. 94-103 The very designation of book 1 as book 1 (or *liber primus*) implies that there would at least be a *liber secundus*.

about epigrams as simply generic and programmatic statements.⁵⁵ The preface instead forces the reader to admit that Martial is talking about *Epigrams*, a self-aware collected edition of his published works, to which this preface itself is intrinsically connected. Catullus, Marsus, Pedo, and Gaetulicus might all be read thoroughly for the quality of their epigrams, but it is Martial who expects to be praised for writing not just epigrams, but the *Epigrams*. Because of the work's generic title, Martial makes it impossible not to read *epigrammata* within his corpus as a reference to the text while also utilising this preface's principal position to make some overarching programmatic statements about every book that will follow.

Nevertheless, some of the statements in the initial preface establish the themes of the first book that are unique to its individual identity and irrespective of the wider corpus. As Fitzgerald has already remarked, the reader is struck at the beginning of book 1 by its series of beginnings.⁵⁶ Martial repeatedly introduces himself and his work to the reader over the start of book 1, and while the persona of a proudly accomplished (and comically fictive) writer comes across most strongly at epigram 1.1, it is in the preface that the poet lays the ground for what is to follow. The aforementioned reference to *libelli mei* works towards this construction of a strong authoritative persona, but the general tone and discussion of what is and is not *fas* for epigram, with the iussive subjunctives at 1.praef.17-8 (*intret & spectet*), forges the image of a poet who knows his craft well. This self-fashioning continues throughout book 1, with Martial sweeping aside criticism of his poems with broad, authoritative statements about the genre: books of epigrams have to have poor poems alongside the great ones (1.16); another poet should publish to enjoy the fame that the reader already knows the poet enjoys from 1.1 (1.25); Velox should stop complaining about Martial's longer compositions (1.110); and the reader should learn that one hundred epigrams is far more than enough for one book (1.118). The persona of the poet is thus established by the end of the book as a skilled practitioner of the art, ready to disseminate his knowledge to anyone and everyone, and firmly focused on the publication of his books.⁵⁷ As a discussion of poetics Martial's first preface carves out the epigrammatist's position in his own genre, but it also works towards giving the author a powerful authorial presence in his text. As Genette comments, the main purpose of the original authorial preface (which this text represents itself as to the reader) is “*to ensure that the text is read properly*”, but here this function also strengthens Martial's authorial voice.⁵⁸ In citing a long list of precursors (Catullus *et al.*) the poet shows his knowledge of the generic principles needed to then badger his critics (1.16 & 110). In reprimanding Cato, that sternest of exemplary figures, Martial assumes a moral (albeit epigrammatic) authority from which to satirise and condemn his opponents.

⁵⁵ After the bombast of 1.1, for instance, Martial tells the reader where to buy the book that they are currently already reading at 1.2. Cf. Roman (2001) 126-9.

⁵⁶ Fitzgerald (2007) 69: “The first thing that we notice about Martial's first book is the profusion of first things.”

⁵⁷ Indeed, book publication features prominently in this book, and far more frequently (though it is a constant theme) in the later books: Mart. 1.2, 1.3, 1.45 & 1.113 supplement the poems listed in this paragraph.

⁵⁸ Genette (1997) 197 with original emphasis.

The preface creates this strong authorial persona for the rest of the text, which is then launched with the bombast of 1.1's claim that "here's that one you read, whom you ask after known throughout the whole world, Martial..."⁵⁹ The preface crafts this persona of the poet for the whole corpus, but it interacts most with book 1, itself a book principally concerned with introductions and definitions.

This creation of a strong authorial persona is reinforced by the construction of a group of dangerous critics and literary hazards, most strongly evoked in the preface by the figures of Cato and the *malignus interpres*.⁶⁰ Both these characters are raised as potential threats and then immediately rebutted. The *malignus*, first, tries to inscribe (or simply write against) Martial's poems, but this is described as a meaningless act as the poet does not intend to gain that kind of renown in his work.⁶¹ Cato, in contrast, is not welcomed, since he is the epitome of the prudish reader and becomes the subject of ridicule in the closing epigram (as discussed above). As with the poet's authorial voice, these figures are conjured up in the preface and soon resurrected in the text that follows. Shortly after the poet has announced his global success at 1.1, Martial offers a warning to his personified book at 1.3 expressing an anxiety for its publication because all Romans are potential critics (here depicted with the sharp noses of the rhinoceros, v.6). Such critics could become as dangerous as the *malignus*, the threat of whom appears in Martial's famous address to Domitian claiming his own moral rectitude: "my column is lascivious, my life upright."⁶² Clearly, the poems suggest, although Martial claims a strong readership to match his poetic persona, his work runs the risk of dissenting voices. These voices are varied, with the prudishness of Cato shooed away at 1.35, the general dissenter Lausus rejected at 1.91, and a jealous reader rebuffed at 1.40. Most famously of all, perhaps, is Martial's invention of the word 'plagiarist' in a cycle of epigrams where the poet questions ownership of a text in a world where books are sold for cold, hard cash.⁶³ As Scott McGill observes, Martial's complaints about plagiarists serve to reinforce his own authorial persona – the poet who is plagiarised is a poet of good enough quality to be plagiarised – and the poet's treatment of these critics runs on a similar level.⁶⁴ His persona revolves around being

⁵⁹ Mart. 1.1.1-2: *hic est quem legis ille, quem requiris, | toto notus in orbe Martialis.*

⁶⁰ Mart. 1.praef.8, 1.praef.17 & 1.praef.ep. I deal with the *malignus interpres* as a figure for the reader to react against in their reading of the text in chapter 2, but here I am focusing on the *malignus* and other figures as threats to the author's craft as a way of introducing the world of Martial's *Epigrams*.

⁶¹ Indeed, *inscribat* can be seen as a pun expressing an act of contested epigrammatism – an epigram is literally something written on something else, which *inscribere* evokes (hence inscription) at the same time as it describes writing against something else. There is a textual problem here, with *inscribat* suggested by Heinsius as an emendation for *scribat* (which would not fit the prose rhythm of the passage without a prefix, as Howell (1980) 97 notes). If *inscribat* is an incorrect reconstruction, which I do not believe to be the case, my argument still holds as the *malignus* is still being prevented from enacting an authorial role in writing the poet's work for him. Cf. Fitzgerald (2007) 71 n. 9 on this issue. In contrast, P. J. Anderson (2008) 210 offers a reading of *scribat* here where the *malignus interpres* is a "malicious exegete" intending to damage the project from over-examination of the text. It is perhaps unsurprising that this reading has not gained much ground in criticism of Martial, as scholars might not want to be deemed as being too ingenious in their readings of Martial's books (1.praef.9-10).

⁶² Mart. 1.4.8: *lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba.*

⁶³ The so-called 'Fidentinus cycle': Mart. 1.29, 38, 52 (the poem where *plagiarius* first appears in a context of literary theft), 53, 63, 66 & 72.

⁶⁴ McGill (2012) 77 & 103-11. McGill's central point is that Martial principally wrote his poems to entertain (pp. 89-90) and as such should be considered warily as evidence for rife plagiarism at Rome. At p. 85, however, McGill

the centre of attention, and being worthy of being at the centre of attention – *fama* is integral to Martial’s poetic identity, and the fact that he is annoying some readers pleases his persona no end (as is most overtly depicted at 6.60).⁶⁵ By repeatedly raising the issues and dangers of publishing at Rome – the *malignus* reading a ‘simple joke’ as invective, the plagiarist stealing his work, the prude rejecting his morals – Martial elicits the sympathies of his readers but also shows himself off as a poet capable of charting the dangerous waters of Flavian Rome’s literary scene. By the end of book 1, then, Martial has set out his programmatic model for the rest of his corpus, and the preface goes a long way towards planting the seeds of this model in the reader’s head.

Although the first preface stands at the absolute edge of the *Epigrams* as a corpus it also operates as a bridge between Martial’s previous and current poetry.⁶⁶ The preface’s references to spectating and the theatre, and the first book’s use of spectacles as a background for many of its epigrams, all remind the reader of the author’s *Liber Spectaculorum* and exhibit a transition from his identity as a spectacle-poet to a poet of epigram in general. This cluster of associations occur towards the end of the preface where Martial proclaims “may Cato not enter my theatre (*theatrum*)... or if he does enter, let him watch (*spectet*)”, and in its the prefatory epigram, where Martial relates the story of Cato’s departure from a *theatrum* during the Floralia.⁶⁷ By describing his *Epigrams* as a *theatrum*, Martial creates the metaphor of his text as a dramatic performance in which he holds the role of a director, but also suggests that vivid events will take place in his work.⁶⁸ Indeed, at one point in the *Liber Spectaculorum* Martial conflates the spectacle of a man’s execution in the arena with a theatrical performance, referring to this as a *theatrum* taking place on the arena floor.⁶⁹ To Martial, the visceral performances in the arena were analogous to the tales told on the stage, and as such the references to the arena in his first book could have been pre-empted by this metaphorical description of the epigrammatic *libellus-as-theatrum*.⁷⁰ In fact, it does not take Martial long to return to the subject of his

notes that this does not mean that Martial was cheapening plagiarism by making light of it, just that he is turning the accusations of a real practice into a witty performance of slighted poet against immoral thief.

⁶⁵ Hardie (2012) 321-9 analyses Martial’s use of *fama* in terms of its continuation of Latin poetics of monumentality.

⁶⁶ In comparison Ovid is an author always looking back at (and writing against) his former works. Martial, though, is generally more interested in continuity. Cf. Martelli (2013) 145-6 & *passim*.

⁶⁷ Mart. 1.praef.17-8 & 1.praef.ep.3. Cato supposedly left the lewd Floralia because he heard his severe presence was making the performers on stage unwilling to act in their customarily raunchy manner. For other versions of this story cf. Val. Max. 2.10.8 & Sen. *Ep.* 97.8.

⁶⁸ Johanssen (2006) 80 makes much of this metaphor of Martial as the text’s *Regisseur* with regards to Mart. 2.praef., where the poet puts on a show for Decianus.

⁶⁹ Mart. *Spect.* 24(21).1-2: *quidquid in Orpheo Rhodope spectasse theatro | dicitur, exhibuit, Caesar, harena tibi*. This is in itself, as Hinds (2007) 148-9 has shown, a reference to the death of Orpheus at Ov. *Met.* 11.20-7, where the mythological bard is torn apart by Thracian women with a simile comparing the event to the savagery of the arena. On the conflation of deaths in the arena with theatre in Martial’s poem, cf. Coleman (2006) 176.

⁷⁰ Jory (1986) makes the argument that gladiatorial combats were staged in the *theatrum* in the late republic up to at least 44 BC. Whether or not the association of the *theatrum* as a place for gladiatorial combat continued after the construction of permanent amphitheatres specifically built for these events is debateable. It is worth mentioning, however, Dodge (2014) 573’s conclusion that sport venues in Roman antiquity were multi-purpose, and that in the 2nd century AD some theatres in the Greek east were repurposed as amphitheatres (p. 572).

previous work. Shortly after the preface Martial depicts a conversation between himself and the emperor over the organisation of a mock naval battle (1.5), and in the subsequent poem begins a cycle describing a trained hare in the arena jumping unharmed through the mouth of a tame lion.⁷¹ The games also feature as the background for poems discussing wine allotments at these events, or as a metaphor for a poor meal attended by the poet (the patron and arena do not offer the dinner guest/spectator sustenance).⁷² The arena frequently recurs in the first book, bleeding over from the previously published *Liber Spectaculorum* to invade Martial's new project and violate the borders between his works. This violation of book boundaries ensures that (for a reader of Martial's earlier works) the first prose preface is a continuation of the artist's work rather than an entirely new beginning. The corpus of the *Epigrams* is itself an independent literary entity, but these allusions to Martial's former role as a spectacle poet places his poetry into the wider corpus of all of his literary works.

Indeed, Martial continues this association with his previous work by offering yet more spectacular treats to his reader in the form of exemplary tales of Romans past. The figure of Cato Uticensis in the preface is, as acknowledged by Fitzgerald, the first of a list of exemplary figures who reappear at points staggered throughout the course of book 1.⁷³ This list of characters is unified by one central theme: all died from suicide, and the majority used the sword. As with the previous examples of the preface's sequential influence, the first poem occurs shortly after the book opens with the suicides of Thrasea Paetus and Cato himself (1.8). Martial then moves onto the joint suicide of Arria and Paetus (1.13); Porcia's swallowing coals after hearing of her husband Brutus' defeat at Philippi (1.42); and closes by favourably comparing the contemporary suicide of Festus with that of Cato (1.78). Of interest in this cycle of poems on suicide is the appearance of Cato at its beginning and end as a framing device, and the graphic and painful deaths of their subjects. Besides Porcia (whose swallowing of hot coals is bound to make any modern reader wince) all these characters use a sword to commit suicide, a violent action that is otherwise lacking in the *Epigrams*, but which would fit well into the violence of the *Liber Spectaculorum*.⁷⁴ With these suicides (themselves acts of termination) Martial brings a sense of closure to his previous work as an arena poet, an act that suggests that book 1 is not such a new beginning after all but a transition towards a broader subject matter for his epigrams. Martial's spectacular poems can comfortably sit within the context of the *Epigrams*, but the rest of his poems (on the book, on vice, on patrons) would be out of place in the *Liber Spectaculorum*. While the poet does return to his previous arena poetry there is still a sense of progression towards the *magnum opus* of his *Epigrams*.

⁷¹ The so-called "lion and hare cycle" incorporates Mart. 1.6, 14, 22, 44, 48, 51, 60 & 104. Nauta (2002) 368 discusses the possibility that there was a separate bookroll containing only these poems sent directly to the emperor as part of the *libellus* theory, which I discuss in chapter 1.

⁷² Mart. 1.11.1 & 26 (wine); 1.43.12-4 (boar). On the distribution of wine tokens at such events cf. Howell (1980) 131. One such distribution (or *sparsio*) is described by Suet. *Dom.* 4.5.

⁷³ Fitzgerald (2007) 69.

⁷⁴ E.g. Mart. *Spec.* 9(7).5-6 gives a grotesque description of a fugitive's still-moving limbs being torn apart by a bear, while 14(12)-16(14) detail how a pregnant sow's belly is cut open to reveal her litter.

