UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Martial and the Poetics of Popular Consumption

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Classics

by

Elliott Gene Piros

2019

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Elliott Gene Piros

Doctor of Philosophy in Classics

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Francesca Katherine Martelli, Co-Chair

Professor Amy Ellen Richlin, Co-Chair

My dissertation argues that, in addition to their thematic content, the form of epigrams written by Martial expresses an understanding of four phenomena that were central to Imperial Roman consumer experience: buying, gift-giving, the extension of credit, and deceptive advertising. A Hispano-Roman poet who wrote over one thousand five hundred epigrams and compiled them into structurally innovative volumes for a general readership, Martial has drawn attention in recent decades for the realism and materialism of his work, qualities that distinguish him from other Roman authors who wrote in a first-person voice. Martial reveals a world of venal calculation submerged in social life and inconsistent with more idealizing notions of exchange and communal bonds. His poetry also tirelessly sifts through the accumulated wealth of empire, indulging in descriptions of

luxurious and everyday consumer goods. Scholars have variously interpreted this departure from established poetic interests as historical evidence for the precarious and degraded mentality of free but impoverished individuals; a symptom of the cultural milieu surrounding holidays such as the Saturnalia, with Martial as an elevated example of the *scurra* or court jester; a rhetorical strategy by a client of independent means who used exaggerated talk of poverty to secure publicity for his literary project from wealthier patrons; the development of a new meta-poetic language that, despite its ostensible disinterest in the immaterial immortality of poetry, nevertheless enhances the poetic qualities of Martial's verse (with "poetic" defined here in opposition to ephemeral socio-economic advantage); and as an effort to record in poetry the texture of urban life under the Flavians, in a city that had internalized the contours and contradictions of a global empire.

While previous studies that link the compositional dynamics of epigrams and collections of epigrams to the juxtapositions and paradoxes of urban life have focused on space and social attitudes, my project focuses on a new area: the economic institutions that structured consumption in Martial's day. I begin with the purchase of commodities with cash. Martial highlights the possibility for coins to be both functionally identical numerical counters and totally individual configurations of matter, no two alike. In the movement between these two possibilities, I locate an aesthetic paradigm that appears throughout the corpus of epigrams, even in poems that have no obvious concern with cash. Next, I turn to the use of tickets in gift lotteries, small pieces of cheap material allotted selectively or sometimes tossed into crowds at private or imperial benefactions, to be exchanged later for actual gifts. Martial's depiction of these lots provides the key to understanding the tension

between accumulation and release that informs so many of his poems. Next, I show that for Martial, the primary social antagonism of credit, a term I use to encompass loans with and without interest, is a disjuncture in time between giving and reciprocating. The feeling of being out of joint resurfaces in epigrams wherein Martial complains that he lacks time to write epigrams; that is, he writes about not having time of his own to write. Foregrounding the importance of time in relations of credit allows Martial to nurture throughout his corpus an impossible double dream for communal ownership and time that is truly his own. In my final chapter, I explore a category of masking substances in the epigrams that I call goop, stuff that is smeared onto or builds up residually on objects and people. In the many references to goop made by Martial, we find fantasies of ownership, aspirations to move up in society, and the commemoration of dead people. We also find a rhetoric of deception that allows for the false appearances contrived by goop to nevertheless say something truthful about an individual or thing. By arguing that the smearing of objects and people with goop provides a material analog to verbal practices such as false advertisement, I conclude with a model for consumer fantasy that sustains gift-giving, buying, and borrowing as we find them described by Martial.

The dissertation of Elliott Gene Piros is approved.

Alex C. Purves

John P. Bodel

Amy Ellen Richlin, Committee Co-Chair

Francesca Katherine Martelli, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2019

For my parents, who showed me that dreams are possible

And for you:

transtiberinus ambulator,

qui pallentia sulphurata fractis

permutat vitreis

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Acknowledgements

More than anything, the city of Los Angeles has inspired this dissertation, both as a presentation of the contemporary moment and as a place to think through memories from a time before I lived here.

In the Southland, UCLA, where my students over the years have challenged me to make the study of antiquity matter to people whose lives intersect and diverge with mine in so many unexpected ways, has been inexpressibly supportive and stimulating.

My home in the Department of Classics has always felt like a home. Thank you especially to Francesca Martelli, Bob Gurval, Alex Purves, Amy Richlin, Brent Vine, Lydia Spielberg, Kathryn Morgan, Giulia Sissa, and David Blank. Rebecca Langlands, Shane Butler, and Mario Telò have all been formative for this project. Conversations with Andre Matlock are behind some thoughts contained here, the good ones at least.

Thank you also to John Bodel of Brown University, and to everyone at the University of Puget Sound: Aislinn, Bill, David, and Eric. You set me on the right course.

Thank you to Danny and Megan. Without you, I would not be here. Thank you to Grant and Miranda. Someday I want to be like both of you.

Thank you most of all to Ben, who showed me the overlook.

Vita

Elliott Gene Piros obtained a BA with honors in Classical Languages and Literature from the University of Puget Sound in 2012. He entered the PhD program in the Department of Classics at UCLA in 2012, obtaining a MA in Classics from UCLA in 2015. He anticipates obtaining a PhD in Classics from UCLA in June 2019.

Elliott Gene Piros has taught extensively at UCLA for the Department of Classics between 2013 and 2019.

Introduction

This dissertation describes how Martial's epigrams are informed by experiences that can be called economic. Anyone who reads Martial will notice, in more or less stark contrast with other Latin literature, a preponderance of ignoble themes: buying and selling sex, books, and other consumer objects, scrounging for loans and gifts, feeling anxiety over one's position in a world of unequal, imperfectly reciprocated exchanges, carping at individuals higher and lower in the Roman social hierarchy, and tactlessly revealing a world of venal calculation submerged beneath prevailing ideologies. To offer a new model for interpreting Martial's realism and materialism, I argue that gift-giving, buying, and lending appear in his work as poetic forms as well as leitmotifs. By unpacking the drives, competing logics, and sensations of these activities as they appear in the *epigrammaton libelli*, I find a language that also articulates the structure and feeling of epigrams. From the perspective of the scholarship on Martial, my dissertation performs several maneuvers that I will situate in this introduction. It returns to reading epigrams closely at the individual level but without discarding intratextual and intertextual connections – verbal, formal, and thematic overlaps between epigrams in the corpus and between Martial and other authors. It suggests an alternative to the binary opposition of gift exchange and commodity exchange. It also proposes a new way to approach the thorny question – arguably *the* big question of Martial scholarship – regarding persona: was Martial's life actually as precarious as his work would often have us believe? Or, by extension, why did he engage so heartily in fleshing out a mendicant persona, driven by thoughts of income and the lack thereof? Finally, it creates for Martial a local version of a larger theoretical framework used

by scholars of both Greek and Latin texts to discern socio-economic or socio-political thought in poetic form.

More intuitively, without capitulating absolutely to the movement of his writing, this dissertation adopts, as a principle of reading, the habit we find in Martial of associating disparate images and institutions, cutting through spheres of life and skipping haphazardly around the Imperial Roman social scene. Consider epigram 12.28:

Hermogenes tantus mapparum, †Pontice†, fur est
  quantus nummorum vix, puto, Massa fuit;
tu licet observes dextram teneasque sinistram,
  inveniet mappam qua ratione trahat:
cervinus gelidum sorbet sic halitus anguem,
  casuras alte sic rapit Iris aquas.
nuper cum Myrino peteretur missio laeso,
  subduxit mappas quattuor Hermogenes;
cretatam praetor cum vellet mittere mappam,
  praetori mappam surpuit Hermogenes.

Hermogenes is so great a thief of napkins, Ponticus,
  as Massa hardly was, I suppose, a thief of coins;
watch his right hand and hold his left one all you like,
  he'll find a way to pull away your napkin:
Thus does the inhalation of a stag suck out a cold snake,
  thus does Iris snatch water about to fall from on high.
When recently a discharge was sought for the injured Myrinus,
  Hermogenes stole away with four napkins.
When the praetor wanted to drop his chalky napkin,
  Hermogenes pilfered the praetor's napkin![1]
    (12.28.1-10)

The poem goes on to elaborate more instances. Hermogenes steals tablecloths and the coverlets of couches. If he could, he would steal theater awnings, the sails of ships, linen garments from the devotees of Isis, and, last of all, actual napkins from dinner parties.

[1] All translations in this dissertation are my own unless otherwise noted. Also, unless otherwise noted, the Latin comes from Shackleton Bailey's Teubner edition.

12.28 showcases the salient elements of Martial's epigrammatic technique. Striking, sensually rich images, alighted upon impressionistically – a cold-blooded snake drawn out by the nostrils of a stag![2] – and just as quickly superseded, unfold a world of napkin-like objects and scenarios that recall this particular type of theft. Imagistic resonances offer one way to cut across life, moving transversely from natural vistas to mythological scenes to parts of amphitheaters to ships to the Isiac cult. But so too does wordplay: mention of the embezzler Baebius Massa in line 2 seems motivated largely by the sonic resonance between *mappa* and *Massa*.[3] Martial obviously evokes here Catullus 12, the memorable hendecasyllables on napkin thievery.[4] But, rather than mapping out a metapoetic engagement, he seems far more interested in the properties and uses of non-poetic *mappae*. The obsessive pathology of Hermogenes, who sees napkins and "napkins" – in the end, literal dinner napkins are reduced to being just one more item in the list – everywhere in the world, becomes the driving force behind this poem, taken on by Martial even as he lampoons Hermogenes. If *mappae* should function as a sort of common visual currency in this poem, the configuration shared by snakes, rainbows, white flags, large cloths, awnings, sails, and garments, we can hardly be surprised. After all, Martial opened with a

[2] See Pliny, *HN* 8.50 for this notion: *et his cum serpente pugna*: *vestigant cavernas nariumque spiritu extrahunt renitentes*, "for stags there is also a fight with the serpent: they track snakes to their holes and draw them out with the breath of their nostrils as they struggle." See also Pliny, *HN* 11.115: *elephantorum anima serpentes extrahit, cervorum urit*, "the breath of elephants draws snakes out [of their holes], the breath of stags burns them."

[3] Massa's involvement in North Africa (see Tacitus, *Histories* 4.50 and Pliny, *Letters* 7.33) could even prompt us, indulging in Martial's roving, quasi-conspiratorial mindset, to recall the prototypical *mapalia* of that area! Furthermore, his very name suggests the heap of coins stolen by Massa: *nummorum*...*massa*; compare the *aurea massa* in 3.31.4 and the *Neroniana massa* in 12.57.8.

[4] On Martial and Catullus, see, e.g., Barwick (1958), Hallett (1988), Swann (1994), Grewing (1996), Marsilio (2008).

comparison to *nummi*. So, this poem illustrates both Martial's habit of flipping through images and the proximity to this habit of economic institutions such as coinage.

Can this habit be described as a symptom of Martial's social status? Despite the fact that Martial seems to speak regularly in the voices of other people, a reliable biography can nevertheless be distilled from details in his corpus.[5] Born in March sometime around 40 CE in Bilbilis, a *municipium* in Hispania Tarraconensis, Martial made his way to Rome in 64, possibly easing into elite society with the help of the Annaei and other families with Spanish connections.[6] It is likely that his literary career began a good time before the publication of the first anthology of poems known to us, the partially extant *Liber Spectaculorum*, put forth perhaps around 80.[7] Two further collections, the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, confusingly also known as books 13 and 14, emerged between 83 and 85. After that, Martial published twelve collections that did not have such clear thematic focuses, each with about one hundred epigrams. It has been argued definitively by Mario Citroni

[5] See Nauta (2002) 39-51 for an overview of the different voices in Martial and the status of the *ego* voice in the epigrams; Nauta (2002) 51-8 turns to the question of wealth, providing citations for the key passages, and concludes (57-8): "we cannot seriously doubt that Martial was indeed caught up in a web of obligations to patrons, and that the material support of these patrons made no negligible contribution to the life-style he carried on as a Roman knight, an owner of slaves and of real estate."

[6] See Kleijwegt (1999) who points out that the assumption of a friendship is less than certain; see also Piazzi (2004) on the role of Seneca's moral philosophy in Martial.

[7] This book is commonly understood to celebrate Titus' inaugural games in 80 in the new Flavian Amphitheater, but see Coleman (2006) xix for the lack of any certainty and also Coleman (1998b), Buttrey (2007); for Martial's juvenilia, see 1.113.

that Martial published many of his books during the Saturnalia, appropriately given their content.[8] A standard dating scheme is given by Kathleen Coleman:[9]

Xenia	Saturnalia 83/84	
Apophoreta	Saturnalia 84/85	
1	late 85/early 86	
2	late 86/early 87	
3	87/88	
4	Saturnalia 88	
5	Saturnalia 89	
6	summer/autumn 90	
7	Saturnalia 92	
8	late 93/early 94	
9	late 94/early 95	
10	Saturnalia 95	second edition of 10 mid 98/early 99
11	Saturnalia 96	
12	spring 102 or later	

Martial thus wrote at least under Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan, possibly also Titus and even Vespasian and Nero. Domitian and his *liberti*, especially Parthenius, loom large in the corpus, and most have seen in Martial's later years a failure to pivot to the new ideological tenor of the post-Domitianic period.[10] So, despite the praise for Nerva in book 11, which also decries the terror of Domitian's rule, Martial returned to Spain around 98 and died there around 104. The younger Pliny records this death in his letter 3.21, also noting that he gave Martial a *viaticum* to pay for the sea journey from Pyrgi. Other details

[8] See Citroni (1988) for the argument and bibliography; see also Citroni (1989).

[9] Coleman (2006) xxvii contains bibliography and alternative proposals.

[10] See, e.g., Sullivan (1991) 44-52, Johnson (1997). Colombo (2013) provides a comprehensive survey of Martial's relationship to the imperial freedmen of Domitian, especially Parthenius, focusing on the period between December 88 and December 94; see Colombo (2013) 176 on Martial's response to the assisination of Domitian. See White (1975) 288-93, Henriksén (1997) on Martial and Earinus. Moreno Soldevila (2017) explores how Martial's post-Domitianic epigrams "constitute an appealing corpus for reflecting on the aesthetic effects of political change," and "can be read as an attempt of the individual to be successfully incorporated in a new political scenario" (quotes from 254). See also Szelest (1974), Coleman (1986), Rimell (2018).

from the *vita*, accepted as basically accurate include a small upper apartment *ad Pirum* on the Quirinal hill, a year spent in Forum Cornelii (modern Imola), a friendship with the poet Lucan and his eventual widow Argentaria Polla,[11] the receipt of a villa at Nomentum, the receipt of another villa in Bilbilis from a Spanish woman named Marcella when he returned there, an honorary tribunate from one of the Flavians and grant of the *ius trium liberorum* from both Titus and Domitian, and a background in law with an unsurprising lack of interest in practicing a legal profession.[12] There is a chance that the Fronto and Flaccilla mentioned in 5.34 were Martial's parents.[13] Even more controversial is the notion that Martial had a wife.[14] But at this point, we are straying into the perplexities of Martial's persona. Indeed, beyond a basic set of acceptable facts we find contradictory statements, and first we must revisit the issue of publication.

My concern in this dissertation is with books 1-12, what has been referred to as Martial's "dodecalogy."[15] In characterizing this set of books, the scholarly debate has revolved around the extent to which they contain an overarching design, either as individual books or as a twelve-part unit, an epigrammatic counterpoint to works such as Vergil's *Aeneid*. As a preliminary to that debate, two things should be said. First, throughout

[11] See White (1975) on Argentaria Polla but also Martial's relationships with Arruntius Stella, Atedius Melior, Claudius Etruscus, Novius Vindex, and the younger Pliny, among others.

[12] For an overview of the *vita* and key passages in the epigrams, see Allen et al. (1970), Sullivan (1991) 1-12; see Daube (1976) on the *ius trium liberorum*.

[13] See Canobbio (2011) 337-8 for an overview and bibliography.

[14] Watson (2003) provides bibliography for the debate and argues that Martial was married in his youth, possibly more than once; Sullivan (1991) 25-6 lists the passages that mention the *uxor*.

[15] See Holzberg (2002) 135-51, Holzberg (2004/5).

the corpus, a number of formats are invoked: poems scribbled down or recited individually, pamphlets of epigrams distributed privately, books – papyrus scrolls or codices – sold to the general public by certain booksellers at fixed locations in Rome or elsewhere, books republished and revised to account for political exigencies, larger anthologies.[16] Second, Martial refers to his own work with ambiguous terms. In most cases, it is unclear what precisely he means by *libellus* or *liber* or *charta*, for example, considering the possibilities just listed.[17] He also acknowledges that multiple publications will inform the experience the reader has of the poems, as at 10.2:

> festinata prius, decimi mihi cura libelli
> elapsum manibus nunc revocavit opus.
> nota leges quaedam sed lima rasa recenti;
> pars nova maior erit: lector, utrique fave…
>
> A previously rushed care for my tenth little book
> has now recalled the work that slipped out of my hands.
> You will read certain poems you recognize, but freshly filed;
> the greater part will be new: reader, be kind to both…
> (10.2.1-4)

This set of couplets refers to a re-publication of book 10, which, as seen on the timeline above, is therefore thought to have appeared before and then again after Domitian's death.[18] However much this passage can be taken as a principle for reading other poems that may have been re-published across less politically sensitive moments in

[16] For an introduction to the various publication formats, see Roberts and Skeat (1987) 24-9; Nauta (2002) 91-141 is incredibly helpful. See Harnett (2017) on Martial and the codex; also Starr (1987), Starr (1990).

[17] On *charta*, for example, see White (1996) 404-5.

[18] For a comprehensive discussion, see Damschen and Heil (2004) 1-8. Holzberg (2004/5) argues against a second publication, viewing this passage as a trick of the poet; against this argument, see Coleman (2000). Martelli (2013) 1 is instructive for either view and gets at what makes 10.2.1-4 so curious: "authorial revision is a more or less invisible aspect of all literary composition. When an author chooses to advertise the revised status of a text, s/he invites the reader to look for the strategy involved in making this aspect visible."

time, it nevertheless thematizes two other key features that must be taken into account: the re-reading of epigrams and the figure of a generic reader, *lector*.[19]

Deriving respectively from the work of Peter White and Don Fowler, two camps have come into being around whether Martial's poems circulated publicly or privately before arriving in books 1-12 as we have them, and the implications of pre-publication circulation. White's argument, that they did, has been somewhat unfairly characterized as treating books 1-12 as *epigrammathecai*, hodgepodge compilations and therefore artistic failures that ripped epigrams out of their original context, which was to function in private networks of *amici*.[20] On this judgement, Martial took poems that he wrote for specific occasions or that he compiled into pamphlets for select audiences and attempted to distribute them more widely via booksellers, thereby compromising their original intention with a fame-seeking afterthought. Conversely, Fowler inaugurated a line of reading that sometimes emphatically denies pre-publication pamphlets, sometimes just pamphlet circulation after the creation of the books that we have.[21] On one hand, this set of readings

[19] On the generic reader in Martial, see Best (1969), Spisak (1997), Williams (2002b), Larash (2004). Starr (2001) surveys more generally the expectation of flexible readerly interpretation that is built into the ancient literary tradition; see also Starr (1991).

[20] The views found in White (1974) are tempered but certainly not abandoned in White (1996); see, e.g., White (1974) 40: "the poet's published books represent only the last and least important means of presenting poets to patrons." See Holzberg (2004/5) for the characterization of White and opposing viewpoint: "Everything that Martial has to say in his poems about the subject of poetry books points in my opinion to one conclusion: the author of the *Epigrammaton libri XII* visualised all of his poems as constituent elements of an architectural book structure. He therefore did not – and Don Fowler also notes that he didn't – use each of the twelve books as a sort of *epigrammatheca*, depositing there his occasional verses."