The praise of the noble suffering endured might also be compared with another arena poem in this book: the immolation of a criminal's hand in 1.21. In this poem, a 'fatal charade' in which a criminal's execution in the arena re-enacts a famous story from myth or history, the protagonist thrusts his hand into the flame like the republican hero Mucius Scaevola.⁷⁵ It is not difficult to compare such a 'charade', in which the criminal re-enacts and thus becomes the mythological/historical *exemplum*, with Martial's praise of Festus at 1.78 as having a nobler end than Cato.⁷⁶ The suicide poems are thus also a form of fatal charade, with the reader invited to take pleasure in a catalogue of gruesome (but noble) deaths. Indeed, the whole sequence of suicide poems has an air of the spectacular and dramatic about it. Each epigram is a short vignette focusing on the act itself with the result that the temptation grows all the more to understand these poems as a poetic performance to be watched (*spectet*) on the stage (*theatrum*) of the *Epigrams*. Thus even as the first preface works to establish itself as the clear-cut beginning of a new book, it also negotiates its position at the start of the *Epigrams* and as a part of the poet's entire epigrammatic output. In essence, Martial's first book stands as a continuation of the *Liber Spectaculorum*, but this continuation is also dependent on the theatrical backdrop that is established in the preface itself. To a reader acquainted with Martial's earlier work, the allusions to arena poetry and spectacle in the first book make the first prose preface less of an absolute beginning than it might otherwise appear. The first book is still a distinct entity in its status at the opening of the *Epigrams* as a whole, but it also acts as a bridge from monothematic arena poetry to polythematic epigram.

What this exploration of Martial's preface has accomplished as an introduction to the broader issues of his paratextual prefaces is a more nuanced understanding of how each book's opening can exist in a variety of different contexts. The reader might arrive at 1.praef. with a view of the book as an individual piece, or as an introduction to the corpus, or as a re-introduction to Martial after his successful launch to a poetic career with the *Xenia*, *Apophoreta*, and *Liber Spectaculorum*.⁷⁷ Of note is the fact that Martial seems aware of the liminality of his first preface, as he makes numerous statements that deny the fact that this preface refers to book 1 alone. His language of spectacle offers a nod to his past as a poet of the arena while his description of multiple *libelli* alludes to what is to come. By establishing his poetic persona in his first preface Martial makes a bold claim that his voice is a powerful one with much to offer his reader, but he also complicates the peritextuality of his own initial epistle. The preface is introductory to the book but also flows seamlessly into the introductory poems of book 1, and thus

⁷⁵ The term 'fatal charade' to describe such an event was coined by Coleman (1990) 44, who discusses Martial's *Liber Spectaculorum* in detail from 62-5. Fitzgerald (2007) 52-67 offers a discussion of the same poems as part of his overview of Martial's corpus of arena poems. Epplert (2014) 524-7 gives a concise summary of fatal charades and their origins, following Coleman throughout. The fatal charades depicted in this preceding work are: Mart. *Spect.* 6(5), 9(7), 10(8), 24(21), 25(21b), 28(25) & 29(25b).

⁷⁶ Coleman (1990) 67-70 argues that by stepping into the arena, gladiators and criminals were crossing a threshold with the underworld and that those acting out these fatal charades would have become the character they were enacting, on a level similar to certain "scapegoat rituals" in various societies (69).

⁷⁷ I have not found any connections between the *Xenia*, *Apophoreta*, and 1.praef., but that does not stop the experienced reader of Martial from viewing the *Epigrams* as a corpus prefaced by these texts.

constitutes a part of the text of the introduction to the rest of the *Epigrams*. As with the borders of his poems, the edges of Martial's preface blur into what follows, offering an introductory picture of his work that is also in and of itself an inextricable part of the work itself. As I show in the following sections, reading Martial's prefaces as paratexts reveals how far they embrace their own liminality, encouraging a sense of continuation whilst promoting their books' independence. Martial's individual books of the *Epigrams* can be read alone or together, and it is partly because of the prefatory material to each book that this is possible.

Rejecting the Form: Martial 2.praef.

Whereas the preface to book 1 was a triumphant expression of the poet's self-positioning within his genre, the second *epistula* actively works to question its own existence before ultimately rejecting the need for the form (which does not reappear until book 8). Yet while the letter's status as an anti-preface is of interest, I will focus here on the liminality of the prose preface as a work positioned between two books.⁷⁸ The preface introduces the second book of the *Epigrams*, connecting with the key theme of his readers' tiredness that appears in the poem immediately following it, but it also acts as a bridge between the first and second books, picking up where the first ended. Thus while the preface announces the individual identity of the work that follows, it also works against such an interpretation through continuation of the epigrammatic sequence. In terms of structure the second preface more closely resembles a traditional letter than the first, and opens with an address to the epigrammatist's patron, Decianus:

VALERIUS MARTIALIS DECIANO SUO SAL.

'quid nobis' inquis 'cum epistula? parum enim tibi praestamus, si legimus epigrammata? quid hic porro dicturus es quod non possis versibus dicere? video quare tragoedia aut comoedia epistulam accipiant, quibus pro se loqui non licet: epigrammata curione non egent et contenta sunt sua, id est mala, lingua: in quacumque pagina visum est, epistulam faciunt. noli ergo, si tibi videtur, rem facere ridiculam et in toga saltantis inducere personam. denique videris an te delectet contra retiarium ferula. ego inter illos sedeo qui protinus reclamant.' puto me hercules, Deciane, verum dicis. quid si scias cum qua et quam longa epistula negotium fueris habiturus? itaque quod exigis fiat. debebunt tibi si qui in hunc librum inciderint quod ad primam paginam non lassii pervenient. (2.praef.)

⁷⁸ Williams (2004) 17 views this anti-preface more as a "light play on the grand tradition of *recusatio*." My own analysis is closer to Johanssen (2006) 81's opinion that 2.praef. is a *Meta-praefatio* that self-consciously undermines itself. In Magrittean terms *haec non est epistula*.

VALERIUS MARTIALIS TO HIS DECIANUS GREETINGS.

"What use to me" you say "is a letter? For do we not do enough for you if we read your epigrams? What more will you say here that you could not say in your verses? I see why tragedy or comedy receive a letter, forms which are not allowed to speak for themselves; epigrams however do not need a herald and are content with their own (i.e. bad) tongue. They make a letter in whichever column [of text] suits them. Therefore don't, if you deem it proper, make the matter ridiculous and introduce the character of a dancer in a toga. In short, consider whether you'd like to go up against a *retiarius* with a twig. I sit among those who protest straightaway." By Hercules, Decianus, I think you speak the truth! What if you knew with what and how long a letter you would have had dealings? And so may it be what you demand. If anyone happens upon this book they will owe it to you that they don't come through to the first column worn out!

While the first preface expresses an attitude of seriousness about comic epigram, the preface to book 2 is comedic for comedy's sake. Martial humorously puts words into his patron's mouth (and that of the reader through the generic second person verb *inquis*) that Martial is risking upsetting his reader through the inclusion of the preface in a book of epigrams.⁷⁹ The instinct of 'Decianus' is that the epigrams do not need a letter to do their talking for them, though there is the suggestion that he is one of the lazy readers that the poet rails against in book 2 with his statement that it ought to be enough (*parum enim tibi praestamus*) to just read the poems. 'Decianus' thus comes across as a patron unwilling to put too much effort into the act of reading, and Martial works to placate the speaker/reader (in a mocking fashion) by promising that the current letter is far shorter than it would have been, and that it does not represent *negotium* to be read, but rather the *otium* usually associated with poetry.⁸⁰ The final statement, that the reader will thank Decianus for not getting to the first column worn out, is a clearly ironizing statement: of course the reader is perplexed – they have just read a preface denying its own relevance, and can thank (or blame) 'Decianus' for the present state of the prefatory letter. As I will soon show, the concern of lectorial laziness and fatigue is a key theme of book 2, but here the cause is attributed to 'Decianus' rather than the author.

As is common practice for Martial's introductory pieces, the preface is carefully linked to the book that follows it. The theme of lazy or worn-out readers reappears across book 2 (epigrams 2.1, 2.6, and 2.77 all debate this issue), but the most consistent thematic and lexical links appear between the

⁷⁹ The superscript reveals that Martial is talking to Decianus, but his name is not mentioned until halfway through the preface after the poet's triumphant (and playfully sarcastic) *me hercules*. It would be extremely easy for the reader to assume the mantle of the letter's addressee.

⁸⁰ In fact Mart. 2.praef. is almost exactly as long as 1.praef. Martial's promise that this letter is far shorter than the one 'Decianus' would have received without his intervention is doubtless a joke: the fun of this preface is that it drags the matter out for as long as possible.

preface and 2.1. The opening poem is addressed to Martial's book, which the poet states could be a thicker *liber* but would be much better received as a small *libellus* whose key characteristic is brevity. Martial closes the poem bemoaning the likelihood that some would still find the book too long (*longus*), itself a repetition of the concern of *quam longam* the opening preface would have been without the interference of 'Decianus'. Indeed, these lexical echoes appear throughout the poem. The act of reading the book is described as *perlegeret* (2.1.2), which evokes the use of the same intensive prefix at 2.praef.16 (*pervenient*). The question of the length of his book (*longus* 2.1.12) is offset by his assertions of its brevity (*brevior* 2.1.4, *brevitate* 2.1.11) and the fact that the text can be read before wine cools at a dinner party (2.1.9-10). Taken together, the preface and opening poem of the book argue that the work does not cause fatigue through its own length, but because of the reader's failings. The same conclusion is reached by the two other poems in the book that explicitly connect with the theme – his erstwhile admirer now lets out long yawns (*longas trahis oscitationes* 2.6.4) because he thinks there are too many poems in the book. Similarly, at 2.77 Cosconius complains to the poet that he writes *longa epigrammata* despite the fact that Marsus and Pedo – two of the predecessors proudly listed in 1.praef. – frequently wrote longer ones. Furthermore, the final epigram of the book playfully states that the book's title can be shortened by one iota to turn it into book 1, transforming this concern over shortening the work into a thematic frame for the whole book.⁸¹ The preface thus establishes an overall theme of the book which is returned to over its course, just as the programmatic imperial cycle does for book 7.

At this point it is worth observing that scholarship has tended to see this preface as an unintentional addition to the book, or one that does not cohere well with the epigrams that follow. The most extreme view is that of Peter White, who argued that this preface was little more than a letter once sent to Decianus and then “set it in its present place, without revision, or concern for self-consistency.”⁸² More recently Nina Johanssen has commented that while there is the thematic link between the preface and 2.1 “this is no more than a short, linear connection, which could have similarly been produced at the beginning of every other book.”⁸³ Although Johanssen's argument has a degree of circularity behind it, her point (and White's) demonstrates the problematic nature of Martial's prefaces. Their prose form immediately ensures that they are viewed as Other to the verse text that follows, and it is easy to conclude that removing the letter from the sequence of epigrams would not drastically alter the flow of the book. Indeed, as Sven Lorenz argues in a forthcoming book chapter, the subjectivity of reading means that when one looks for links in an epigram collection one is likely to find them there.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Mart. 2.93.4: *unum de titulo tollere iota potes*. The title of book 2 would be expressed as II, so the removal of one 'iota' refers to turning II into I (and thus the *liber secundus* into the *liber primus*).

⁸² White (1974) 58. Williams (2004) 18 describes White's viewpoint and judges it as “perhaps taking Martial too literally” without offering further comment on the matter.

⁸³ Johanssen (2006) 84: “diese ist jedoch nicht mehr als eine kurze lineare Anknüpfung, wie sie ebenso am Beginn jedes anderen Buches hätte gestaltet werden können.”

⁸⁴ Lorenz (forthcoming): “Once one starts looking for links between poems in a collection, one will certainly find them. So, some scholars of Martial will disagree with a reading of the epigrams that focuses on links between the poems and others will detect even more linking devices. Any debate on whether there are links between two

Nevertheless, the close repetition of terminology between the preface and opening poem of the book encourages their reading as a paired introductory unit. That these terms are repeated in two other instances within the book also reveals an overall attitude of Martial's poetry at this time, and constructs a degree of cohesion to the overall work. This may be a weak link (as Johanssen views it), but it is a link nonetheless. That Martial treats his prefaces in a similar way to his poems is significant enough to merit their consideration as carefully structured elements of the *Epigrams*.

Indeed, the second preface is part of a structure that exists beyond the confines of one book, which crafts the image of a whole corpus at the same time as the individual identity for book 2. This preface opens the second book, but it also forms an epistolical bridge between 1.118 and 2.1.⁸⁵ Martial ended his first book with a simple distich that "for whomever it is not enough to have read one hundred epigrams there is never, Caedicianus, enough of a bad thing", wittily closing the book with an expression of nugatory poetics: the reader should stop because they have already waded through enough nonsense.⁸⁶ With the beginning of the second book, however, a clear continuation of the theme begins. At 2.1 Martial states that although a *liber* could contain up to three hundred epigrams (three times what was described as too much at 1.118) nobody would read it anyway, judging it too long (picking up where 2.praef. leaves off). The end of book 1 thus acts as a pause in thematic progression, akin to the pause in narrative seen at the transitions between books in single-poem works such as Vergil's *Aeneid*.⁸⁷ Yet Martial's thematic progression from 1.118 to 2.praef. deconstructs the barriers between his books, which the poet acknowledges are there by claiming to distinguish his preface (which is read before the *prima pagina* 2.praef.15) from the main text. By the end of book 2 Martial has even broken down the distinction between both books' individuality, quipping that the work can be turned into book 1 with the removal of the second iota from its title.⁸⁸ The presence of a prose preface itself proclaims the beginning of a new book, but this 'business-as-usual' continuation of the end of book 1, coupled with the assertion of 'Decianus' that each *epigramma* can serve as its own *epistula* (2.praef.5-8) completely rejects this usual function. Each epigram is a preface, and each book is book 1 if doctored by the reader. The prefaced book 2 is thus subsumed by book 1, and its individuality is revoked at the same time as its prefatory form is rejected. In one sense, the purpose of the second preface is to show that Martial's

poems or not will inevitably draw on arguments of plausibility." Henderson (2002) xi makes a similar point about reading Pliny's *Letters* in a more colloquial manner: "Once we have our chosen frame firmed up and let reading begin, we will come across instances where particular links, continuities, or proto-narrative developments are sign-posted - sign posted so indubitably that any reading experience that overrides them is (I trust you'll agree) just deaf and dull."

⁸⁵ Williams (2004) 18 observes that the theme of potential boredom appears at 1.118 and continues in book 2 (as I have discussed above), becoming characteristic of the earlier books of the corpus.

⁸⁶ Mart. 1.118: *cui legisse satis non est epigrammata centum | nil illi satis est, Caediciane, mali.*

⁸⁷ Indeed, Sapsford (2012) 228-47 argues that Martial's 12-book corpus mirrors the structure of Vergil's *Aeneid*, to create an epigrammatic epic. Holzberg (2002) 135-52 makes a similar argument for a *Dodekalog* format, and sees book 7's opening with the return of Domitian, for instance, as a signal for the opening of the second half of his corpus (p. 139).