[21] See Fowler (1996) 224: "I have tried to free Martial's epigrams from a paradigm of 'occasional' poetry, and to suggest that far from being transparent windows on to a day-to-day world of social interaction, they are complex and sophisticated texts whose existence in the published books is central." See also Roman (2015) 552-3. Nauta (2002) 91 has it both ways: "there are two levels at which the epigrams could function: the level of the occasion and the level of the published book. Some epigrams may have been written to function at both levels, others will have been written exclusively for the published book."

has formed the basis for appreciating Martial's Ovidian book architecture, for the genesis of each epigram appears as the first moment in a master plan to create a subtly structured, aesthetically innovative unit, by which is variously meant individual books or the dodecalogy as a whole.[22] It is in this area that we find the term "cycle" used productively to discern structures and even hidden meanings in each or several books.[23] On another hand, it has served to qualify the passages where Martial *does* refer to pre-publication circulation as playful, sophisticated literary fictions, suggestions of a manner of reading that would suppose – but not actually imply – traces of prior conditions of meaning. So, we could read the lines from 10.2 quoted above as a gesture to the lingering memory of Domitian after his so-called *damnatio memoriae*, an allusion to the strain put on people reading epigram through regime change, especially poems by a poet who previously praised the now-bad emperor. Accordingly, Martial preserves a fiction of specific occasions in his works directed to a general readership picking up his books anytime, anywhere.[24]

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[22] For attempts to describe the architecture and thematic coherence of books or the whole corpus, see Garthwaite (1990), Merli (1993), Garthwaite (1993), Coleman (1998a), Garthwaite (1998), Scherf (1998), Scherf (2001), Holzberg (2002), Spisak (2002), Fearnley (2003), Moreno Soldevila (2004), Holzberg (2004/5), Coleman (2005), Watson (2006).

[23] To be clear, the effort to find cycles in Martial pre-dates the White vs. Fowler debate; see the foundational work of Barwick (1932), Barwick (1958). For a critical assessment of Barwick's theory, see Grewing (1997) 30-1, Morelli (2009) 44. The definition of a cycle in Lorenz (2004) 257 is sufficiently broad: "all groups of epigrams, adjacent poems, or scattered pieces that display a common theme or motif, common use of language, or common structural features. Martial's cycles would then rely on the connecting similarities between single epigrams – all conceivable similarities that prompt readers to remember an earlier poem and compare it with the present one, and that can thus influence the reader's reception of the *Epigrammaton libri*." See also Salanitro (1983), Boyle (1995), Merli (1998), Garthwaite (2001), Lorenz (2003), Holzberg (2006), Buongiovanni (2012), Mulligan (2013), Sparagna (2016).

[24] On the fiction of occasionality, see Burnikel (1990), Fowler (1996), Roman (2001) 202. Conversely, see Dominik (2016) on Martial and Statius, Hardie (1982) for a more general background to occasional verse in this time period; see also Uden (2015) 94-103 on *recitatio*.

I do not think that the identification of patterns and cycles in and across Martial's twelve books requires the rigid rejection of prior publications or even recitations where the poet did not yet have his project fully conceived and in mind. Therefore, I accept points made by both camps. In whatever way, and the dynamics will always remain unclear, Martial's epigrams were variously combined and recombined and circulated in various formats, before and even after the books we have came into being. For me, when Martial invokes this situation it is to elaborate a principle of interpretation: compiling epigrams into collections, whatever their size and whoever their recipient, is a mode of reading that accepts that juxtaposing epigrams of different types can have emergent effects not originally intended, even by the person who initially wrote them. In my second chapter, I show that dicing provides an analogy for this type of reading. A throw of dice presents the gambler with a random assortment of meanings. She will discern connections between them. She may also suppose that the throw was rigged all along, and perhaps it was. Moreover, this understanding qualifies Martial himself as both *auctor* and *lector*, someone who returns to his already written, already read work to see what new meanings can emerge when so many allegedly self-contained units are strung together.[25] My first and third chapters look at the re-use and occasionality of epigram. Moreover, many of the readings that I perform in this dissertation take for granted that at least some readers in Martial's day could have roamed quickly and conveniently between his poems, flipping

[25] On closure and epigram, see Fitzgerald (2007) 2: "trailing a context which stubbornly clings to it, the transplanted epigram prevents the book from closing over its contents." See also Johnson (2005).

readily through his collections and observing patterns at a macro level, even between epigrams that were written a decade or so apart.

At stake in the debate over pre-publication versions of Martial's epigrams is the extent to which he was beholden, in writing poetry, to patrons and their largesse or, put more charitably, to the service of beneficial exchanges in networks of *amici*. White and others tend to privilege the role of epigrams in these networks over a literary project that would be both life-consuming and larger-than-life.[26] Mentions of book stalls and a general readership, moreover, hardly rescue Martial from charges of profiteering through poetry or seeking fame and wealth in the present at the expense of literary immortality. Luke Roman rightly suggests that Martial's persistent references to the utilitarian, sub-literary function of his poetry, a tendency which contrasts diametrically with the Augustan poets' lack of interest in financial matters, is in fact a new way to secure the autonomy of poetic ends:

> The relentlessness of Martial's presentation of the book as a material object for sale at the bookshop may also have the effect, paradoxically, of bringing the book's literary qualities more insistently to the fore…The relentlessness of Martial's materialist fiction thus creates the basis for a striking polarization of hermeneutic options: the reader must either accept the problematic fiction afforded by the text's literal account of itself, or assume a literariness the text persistently disavows.[27]

We can extend this notion to the epigrams addressed to individual *amici* and those that embarrassingly praise Domitian: these poems, in proclaiming over and over again Martial's financially advantageous friendships with power brokers and imperial benefactors, oblige us to look for other ways to read them beyond the prosopographical or

[26] On patronge and Martial, see White (1974), White (1975), White (1978), Saller (1983), Kleijwegt (1998), Spisak (1998), Harrison (2001), Nauta (2002).

[27] Roman (2014) 310; see also Roman (2015), Duff (1929).

historical.[28] Roman's point therefore allows us to consider the literariness of Martial without denying Martial's materialism, utilitarianism, flattery, and venality. Saying that poetry might just be another commodity prompts us to argue for how it is different, better. Or, emphasizing that poetry books are just stuff, susceptible to hungry moths and worms and liable to be used as wrapping for oily fish, also draws to our attention the immaterial, transcendent dimension of epigram. Put a third way, if poetry is supposed to be just intra-elite Imperial politics by other means, we must ask what makes poetry different from any other sort of *beneficium*. But then, what *is* Martial doing with all these poems that could otherwise seem to ask for favors, criticize *amici* for their bad behavior, lament an impoverished state of affairs, and shore up Martial' s position vis-à-vis those much worse off and with much less potential than he had?

Before setting up my answer to this question, it is worthwhile pausing a moment to consider Martial's financial wellbeing. Is there any truth to the "mendicant façade" we find in his poetry?[29] The fashion has long since shifted away from Post's infamous characterization of Martial as a "chronic beggar," but in its stead no clear consensus has emerged.[30] White again set an influential line of thinking by arguing that Martial was a person of independent means who only sought help from patrons in order to publicize his

[28] We cannot in any way discount the value of Martial as a source for prosopography and topography; there is a incredibly useful body of scholarship on the more or less certain historical identities of the various friends and antagonists mentioned by Martial, culminating in Moreno Soldevila et al. (2019); Balland (2010) is also very helpful for envisioning the company in which Martial found himself. Rodríguez Almeida (2014) is invaluable for the city of Rome.

[29] The phrase comes from Hardie (1983) 70.

[30] Post (1908) xiii.

work and protect it from plagiarism.[31] Since we can reasonably take Martial at his word that he possessed the equestrian *census*, we can assume a significant degree of wealth, perhaps represented primarily by his farm in Nomentum. Conversely, Peter Tennant has convincingly outlined the possibility of a truth in Martial's complaints about general poverty, burdensome expenses, and inadequate remuneration.[32] Tennant puts the question in terms of liquid versus illiquid wealth. Martial may well have faced the same difficulties others, such as the younger Pliny, did in readily converting their ownership and status into purchasing power. Perhaps with Martial we have an ancient example of the "wealthy hand-to-mouth," a term used by a trio of economists to describe contemporary "households that hold little or no liquid wealth, whether in cash or in checking or savings accounts, despite owning sizable amounts of illiquid assets [carrying] a transaction cost, such as housing or retirement accounts."[33] Apart from whether Martial was indulging in a persona the construction of which goes back at least to Hipponax with his ragged cloak or was in fact revealing something of his own life, it can be taken for granted that Martial's poems do reflect the struggles of many people in Rome. I explore the obsession with liquidity and ready cash in my first and third chapters.

Nevertheless, few will want to return to seeing Martial's poetry as a mere record of *his* life, even though Martial wants us to see his poetry as an unabashed record of life

[31] White (1978) 74-92; at 88-9 he suggests that Martial might have enjoyed an annual income of around HS24,000, 6% of the HS400,000 required of equestrians at the census.

[32] Tennant (2000); see also Malnati (1987/8).

[33] Kaplan et al. (2014) 77.

itself.[34] Instead, we can interpret Martial's materialism and realism in several ways. The first, which seems almost too obvious to say, is as evidence for the headspace of the Saturnalia, a festival of social inversions and levelling as well as holiday markets and gift-giving.[35] Martial's self-proclaimed shift into the trivial, quotidian, and authentically mundane parallels a movement enshrined in the Roman calendar, but part of Martial's genius lies in identifying the license and spirit of the Saturnalia in moments outside of December. I explore the generic time of epigram in my third chapter, but for now we may consider epigram 5.84, the last in book 5. Lamenting the passing of the holiday, the poet complains that the once-generous Galla has sent him no little presents:

> sane sic abeat meus December:
> scis certe, puto, vestra iam venire
> Saturnalia, Martias Kalendas;
> tunc reddam tibi, Galla, quod dedisti.
>
> Alright, let my December slip away like this:
> I think you surely know that soon comes your
> Saturnalia, the Kalends of March that is;
> then I shall return to you, Galla, what you gave to me.
> (5.84.9-12)

These concluding lines cast the Matronalia, the Kalends of March referred to here, as the female counterpart to the Saturnalia – "your Saturnalia," as Martial puts it. The Matronalia will serve as the second moment in an exchange between Martial and Galla, the moment when the Saturnalia will resume insofar as time will be given to the exchanges that

[34] E.g. 10.4.7-10: *quid te vana iuvant miserae ludibria chartae*?/ *hoc lege*, *quod possit dicere vita* "*meum est.*"/ *non hic Centauros*, *non Gorgonas Harpyiasque*/ *invenies*: *hominem pagina nostra sapit*, "what advantage do the pithy jokes of my pages/papyri have for you? Read this, about which life can say, 'it's mine!' You will not discover Centaurs and Gorgons and Harpies here: my page tastes like a human being."