⁸⁸ Rimell (2008) 122 also considers this creation of another book 1 by Regulus in this poem as part of her discussion of book 2 as a text obsessed with making numbers physical. On Mart. 2.93.4 - cf. n. 81 above.

books are all a mass of connected text, and to deny the book divisions that their own author imposes upon them.

This deconstruction of concrete boundaries between Martial's books does not, however, mean that his books cannot be seen as individual entities at all. Martial's book structuring works to play with the idea of a constant text, and while his structuring is purposefully messy (an "ordered disorder" as Victoria Rimell puts it) a structure is still present.⁸⁹ Furthermore, one of the key features of Martial's *Epigrams* is that they work to confuse and deny easy classification. Fitzgerald's argument that the poems form an endless chain of associations that leads to the impossibility of reading a book of epigrams is born from a reading that denies the coexistence of the three conflicting principles of Martial's epigrammatic corpus – the poem, the book, and the corpus.⁹⁰ Martial's second preface throws this issue into a new perspective by claiming independence at the same time as it propagates reliance on the sequential progression of texts and books. However, it holds these three aforementioned states at the same time: it stands alone as a playful anti-preface; it opens the larger body of texts within book 2 by establishing the key issues of fatigue and length within the book; and it stands as a fixed point within the wider corpus. These three states overlap, coexisting in a riotous unity that can disorient the reader, but that can also be accepted for the almost impossible project that Martial works towards – crafting a series of books of short, individual poems that strive to exist as a unified collection.

It is Martial's second preface which, of all his prefatory letters, most enacts this tension between its various literary states. The *epistula* is firmly located at the start of the second book, addressing the patron whom Martial only addresses in this and the first book of *Epigrams*, while also sitting between the book's opening poem and the preceding text's closing epigram.⁹¹ By enacting this cross-contamination between books, however, the second preface serves to create a sense of the overall corpus. Only the reader who reads both books would pick up on such an overlap of sequential themes with the sense of resuming where one book finished, but then it is only such a reader who would appreciate the idea of a corpus anyway. This establishment of a progression across books is at its most profound when the text of one book is laid next to the other in the numbered sequence assigned by the order, and perhaps is starker in a modern codex reading context than in the original. It is to this tension of modern editorial practice and its influence on the conceptualisation of individual books that I now turn, with the example of the preface to *Epigrams* 8.

⁸⁹ Rimell (2008) 156: "epigram neatly performs the contradiction of ordered disorder, or disordered order that epitomises the Saturnalia." Rimell also (p. 12) sees the *Epigrams* as a kind of *turba* – the city (*urbs*) reconstructed within the crowd (*turba*) of epigrams that jostle and vie for the reader's attention.

⁹⁰ Fitzgerald (2007) 198.

⁹¹ Mart. 1.8, 1.24, 1.39, 1.61.10, 2.praef. & 2.5. On the odd disappearance of Decianus from the *Epigrams* after book 2, cf. Williams (2004) 19.

Modern Editions, Modern Interpretations? Martial 8.praef.

After a gap of five books Martial suddenly resumes the practice of prefacing his epigrams with a prose letter, here to the emperor Domitian, in a continuation of the divine panegyric heaped upon him in book 7. As with the first preface, 8.praef. closes with an explicit reference to a poem, but in this case the epigram in question does not appear within the preface itself but as the opening poem of the book (i.e. 8.1). The issues that this preface raises, then, are of how far the prefatory letter is separated from the book; Martial's *epistulae* frequently refer to subsequent poems, but also affect an attitude of externality to the main text. In this section I consider how far these paratexts remain paratextual, and to what extent modern poem divisions might influence and alter attitudes to the book and preface as individual literary entities. The preface itself signals a stark contrast to 1.praef. with a sudden shift towards austerity, which is signalled by a string of official titles within the superscript:

*IMPERATORI DOMITIANO CAESARI AUGUSTO GERMANICO DACICO
VALERIUS MARTIALIS S.*

omnes quidem libelli mei, domine, quibus tu famam, id est vitam, dedisti, tibi supplicant; et, puto, propter hoc legentur. hic tamen, qui operis nostri octavus inscribitur, occasione pietatis frequentius fruitur. minus itaque ingenio laborandum fuit, in cuius locum materia successerat: quam quidem subinde aliqua iocorum mixtura variare temptavimus, ne caelesti verecundiae tuae laudes suas, quae facilius te fatigare possint quam nos satiare, omnis versus ingereret. quamvis autem epigrammata a severissimis quoque et summae fortunae viris ita scripta sint ut mimicam verborum licentiam affectasse videantur, ego tamen illis non permisi tam lascive loqui quam solent. cum pars libri et maior et melior ad maiestatem sacri nominis tui alligata sit, meminerit non nisi religiosa purificatione lustratos accedere ad templa debere. quod ut custoditurum me lecturi sciant, in ipso libelli huius limine profiteri brevissimo placuit epigrammate.
(8.praef.)

TO THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN CAESAR AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS
DACICUS, VALERIUS MARTIALIS SENDS GREETINGS.

All my little books, Lord, to which you have given renown (i.e. life) supplicate you. And besides this one I think they will be read. However this one, which will be inscribed as the eighth of my work, enjoys the occasion of piety more frequently. And thus it was less necessary to labour with genius, in whose place the subject matter took over – material which now and again I have indeed tried to vary through the mixture

of jokes, lest every verse should heap up its own praise for your celestial reverence, which could tire you more easily than it would sate us. But although epigrams have been written by even the most severe men of the greatest fortune that appear to adopt the mime's licence for words, I have, however, not allowed these ones to speak as naughtily as they are accustomed. Since the larger and better part of the book has been restricted to the majesty of your sacred name, it will remember that one should not approach temples unless cleansed by religious purification. So that those about to read me might know what is guarded against, it pleased me to announce it on the very boundary of this little book in the briefest of epigrams.

The preface thus outlines the general aim of the book: to act as a sacred space within which epigram's lascivious voice (so triumphantly and brazenly announced in the first two prefaces) is restrained to fit the grand majesty of the emperor to whom the book is dedicated. Rather remarkably, however, the preface ends with a reference to a poem on the boundary of the book (*in ipso libelli huius limine*) which does not appear with the preface on the boundary of the text itself but as the opening poem of the work. As I shall argue, these two textual entities are as closely linked together as 1.praef. and its own self-contained epigram:

*laurigeros domini, liber, intrature penates
disce verecundo sanctius ore loqui.
nuda recede Venus; non est tuus iste libellus:
tu mihi, tu, Pallas Caesariana, veni. (8.1)*

Book, about to enter the laureled Penates of our Lord,
Learn to speak more sacredly with a reverent mouth.
Nude Venus withdraw! This little book is not yours:
You, Caesarian Pallas, you come to me.

Although this poem is clearly thematically linked to the preceding letter, the division of preface and epigram into two separate entities creates a hermeneutic boundary between the two items. There are strong thematic similarities that tie them together: the tone of religiosity that ends with a final invocation of Caesarian Pallas (v.4) brings to mind the religious purification (*religiosa purificatione lustratos*) of 8.praef.16-7; the book is bade to speak *sanctius* (v.2) as promised (or threatened) in the epistle (*non permisi tam lascive loqui* 8.praef.14); and the reference to Domitian as *dominus* (v.1) resumes the tone of supplication shown throughout the preceding letter.⁹² Furthermore, Martial's comment that this poem is to appear on the very boundary of the book is reminiscent of his statement at 1.praef.20-1 that he would finish his letter in verse. That both poems (1.praef.ep. & 8.1) are four lines long and work to

⁹² For this poem as an invocation of divinity and an imitation of inscriptions at religious sites forbidding sacrilegious acts cf. Schöffel (2002) 79 & 84 (on *veni* as a call for an epiphany).

fence off the book from a specific audience – prudish Catones in book 1, traditional readers of epigram in book 8 – also suggests a degree of parallelism at work here.⁹³ Whereas the lewd dancers at Flora’s games are welcomed with open arms at 1.praef.16-7 here they are rejected in the form of a nude Venus; whereas the prudish Catones are lambasted for even arriving at the gates of Martial’s *theatrum* at 1.praef.ep., they are represented by and invited in with the virginal goddess Pallas at 8.1.4. Given this consistent intratextual allusion to the first preface it is possible that 8.1 may have once formed a part of 8.praef. as an epistolary epigram rather than the official opening poem to the book before being separated in the transition from ancient to modern edition.⁹⁴ While a conceptual gap will always exist in the transition from prose to poetry, the division into separate numbered texts is far more pronounced and enforces a separation that is not seen in 1.praef. Thus by numbering 8.1 as 8.1 (and not, say, 8.praef.ep.) the reader is treated to an epigram not *extra* but firmly within the *ordinem paginarum*.

Nevertheless the role of 8.1 and 1.praef.ep. remains conceptually the same. Both are what Christian Schöffel refers to as *Brückenepigramme*, epigrams that aid the transition from the introductory preface to the poems themselves.⁹⁵ Both epigrams continue the key themes of the preface and create a smooth transition from prose to verse. Indeed, all of Martial’s prefaces either contain a poem or are immediately followed by one that is related in some manner to the preceding letter.⁹⁶ Rather than creating a stark contrast between his *epistulae* and books of poems Martial works them together to create a more unified reading experience regardless of the fact that his prefaces are positioned beyond the rows of his epigrams. Interestingly, however, the poems that are regarded as part of the prose prefaces would not work well as standalone poems: 1.praef.ep. would not appropriately open the first book with its general admonition of Cato’s departure from the Floralia; and 9.praef.ep., although similar in tone and scope to 1.1, requires the explanation of the preface that precedes it to retain its social significance as a poem of thanks and dedication to Stertinius Avitus.⁹⁷ This could explain why 8.1 is regarded as a standalone epigram – its four lines stand as a perfect opening to a book containing no

⁹³ Johanssen (2006) 94 comments that the adjective *severus* is used to praise writers of epigram in 8.praef. but to mark out the poet’s textual enemies in 1.praef.

⁹⁴ On this cf. Schöffel (2002) 78, who sees this separation as a deliberate blurring of boundaries between preface and poem. He observes that 8.2, an invocation of Janus the god of boundaries, could operate as a perfectly apt initial poem to the book. Johanssen (2006) 91-5 draws out the consistent parallels between the two prefaces.

⁹⁵ Schöffel (2002) 55: der Dichter aus zwei disparaten Teilen mit Hilfe eines „Brückenepigramms“ wieder eine organische Struktur zu schaffen sucht (“[in his prefaces 1, 8 & 9] the poet seeks to create again from two disparate pieces an organic structure with the aid of a ‘bridge epigram’”). Schöffel’s *Brückenepigramme* are correspondent to the bridge epigrams I have already identified as a transition between two themes, such as the flow of water changing from the baths at Rome to December weather at 7.34-6 (which I discuss in chapter 4). In this case, however, Schöffel is focused on the pairings of prefatory letter and epigram that transition towards a body of epigrams.

⁹⁶ Contained within the preface: Mart. 1.praef. & 9.praef. Followed by a thematically similar epigram: Mart. 2.praef. (brevity of the book), 8.praef. (reverence to the emperor) & 12.praef. (Priscus, *otium*, and hunting). Henriksén (2012) 3-4 also observes this feature of the prefaces.

⁹⁷ Pace Johanssen (2006) 102 & Lorenz (2002) 189. Nauta (2002) 115 acknowledges that this poem could function as an introductory poem to the book but insists that the whole preface is an occasional text rather than a work sculpted for the book.

obscenity, similar to 5.1 – but also why the poems within the prefaces to books 1 and 9 are considered as a piece included within the larger letter. In a sense every prefatory epigram is the first poem of the book and each first poem of the book forms a part of the preface or prefatory sequence.⁹⁸ The effect of these prefatory epigrams is to produce a gradual sensation of continuity for the books to urge their reader on, and to smooth the transition between peritext and text, easing the reader into the sequence that the epigrams enact.

Indeed, it is questionable whether one should attempt to reconstruct or re-divide the book. Prefatory epigrams may once have been positioned *extra ordinem paginarum*, but there is ultimately no way of proving the original layout of the text due to the simple fact that the original text no longer survives. What remains is to analyse the text as it is extant, and the extant text reveals some intriguing possibilities. While 8.2's subject matter of Janus the god of boundaries is, as Schöffel has commented, apt for the opening poem of a book that stands on the boundaries highlighted by the preface's self-referential *limen* (8.praef.19), the poem also forms part of an opening catalogue of divinities.⁹⁹ The book opens with Domitian (deified by the end of 7.99 as *deus*) in all his glory in the preface; pairs him with Athena – his patron deity – whilst rejecting Venus at 8.1;¹⁰⁰ then requests Janus' goodwill to Domitian at 8.2; offers a *recusatio* (pre-empted by the receding Venus at 8.1) to the Muses at 8.3; and at 8.4 returns to Domitian, who is worshipped by the gods themselves. Whether or not 8.1 is judged as a separate poem the thematic sequence still carries on, inexorably drawing the reader into the book and establishing the emperor as a divine figure surrounded by significant divinities. When viewing the text from a thematic point of view the individuality of each epigram is less important – the boundaries of each poem blur together to form the same larger concept (here the association of the emperor with the divine). For book 8 the preface is yet another link in the programmatic chain, as much a part of the text as the paratext.

Thus far my reading of 8.praef. has assumed that 8.1 belongs (to an extent) within the preface itself due to parallels to the first preface and the statement of the poem's liminality. However, it is worth considering the hermeneutic difference that takes place if 8.1 remains as 8.1. In this case, the statement that the poem remains on the very border of the text remains true given that the preface is imagined by the author as something beyond the border of the text – the first poem of a book is still on its *limen*.¹⁰¹ In this case the opening preface enacts a warning, which the final sentence highlights – Martial has

⁹⁸ On initial epigrams without a preceding prose preface, see the concluding section below on verse prefaces in Martial, pp. 184-6.

⁹⁹ Schöffel (2002) 78. Schöffel also comments here that trying to reconstruct 8.2 as the opening poem of the book could work against the conscious blurring of boundaries between 8.praef. & 8.1. Interestingly, this whole debate is focused around and dependent on the need to catalogue these items as individual or combined entities, a tension with which the *Epigrams* constantly toys. Cf. Sharrock (2009) 22 on Janus as a prefatory figure in Roman Comedy and Ov. *Fast.* 1.63-288.

¹⁰⁰ B. W. Jones (1992) 100. Cf. Suet. *Dom.* 15.2-3.