[35] For Martial's Saturnalian poetics, see Rankin (1962), Grewing (1999), Grewing (2010), Blake (2011), Scheidegger Lämmle (2014).

are proper to it. These exchanges are clearly poetic in nature, and accordingly Coleman has suggested that book 6 was published during the Matronalia of 91.[36] Moreover, in the phrase "your Saturnalia" we find a clear example of Martial locating Saturnalian moments throughout the course of the year; the Saturnalia comes to refer not exclusively to a festival but to a more general set of attitudes, activities, and modes of expression. The view of life expressed during the Saturnalia itself thus provides Martial with the basis for a much broader revelation of allegedly authentic humanity. If the Saturnalia operated in Martial's elite literary circles as the venue for articulating certain aspects of life that would otherwise remain suppressed, we must understand this space not as a limit to Martial's project but as an enabler.

Two groups of readers have considered the rhetorical functions of Martial's realism and materialism in ways that are relevant to my project. The first, which primarily asks how Martial's poetry played out in networks of patronage, views talk of poverty as inaccurate but useful for securing favors. In the words of Greg Woolf, "eloquent poets, whose education and manners proclaim their status, play at paupers to amuse and tease their hosts and extract from them a little of the wealth about which they had been made to feel uneasy."[37] From this perspective, an obviously false premise of outright poverty or crushing financial difficulty eased the awkwardness surrounding status and opportunity

[36] Coleman (2005).

[37] Woolf (2006) 99; see also Woolf (2006) 98: "Poverty for Martial is a (tatty) cloak put on for some purposes and not others, and we should not expect coherence in his self- representation…When Martial puts on the poor poet's persona it is almost always to achieve a distance from wealth, when his attack is directed against wealth, the wealthy or the abuse of riches." See also Byrne (2004), Blake (2015). Martial also, of course, talks about luxury; for the ekphrasis of luxury as a form of encomium, see Rosati (2006), Fabbrini (2007), Fabbrini (2012), Rosati (2017).

that was omnipresent in Martial's social scene. One could think of the scene in the 2011 Paul Feig film *Bridesmaids* where Kristen Wiig's character, who cannot afford to fly first class to a destination bachelorette party in Las Vegas, slips into the hammy voice of a vaguely Dickensian street urchin to say, "help me, I'm poor." This notion of Martial as someone who carefully, strategically deploys the language of poverty fits well with the work of scholars who would discern sincere first-person poems where Martial talks about himself from slips into *personae*.[38] If we begin from the premise that Martial was an *eques* favored by successive imperial households, we can assume that claims of worn cloaks and nervous, desperate calculation would have struck his original readers as, among other things, subtle invocations of an artificial language of patronage, differing in their rhetorical register from Martial's proclamations of his own privileged identity.[39] Even apart from possibly facilitating exchanges between *amici*, Martial's "mendicant façade" sits well alongside non-poetic examples of elites playing poor, such as Nero's nighttime brawling

[38] See, e.g., Allen et al. (1970) 345: "While a literal interpretation of Martial's conventional epigrammatic treatment of literary patronage could produce a picture of Martial as the shabby, starving poet of the third-floor garret, our author has deliberately included in his epigrams autobiographical material that he must have intended as a correction to such a false impression." See also Saller (1983).

[39] Compare a different approach to the function of frank speech in Martial by Spisak (2007) 97 on Greek iambic poets but by extension Martial: "As part of this tradition, wherein [Greek iambic poets] always represented the interests of the social community, they were granted special license in their writing – specifically, subject-matter, language, and candour much beyond normal social limits. As a result, their writing had great power to influence because it spoke directly, forthrightly, and with visceral images that bypassed social and cultural filters to reach the emotions directly"; see then Spisak (2007) 2: "in fact, behind Martial's alleged preoccupation with money and his seemingly excessive praise of friends and the emperor is a sophisticated system of social exchange or reciprocity that was fundamental to friendship, business, politics, and sense of community in the ancient Roman world (and remains so today)." It should be noted that Spisak is in part referring to Martial rampant misogyny, phallic sexual aggression, homophobia, and anti-Semitism; see footnote 44 for a theoretical model that addresses these features more directly.

and Domitian's *mica aurea*.[40] But what else did these men find in people living precariously beyond a point of reference to dispel or qualify their own anxieties? Why would they mediate even more anxious forms of life with the aesthetic technologies at their disposal?

We do not have to force an opposition between literary and sociological readings of Martial to consider a different answer. Others have seen a second rhetorical purpose in Martial's realism and materialism: to expose the self-definitional tropes of epigram or first-person literature more generally to economic realities typically set apart from the *locus amoenus* of song. Such exposure would have reinvigorated the literary scene in Flavian Rome, caught at an impasse of old forms, saturated by bloviated, out of touch writers of epic and tragic poetry.[41] Again, we can think here of Luke Roman's point about the impossibility for Flavian first-person poets to be removed from the realities of urban life. On the other hand, Martial was hardly the first Latin epigrammatist to find in urban poverty a new way to express a Callimachean literary paradigm, and so we should think of his gesture as an intensification of what is found in Catullus, for example, rather than something totally new. As Maria Marsilio puts it, "for Martial and Catullus and their chief literary models, poverty is crucial in the articulation of literary aesthetics."[42] Productive readings have emerged from construing the sophisticated construction of reality in Martial

[40] For Nero dressing up and wandering the streets of Rome, see Tacitus, *Annals* 13.25; see Martial 2.59 on the "golden crumb," a small dining hall.

[41] See, e.g., Rimell (2008) 10 on the "death of poetic independence and seclusion."

[42] Marsilio (2008) 924; see also Marsilio (2008) 921: "note that Catullus and Martial make their claims of personal poverty in the context of asserting their own literary merits, and that their 'poverty' symbolizes the Callimachean slenderness and refinement of their poetry." See also, crucially, Gowers (1993) 220-67 on the metaphorics of poetic style in Martial; and Spisak (1994).

– what Barbara Gold has called his "pretence of neutral realism" – as a response to prior poetic traditions as well as contemporary poetic exigencies.[43] Thus, to cite just a few, Stephen Hinds can describe "codes of referentiality" in Martial's sexually obscene or at least verbally frank allusions to Ovid's poetry, while Donald Lavigne can speak of Martial "degrading" the legacy of Augustan love elegy with poems about wives and anal sex.[44] However much Martial seems to cut away from literature altogether, he was nevertheless steeped in the literary tradition, and the sophistication of his construction of reality involves allusions to prior literature that take tropes or self-referential poetic objects and find for them gritty, contemporary versions. To pick one example, in my fourth chapter I explore how Martial's materialist poetics finds a less than elevated image for itself in the markings, *stigmata*, tattooed into defamed bodies.

There is another historical condition for the innovative form and unexpected content of Martial's poetry, one that visitors to Rome can still explore today: major changes to the urban fabric of the city under the Flavians. Accordingly, Martial turned to veristic epigram, which indeed would become constituted and clarified as a genre in his own work, because it was the best and only form for the times.[45] As Victoria Rimell notes, "Martial

[43] Gold (2003) 596.

[44] Hinds (2007) 113, Lavigne (2008) 282; the larger notion of "staining" a textual tradition is owed to Richlin (1992) 26-30, 58. Richlin (1992) sets forth a model that extends to the sexually explicit and offensive humor of Martial, linking it not so much to the Saturnalia as to Priapus (quote from 58-9): "one minatory figure stands at the center of the whole complex of Roman sexual humor; he will be represented here by the god Priapus. The general stance of this figure is that of a threatening male…This figure is active rather than passive and does not always restrict himself to foul descriptions of his victims, but sometimes threatens them with punishment, usually by exposure or rape, whether vaginal, anal, or oral…The nature of the Priapic figure is responsible for all the patterns of Roman sexual humor." See also O'Connor (1998) who links the order-restoring Priapic stance of Martial to Domitian's moral legislation.

[45] On the construction of the genre of epigram in Martial, see Lorenz (2010), Mindt (2013), Hinds (1997), Citroni (1968). For the Greek epigrammatic tradition and its influence over Martial, see Nisbet (2003) along

makes epigram define and perform a Zeitgeist: his poetry is Rome, both the city itself (a mass of streets, buildings, monuments and people) and Rome as concept and dream – the epicenter and embodiment of a vast, complex empire." [46] In a similar vein, William Fitzgerald turns to the nineteenth century to find a figure capable of elucidating Martial's relation to his global, cosmopolitan world: the *flâneur* of Haussmann's Paris. In counterpoint to scholars who would see Martial as yet another example of the Saturnalian *scurra*, "one who earned his dinner by entertaining guests with his mockery," the *flâneur* provides Fitzgerald with the flexibility to move beyond a characterological study of Martial.[47] Yes, the *flâneur* is a figure, but his emergence as a type is epiphenomenal to the emergence of a deep structural shift in the world, a tectonic movement in the texture of Parisian – and, correspondingly, Roman – life. So, "if 'world' is the most general term for the form in which an environment makes sense, for the way in which its components relate," we find in the epigram book, viewed through the *flâneur*-like eyes of Martial, an internalization of urban juxtapositions and antiorganicist forms, the "paradoxes and tensions of urban experience…the worldly counterpart to the juxtapository environment of [Martial's] books."[48] This model allows Fitzgerald to speak of "the persona of the form," a habit of viewing *and also* a presentation to the viewer that go beyond their respective

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with Richlin's review in *The Classical Review* 55 (2005: 466-8), Gutzwiller (1998), Puelma (1997), Puelma (1996), Salanitro (1991), Laurens (1989), Szelest (1960). For Martial and earlier Latin poetry, especially epigrammatic models, see Merli (2010), Pitcher (1998), Williams (2002a), Byrne (2004); Zingerle (1877) is comprehensive for Ovidian echoes in Martial.

[46] Rimell (2008) 8.

[47] The quote is from Nauta (2002) 178; for Martial and *scurrae*, see also Damon (1997) 146-71, Saggesse (1994).

[48] Fitzgerald (2007) 2, 5; see also the earlier comments of Hennig (2003) 55-67 on *flânerie*.

embodiments in a person and cityscape.[49] In other words, the aesthetic qualities of Martial's poems, both individually and in book compilations, are a means of making sense of and moving through the world of Rome on its own terms.[50]

But however much this method suggests a mastery over the urban environment and a social scene shot through with contradictory codes of behavior and value systems, for Fitzgerald and Rimell Martial comes across as someone who ultimately swims in the roiling confluence of tides like everyone else: "[Martial's] books might be more appropriately thought of as kaleidoscopic because his world has no center; it is a world of opportunities and exchanges."[51] The risk here is that, while we move past a simple opposition of real reality and constructed reality, invocations of the de-centered, postmodern condition as an inroad into Martial's Rome also leave us with a somewhat mushy critical terminology. All the same, terms such as variation, paradox, juxtaposition, and kaleidoscope are accurate

[49] Fitzgerald (2007) 8; Rimell (2008) 4 uses the term *Weltanschauung*. Bodel (2003) 272-3 on Petronius may serve as clarification: "the attitudes of Petronius' characters towards currency do not present a coherent picture of economic rationalism but rather a thematically shaped sketch of a particular mindset. They reflect not the monetary vicissitudes of the real world but the author's intention to delineate through the freedmen's talk of money a metaphorical map of their construction of the universe."

[50] See also Laurence (2011) 99 on the spatial, by which he means the feeling in Martial's poetry of being in identifiably urban landscapes: "the spatial authenticates the text of the Epigrams (perhaps not Books 8 and 9) as being in Rome without resorting to listing monuments, and locates Martial as living there and as a person who could represent the city in text. Fundamental for that representation is a sense of movement through space." See also Pailler (1981).

[51] Fitzgerald (2007) 198; compare Rimell (2008) 19-50. The kaleidoscope is arguably the favorite figure for Martial's poetic technque; see, e.g., Dominik (2016) 413: "[Martial] takes stereotypical situations and characters and satirizes, hyperbolizes, distorts, and ridicules them. The result is an astonishing kaleidoscope of images, cameos, vignettes, and caricatures." I return to La Penna (1992) in chapter 1; see also Morelli (2009) 45 on cycles: "All cycles, and even every single poem in a given cycle and in the book, present thematic, structural, metrical, or linguistic connections with the other poems or cycles. On the other hand, it is necessary to add that all poems and cycles are inserted in larger sets that intersect each other and run through the whole book, which include epigrams working out similar macrothematic, subgeneric, metrical, and linguistic features. The interconnection of different frames creates a particularly vivid kaleidoscopic effect."

and have long been staples of purely formalist readings.[52] And the objection that kaleidoscopes do have a central axis would only make them a more appropriate model: amidst all the shifting configurations of his poetry, we still are able to identify a biography for a person called Martial. He is hardly a void or absent center in his own text. What is so influential for my project is not the identification of these qualities in Martial but the more recent approach that sees in them a means for the world outside of poetry to enter Martial's text. More to the point, the formal properties of variation, juxtaposition, and kaleidoscopically random reconfiguration constitute an apparatus for Martial to think critically about Rome and the impact of space on the daily experience of its inhabitants.[53] Whether it is Martial himself who is submerged in the chaos of Roman life or Martial who masterfully depicts the submersion of others, we get from this body of scholarship a productive model for thinking through the socio-political dimension of aesthetic forms: these forms are themselves an appropriation of feelings of moving between built spaces and living at the center of the machine of empire.

I shift this method of reading from the spatial to the economic. But also, I attempt to move beyond thinking about Martial's almost unparalleled interest in the grittier, ignoble dimensions of Roman life as the inclusion of reality effects, features intended to give

[52] See Williams (2004) 9-10 for a brief overview of formalist approaches to Martial and bibliography; see especially Siedschlag (1977), Burnikel (1980), Sullivan (1989).

[53] See Roman (2010) 88-9 for a summary of recent scholarship in this area: "The current trend is…to reverse the determining force of urban reality over literary representation, and to make the writer into the creator of his own city: hence the dual metaphor of reading the city as text, and, in a related twist, writing the city into text. Pushed too far, this approach could potentially become reductive in its own ways. The best recent work equally incorporates an awareness of the ways in which the city and its patterns of social behavior condition literary creativity."

credibility to an unvarnished, warts-and-all depiction of living in the capitol of a global empire.[54] My dissertation argues that we can grapple with logics that are internal to Martial's poetry by beginning from the way he talks about buying and selling, gift-giving, lending, and deceptive advertising. More precisely, these themes manifest in the corpus of epigrams as the use of coined money in commodity exchange; the use of lots – *sortes* or *nomismata* – in the private and public distribution of goods; the subjection of social relations to forms of credit; and the expression *vendere vanos fumos*, "to sell empty smoke." My model for understanding how these institutions shape Martial's poetry derives from Alex Dressler's reading of property in the comedies of Plautus. Real consequences result from all the exchanges just mentioned when they occur in real life: slaves are transferred from one owner to another, people who receive lots in *sparsiones* receive objects and are marked as special beneficiaries, *amici minores* are obliged somehow to repay lenders, for example. When these exchanges occur in epigram or comedy, it is not the case that they merely leave the real world and enter a symbolic one, for already in the real world, the world of *res*, exchanges are made possible by symbolic fabrications such as legal codes and social conventions. Rather, Dressler argues for a phenomenon that he calls "aesthetic liquefaction":

> In the space of performance, which is a space of play (*ludus*), because they arise in a dimension free from the usual constraints of real life, the increasingly elaborate symbolic treatments of the plays, their exposure of poetics with reference to plot, and their increasingly "metapoetic" development of the same, all produce a dimension in which the real, materially efficacious and socially consequential aspects of property melt away.[55]

[54] For the urban fabric and economic institutions as reality effects, see, e.g., Rimell (2008) 96 on Martial's obsession with counting and numbers, to which I return at the beginning of my first chapter.

[55] Dressler (2016) 13.

In Plautine comedy, then, we find recognitions that are based on the function of property in historical situations and Roman social theory. That is, the form of recognition itself – rather than the fact that a given person or object is recognized as the property of someone else – enacts the basic logic of property in the Rome of Plautus' day but without the real consequences of that logic. This enactment constitutes a manner of thinking about society:

> the plays are themselves, in an immanent or implicit, practical form, a kind of progressive theorization of the sociopolitical conditions of their production… to the extent that such a theorization remains implicit, and does not occasion the kind of philosophical exposition that it might in Cicero's several treatments of property…it is aesthetic – a form of analysis in experience, rather than expression.[56]

We find here an articulation of the capacity for aesthetic configurations to engage with and process some of the most consequential and morally challenging dimensions of the ancient world, not least the traffic in humans.[57] At the same time, as Dressler implies with "liquefaction," this aesthetic mode of engagement develops a space between play and consequence by turning social forms into poetic ones. Dressler thus surprisingly locates in Plautus a utopian ideal through the very entry into comedy of forms of control that in fact would have excluded many people from a proper life.[58] It remains to be seen how a similar liquefaction – de-materialization is a better word for Martial – plays out in the epigrams.

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[56] Dressler (2016) 10.

[57] See also Wohl (2015) 4-8 on the theoretical background to this way of reading (quote from 4): "the challenge is not just to keep these two sets of issues – the aesthetic and the political – in focus simultaneously, but to theorize their interconnection within the text itself, to identify the ideological work being done in and by tragedy's aesthetic form." Wohl cites the classic formulation of Adorno (1997) 6: "the unsolved antagonisms of reality return in artworks as immanent problems of form," also influential for Dressler's argument.

[58] See, e.g., Dressler (2016) 14: "Even if the plays had no effect on real life, then, even if, after watching them, no elite renounced his status and no slave rebelled against her or his, the very fact that the plays resist

Martial, of course, differs from Plautus in that he is writing epigrams and not comedies. The corollary to Dressler' nexus of performance and recognition is in my dissertation the immanence of epigrammatic humor in all its iterations. As we will see so often, Martial can capture the various contradictory ways of thinking and acting that are bound up in economic institutions only through the ability of a joke to suspend the absolute thought around it. The *ludus* we find in Martial tends to introduce ways of thinking and feeling that only cohere in the space of the joke itself. If subjected to the cold, rational eye of an explicit theorization, or even if just told in a different order, these humorous epigrams would not work, and by extension their aesthetic analysis of socially consequential phenomena would not have its effect. Through the structure of his epigrammatic *ludus*, Martial buys in to all manner of incoherent and irrational thoughts and impulses, as we have already seen in the case of Hermogenes above. His epigrams unfurl *as if* so many of the obviously misguided or inaccurate or fully inarticulable assumptions of life really were true from a neutral, totalizing perspective. We may be tempted to see this "buy in" as a Saturnalian divergence from the constraints of normal, sober thinking. But in his epistolary eulogy, the younger Pliny tells us that it was a feature of Martial's life:

> dedit enim mihi, quantum maximum potuit, daturus amplius, si potuisset. tametsi, quid homini potest dari maius quam gloria et laus et aeternitas? at non erunt aeterna, quae scripsit; non erunt fortasse, ille tamen scripsit, tamquam essent futura. vale.
>
> He gave to me as much as he could; he would have given more if it were possible. And yet, what more can be given to a person beyond glory and fame and immortality? "But his epigrams will not be eternal." Perhaps they will not be, but he wrote them as if they would. Goodbye.

inequality in status in this purely theoretical or aesthetic way means that they resist the readings of the pessimistic historicists that dominate their study."

(Pliny, *Letters* 3.21.6)

Our only external source on the life of Martial thus discerns in him the centrality of the logic of *tamquam*. Whether or not Pliny was just being polite, we can proceed as if he really was onto some fundamental feature of Martial's life and also his poetry.[59] Moreover, the question of poetic immortality returns us to the center of the debate surrounding publication. If Martial wrote his poems *as if* they would be eternal, Pliny's formula implies that he wrote with an eye to artistic autonomy, disregarding reception in his own day. This statement comes immediately after Pliny has just mentioned the exchanges that structured his and Martial's relationship: Pliny gave cash, Martial gave epigrams and would have given more if he could. This juxtaposition is precisely the point. Martial's autonomization of the economic logic of his day happened through writing and delivering epigrams in real situations of exchange and dependence, epigrams that address these situations.