¹⁰¹ I examine how Martial refers to his prefaces' liminality at p. 146.

structured his book with a poem that is to warn those about to read what they are being protected from (*ut custoditurum me lecturi sciant*). The reappearance of the preface after so many books is surprising to the reader,¹⁰² but the sudden removal of all obscenity from the book is equally unexpected to a sequential reader of Martial. Book 8 has a precedent in book 5's restriction of lewd subject matter out of deference to the emperor, but the later book addresses a Domitian who has now become deified.¹⁰³ Martial's book has now become a *templum* instead of a *theatrum*, and requires appropriate treatment in establishing the appropriate tone for those entering – even reading the first poem means to have already entered, an act not allowed for those without religious purification (8.praef.16-7).¹⁰⁴ By bisecting his preface and following epigram into two individual units, the poet could be enacting the same requirement; only the *lustrati* may enter temples, and only those willing to repress their more lascivious urges may read book 8. If this poem were placed within the preface then the act of entering Martial's *templum* to access its mysteries would be reduced (in effect 8.1 would become a continuation of 8.praef.) and the poem would become more paratextual than textual. What might appear on the surface to be a simple question of assigning numbers to divide up the text has actually become a question of how the reader approaches and conceptualises the beginning of the work.

When examined through a paratextual lens the preface to Martial's eighth book thus brings to attention the key tensions behind prefatory liminality. One such issue is how peritexts shift and change dependent on their presentation within different editions. Epigram 8.1 gains or loses paratextual associations dependent on whether or not the reader interprets it as a poem that belongs more to the preface than the text. If the epigram were printed outside of the main body of the book the transition from paratext to text would have a more gradual nature, and if not then the reader would enact stepping over the book's threshold to view the divine mysteries within. Significantly, however, the poem can act in both capacities and can be seamlessly read in both ways due in part to the fluid individuality of Martial's epigrams. Moreover the thematic importance of the preface on the subsequent chain of poems, and the book itself, cannot be overstated. Once again, Martial's prefaces show a particular uniqueness to the book to which they are attached, and help to promote a sense of individuality to its specific work.

¹⁰² So Johanssen (2006) 97, who remarks that while there is no reconstructable reason for the appearance of a preface after so long an absence, the reader would have the impression that the poet must have something important to say.

¹⁰³ Mart. 5.2.6-8: *quintus cum domino liber iocatur; | quem Germanicus ore non rubenti | coram Cecropia legat puella*. Again the presence of Minerva is given as the reason for Martial's restriction of his subject matter.

¹⁰⁴ Schöffel (2002) 79 reads Mart. 8.1 as a poem imitating the boundary inscriptions at temples insisting on religious purification before entry, an act that the poet makes apparent in the preface's designation of the book as *templum*. Considering how Martial's prefaces are similar to Roman Comedy's prologues (discussed at p. 140 above) it is interesting that Sharrock (2009) 57 reads the prologue as acting as a priest observing a religious ritual. At 8.praef. Martial is the priest announcing whether or not the reader may take part.

Martial's Statue: Mart. 9.praef. & the (Monu)mentality of Fame

After the grandeur of book 8's preface with its explicit connection to the main text of the book, the penultimate prose preface in the corpus may come as a shock to the reader. Of all Martial's epistles it is perhaps the most puzzling due to its extreme brevity, its lack of an official superscript, and because it only appears to function as an explanation for the prefatory epigram itself. A closer reading of the book, however, soon reveals the intertextual role the fourth prose preface plays. What Martial creates in 9.praef. is a description of a bust which, like Pliny's statue in book 3 of the *Epistles*, depicts and acts as a monument for the poet's fame.¹⁰⁵ As such book 9 interacts constantly with what could be termed Martial's '(monu)mentality of fame', a desire to express and interrogate how fame was materially constituted in ancient Rome. What makes 9.praef. especially significant for the present study is how it sections itself off with the closural discourse of letter writing while refusing to end, and how it addresses two addressees explicitly (Avitus and Toranius) and another implicitly (the general reader) with the language of inscribed epigram, from which literary epigram had descended. The preface runs as follows, with the principle addressee only identified in an initial opening clause:

have, mi Torani, frater carissime. epigramma, quod extra ordinem paginarum est, ad Stertinium clarissimum virum scripsimus, qui imaginem meam ponere in bibliotheca sua voluit. de quo scribendum tibi putavi, ne ignores Avitus iste quis vocaretur. vale et para hospitium.

*note, licet nolis, sublimi pectore vates,
cui referet serus praemia digna cinis,
hoc tibi sub nostra breve carmen imagine vivat,
quam non obscuris iungis, Avite, viris:
'ille ego sum nulli nugarum laude secundus
quem non miraris, sed, puto, lector, amas.
maiores maiora sonent: mihi parva locuto
sufficit in vestras saepe redire manus.'* (9.praef.)

Hail, my Toranius, dearest brother! I have written an epigram, which stands outside the series of columns, to the very famous gentleman, Stertinus, who wanted to place my likeness in his library. I thought I should write about him to you, so you would not be ignorant of this Avitus who is invoked. Farewell and prepare a welcome.

¹⁰⁵ The heading of this chapter alludes to that of Henderson (2002), which acted as a stimulus for many of the ideas in this present section. Henderson's book considers the role of sculpture and self-representation in Roman art, focusing in particular on Plin. *Ep.* 3.6, where the senator reports on the purchase of a statue for public display. Henderson argues that this statue represents Pliny himself and should be read as a parallel for the author's self-representation in the *Letters* as a whole (pp. 155-71), and that Mart. 9.praef. acts in a similar way to Pliny's statue as a method of literary self-fashioning (pp. 55-7).

A bard known, though you don't want it, for his sublime inspiration,
 To whom late ashes will bring worthy rewards,
 May this short song live under my likeness for you,
 Which, Avitus, you join with men not obscure:
 'I am he, second to none in praise of my trifles
 Whom you do not admire but I think, reader, you love.
 Let greater men sound greater things: It suffices me,
 After saying small ones, to return often to your hands.'

By far Martial's shortest letter, the preface to book 9 is also the most colloquial, addressing Toranius with a simple *have... frater carissime* rather than the traditional form of *TORANIO MARTIALIS SAL.* Though lacking in a superscript, this letter is the only one in Martial's corpus that ends with the traditional sign-off *vale*, which formally closes the 'letter' section and gives way to that of the prefatory epigram. The prose section of this preface gives the broad overview of the epigram's context – it is to be inscribed on a bust placed in the private library of a certain Stertinius Avitus, apparently unknown to Toranius. In fact, this juxtaposition of Martial's fame with Stertinius' (and Toranius') is central to the preface's discourse of renown – Martial comes across as the one person without need of an introduction, even though he provides himself with one that is not only verbose, but also to be inscribed amongst a collection of busts whom he deigns "not obscure." This one-upmanship is central to his (monu)mentality of fame and, as I shall demonstrate, to an understanding of how 9.praef. connects itself to book 9.

As I have already intimated, Martial's preface is entirely devoted to the subject of Martial's fame and poetic ability. The poet describes himself as a *vates*, a divine bard of epic associations that are further evoked with the assertion that he has sublime inspiration (*sublimi pectore*).¹⁰⁶ The depictions of men with whom his bust is to be placed are also renowned (*non obscuris* the poet gleefully boasts), which in turn augments his own relative importance – he deserves to be ranked among these people, who are presumably famous authors (the busts are in a library, after all). He even predicts his own posthumous great fame (*praemia digna*), and leaves the reader with the retort that they love reading him even though his *nugae* might not be judged as highly as epic (*puto, lector, amas*). All in all the poet's self-depiction is as grand as it is haughty, and leaves the reader with an impression of his literary importance. Most significantly, however, the poet's own fame far overshadows that of the two men who

¹⁰⁶ Roman (2015) 446-51 considers the difficulties faced by the poet in Flavian Rome and the general need to distance oneself from the independent *persona* of the *vates* in a period of reduced social independence. Significantly, at p. 447 he observes that the figure of *vates* was ironised even by Horace, and especially in Petronius (such as the figure of Eumolpus at Petron. *Sat.* 83.7). In my analysis below I further examine the potential that Martial's self-portrayal as an Augustan *vates* figure could be serio-comic.

could vie for the status of the letter's addressee – Toranius and Stertinius Avitus.¹⁰⁷ The language describing them puts the two men on a lower level of fame than (at the very least) that which the poet claims to enjoy. Toranius may be Martial's dearest friend (*amice carissime*), but he only appears at one other point in the *Epigrams* as a generic recipient of a dinner invitation.¹⁰⁸ Stertinius Avitus is designated as a *vir clarissimus* (a generic term for a senator) but clearly could not have been very famous in reality (or in the reality of this letter, at any rate) because Martial has to explain his identity to Toranius (and thus the reader), a conceit around which the whole preface revolves.¹⁰⁹ There are numerous references to an Avitus throughout Martial's corpus, but as Peter White rightly observed the phrase *de quo scribendum tibi putavi* suggests that this specific Avitus, about whom Martial must write to Toranius, is a previously unknown presence in the corpus.¹¹⁰ In this letter Martial toys with the idea that he is more renowned than the *vir clarissimus* in whose library his bust is to be placed. A triad of social impact manifests in the order of characters listed – first the close friend but unknown personage Toranius, second the relatively obscure Stertinius Avitus, and finally the world-renowned poet Martial. The poet's bust thus stands as a symbol of his triumph as a literary figure, now desired even by the *virii clarissimi* who keep copies of him (his text and image) in their private libraries.

Martial has depicted himself as a figure more famous than his beneficiaries due to the fact that he is the one whose name is inscribed under a representation of himself in stone. As well as claiming fame from monumental representation, 9.praef. also has metapoetic significance that channels into the Latin tradition of poetic fame, which maintained that a poet was truly successful if his name lived on after his death in the form of his text, outlasting the ephemerality of human life. The most famous proponent of this tradition is Horace who, at the end of his third book of *Odes*, proclaimed that he had “produced a monument more everlasting than bronze” with his poetic project.¹¹¹ To Horace, the standard-bearer of Augustan poetic aesthetics, the materiality of monuments is supplanted by the immortality of verse. Martial, although he later expresses the same sentiment that his words would outlast crumbling marble, links the poetics of fame in 9.praef. with his genre's inscriptional origins to evoke Horatian aesthetics on a poem supposedly set in stone: his poem lives on, but under a bust in a library (*sub nostra breve carmen imagine vivat* 9.praef.ep.3).¹¹² Henriksén comments that Martial's

¹⁰⁷ For a detailed discussion of potential addressees in this preface (Toranius, Avitus, and the reader), see Henriksén (2012) 1-2 & Johanssen (2006) 106.

¹⁰⁸ Mart. 5.78. Cf. Henriksén (2012) 6.

¹⁰⁹ Henriksén (2012) 7 on *vir clarissimus*. Johanssen (2006) 106 concludes that it is impossible to tell whether or not this text is fictional or occasional. The consistent play with identity and fame within the preface and the book to my mind, however, displays an artificiality that could at least have been applied to the letter when it was prepared for publication with the book.

¹¹⁰ Henriksén (2012) 7, White (1972) 56-7. Occurrences of an Avitus outside of this preface include: Mart. 1.16, 6.84, 10.96, 10.102, 12.24.9 & 12.75.

¹¹¹ Hor. *Carm.* 3.30.1: *exegi monumentum aere perennius*. I discuss this poem and Martial's relationship with literary *fama* further in chapter 2.

¹¹² Mart. 10.2.9-12: *marmora Messallae findit caprificus et audax | dimidios Crispi mulio ridet equos | at chartis nec furta nocent et saecula prosunt, | solaque non norunt haec monumenta mori*.

poem “is fused with the bust into an artistic whole; and as the image lives, so does the poem”, but I would argue that the poem and bust, at least when situated within the text itself, have their roles reversed here.¹¹³ It is Martial’s poetry that brings the bust to life for the reader, who is not reading the poem from an inscribed monument but from a written text. To the reader there is no bust or image, only the written word. Thus the physicality that Martial proclaims does not exist for his reader, but the associations with the statue’s monumentality remain. By bringing to attention to the fact that the poem brings life to the bust (or rather that the poem brings life to the life-bringing bust), Martial creates an environment in which even ephemeral materiality might survive. Although marble crumbles, verses written on marble and depicted in verse will live forever. Martial’s poem on his own bust, then, makes his contemporary fame eternal. What might have been a forgettable bust in a forgettable man’s library suddenly becomes a poem spread around the world, and one that is read if not loved.

This (monu)mentality of fame is especially significant to the preface’s role as the introductory text to book 9 in that it prepares the reader for a continued discussion of power and renown as the book continues. A key feature of the book is its large number of epigrams (detailed below) describing various statues, culminating in a recent statue of Hercules which was depicted with the face of the Domitian himself. The prominent placement of Martial’s statue at the book’s opening not only expresses his own poetic fame and authority, it also represents a statement on the power of poetry to amplify the emperor’s monumental image. The emperor was already depicted on statues and busts across Rome and the empire, but by introducing the theme of poetic immortality to artistic representation, Martial makes Domitian a strong poetic promise: stones may crumble and bodies may decay, but depictions of both will live on forever in Martial’s poetry. In book 9, then, Martial’s preface creates a background of immortal monumentality upon which he will project the emperor in a bid to make his fame and renown live beyond his existence in the material world.

The preface therefore stands as an important structural entity, opening the catalogue of statue poems that appear at regular intervals in book 9. The cycle opens, after the preface, with a pair of poems on a bust of Domitian (9.23-4) which literally put the emperor on a pedestal to be admired. The poet then continues by introducing the demigod Hercules, who appears at 9.43-4 as a statuette (the so-called Epitrapezios) owned by Novius Vindex. Martial then reintroduces himself with a discussion of poetic aesthetics at 9.50 (his own poems are small, finely crafted statuettes whereas long epic is a huge giant of unrefined clay). After these introductory poems the epigrammatist begins to draw the emperor and demigod together, and at 9.64-5 offers a description of a temple statue to Hercules on Via Appia which was depicted with Domitian’s facial features. Hercules is, perhaps unsurprisingly, contrasted negatively to the deeds of the emperor who at 9.101 is shown as the figure with the more convincingly Herculean achievements. If nothing else, it is clear that the ninth book of the *Epigrams* is a decidedly monumental

¹¹³ Henriksen (2012) 9.

volume, but Lorenz’s detailed analysis of the statue cycle has effectively demonstrated that these poems act as “*Säulen*” (or, “pillars”) within the book that support the structure of the collection and act as markers for his thematic variation.¹¹⁴ Epigrams 9.1-22, for instance, are focused principally on panegyrics of the emperor, peaking with the crowning of Domitian’s bust with a golden wreath by Carus at 9.23-4, which instigates a shift towards the praise of prominent *amici* in the following poems.¹¹⁵ Lorenz’s arguments are very convincing – Henriksén judges the sequence to be “too coherent to be haphazardous [*sic*]” – and suggest two points of significance to the present study.¹¹⁶ Firstly, Martial’s own self-depiction as a marble bust at the start of the book, and then his depiction of his poetry as small, refined statuettes at 9.50, seeks to place himself on a similar level to Domitian and Hercules in order to enhance the authority his poetic voice. Secondly, the preface’s linkage to the cycle encourages a view of the *epistula* as a part of the very text that it claims to be separated from in its position beyond the paginal order. It is to this latter point that I now turn.