Pliny gave Martial cash, an object that could be construed both as gift and commodity. In the epigrams, we find also gifts that are not cash, and cash that is not, properly speaking, a gift but rather a loan. These three terms – commodity, gift, and loan – form the basis for the first three chapters of my dissertation. In Chapter 1, I examine commodity exchange. For Martial, the readiest form of commodities is coinage. But in the use of coins we find opposing tendencies. Coins may serve as numerical units, each in

[59] See Henderson (2002) for a cynical reading of Pliny 3.21 and Martial; Marchesi (2013) picks up from Henderson's discussion of Pliny's strategy of partial citation in 3.21, pointing out (105) that "in the epistle, the eternal question of poetry's power to bestow enduring fame is a thin veil for the practical concerns (i.e., the socio-economic factors) that accompany the literary enterprise. In 3.21, the issues of composition, dissemination, and preservation of literary text (writing for eternity) are allowed a final consideration only after the Pliny-Martial connection has been explored in sociological terms (their shared *amicitia*)." On Pliny and Martial more generally, see Edmunds (2015).

theory identical to all the others. Every coin, however, tends to be a unique configuration of matter, differing from others. I argue that the possibility of activating either of these dimensions of coinage offers Martial an aesthetic paradigm in addition to a more straightforward moralizing tool. In the movement between abstract, homogeneous number and singular, heterogenous identity, Martial locates a modality of sensation. Martial applies this paradigm to synthesize the properties of coins and the properties of people or objects for sale. In the course of describing this synthesis, I locate a language that then reappears in epigrams that do not explicitly mention coinage. These epigrams extend Martial's poetics of fungibility in scenes that are apart from economic exchange. They feel out a category of matter that I call spectral, following Derrida's "hauntological" reading of Marx. I conclude by noting that the spectrality of commodity exchange provides Martial with a method for alienating elements in lists.

In Chapter 2, I turn to Martial's interest in lots and sortition. Lots, called in Latin *nomismata* or *sortes*, are little pieces of matter given to people in place of a gift itself. The scenarios in which we encounter lots in Martial differ but generally involve a randomized distribution, sometimes a *sparsio*, "sprinkling," in which *nomismata* are cast into crowds, bringing a frenzy upon their recipients. As with other, more orderly gift lotteries, we may assume a process of exchanging the lot for the allotted object. The use of lots resembles other practices that feature in Martial's poetry, such as gambling and forms of commemoration where black and white pebbles would be placed in jars to record whether each day of life was happy or sad. I argue that these practices provide Martial with a conceptual and formal framework for his poetry of objects. To make this argument, I read closely a series of epigrams wherein food and other bodies burst forth from concavities,

appropriating the appearance and sensation of *sparsiones* and other "nomismatic" and aleatory forms of *ludus*. Lots suggest a poetic form, but they also embody the impulses that sustain accumulation in life. The emergence of this social form as an aesthetic form therefore allows Martial to bring a common trajectory of life into proximity; in the nomismatic and aleatory practices, we find a comprehensible image of life itself.

In Chapter 3, I show that Martial aligns credit, by which I mean loans with and without interest as well as gifts given with the expectation of a more imprecise reciprocity, with a larger exploration of time and its contents in the epigrams. Credit has the ability to create something more than the original value of gifts or loans, something *plus*. But it can do so only through a disjuncture in time, by opening a space between the act of giving and the acts of reciprocating or repaying. I argue that this form means that in fact the primary object in relations of credit is time itself. Hence, the many complaints voiced by Martial about how his time does not belong to himself must be viewed through the lens of credit. I use this argument to stage a broader inquiry into experiences that are out of joint in the epigrams. I also discover a double dream, one that ends up being impossible, for truly communal ownership and for time that is entirely one's own. I conclude by tentatively suggesting that credit offers Martial a positive social model.

Finally, in Chapter 4, I revisit the desires that propel commodity exchange, gift-giving, and credit by describing a category of masking substances I call goop, basically any stuff that can be smeared onto objects or people. Goop is an often-residual matter that functions as a medium of virtual experience in the epigrams. In the application of goop, we find fantasies of ownership, aspirations to move up in society, and the commemoration of dead people or earlier moments in life, for example. After describing literal instances of

goop in the epigrams, I suggest that the action of smearing objects and people can be used to interpret other verbal practices, such as false advertising and the exchange of erotic fantasies between *amici*. This topic provides me with a way to look back at the role of fantasy in the previous three chapters.

Why "popular consumption?" The premise behind this phrase is that the economic activities we find in Martial condition the forms of sensation that are elaborated by his poetry. Thus, preserved in the very form of epigrams – and in their choice of material imagery – are events that played out in manifold iterations at multiple tiers of Roman social life. Moreover, these events were construed ideologically as popular and non-rarified. Admittedly, at this point in the project I have focused most of all on Martial's poetry itself, as the reader has surely now gathered. Thus, I leave unclarified the scope of my argument for those seeking to move beyond his text. What I hope to offer instead is, again, a new way to think about economic realities in the *epigrammaton libelli*, one that goes beyond notions of reality effects, rhetorical purposes, and codes of referentiality even as I do not abandon those critical insights. Even though forms of exchange were everywhere in Roman social life, their dynamics were perhaps less obvious than the physical texture of the city of Rome. Moral or ethical discourses about, e.g., taking out loans or buying things with cash also seem to have precluded the concerns of socio-economic inquiry that we would wish to pursue in our own politics. As I will show, there are contradictions at work in modes of exchange, contradictions which epigrammatic humor proves remarkably effective at observing, suspending, and sensing. Martial's allegedly trivial poetry contains profound thoughts about society, but in an unexpected form. The permeation of social life by economic codes, both impersonal and possessing of their own, eerie volition, is a

fascinating process. It is at least deserving of the poetic technologies of the Latin (and Greek) epigrammatic traditions. Its emergence in poetry may even redeem it from the exploitation it effects in life even if that emergence does not necessarily suggest a discernible path forward.

Chapter 1: The Properties of Property

"Papa! What's money?"
The abrupt question had such immediate reference to the subject of Mr Dombey's thoughts, that Mr Dombey was quite disconcerted.
"What is money, Paul?" he answered. "Money?"
"Yes," said the child, laying his hands upon the elbows of his little chair, and turning the old face up towards Mr Dombey's, "what is money?"
Mr Dombey was in a difficulty. He would have liked to give him some explanation involving the terms circulating-medium, currency, depreciation of currency, paper, bullion, rates of exchange, value of precious metals in the market, and so forth; but looking down at the little chair, and seeing what a long way down it was, he answered: "Gold, and silver, and copper. Guineas, shillings, half-pence. You know what they are?"
"Oh yes, I know what they are," said Paul. "I don't mean that, Papa. I mean what's money after all?"

Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son*

addixti servum nummis here mille ducentis,
ut bene cenares, Calliodore, semel.
nec bene cenasti: mullus tibi quattuor emptus
librarum cenae pompa caputque fuit.
exclamare libet: "non est hic, improbe, non est
piscis, homo est; hominem, Calliodore, comes."

Yesterday you sold a slave for 1,200 sesterces
so that just once, Calliodorus, you could dine well.
But you didn't dine well: the four-pound mullet you purchased
was your whole dinner, from head to tail.
I want to shout: "this, wicked man, this is no fish – it's a human!
it's a human you're eating, Calliodorus."

Martial, *Epigrams* 10.31

Introduction & Argument

What is money? Even with an arsenal of examples, the elder Dombey struggles to correct Paul's insistent naïveté. His eventual answer belongs to a different question: "money, Paul, can do anything." Studies of the issue in Greco-Roman antiquity have long employed the tripartite definition where money can be a store of value, mediator of exchange, and unit of account.[60] Economic historians now tend to emphasize the relative complexity of monetary systems and financial vehicles in the period when Martial was composing his epigrams.[61] Commercial markets are a conspicuous feature of his poetry. He characterizes his book collections as commodified goods, often enumerates prices and incomes, and refers to most denominations of coinage. The epigrammatist is no Nicole Oresme, but his interest in money cannot be explained away as a mere reality effect. In this chapter, I show that Martial exposes diametric tendencies in the perception of monetary value in his world. On the one hand, coins are a way to grab onto the homogeneity implicit in everything that is bought or sold, the specter of monetary value that can be reified if the right market conditions exist, a value that is numerical, abstract, and composed of self-identical units.[62] On the other hand, coins are stuff with a rich semiotic existence, each one

[60] See, e.g., Hollander (2007) 1-14 and Peacock (2013) 17-46.

[61] For an overview, see Lo Cascio (1981), Howgego (1992), Harl (1996) 1-20, 73-96, Duncan-Jones (1998), Duncan-Jones (1999), von Reden (2012); concise definitions for key terms can be found in Jones (1990). See Verboven (2002) 132-9, Harris (2006), von Reden (2012) 276-9 on cashless transfers and the difference between money and coinage. Coinage reforms were important to Domitian's rule; see Carradice (1983) 141-50, 153-66.

[62] I implicitly argue here that Roman money in Martial's poetry can approach the definition of contemporary money offered by Seaford (2004) 1: "what sort of thing is [money]? Apparently a token or symbol, commanding the labour of others. But a symbol of what? Not, surely, of all or any one of the numerous goods and services that it can be exchanged for, but rather of the homogeneous, numerical exchange-value abstracted from – so as to embody command over – goods and services. And because this value is too abstract to be embodied in money in the way that the abstraction of strength may seem embodied in a symbolic lion,

different and all suggestive of a host of metaphors, not least in moral discourses.[63] As stuff, they are useful for affecting displays of wealth and can be, as with other gifts, the site of emotional bonds. I explore here Martial's habit of flipping between these two sides of coinage.