As I have shown, the preface and its epigram can be used as a key with which to read the structure of book 9, but its profession of separation from the text presents potential difficulties to its classification as a paratext. The preface is interwoven with the book itself, but it affects a level of dissociation from the main body of the book that is far more pronounced than any of the previous prose letters. This separation is immediately made clear through the statement that the prefatory epigram is *extra ordinem paginarum* (9.praef.1-2), which also reinforces the letter’s own further separation from the poems (it is beyond the epigram that lies beyond the rows of poems on the papyrus scroll).¹¹⁷ This sense of detachment is then further intensified by the letter’s own stock closural statement of *vale et para hospitium* (9.praef.6), the first and only occurrence of this phrase in Martial’s corpus, which creates a conceptual break between the preface and the prefatory epigram, which in turn has already been defined as beyond the main text. This explicit effort to distance the preface from the first epigram of book 9, however, only serves to further highlight its own importance, and Martial’s expressions of closure and detachment focus the reader’s attention on the peritext’s contents. As has recently been observed in scholarship on both the Elder and the Younger Pliny, there was a strong tradition for prefatory material to be misleading; authors emphatically denied the existence of certain aspects of the text (such as its careful structuring or composition, or relevance to the whole work) to aid the reader in noticing them when they do appear.¹¹⁸ When Martial remarks that his preface is beyond the main text

¹¹⁴ Lorenz (2003) 570 & 580.

¹¹⁵ So Lorenz (2003) 579.

¹¹⁶ Henriksén (2012) xxxvi. This cycle, and indeed book 9’s careful structure, encourages the view that Martial’s books were carefully arranged with poems specifically composed for this form. Lorenz (2003) refers to the precise positionality of these poems within the book throughout his study.

¹¹⁷ So Johanssen (2006) 104.

¹¹⁸ R. Gibson (2014) 37-8 [the Elder] & Bodel (2015) 49 [the Younger]. Plin. *Ep.* 1.1 denies a careful arrangement for the *Letters* as a whole, while Stat. *Silv.* 1.praef.3-4 & 13-5 impresses upon the reader the poems’ poor quality which derives from their swift composition. Statius is plainly stating his own skill in producing high quality poems

he is thus highlighting its separation on a physical, but not lectorial, level. With such a reading, the tension between paratextuality and textuality dissipates: the preface is still an introduction to the text that exists on its borders as an interpretive tool to aid (and influence) the reader's approach to the book.

Furthermore, Martial's unusual closing remark of *vale et para hospitium* (9.praef.6) forms a part of the preface's central point – that epigram is a light genre that does not aspire to greatness – which introduces a consistent contrast throughout book 9 of lowbrow *Kleindichtung* (light verse) and highbrow Domitianic panegyric.¹¹⁹ The whole epistolary section of the preface is short and to the point, best exemplified by its brief opening *have, mi Torani* (9.praef.1) which contrasts sharply with the ream of imperial titles seen at the start of book 8. The difference in tones between Martial's addressees befits their different statuses – while Domitian is Martial's ultimate patron and ruler of the Roman world, Toranius is a close friend of the poet's. A short, perfunctory letter would cause less offence to a friend than an emperor, and perhaps the poet could also allow himself more room to joke. The curtness of *vale et para hospitium* constitutes a knowing wink towards the fictionality of this whole preface, with Martial not actually expecting Toranius to welcome him as the letter is only 'sent' to him as part of a literary trope – it is the reader who acts as the text's addressee after all. The joke is explained by the subsequent epigram – Martial takes on the guise of a divinely inspired *vates*, whose praise is second to none but only for his trifling, epigrammatic poetics (9.praef.ep.1-5). The poet even wryly undermines his own proclamation to divine bardship with the comment that while he is not praised by his reader he is enjoyed by them.¹²⁰ His self-characterisation as a vatic figure is thus serio-comic, and cannot be read with an entirely straight face, but this need not undermine the panegyric of the book. Instead, the severity of the panegyric poems is counterbalanced by the frivolity of base humour, as shown by the alternation between grand panegyric mode and erotic joking in the first eight poems of book 9.¹²¹ Moreover, it is telling that this pride in *Kleindichtung* is expressed in the same language as that used to praise sculpture at 9.50 – the small Brutus' boy trumps the huge clay figures that epic poets produce.¹²² The point of the preface's triumph of lowly poetry thus becomes clear, and is not dissimilar to that of

at short notice, and Pliny's letter is programmatic for the whole collection. On Pliny the Younger cf. Gibson & Morello (2012) 259-63, who compare Pliny's strategy to the similar technique of Ovid at *Pont.* 3.9.51-4.

¹¹⁹ This contrast is analysed with particular reference to Mart. 9.50 at Lorenz (2003) 582-3: folglich zieht sich durch das gesamte Buch eine implizite 'Verhandlung' Martials mit dem Kaiserthema, in der verschiedene Formen von Panegyrik vorgelegt werden, der Kaiser auch einmal für eine Weile aus dem *liber* verschwindet, dann wieder zurückkehrt und schließlich durch die Synthese Domitians mit Herkules der Höhepunkt der Adulationen erreicht wird.

¹²⁰ Mart. 9.praef.ep.6: *quem non miraris sed, puto, lector, amas*. The epigrammatist repeats this quip when comparing his poetry to that of epicists (the antithesis of *Kleindichtung*) at Mart. 4.49 & 10.4.

¹²¹ This argument is also consistently made by Martial to the emperor. At 8.praef.5-11 he justifies the inclusion of jesting epigrams within the book out of a desire for variety, and at 1.4 & 7.8.9-10 comments that even during the pomp of a triumph jokes are allowed. Martial's alternation of high and low tones at 9.1-8 mirrors the same strategy seen in the quality of gifts in the *Apophoreta*, especially the works of high & low literature in 14.183-96 analysed by Leary (1996) 13-21 & Lóio (2014) 376-81.

¹²² Mart. 9.50.2's *brevitate* echoes the *breve carmen* of 9.praef.ep.3. Cf. Lorenz (2003) 580 & Henriksén (2012) 221-2, although the latter does not draw a direct parallel between these two poems he compares the *brevitas* of 9.50 to Martial's general poetic programme throughout the corpus.

8.praef.: there is a tension in a poet of light verse seeking to honour the emperor in lofty panegyric, but smaller poems can please in their concision and can reduce the risk of boredom through pleasing variety. The preface is a mediation between the poet's decision to write poetry celebrating the emperor's grandeur and his genre's traditional expectation to include invective and skoptic themes.

The preface to book 9 might be Martial's most challenging prefatory letter, but it is also one of his most artful in bringing together a juxtaposition of high and low genre with a description of a statue that sets the stage for the reappearance of sculptures throughout the book. Martial's poetic statue is the epigram through which to read the statue poems of book 9; its negotiation of his (monu)mentality of fame draws together concepts of renown by combining the materiality of physical artwork with the immateriality of immortal poetics. Such a claim to bring immortality to the emperor is made more profound by the *damnatio memoriae* that was utilised against Domitian following his fall from power; to some extent, positive views of Domitian's rule and his achievements only survived due to the immortality of contemporary verse triumphing over the ephemerality of physical elimination. This preface also plays literary games with the concept of a preface's distance from the text. Its prefatory epigram is not only *extra ordinem paginarum*, but also buried within a letter which separates itself through the use of a closural *vale*, and divided further into two individual halves – the poem describing the bust, and the poem under the bust itself. Such overt claims of physical distance from the text, however, belie a thematic closeness – the peritext still physically remains on the text's borders, but its content spills over to become a part of the text itself. Once more Martial has blurred the conceptual boundaries between text and paratext. The poet draws attention to the thematic significance of his preface to the rest of the book, both in the immediate context of the programmatic poems that open book 9, and over the course of the book in the series of statue poems (Lorenz's *Säulen*), which reinforce a sense of progression and unity for the work. The most of all the prefaces, 9.praef. bestows upon book 9 its own individual identity as a work dedicated to the poet and emperor's rising renown. As the final preface will make even clearer, however, there is a situatedness to each preface's position in the corpus – book 9 is positioned at the peak of the poet's career (thematically and, perhaps, historically), while book 12's preface prepares the reader for the final epigrams of the corpus.

The Beginning of the End: Martial's Final Preface

Martial's final preface is a peritext that is extremely conscious of its position in the corpus. At the start of book 12 it introduces the overall themes of the final book – the contrast of life in urban Rome and rural Spain, the poet's exilic withdrawal from Rome to a land of literary seclusion, and the judgement of his readers – while also making allusions to finality that prepare the reader for the last (ever) collection of Martial's work. The preface reads with a definite sense of the corpus coming to a close along with the poet's life of fame, but this retirement is arguably not the bitter Ovidian failure that John

Sullivan described it as.¹²³ While the poet draws parallels between his final and first prefaces with the conclusion that life in Spain is duller than the excitements of the city, there are hints in the preface and the book itself that the poet is not quite so disappointed as one might expect. Indeed, as I show below, the poet prepares the reader for the end of the book and the corpus, but represents his departure as a fond farewell by presenting himself as a man who has succeeded in poetry and life, and who can now enjoy the fruits of his labours. The longest of Martial's prose prefaces, the letter is itself addressed to a much-appreciated patron who is supposedly visiting the poet in Spain:

VALERIUS MARTIALIS PRISCO SUO S.

scio me patrocinium debere contumacissimae trienni desidia; quo absolvenda non esset inter illas quoque urbicas occupationes, quibus facilius consequimur, ut molesti potius quam ut officiosi esse videamur; nedum in hac provinciali solitudine, ubi nisi etiam intemperanter studemus, et sine solacio et sine excusatione secessimus. accipe ergo rationem. in qua hoc maximum et primum est, quod civitatis aures, quibus assueveram, quaero et videor mihi in alieno foro litigare; si quid est enim, quod in libellis meis placeat, dictavit auditor: illam iudiciorum subtilitatem, illud materiarum ingenium, bibliothecas, theatra, convictus, in quibus studere se voluptates non sentiunt, ad summam omnium illa, quae delicati reliquimus, desideramus quasi destituti. accedit his municipalium robigo dentium et iudici loco livor, et unus aut alter mali, in pusillo loco multi; adversus quod difficile est habere cotidie bonum stomachum: ne mireris igitur abiecta ab indignante quae a gestiente fieri solebant. ne quid tamen et adveniēti tibi ab urbe et exigenti negarem — cui non refero gratiam, si tantum ea praesto quae possum —, imperavi mihi, quod indulgere consueveram, et studui paucissimis diebus, ut familiarissimas mihi aures tuas exciperem adventoria sua. tu velim ista, quae tantum apud te non periclitantur, diligenter aestimare et excutere non graveris; et, quod tibi difficillimum est, de nugis nostris iudices candore seposito, ne Romam, si ita decreveris, non Hispaniensem librum mittamus, sed Hispanum. (12.praef.)

VALERIUS MARTIALIS TO HIS PRISCUS, GREETINGS.

I know that I owe a legal defence for my most defiant three years' idleness, for which I ought not be absolved among even urban engagements, with which we more easily

¹²³ Sullivan (1991) 53-5 typifies the final book as the work of a poet running out of ideas and devoid of inspiration. Rimell (2008) 191-3 reads this book much more carefully, instead seeing Martial's references to Ovidian exilic verse as anticipation of the end of his work that is also tinged with nostalgia for his former career.

manage to appear tiresome than dutiful. This is much less the case in this provincial solitude where, unless I am immoderately studious, I withdrew without comfort and without excuse. Therefore please accept my reasons amongst which this is the first and greatest: that I search for the ears of the city, to which I had become accustomed, and I seem to litigate in a foreign court. For if there is anything pleasing in my little books my listener dictated it. That precision of the law courts, that ingenuity of subject matter, the libraries, theatres, social engagements, in which pleasurable matters do not notice their own application... To sum everything up, I, as if deserted, desire those things which I frivolously abandoned. The tartar of municipal teeth, and envy in place of judgement, and one or two evil people (many in a tiny place) add to these things. Against this it is difficult to keep good humour every day. Therefore do not marvel that what used to occur out of joy is cast aside out of indignation. However, lest I deny anything you request when arriving from the City (for which I will not return the favour if I only perform what I can), I gave myself orders for what I had been accustomed to enjoy, and applied myself for a very few days so that I might receive your ears, the most familiar to me, with their own arrival feast. I hope that you are not overburdened to diligently value and examine these things, which are not endangered with you alone, and (what is most difficult for you) that you judge my trifles with your candour set aside, lest (if you should decree it) we send to Rome a book that is not Spanish but a Spaniard.¹²⁴

The ‘Martial’ of the final preface appears to be a very changed man. He is far more careful and apologetic than the proudly boastful voice of epigram 1.1, instead acting in a manner similar to Statius’ in the earlier books of the *Silvae*.¹²⁵ Indeed, change seems to be the preface’s watchword as Martial reveals that he has withdrawn from the city of Rome to his native Spain (his later epigrams will disclose his return more precisely to his hometown of Bilbilis), and no longer habitually writes epigram. The whole letter establishes a narrative frame for the book itself, which Martial has supposedly written for his friend Terentius Priscus upon his arrival from Rome to visit the poet. In one sense, Martial contrasts the double homecoming of book and epigrammatist here – the poet has returned home to Bilbilis and remains there, but his work belongs at Rome where his poetry was born. The overall sense of this piece is of reaching the end of Martial’s literary career, but it also represents the end of his corpus. The reader is perhaps already ready for the beginning of the end if they know in advance that this is the poet’s final

¹²⁴ Nauta (2002) 126 argues that *mittamus* can be read as a “real plural” instead of a polite plural-for-singular form (i.e. “lest I send”) in an effort to make the quality of the book as reliant on Priscus’ editorial skill as on Martial’s poetic prowess.

¹²⁵ On the similarities to Statius’ *Silvae*, see Johanssen (2006) 113-4.

book, but there are a series of closural hints within the preface that continue throughout the *libellus*, tying this preface not just to the start of book 12, but to the start of the end of the *Epigrams* itself.

Within the preface there are a number of markers that create an air of finality for the reader, and first develop a sense of closure for the final book. Firstly, the letter concerns itself with the poet's departure from the city but also from writing epigram. The first words of the preface point out a gap of three years, a time gap which the letter in fact creates for the modern reader, between books 11 and 12, a gap which is explained by the poet's lack of the ability and desire to write. That the poet has left Rome itself and moved into a retirement (what Martial terms a secession into provincial solitude 12.praef.5-7) is the embodiment of his work coming to a close, an end to the highlights of the city his persona now laments. Indeed, that Martial died not long after writing his twelfth book (which has at times been considered a posthumous collation) creates the ultimate sense of closure for Martial's retirement - the poet has removed himself to Spain to die in his hometown.¹²⁶ As well as making the poet's move from Rome to Spain more concrete, this preface is firmly focused on nostalgia for what has happened, and what the poet no longer has. Past tenses are particularly pronounced in the final *epistula*, and reinforce this general attitude of coming to the end of the poet's career. Martial emphasises that he himself has abandoned Rome (*secessimus* 7, *assueveram* 10, *reliquimus* 15) and is as if abandoned himself (*quasi destituti* 15), and that the act of writing is a pleasure of the past (*auditor dictavit* 12, *solebant* 21, *consueram* 25) which he has attempted to resurrect on Priscus' behalf. The only concern the poet shows for any future is on the book's behalf – it should be sent (*mittamus*) in a polished form that does not suggest its coarser Spanish origins but instead resembles a cultivated Roman work as much as possible, a work from the poet's past. Indeed, that Martial addresses the letter to a Priscus is especially significant given that the name derives from the adjective *priscus*, a word referring to something from the deep past. The superscript to the letter (PRISCO SUO S.) could thus be read as “to the poet's friend of old”, a worthy recipient of the final works of a poet who has receded from public life.¹²⁷

Indeed, just as Martial's retirement from Rome can be seen as the act of an old man departing the literary scene, it can also be seen as a reference to the exile poetry of Ovid, who famously referred to exile as a kind of living death.¹²⁸ Death is the ultimate closural act, and by linking his preface to

¹²⁶ The death of Martial, the only contemporary account of Martial at all, is recorded in Plin. *Ep.* 3.21, itself at a closural point in the third book of the *Letters*. Johanssen (2006) 108 n.126 summarises the arguments for the publication date and editor of book 12. Shackleton Bailey (1993) 3.90 n., repeating Ker, states that the posthumous edition is a possibility. Sullivan (1991) 52-3 is cagey. The argument itself is based on the preface's claim that the book for Priscus has been written in a few days (*paucissimis diebus* 12.praef.25), and that the book is too large to have been written in this time. Such a thesis is dependent upon reading the preface literally – Statius made similar claims for celerity at *Silv.* 1.praef.12-15 which need not be taken at face value. Cf. G. Parker (2014) 119-25. I see no reason not to consider the text as extant the epigrammatist's own work especially given the closural nature of the book's ending, which I explore further below.

¹²⁷ Name games occur at the start and end of Pliny's corpus of *Letters* too, transitioning from light (*Clarus*) to dark (*Fuscus*) – R. Gibson (2015) 189.

¹²⁸ Most especially at Ov. *Pont.* 4.16.51-2, the final couplet of the final poem of Ovid's exile poetry and corpus.

themes of exilic poetry (the poverty of talent in the region, the possibilities at Rome) Martial is drawing attention to the ultimate closure of his own work.¹²⁹ On this point Johanssen draws out several allusions that Martial makes to Ovidian exile poetry – the barbarisation of his poetry (here becoming more Spanish than Roman), and the conflation of subject matter (*materia*) with poetic ability (*ingenium*) – but most striking is the poet’s emphasis on geographic distancing that appears with his discussion of the text’s audience as an *auditor*.¹³⁰ In the midst of discussing how his audience in Spain does not respond well to his poems, Martial explains that anything worthwhile in his previous work was there because “my listener dictated it” (*auditor dictavit* 12). Howell has interpreted this statement as “nostalgia for what was no longer even a possibility” but this does not adequately explain the significance of why Martial refers to *auditores* instead of *lectores* here.¹³¹ The distinction must lie, as Johanssen argues, in an allusion to Ovid’s *Epistulae ex Ponto* where the exiled elegist complains that composing without an audience is akin to dancing in darkness – there is no stimulus to do so.¹³² Like Ovid, Martial suggests that the literary scene outside the capital is not lively enough (a letter from Pliny confirms the lively *recitatio* scene) to encourage the poet to write poetry, a point which, alongside his complaints that he no longer enjoys writing, suggests a poet firmly in decline.¹³³ In some ways, Martial’s retirement to Spain represents an exile from the literary scene at Rome and an end to his literary career.

The epigrammatist also indicates that his final preface is initiating the end of his career through a series of lexical allusions to his first letter. In 12.praef. the epigrammatist shadows a number of themes from the first prose preface to highlight his supposed change of circumstances, but also to create a sense of circularity and a return to the start of his work that augments the overall atmosphere of closure at the end of the *Epigrams*. The key difference, however, is that the poet is now in Spain and not at Rome. This shift is exactly what the poet blames for his overly studious nature, which he comments is immoderate (*intemperanter* 12.praef.6), the exact opposite of the moderation (*temperamentum*) which Martial had claimed was a guiding principle of his composition at 1.praef.1-2. The *malignus interpres*, the poet’s great enemy of 1.praef.7-10, also resurfaces slightly later in the twelfth preface as the *mali* whose teeth are coated in tartar, a metaphor for their malicious criticism.¹³⁴ Most tellingly Martial

¹²⁹ Note Hinds (2007) 133 n. 58 who comments that Martial presents his departure from Rome as either an escape from the madness of the city (e.g. Mart. 12.18) or as a nightmare of banishment (12.praef.) dependent on each text’s aims.

¹³⁰ Johanssen (2006) 110-1 (*ingenium* and *materia*), 113 (*auditor*) & 119 (barbarisation).

¹³¹ Howell (1980) 103-4. Bowie (1988) 20-1 is less dismissive of the prospect of an audience than Howell. Martial also speaks of his audience as *auditores* at 7.52 & 9.81.

¹³² Johanssen (2006) 112-3. Ov. *Pont.* 4.2.30-6, cf. esp. vv.35-6: *excitat auditor studium laudataque virtus | crescit et immensum gloria calcar habet.*

¹³³ Plin. *Ep.* 6.15 records a recitation at which a separate Priscus interjects in the middle of another man’s performance. In a subsequent letter describing another recital (6.17) Pliny judges a silent audience for their lack of involvement in the refinement of the poet’s work.

¹³⁴ The criticism of the *malignus* is also physically depicted in dental hygiene in the form of a “somewhat rancid mouth” (*randiculo ore*) at Mart. 7.34.7.

bemoans that there are only a few such *mali*, but in such a small town they are a greater threat. Overall there is a sense of failure, or an inability to write epigram, and the poet's admission of his difficulty in maintaining a *bonum stomachum* (12.praef.18) feeds into this consistent interplay with his first preface. In 1.praef. the epigrammatist defined his work as light-hearted and frivolous jokes and games (e.g. 1.praef.7), but now it is a difficult labour that he must force himself to write (12.praef.24-5). His lack of a *bonum stomachum* thus makes him an inappropriate figure in his own genre, a character like the severe Cato whom he had previously lambasted and thrown out of his *theatrum* (1.praef.ep.). While the first preface makes the case for the *Epigrams*' existence and moral rectitude, the final preface lays out why the poet has come to stop writing except in special circumstances (such as his friend Priscus visiting). While this may seem to suggest that the poet is preparing to finish on a low note, the subject matter is remarkably apt for the end of a literary career, just as 1.praef. is apt for introducing the poet to his audience. The lexical intratextual allusion to 1.praef. thus serves as a method to highlight the changes in Martial's life, but also creates the sense that the twelfth book has a very specific place in the architecture of the whole collection.

Yet while the retirement to Spain evokes exile and an inversion of the original prose preface to emphasise the beginning of the end of Martial's poetic career, this retirement is not phrased in entirely depressing terms throughout the book. Indeed, Martial consistently hints that his retirement to Spain can be cast in a good light due to his literary success, a success that is shown through his judgement by private patrons. As Michael Bowie notes, there is a theme of critical judgement (both judicial and literary) throughout the book that begins in this epistle.¹³⁵ Martial's opening remarks are that he must offer a *patronium* – that is a legal defence – for his silence (12.praef.1-2), that his poetry recitals are akin to pleading in a foreign court room (8-9), that while Romans have a *iudiciorum subtilitas* (10-1) the Spanish are complete philistines (15), and that Priscus is ultimately responsible in the judgement of how Spanish the book will be (28-31). Judgement of the *Epigrams* has always been a central theme, usually with the emperor Domitian as the most principal judge in his role as *censor perpetuus*, so it is interesting that with the final Flavian's assassination and the rise of a new dynasty the focus of literary judgement has shifted back to private individuals.¹³⁶ What Martial depicts Priscus as, which he explicitly makes clear at 12.3(4), is a Maecenas, a single patron of great munificence offering singular support to the poet by providing wealth that can sustain the *otium* required for crafting poetry. Under Domitian, and up until this book, the epigrammatist has complained that no patron in his contemporary age could provide such support and become a Maecenas, which in turn meant that no contemporary poet's skill could rival that of the Augustans.¹³⁷ Martial claims, however, that Priscus was a Maecenas

¹³⁵ Bowie (1988) 20. Johanssen (2006) 116-7 describes this as a “*iudicium*-Motiv.”

¹³⁶ E.g. Mart. 1.4 & 7.8.9-10. Private individuals such as Parthenius and Apollinaris were still integral to Martial's theme of literary critique, but they were not depicted as the sole reason for and judgement of his work, instead acting as intermediaries for the emperor. Cf. Nauta (2002) 341-9 on such ‘brokerage’.

¹³⁷ Mart. 1.107, 8.55 & 11.3.

to him even when the *durus princeps* (no doubt Domitian) was in power, so it should not be assumed that financial support was so dependent upon a change of regime, but rather that the poet's attitude to his patronage and his persona as a poet has changed with the final book. No longer is he the poor poet scrounging for a new toga or cloak, but instead he receives a countryside *villa* from his patroness Marcella that evokes the Sabine farm that Horace immortalised in verse nearly a century prior.¹³⁸ While Martial proclaimed himself as a *vates* ironically at 9.praef.ep.1 to contrast with his *Kleindichtung*, here the poet is making a point about his achievement of literary *otium* which is described at 12.3(4).6 in a characteristically self-deprecating manner as *pigritia* (laziness). This *otium*, however, the aesthetic goal in the Augustan age, is inverted for Martial; as a poet of *negotium*, of clients and day-to-day life, Martial has composed within the hustle-and-bustle that poets like Horace disavowed.¹³⁹ By achieving literary *otium*, then, Martial marks the end of his epigrammatic career – he can no longer write epigram, nor does he want to. Indeed, he is too bored in his secession and craves the excitement of Rome, which had proffered so many themes for his poetry (12.praef.12-5). Martial thus inverts the model of literary *otium*, and uses it to signify the end of his career as an epigrammatist, hinting at the closure that he strives towards in the final preface and book of his corpus.

To bring about this turn towards a life of *otium* Martial has to leave the city, and his decision to retire to Spain is contrasted with the imperial city not in the preface alone but across the whole book. Rome continues to be at the centre of Martial's subject matter for the book, but it is always represented as a foil to the *otium* of provincial life and shown up to be a worse place to live. In short, Martial juxtaposes Spain with Rome to suggest that his retirement to Spain is not a depressing exile but a happy ending. The contrast between Rome and Spain is immediately made in the preface – the difference between the Spanish and Romans is their ability to judge good poetry (12.praef.10-1 & 15), and the poet is worried about sending a book to the city that speaks like a Spaniard rather than a Spanish citizen of Rome (30-1).¹⁴⁰ At the outset of the book, then, Spain is compared unfavourably to the Eternal City, but that soon changes. The book includes a few poems that refer to Spain in some manner, but the majority of epigrams are set in Rome itself or continue themes that have taken place in previous books.¹⁴¹ Spanishness even leaks into traditionally Roman topics – at 12.57.9 the Spanish word *balux* (gold-dust) spills over into a discussion of Nomentum, and at 12.63 the poet complains about a plagiarist

¹³⁸ Mart. 7.36 (request for a new cloak), 8.21 & 9.49 (celebration of the gift of a toga) & 12.31 (Marcella's *villa*). Hor. *Ep.* 1.16.5-16. The trope of the *locus amoenus* as a place to which the poet seceded continued to be a trope, albeit passé, in Martial's day as Aper's joke at Tac. *Dial.* 9.6 indicates.

¹³⁹ Roman (2010) 89: "In the ancient setting, Martial's aggressively urban poetics presents a paradoxical aspect: a poet requires *otium*, a space apart from the city's uproar, yet the epigrammatist produces a mode of poetry premised on speed, impromptu wit, and the jagged, surprising texture of urban life."

¹⁴⁰ Bowie (1988) 30.

¹⁴¹ Bowie (1988) 4-5 & Howell (1998) 179. Spain is a setting at Mart. 12.1-3, 5, 9, 18, 21, 31, 44, 60, 62-3, 92 & 98, and Rome at 12.8, 11, 14-5, 24-5, 28-9, 32, 34, 36, 38, 42, 48, 55, 57, 59, 65, 72, 74, 77 & 83. The countryside in general (traditionally juxtaposed with city life) is depicted at 12.1, 14, 16, 18, 25, 33, 57, 60 & 72.

of his work living in Corduba, a Spanish twist on book 1's Fidentinus cycle.¹⁴² In general there seems to be an active negotiation between the various advantages and disadvantages at Rome and Spain. The province is slower, more boring, but less pretentious than the city which, although an exciting place to create literature, is wracked with moral flaws (such as the 'horror' of marriage between two men) and constant noise.¹⁴³ Indeed, an anonymous character depicted returning to Rome after an absence of fifteen years (five times more than Martial's) is greeted by a mob of farmers, weavers, foul-smelling cobblers, the lame, and those fresh from oral sex (both male and female) – an unappealing rabble which the epigrammatist quips was not worth returning for.¹⁴⁴ This is a return, perhaps, that the poet presents himself not being eager to enact. He sends the book to Rome at 12.2(3) as his proxy, remarking on the tears with which his old friend Stella would receive it (v.16), but closes the book with a boat carrying Instantius Rufus to Spain. The poet moves from a desire for the city borne from nostalgia to a rediscovery of its less salubrious features, and so teases his friend Juvenal at 12.18 with the benefits of rural, provincial living (so denigrated in the preface) before moving onto a more damning catalogue of urban problems.¹⁴⁵ The only reason Martial claims for ever wanting to return to the city at 12.68 is if the trouble of the urban *salutatio* follows him abroad, and while he bemoans the culture of Spain in 12.praef. his patroness Marcella is praised as a welcome alternative to city sophistication at 12.21. Martial has indeed depicted his retirement to Spain from the city and an end to his work, but the reader is left with the suggestion that the authorial persona is actually content with this outcome.