I argue that the movement between numerical valuation and sensual plenitude – coins and commodities as numbers, coins and commodities as culturally determined matter – functions as an aesthetic paradigm in Martial's epigrams, providing him with a form of perception that encompasses the abstract and concrete. I pursue this argument in the following order. I begin by showing that the numerical aspect of coinage allows Martial to engage in a censorial poetics of speaking truth where price and monetary valuation are thought to cut to the essence of people. I then show that fungibility is parodied by Martial, while the notion that all coins are the same – and by extension that commodities can be truly fungible – is undercut by the giving of coins as gifts. The possibilities for a coin to be both token of accounting and unique configuration of matter come together in epigrams about lending at interest: here currency *is* both numbers recorded in ledger books and coins circulating in the hands and wallets of borrowers.[64] A closer reading of the descriptors Martial uses with coins reveals an overlap between his language of coinage and his language of wealth more broadly. We begin to see a synthesis in Martial of the

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we should perhaps call modern money not even a mere symbol but a mere sign, whose meaning is exhausted in its function as a means of payment or exchange." See Bransbourg (2011) on Roman fiduciarity and metallism.

[63] Kurke (1999) 23 explores the role of coinage as a "a polyvalent symbol within a complex symbolic system" in the Greek world.

[64] I resume my discussion of lending in Chapter 3.

properties of coins and those of things or people purchased with coins. Conversely, things and people take on the abstract homogeneity of coins. I dwell on the wear some coins demonstrate from being handled by so many buyers and sellers. This wear is a symptom of coins' use as counters, as something lusterless that is only useful as a number. I then argue that fungibility is a central criterion for reading six epigrams that, while not directly addressing coinage, resonate verbally and thematically with Martial's poetics of cash. Hence, this is a chapter about the logic of money as an aesthetic object, not about coins per se. Coins offer an inroad into Martial's poetics of fungibility, but they do not offer the only presentation of the logic of fungibility in the epigrams.

How can a process of valuation and exchange suggest a form of aesthetic perception? The second epigraph to this chapter provides a good example. Calliodorus sells a slave and with the proceeds buys a large mullet which he consumes as a lavish one-course dinner. Martial jokes that the fish being eaten is the slave. More than just skewering the easy disposal of slaves, the punchline relies on a bad-faith conception of commodity exchange. Mediation between fish and human can be expressed numerically as money, property in the abstract that lacks the properties of either entity. Human is converted into coins, and subsequently, and in theory indifferently to any prior activity, coins are converted into fish. But Martial sees in this quotidian transmutation of value a residue that lingers through the operations of exchange, defying the principle of abstraction enacted in the use of money. According to the logic of the joke, if Calliodorus can bite into a bought fish that is simultaneously a sold slave, it is because what is fungible between the mullet and the enslaved man is not just value expressed abstractly as a number but also a macabre, metaphysical co-presence of each. If monetary exchange can be thought of as the moment

that makes property present to the exchanging parties, then Martial adds the possibility that in commercial exchanges property can become contaminated with the properties of whatever material form it happens to inhabit. The joke about Calliodorus relies on the ceaseless movement between fish, slave, and price as number: each remains immanent to the joke. Hence, when conceived of in this way, commodity exchange suggests itself as a compositional process.

Coins in Martial's Epigrams

Martial's terminology for coinage combines a generalizing view of money with the rational language of fractions. Once, at 11.70.7, money is called *pecunia numerata*, but above all Martial prefers the term *nummus*, using it in thirty-two poems. This word is probably an abbreviation for the *nummus sestertius*, the usual denomination for accounting, or perhaps the *nummus dupondius*. It could also be a generic, catch-all word for any denomination of currency in the Augustan system. More precise terms exemplify the Roman logic of measurement. Around ten times we find the word *sestertius* – 2 ½ *asses* – and once the diminutive *sestertiolus*. *Centum quadrantes*, the bronze *quadrans* being ¼ of an *as* and cropping up also about ten times in the corpus, form the *sportula* given to clients, for example at 1.59.1 or 3.7.1. The word *as*, which originally is a unit of measurement (a unity, divided into twelve parts – *unciae* – in the duodecimal system), is equally common. Twice, however, it features in the legal phrase *ex asse*, characterizing at 3.10.5 and 7.66.1

not money per se but the transfer of an inheritance to a sole heir.[65] *Denarius*, originally meaning ten *asses*, shows up half as much, as does the word *moneta*, which Martial uses to refer to coins as well as a mint making coins. We do not find other denominations such as *quinarius*, and in the single instance of *semis* appearing, at 11.105.2, it just means one half. *Bes*, *quincunx*, *triens*, *sextans*, and *semuncia*, names for coins from the Republican era, are unsurprisingly used only for measurements of volume in Martial's corpus.

The numericity of coinage in Roman financial language supports a broader habit of enumeration, and sometimes Martial dispenses with the denomination altogether, simply giving us a number.[66] Counting is a favored poetic mode for Martial. He assesses the value of things, people, and social relations in numerical units, totting up prices, expenditures, revenues, loans and debts, inheritances, and gifts.[67] Not least, he counts his own poetry by the book, poem, line, and word.[68] A poem in book 5 about seating rules in the theater links counting with the figure of the censor and his role in society – the *censoris cura*.[69] Bassus attempts to cheat his way into the equestrian section by wearing expensive Tyrian purple garments but, as Martial observes, no cloak can substitute for the requisite four hundred

[65] *OLD* s.v. *as* § 4; see *OLD* s.v. *as* § 3 for the previous point. See Bailey (2012) on coins and measurements generally.

[66] See, e.g., 6.10.1: *pauca Iovem nuper cum milia forte rogarem*, "when recently I was asking Jupiter for a few thousand…"; sometimes a denomination or the word *nummus* will appear elsewhere in the epigram, but often, as with 6.10, the reference to money is clear from the context.

[67] Rimell (2008) 94-139 provides an overview of this tendency in Martial; see also Hardie (1983) 70, Sullivan (1991) 3-4.

[68] See, e.g., 2.1, 5.2, 5.15, 6.1, 8.1, 8.3, 8.20, 9.84.

[69] 5.23.3; see Canobbio (2011) 280-1 on the historical context. See also 5.25 for the same theme.

thousand sesterces.[70] The poet takes the side of Domitian in his enforcement of the *lex Roscia* by mentioning the number that cuts to the truth of Bassus' social status. But if numerical valuation bolsters Martial's credibility as a truth teller, there is also talk of fudging numbers. The final poem of the second book even asks the reader to manipulate the Roman numerals marking the collection: if we would rather have book 1, we simply need to remove an iota.[71] We hear of something resembling insurance fraud in 3.52, where Tongilianus collects a million sesterces for a burned house originally bought for two hundred thousand, an anecdote expanded by Juvenal.[72] 5.35 demonstrates the pure fabrication of numbers: Euclides, dressed in luxurious scarlet, boasts about two hundred thousand in income from a farm at Patrae, among other things, but is betrayed when a key falls out of his pocket, revealing him to be a mere *ianitor*.[73]

Still, a general faith in the veracity of numbers allows Martial to engage in what I call a censorial poetics, using numbers to demonstrate truths. A good example comes from epigram 10.75 where the poet gauges the falling market value of a prostitute over time.[74] Galla once commanded a price of twenty thousand sesterces, *milia viginti*. A year later that number drops to ten thousand, *bis quina sestertia*, then, six months later, two thousand, *duo milia*. Martial next offers one thousand, *mille nummos*. Galla later accepts four hundred

[70] 5.23.5-7.

[71] 2.93.

[72] Juvenal, *Satires* 3.203-11.

[73] 5.35.7-8.

[74] See also 6.71, where a master sells Telethusa but lustily buys her back at a higher price because of her subsequent training in erotic dance.

sesterces or four gold coins, *aureolos quattuor*, then one hundred sesterces, *centum nummos*, then the contents of Martial's dole, *quandrantibus centum*. The punchline: Galla ends up offering to pay the poet for sex, an offer he declines. Martial testifies to the ability of money to track the exchange value of commodified people, doggedly following this logic through to where Galla paradoxically pays to sell herself. Galla must watch the abstracted value of her own body fluctuate somewhere outside of itself, mediated by descending numbers. Another example is 3.62. Here Martial lists the expenditures of the wealthy Quintus. He buys boys for one or two hundred thousand, *centenis*…*et saepe ducenis*. His household furniture costs one million sesterces, *decies* [*milia*], while he spends five thousand, *milia quinque*, on a pound of silver. Far from making Martial seem petty for precisely recording outlays, the prices in the epigram self-evidently reveal the *pusillus animus* of Quintus.[75] The elision of coins with numbers functions as part of an authorial claim to truth about people.

This concern for numbers that amounts to a clear recognition of reality manifests in anger in book 4 when Martial chides Maecilianus. The *amicus* had asked the poet for a loan of one thousand sesterces: *mille tibi nummos hesterna luce roganti/ in sex aut septem*, *Maeciliane*, *dies*, "when you were asking yesterday for a thousand coins [to have] for six or seven days…"[76] Martial had denied this request, but next Maecilianus asks for a large dinner plate and some serving vessels. The poet responds as if he was being conned: *stultus es*? *an stultum me credis*, *amice*? *negavi/ mille tibi nummos*, *milia quinque dabo*? "Are you

[75] 3.62.9.

[76] 4.15.1-2.

stupid? Or do you think I am stupid, friend? I refused you a thousand sesterces; will I then give you five thousand?"[77] The six-line poem contains five numbers, shifting between currency amounts and days. To Martial's mind, the plate and serving ware are the exact equivalents of their cost, which is more than the loan in cash would have been. His indignation presupposes that both actors in the relationship will be aware of the monetary value that pervades the world of things whether it appears directly in the form of loaned cash or cryptically in the form of gifts. The ability to reduce to a number lurks even in non-commercial exchanges, offering a trajectory for the emotive pitch of the epigram. Martial's anger works by exposing the objects caught up in the relationship between himself and Maecilianus to a logic of sameness and the self-identical units of accounting.

The logic of sameness takes a parodic form in an epigram that lampoons Caecilius the "Atreus of gourds," *Atreus cucurbitarum*, who loves squash so much that he instructs his cook to shape it to look like every other dish.[78] Squash becomes first, second, and third course: ersatz cakes, dates, lentils, beans, mushrooms, sausages. Caecilius wrongly thinks of himself as elegant and clever: *hoc lautum vocat*, *hoc putat venustum*,/ *unum ponere ferculis tot assem*, "this he calls elegant, this he considers lovely: to serve one item as so many dishes."[79] The verb *ponere* signifies "to serve" when used in the context of food. But Martial allows for another meaning, "to spend," revealing the low cost of the meal.[80] Line 21 could

[77] 4.15.5-6.