Indeed, this progression towards an understanding of the poet's retirement to Spain as a fortunate event creates a meaningful sense of closure for the book, a closure which is most enacted by the final poem of the book.¹⁴⁶ While there is always a potential for works to stop instead of ending (to use Don Fowler's language), it is the final poem of book 12 that rounds off the closural attitude of the final preface and closes the whole of the *Epigrams*:¹⁴⁷

*Baetis olivifera crinem redimite corona,
aurea qui nitidis vellera tinguis aquis;
quem Bromius, quem Pallas amat; cui rector aquarum
Albula navigerum per freta pandit iter:
ominibus laetis vestras Instantius oras
intret, et hic populis ut prior annus eat.*

¹⁴² Cf. n. 64 above.

¹⁴³ Mart. 12.42 (marriage of two men), 68 (noise at Rome).

¹⁴⁴ Mart. 12.59.

¹⁴⁵ Similarities between this poem, and indeed this book, and Juvenal's corpus (especially Juv. 3) have been noted by Howell (1998) 176 & 185. Cf. Colton (1991) *passim*.

¹⁴⁶ Pace Bowie (1988) 417 who considers the whole poem a sad reflection of the epigrammatist's former skills: "the whole poem seems distinctly to lack warmth or enthusiasm, but, as 12.62 also demonstrates, M. seems not to be at his best or most original in these more serious literary environments."

¹⁴⁷ Fowler (1989) 80, the seminal article on closure in classical literature.

*non ignorat, onus quod sit succedere Macro:
qui sua metitur pondera, ferre potest (12.98)*

Baetis, hair wreathed with an olive-bearing garland,
You who dye fleeces golden with glinting waters;
Whom Bromius, whom Pallas loves, for whom the ruler of waters,
The Albula, unfolds a path navigable through the straits:
May Instantius enter your shores with prosperous omens
And may this year pass for its peoples like the former.
He is not ignorant of what a task it is to succeed Macer:
He who measures his burdens can bear them.

The poem itself charts the journey of Instantius Rufus from Italy (Albula being another name for the Tiber) to Spain (here the Baetis, the ancient name for the Guadalquivir river) to take over governorship of the province of Hispania Tarraconensis from Macer.¹⁴⁸ Clearly honorific in scope, the poem is also full of closural motifs.

The first of these motifs is the *corona* that wreathes the personified Baetis. The *corona* itself was a crown of leaves, here evoking the garlands of the same name worn by poets at poetic festivals but was also a well-established closural pun on the *coronis*, the sign used to mark the end of a work on a Graeco-Roman scroll.¹⁴⁹ While the olive-leaf *corona* worn by Baetis is a festival garland rather than a poetic wreath, as Bowie notes, a garland is still a garland and the pun on *coronis* is still present.¹⁵⁰ The *corona* here serves as a metaphorical wreath for the end of the book (itself Hispanic like the Baetis), tying the collection together and preparing the reader for its final moments. Furthermore, given that Martial refers to the Floralia in his first preface (1.praef.16-17 & 1.praef.ep.1), festival games which celebrated a flower goddess herself garlanded with flowers, this final poem's depiction of a garlanded river goddess encircles the whole corpus with a balanced ring composition that book-ends the collection with twin wreaths. For Martial the *corona* is a *coronis* for this particular book as well as a reminder of how far the reader has travelled through the corpus to get there.

¹⁴⁸ This Macer may be the same Macer as at Mart. 10.18(17) & 10.78. On the present poem, see Shackleton Bailey (1993) 3.169 & Sullivan (1991) 53-4, the latter of whom sees the close of the book as so abrupt as to suggest a posthumous editor. Questions of editorship aside, I will focus here on how this poem works to cement the book's role as the end of the *Epigrams*.

¹⁴⁹ Roman (2001) 133 on the *coronae roseae* that mark the end of the *Xenia* (Mart. 13.127). Martial also uses garlands to indicate the approach of the book's end at 7.89, 8.82 (an oblique reference to the *corona civica*) & 11.89. Note that each of the collections of poems that make up the *Palatine Anthology* is described by its editor as a garland of flowers, with each poet metaphorically represented by a different bloom (AP 4). Cf. Höschele (2013) 249-51 on the closural role of the *coronis* in the *Carmina Priapea*.

¹⁵⁰ Bowie (1988) 413-4. Bowie notes that a poetic garland appears at 12.52 (p. 246), but does not focus on its metapoetic significance.

The poet then moves on to describe the act of Rufus' ship travelling from Rome to Spain. The act of journeying (particularly by sea) has metapoetic connotations for the act of composing poetry, but this exact journey from Rome to Spain has precedent at the end of Martial's tenth book.¹⁵¹ In epigram 10.104, Martial bids his book to accompany his friend Flavus across the sea to Spain, an act which Regina Höschle has shown to be an act of false closure in preparing the reader for the poet's return to Spain, which does not actually occur until book 12.¹⁵² There are significant differences in the poem, especially when 12.praef. is included in the analysis. Most importantly, at 12.98 Martial makes no reference to his book leaving for Spain, whereas at 10.104.1 he emphatically stresses that the book is to leave as Flavus' companion (*i nostro comes, i, libelle, Flavo*). Instead, the poet simply hopes that Instantius Rufus' journey to his homeland goes unimpeded. The book, which Martial has already sent to the city of Rome with Priscus at 12.praef. and 12.2(3), instead stays in Italy. The book thus becomes an observer, watching and describing Rufus' journey to Spain (or rather his exit from Italy) whilst not sharing it. Indeed, when considered with the closural sequence of the book, there is a sense of abandonment – 12.94 playfully remarks that Martial cannot write poetry when Tuca out-competes him at every genre, reminding the reader of the concern raised at 12.praef.8-26 that the epigrammatist is no longer able to compose good poetry. By the end of book 12 there is no place for Martial's epigram anymore, which is a genre the author situates firmly at Rome. As such when the poet bids Rufus a safe journey from Italy to Spain the book cannot sail along with the poem's passenger as it once did. Instead the book is left behind in Italy, and the *Epigrams* come to a close. Rufus sails off into the distance, but the reader and book are left behind. The hope for a prosperous future for Rufus and his province's people (including Martial) is a future that the reader and book are invited to view from afar, but not to see in person.

Furthermore, when read in light of the poem's position at the end of Martial's corpus the final line helps to round off the whole poem with a metapoetic statement that is reminiscent of the end of book 1. Martial's final *sententia* that "he who measures his burdens can bear them" refers to Rufus' potential feelings of inferiority when comparing himself to the previous governor of his province, but is worded in such a way as to apply quite generally to any task. In particular, this poem reminds the loyal reader of Martial's *Epigrams* of the final poem of book 1, which remarks that "for whomever it is not enough to have read one hundred epigrams there is never, Caedicianus, enough of a bad thing."¹⁵³ 1.118 is a general comment on knowing the limits of taste and reading, and when paired with 2.1, which states that while a *liber* could bear (*poteras... ferre* v.1) three hundred poems no one would read it, places the ephemeral poetry of the *Epigrams* into a discourse of weights and measures. This discourse

¹⁵¹ Zissos (2004) 416 discusses the *topos* of the poetic composition as a naval voyage, which I also explore in chapter 4.

¹⁵² Höschle (2013) 258-62 makes a persuasive argument for the linear reading of books 10-12 which focuses on the poet's strong affirmation that book 10 is his *decimus libellus* (Mart. 10.2.1).

¹⁵³ Mart. 1.118.

is firmly evoked at 12.98.8 with the same language as before (*ferre potest*) but this time in the context of a man's duty which is physically weighed out (*metitur pondera*).¹⁵⁴ The implication is that just as Instantius Rufus knows the weight of the task ahead of him, so too does Martial understand the weight of his own task, and that this is a good time to finish. When taken together the closural statement on measurements, the image of a ship sailing with the book left behind, and the presence of a garland all combine to create a sense of true closure for the book and the corpus. As with the other prose prefaces, 12.praef. lays the ground for the book as a whole, in this case working to create an overall sense of closure by separating the poet from his work; Martial remains at Bilbilis and sends his book to Rome, where it stays now that its author has fully retired to Spain.

The final poem thus forms a frame for the entire book with 12.praef., and highlights a series of oppositions that help to develop a feeling of ultimate closure. While the book begins with the poet sending his book to Rome along with his close friend Priscus, it ends with Instantius Rufus' return journey to Spain which the book can only watch and report rather than taking part in. As Rufus sails off into the distance the book and its reader are left on the Italian shore, reminded of the happy future that awaits its passenger (and by extension Martial) in Spain. As the poet has highlighted in the preface and 12.94 there is no place for his production of epigrams at Rome anymore. In Spain he lives in a state of literary exile, far removed from the city that once provided him with so much subject matter. When Martial's persona returns to stalk the streets of the Eternal City, however, he does not leave his reader with a flattering depiction. The overall negative comparison to Spain reveals a suggestion that while the countryside can be dull and boring in comparison to the city, it is less pretentious and immoral, and becomes the perfect place for a retirement. Martial combines these literary *topoi* – the town versus the country, the poet in exile, and achieving literary *otium* – to artfully construct a sense of finality; the poet argues that he is retiring to the countryside, but that this state of affairs suits him. The preface thus constitutes the beginning of this literary end, acting as an introduction to the introduction of the poet's finale. Its artful interaction with the rest of the book's themes, and its self-conscious reworking of the concepts from 1.praef. also reveals an understanding that these books of epigrams all form part of an overall corpus with its own internal narrative. By drawing the reader's mind back to the corpus' overall beginning, Martial applies a pleasing circularity to the whole oeuvre that promotes an overall cohesive unity. The closing *corona* that coincides with the *coronis* on the ancient scroll at 12.98 thus signals an overall end to Martial's literary output, and encircles the whole collection with a wreath of olive-leaves.

¹⁵⁴ OLD *s.v.* *pondus* 3 – *pondera* can refer to the physical weight of the object as well as the weights used to measure an object in the scales. OLD *s.v.* *metior* 1a & b – *metitur* is used for measuring size and length, but also poetic metrics.

Coda: Verse Prefaces in Martial?

As I have demonstrated, each of Martial's prose prefaces serves to establish the individuality of the books to which they are attached, while also reinforcing a sense of cohesion to the wider collection by taking advantage of their liminal role as peritexts. The prose *epistulae* self-identify as texts *extra ordinem paginarum* and before the *prima pagina* (9.praef.1-2 & 2.praef.15-6) and have a different physical composition to the body of verse *epigrammata* they precede. This ensures that while the prose prefaces introduce the themes that are central to the books they announce, they also remain separate in some way from the main text itself. Throughout this chapter I have argued not only that the prose prefaces utilise a fluid style of paratextuality (behaving in a manner that slides between textuality and paratextuality) but also that they help to create an understanding of each book of the *Epigrams* as individual entities that belong to a larger twelve-book whole. For this concluding section, however, I cast a brief glance towards the books that do not contain prose letters to consider how the *epistulae* compare to the other books' introductory material. As noted above, each book of the *Epigrams* begins with an introductory sequence of poems irrespective of whether or not they open with a prose letter.¹⁵⁵ That the prefatory epigram was considered a sub-genre of epigram from the start of the genre's anthologisation is demonstrated by their inclusion by Kephala as the fourth book of the *Palatine Anthology* to preserve the openings of the garlands of Meleager, Phillip, and Agathias (*AP* 4.1-3 respectively).¹⁵⁶ A brief examination of the key differences and similarities between Martial's prose prefaces and what could be termed his verse prefaces will serve to draw out and summarise the key points that I have made in this chapter. As I will ultimately conclude, Martial opens each book with an introductory series of individual texts, but it is his prose prefaces that draw attention to their peritextuality by their very nature as letters in prose form.

Each of Martial's books that does not include a prose preface opens with an introductory poem or set of poems which have the role of setting the scene and overall tone of the book. Thus 3.1-2 and 3.4 explicitly tell the reader that the book is coming from Cisalpine Gaul in a manner similar to 12.praef. & 12.2(3).¹⁵⁷ Epigram 5.1-2 explains the lack of obscenity in the book in a similar way to 8.praef. and 8.1. The introductory poems in the other books similarly lay out the distinct feel of their individual books, highlighting the praise of Domitian (4.1-3, 6.1-4), the emperor's anticipated return to Rome (7.1-8), the act of editing/revising the book (10.1-2), and the work's overall Saturnalian atmosphere respectively (11.1-6). The poems that act most similarly to the prose prefaces, however, are to be found outside the corpus of the *Epigrams* in Martial's other epigrammatic collections, setting the specific

¹⁵⁵ See pp. 164-5 above. Cf. Henriksen (2012) 3-4 & 4 n. 10.

¹⁵⁶ All references to 'prefatory epigrams' in this section refer to poems at the start of Martial's books that are not attached to prefaces. Unless otherwise stated I am not referring to 1.praef.ep. or 9.praef.ep., which earlier I referred to as 'prefatory epigrams' as epigrams placed within prose prefaces rather than epigrams acting instead of prose prefaces.

¹⁵⁷ On the similarities between the opening of books 3 & 12, see Fusi (2006) 106 & 111-2, who focuses on Martial's wish not to appear foolish or barbaric in his writings from beyond Italy.

scene for the subsequent work and explaining to the reader how the work is to be approached. In the *Liber Spectaculorum*, the book depicting the inaugural games of the Colosseum, Martial first focuses on the majesty of the building itself (*Spec.* 1-2) and the diversity of its crowd (*Spec.* 3), before moving onto the ejection of informants from the city in exile (*Spec.* 4-5) as a preparation for the spectacles themselves (*Spec.* 6(5)).¹⁵⁸ In the *Liber Spectaculorum*, a series of epigrams thus set the scene of the overall book by specifying the location and event for every other poem in the book (the inaugural games of the Colosseum) along with the overall theme of imperial might and subjugation of the world (*Spec.* 3). The reader's gaze is invited to sweep across the amphitheatre itself, gradually focusing in on the arena floor. Similarly, the initial poems of the *Xenia* and *Apophereta* establish the overall mood and purpose of the collections – to serve as poetic representations of gifts (or even their replacement, quips the poet at 13.3.5-6) given to guests at Saturnalian banquets.¹⁵⁹ The reader is given instructions on how to read and/or use the collection (13.3 & 14.2) before the list of poems with their individual *lemmata* opens up. Like the prose prefaces, the verse prefaces to the *Xenia* and *Apophereta* are set out in a significantly different manner, their absence of *lemmata* physically separating them from what follows. They are not, however, emphatically stated as belonging beyond the *ordo paginarum*. In each of these books the introductory role played by the prose preface is given to the prefatory epigrams instead as a way of introducing the reader to the book's setting and providing them with any necessary instructions on how to approach the text. In short, where prose prefaces are not present the epigrammatist employs a kind of verse preface instead.

Nevertheless, there is a key difference between prose and verse prefaces in Martial (besides the obvious difference of their form as prose or verse texts): their paratextuality. While Martial stresses that his *epistulae* are located *extra ordinem paginarum* there is no such emphasis of the separation of his verse prefaces from the rest of the book – these poems are to be considered very much a part of the text, *intra ordinem paginarum*. These poems are physically connected to the rest of the text, within the *prima pagina*, and conceptually form a strongly connected part of the book's hermeneutic chain. By separating out his prose prefaces, by contrast, Martial creates a conceptual distance between prose preface and verse epigram, and creates a paratextual zone. While the verse prefaces are peritextual in that they physically border the edge of the text, they are not separated from the rows of columns that enforce a sense of unity to the collection, nor are they visibly different to the other poems in their layout as poems

¹⁵⁸ The text of the *Liber Spectaculorum* is admittedly mangled, but the introductory sequence survives mostly intact and its order until *Spec.* 4 is uncontroversial – cf. Coleman (2006) xxi-xxv.

¹⁵⁹ Mart. 13.1-2 have long been regarded as poems out of their place, with 13.3 serving as the 'true' verse preface to the book. So Shackleton Bailey (1993) 3.170 n.1 & Leary (2001) 37 following Ker (1950) 23-4. While Mart. 13.2 is obviously out of place, I find 13.1 of such similarity to 14.1 to not deny its inclusion in the final book, given that both poems are concerned with dice games at Saturnalia (the setting for both books), and that 14.1 is not considered out of place. Ker's comment at p. 24 that the start of book 13 is announced shortly before 13.4 in MS Q, which normally occurs in this MS at the end of each book, however, does cause potential issues, but is not taken by Ker as a reason to eject 13.3 from the text too. In my opinion, 13.2 should be omitted, with 13.1 serving a parallel role to 14.1 (and thus 13.3 to 14.2).

instead of prose. When Martial writes prose prefaces he enforces some degree of separation between text and peritext, and divides the two from one another in a distinct way. This separation helps the poet to make his first preface an introduction to the whole work and 12.praef. an introduction to its end, to help 2.praef. bridge the conceptual gap between the first two books, and to further emphasise the key points of the middle prefaces (8's adulation of Domitian and lack of obscenity, 9's role as a lens through which to view the whole book). The themes of these prose prefaces are as a part of the subsequent book as their verse counterparts', but they are also removed from the text on a physical and conceptual level. Indeed, this detachment from the flow of poetry offers the epigrammatist an opportunity to step back and reflect on the nature of his work, and make firm authorial statements about his oeuvre. It is the prose nature of Martial's prose prefaces that makes them stand out to the reader, and it is this that makes them indispensable to the epigrammatist as agents introducing the key concepts of their books and his whole work.

Overall it is this structural difference between prose and verse prefaces in Martial that creates such a marked distinction for the reader. The introductory material for each book, whether verse or prose, always works towards establishing the overall setting and central themes for each book. The prose letters, however, stand out as slightly separate entities to the rest of the book, peritexts on the fringes of the physicality of the scroll/book in the reader's hand. As the first item on the page/scroll, the prose prefaces play a powerful role in crafting a concept of cohesion for the rest of the book. Each prose preface has a specific role that is individual to its book, but just as each subsection of this chapter has focused on each letter's peculiarities, each subsection has also revealed a broad level of consistency in Martial's prose poetics. These prefaces do not stand as vestigial remnants of individual *libelli* sent to win over rich patrons, but as literary texts through which to read each book and the collection. The *epistulae* function as key markers of the overall macrostructure of the *Epigrams*, a textual architecture that is developed as the books are read in linear sequence. Indeed, the level to which Martial's peritexts root themselves in the text they precede and their own positionality in the corpus shows a strong self-awareness of their role on the fringes of the text. It is here that Martial begins his programme of blurring the boundaries between text and peritext, between text and non-text, and between individual books to craft a sense of a cohesive corpus. What results is far from a structureless mess, however. Each book represents a finely crafted unit that slots into its position in the twelve-book sequence, slowly building towards the end that is first announced at 12.praef. The prefatory epistles are thus introductions not just to their individual book, lenses through which to interpret them (as with 9.praef.), but also key links in the sequential chain of Martial's *Epigrams*.

Conclusion: The Difference the Book Makes

The question that arises, then, is whether the Milan Papyrus is representative of this intermediate stage [between inscriptional and literary epigram], a mechanical gathering of epigrams by one or more poets, or whether it was intended to be read as a literary object composed of multiple individual parts, that is, as a poetry book. The answer is important because it affects fundamentally the privileges we may choose to grant ourselves in reading these poems... whether we are dealing with an aesthetically organized collection that is more than the sum of its parts, where meaning resides as much in the interrelationship of the epigrams as in individual poems. (Gutzwiller 2005b, 288. My emphasis.)

Although there is a gap of around three hundred years between Martial and Posidippus (who wrote in the third century BC), many of the questions I have dealt with in this thesis have also been asked of the Greek epigrammatist's recently published Milan Papyrus. Whenever a book of short poems is discovered and analysed the immediate questions that arise concern whether the text is a singly-authored collection, whether the poems were composed for the book itself or merely collated at a later date, and, in the latter case, who that compiler might have been. Many of these questions are unknowable – the language of authorial intentionality is quite rightly becoming less prevalent in current scholarship, but it is difficult to discuss the arrangement of a book of epigrams without discussing the role of the author in the text. At the very least, however, it is clear that what remains is a contexture, a collection of texts compiled by some hand and presented as a collection. As Karen Gutzwiller's chapter title ('The Literariness of the Milan Papyrus or "What Difference a Book?"') suggests, there is so much at stake when one asks how the interpretation of a poem changes when it is read in the context of a book or in isolation. This thesis has consistently argued that Martial's *Epigrams* should be recontextualised as a contexture, a text carefully arranged by the poet to help encourage a sequential reading, and to ensure that one can read a book of epigrams as a coherent and unified poetry book (assuming they choose to do so).

The key hermeneutic problem of a book of epigrams is also its solution. Each epigram is a highly individualised poem that is nonetheless thrown together with a number of other epigrams and named a book. But this very compilation into the contexture lends them some structural unity, which a canny poet writing in a literary tradition that lauded inter- and intratextual repetitions could exploit to maximum effect. Every poem in the *Epigrams* has a trifold existence, which, while sometimes straining the book's overall unity, helps to create an overarching sense of belonging to the specific place in which it is found in the corpus. Each epigram is thus an individual poem (but not a poem in complete isolation), as well as a poem with a specific place within a book, and a poem with a specific place within the *Epigrams* as a whole (and the wider corpus of Martial's work).¹ Martial's individual epigrams exist in

¹ Just as the epigram itself is a poem composed of lines of words, themselves consisting of strings of letters.

multiple hermeneutic states at the same time. However, reading each epigram within the specific context of one of these three states does not destroy its other hermeneutic possibilities. Like one of Martial's double entendres, which encourage various interpretations of the same text, the point is not to isolate one reading and claim it is more 'correct' than the other, but to enjoy how these readings overlap and nuance the poem. Thus when Martial speaks of the planks of the *Argo* at 7.19, the reader is not expected to think to themselves that because a metapoetic allusion to the composition of the *Argonautica* is possible in this epigram that they should not ever read 'Argo' as 'Argo'. Instead, Martial's ship is both the 'Argo' and the '*Argonautica*' at the same time, enjoying a dual hermeneutic existence.

The problem with this kind of reading, as William Fitzgerald has acknowledged, is the potential for the reader to read every epigram in light of each new poem, and for their understanding of the poem (and the book) to constantly change "in their shifting constellations."² As I have argued in my first two chapters, however, the *Epigrams* can retain some sense of order in a disordered text by their (explicit and implicit) invitation to be read in a sequential order. Martial's expressed desire to be read from 'cover to cover' (*perlegere*), his insults against those who would skip out the poems they find boring, and his jokes that expressly rely upon the reader's sequential progress through the book itself (as with his mock warnings to the *matrona* at 3.68 and 3.86) all establish a general recommendation that the *Epigrams* should be read in sequence. Martial's books do their best to define their Model Reader as a willing and helpful *lector studiosus*, doing the poet's bidding and respecting his *fama* as the author of the books, and part of this is to read the books linearly. As my introductory chapter argues as well, the physical format of the bookroll brings with it a stronger degree of sequentiality than the modern codex book through which a reader can more easily skip. As such, the reader's ideation of the book's unity, their cumulative reading of the text that updates their horizon of expectations as they move sequentially through the text, is less chaotic and random than a first glance might suggest. If nothing else, this sequential progression through the text places some limits on an otherwise limitless string of interpretations.

It was in my third and fourth chapters that I pushed a sequential reading of book 7 to argue that this *libellus* is a thematically cohesive unit. The emperor Domitian, and his anticipated return from the frontier dispute with the Sarmatians in the winter of AD 92, forms the thematic contextualisation for the whole book, and is a subject to which the epigrammatist returns (or alludes) throughout its course. As the book progresses the reader is reminded of the emperor's divine and military powers, and his development into a Jupiter-on-earth in increasingly hyperbolic discourse. Even poems that repeat the motif of water throughout the book continue this epic depiction of the emperor by creating a backdrop for the heroic *nostos*, taking advantage of the Danube frontier's proximity to the area through which the Argonauts sailed on their own epic return voyage. The emperor appears in his role as a deity at the

² Fitzgerald (2007) 69.

book's beginning and end (as well as regularly throughout the book) to frame the whole text's thematic progression and create a sense of returning to where the reader started. Indeed, in the final poem of the book Martial asks Domitian, watching over the city from on high, to consider his whole *libellus* and judge it for himself, much like the reader who can now enjoy the panoramic splendour of book 7 in its entirety. Various themes progress through book 7, but it is the figure of the emperor that is used to bind the whole together with a thematic unity specific to book 7 itself.

In the last chapter of this thesis I ended with beginnings, considering how Martial's paratextual prose prefaces craft a sense of the wider corpus of Martial's *Epigrams* even as they establish their book's specific identity. The prose prefaces to books 1, 2, 8, 9, and 12 all promote themselves as paratextual elements, using this level of separation from the text to introduce the epigrams that follow. Nevertheless, through the introduction of key themes, and sometimes the inclusion of prefatory epigrams within the prose prefaces themselves, they challenge the very boundaries they establish. Like Martial's individual epigrams, the prefaces 'bleed' over into the subsequent poems, preparing the reader for what is to follow, but (as in the case of 2.praef.) they can also act as a transitional element between the books themselves. As sequential links in the series of books in Martial's *Epigrams* (or as a stepping stone between the *Liber Spectaculorum* and *Epigrams* 1 in 1.praef.'s case), these prefaces help to craft a sense of 'corpus' even as they introduce the idea of 'book' to the reader. As with each of Martial's poems in the *Epigrams*, the prefaces have a trifold existence, standing as their own isolated text, as an integral unit to the book in which they are found, and as an item with a specific place within the wider corpus. Martial deliberately problematizes how paratextual (and textual) his prose prefaces are, but he embraces the manifold existence of each of his textual elements in the *Epigrams* to craft a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The epigrammatist is constantly frustrating and challenging the borders he creates, but they are still there however tenuous they might appear.

Overall this thesis has progressed from a study of reading the sequence in a book of epigrams towards the book itself, and then to the corpus as a whole, charting a course through the *Epigrams* to argue that these books of seemingly-random and discordant poems can create a thematically unified whole. Nevertheless, I do not wish to say that every poem in Martial's *Epigrams* has an 'obvious' connection to the epigrams that surround it. At times epigrams are placed in such a way as to frustrate any sense of obvious unity within the text, and can create an overwhelming sense of uncertainty and disunity for the reader.³ Instead, what I have argued is that Martial has carefully structured his books to produce a series of interlocking themes that produce a thematic progression across his books, inviting the reader towards a sequential reading of his text to see a kind of overarching unity to the work that binds its constituent poems together regardless of their direct thematic similarity. By highlighting key topics for the book (in book 7 Domitian's return, in book 9 statues, and in book 12 the end of the corpus,

³ I discuss the 'non-sequitur' and its impact on the unity of a text in chapter 1.

for instance), Martial creates central motifs for his individual *libelli* around which the rest of his poems revolve. Martial acknowledges that some readers do not wish to engage in a sequential reading, and that certain readers will pick and choose their way through the *Epigrams*, but crucially he states that this is an incorrect way for the Model Reader to move through the text. Each poem has its own specific positionality within the book, and thus within the corpus as well. Excising these poems from their original context dramatically changes how the reader engages with and interprets the individual epigram and the collection as a whole.

In particular this thesis has aimed to recontextualise Martial's individual poems within the context of this larger whole. In essence, I have been trying to credit the author for his work in creating a careful sequence of poems that rewards a sequential reading, rather than viewing the *Epigrams* as some kind of haphazardly arranged collection of the poet's 'greatest hits'. Even if Martial himself did not arrange the *Epigrams* (i.e. some editor posthumously rearranged his work), the epigrams evidence a careful arrangement. Indeed, as I have repeatedly argued over the course of this thesis, many of the poems suggest an understanding of the book (and corpus) at their very moment of composition – various poems make reference to specific book numbers (both of the current book and other *libelli* within the corpus), the work's arrangement, and ideal reading practices. The reader is still the primary agent in interpreting the text, bringing their own assumptions and personal experiences to the text in a process of mediation with each epigram, but it is the author who has carefully guided the reader down a specific path of reading (and thus its interpretation). By following Martial's insistence that the Model Reader progresses through the text in its entirety from beginning to end, the potentially limitless chain of associations between every epigram in the corpus is immediately limited, and helps to create a sense of each poem's specific position within the book in which it is found. The book has a significant impact on the interpretation of each epigram, providing the reader with a larger context for its content, but it is the author's careful arrangement of these poems within that book that ensures the hermeneutic possibility of a unified book of epigrams.

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