[78] 11.31.1.

[79] 11.13.20-21.

[80] *OLD* s.v. *ponere* § 5, 14.

alternately be translated: "to spend a dollar on so many dishes." As discussed above, *assem* means first a unit, hence my "item," then a copper coin, my "dollar." A key point emerges from this slippage of meaning. Monetary value can present itself – serve itself up – in manifold forms, not unlike the way Caecilius' cook "arranges manifold layers of squash meat," *multiplices struit tabellas*.[81] The gourds of Caecilius make palpable the strange homogeneity in every commodity, the numerical dimension that allows goods to be commensurable in the marketplace. The epigram implicitly satirizes people who would focus exclusively on this homogeneity. People who care only for prices are like someone who enjoys only the same bland food. All the same, Caecilius does want this bland flavor presented to him in manifold forms.

The squash of Caecilius lends a fleshiness to a sort of matter that Jacques Derrida has termed spectral. In returning to Marx' famous call to recognize the "metaphysischer Spitzfindigkeit und theologischer Mucken" of the commodity, that "sensuously supersensible thing," Derrida involves the notion of exchange value in a much larger metaphysical project of figuring the spectral non-origin of presence as a ghost.[82] For Derrida, commodification is a type of haunting in the phenomenological experience of an object. This awareness of value can never be excluded from the sensible qualities of an object but also, it can never be definitively located in them. Monetary value is somehow in

[81] 11.31.9.

[82] Derrida (1993) 1-60, 188-94; see Marx (1977) 163. Žižek (1989) 12 offers another take: "we have touched on a problem unsolved by Marx, that of the material character of money: not of the empirical, material stuff money is made of, but of the sublime material, of that other 'indestructible and immutable' body which persists beyond the corruption of the body physical – this other body of money is like the corpse of the Sadeian victim which endures all torments and survives with its beauty immaculate."

or coextensive with an object, even when that object is freighted with cultural meaning. But it also comes from outside an object, from the social life of that object whenever it is related to other objects in this way. Hence exchange value or fungibility, like a ghost who dwells between the world of the living and the dead, is spectral. Martial's examples of the ontological indeterminacy of exchange value and the residual materiality of money can be read from the perspective of Derridean hauntology. For instance, a flamboyant man strutting through the Saepta Julia is revealed to have pawned his equestrian ring for barely eight coins in 2.57.7-8: *oppigneravit modo modo ad Cladi mensam*/ *vix octo nummis anulum*, *unde cenaret*. The money was, in a sense, already in his hand, but the ring was a symbol for a social status, its perceptible qualities connoting class membership, legal rights, and social prerogatives, among other things. Epigram 2.57 zeroes in on the impossibility of banishing fungibility itself from the stuff of life and a second impossibility of perceiving it as one would apprehend the meaning of the ring, i.e., "this man is an equestrian." Its presence in the scene can only be satisfactorily felt after the fact, in the perfect tense, *oppigneravit*, once a transaction has occurred.

Two metallic terms for money demonstrate the slipperiness between categories of coin and commodity. The first, *aes* or *aera* in the plural, indicates either bronze or alloyed bronze coins or any coin not made from precious metals. It can also describe something made from bronze – statues, bowls, etc.[83] It is not difficult to tell when Martial refers to coins with this word and when he refers to something purchased with money. The same is

[83] See, e.g., the bronze castanets, *Tartesiaca*…*aera*, at 11.16.4.

not true with *argentum*, silver. Silver can be a commodity bought by the pound.[84] But in 7.53, Martial suggests uncoined silver as a viable alternative to money because of its standardization and therefore fungibility. An *amicus* called Umber provokes ire by re-gifting his haul from the first five days of the Saturnalian festival to the poet. Martial lists the items: foodstuffs and cheap household goods such as writing tablets, a toothbrush, a sponge, a napkin. The conclusion puts these recycled gifts into perspective:

> vix puto triginta nummorum tota fuisse
> munera quae grandes octo tulere Syri.
> quanto commodius nullo mihi ferre labore
> argenti potuit pondera quinque puer!
>
> I think the gifts, which needed eight robust Syrians
> to carry them, cost barely thirty sesterces all together.
> How much more conveniently, and with no exertion,
> could five pounds[85] of silver have been brought to me by a boy!
> (7.53.9-12)

The punchline links two non-equivalent things: the cost of the gifts and the weight of silver for which they could be substituted.[86] As opposed to the bulky gifts, silver would have the same convenience as cash, functioning as a unit of account and store of value. Martial's preference for five pounds of silver is implicated in the difference between eight struggling Syrians and the anonymous *puer* who would deliver it by himself, the very last word of the poem. The gifts are worn out by circulation as the Saturnalia moves past its

[84] See, e.g., 3.62.4.

[85] Galán Vioque (2002) 324 points out that *pondera* is synonymous here to *libra*; see Petronius, *Satyrica* 31.10 for silver cups marked with their weight.

[86] I pass over part of the joke here: the silver would be more convenient *and* more valuable than the gifts, hence the exchanged proposed is not between equal things.

climax, while the silver, like the boy, arrives with its strength undiminished.[87] The epigram shows the subtlety of Martial's libidinal poetics of fungibility, relying on the category overlaps of uncoined silver, a substance between gift, commodity, and currency.[88] The silver would distill the value of the gifts into a convenient, readily circulating form. But of course, the silver and the boy carrying it are hardly the same as the trivial gifts and robust Syrian slaves, and the conceptual movement from latter to former takes on an erotic charge as the value rises.

So, while the epigrammatist can use monetary valuation to reduce things and people to the honesty of numbers, so to speak, certain fungible goods lead us away from abstraction. We see this clearly with gold coins. The term *aureolus* appears six times in the corpus, fitting into Martial's meters more easily than the cretic *aureus*.[89] It can denote a high price, as when Galla, perhaps the same woman mentioned in 10.75, charges regular customers two or four *aureoli* but gets *aureolos…denos* from Aeschylus to remain quiet about his unspecified sexual kink.[90] More often, the gold of these coins creates an aesthetic experience that detracts from their ability to be handed over promiscuously. *Aureoli* become special objects conveying affection between individuals. Along with sardonyxes and emeralds, Chloe gives her boyfriend Lupercus *centum dominos novae monetae*, "one

[87] Pederasty is a key feature of Martial's poetry; see Sullivan (1991) 207-10, Richlin (1992) 32-56, Obermayer (1998) 55-7. Richlin (1992) 40 discusses the technique of ending poems with *puer*, an erotic surprise or indeed the answer to a sort of riddle set up to equate disparate things.

[88] See also 8.71, where a patron sends gradually less and less uncoined silver to Martial for the Saturnalia, who counts down the weights.

[89] Canobbio (2011) 249.

[90] 9.4.3.

hundred masters from a new minting," with the implication that they too will be jewelry.[91] Why spend shiny new coins when you can wear them, show them off?[92] Elsewhere Martial juxtaposes *binos quater a nova moneta*, "eight [coins] from a new minting," with a pound of expensive perfume, *libram Cosmiani*.[93] Likewise, in 12.65 he ponders what to give Phyllis after a long night of sex. Options include perfumes, Spanish wool, or *de moneta Caesaris decem flavos*, "ten blondies from the imperial mint."[94] Phyllis asks for an amphora of wine, rounding out the list of things notable for their seductive properties. These coins begin to recall gold given explicitly as a gift at 8.18.9: *aurum et opes et rura frequens donabit amicus*, "many *amici* will give gold and wealth and land." We see the parsing of gold and coins in a similar list in book 3. Candidus shares his wife with the public, unlike his wealth: *solus*…*nummos*,/ *aurea solus habes*, "you keep your coins to yourself, you keep your gold to yourself."[95] Suggestive of unique objects like cups or jewels, the precious metal of *aureoli* differentiates them from each other, from other coins with the same value, e.g. one hundred sesterces; and from numbers in the abstract.

The sensible materiality of gold fits with a recurrent image in the corpus of coined wealth as animated, having a will of its own. This image is framed by the stereotypical

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[91] 4.28.4-5; see Moreno Soldevila (2006) 250.

[92] See in the adjacent epigram (4.29.3-4) where the principle is make explicit: *rara iuvant*: *primis sic maior gratia pomis*,/ *hibernae pretium sic meruere rosae*; "rarities are pleasing: so, greater favor belongs to the first fruits, so, winter roses deserve their price…."

[93] 12.55.7-8.

[94] 12.65.6.

[95] 3.26.1-2; *aurea* here may mean gold cups, so Fusi (2006) 249; or, following Friedländer (1886) 297, gold dishes.

strongbox, the *arca* of wealthy individuals who might well support Martial.[96] Twice the *arca* is said to "whip up" wealth, *flagellat*, referring to the compulsion attendant upon lending at interest.[97] In each passage, *arca* is the subject of the verb, impersonally driving profits. Likewise, in 3.31.3-4 debtors are enslaved to an inhuman mistress: *et servit dominae numerosus debitor arcae/ sustentatque tuas aurea massa dapes*, "numerous debtors serve the strongbox-mistress, and heaps of gold prop up your feasts." Now the loan records kept in the *arca* are the objects of enumeration. We see these pages eerily unfolding of their own volition next to the pale glow of coins in book 8: *superba densis arca palleat nummis,/ centum explicentur paginae Kalendarum*, "although your arrogant cashbox glows with heaped up coins, although one hundred pages of the Kalends unfold…"[98] The *paginae Kalendarum* contain the *nomina* of people who owe *usura* on the Kalends.[99] The power of money to generate more money derives from its ability to be in two places at once, so to speak: a number by a name on a page and stuff in the hand or wallet. Because of this ontological duplication, the ledgers rustle with their own fecundity.

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[96] See, e.g., 1.76.5, 2.30.4, 2.44.9, 3.31.3, 3.41.2, 5.13.6, 5.42.1, 8.38.11, 8.44.10, 10.15.4.

[97] 2.30.4; 5.13.6. I follow the interpretation offered influentially by Friedländer; see Canobbio (2011) 189-90 for a comprehensive overview and the notion that *flagellat* simply refers to the straining of a chest crammed with coins, the image we get at 10.15.4: *non caperet nummos cum gravis arca tuos*, "although your freighted strongbox could not hold your coins."

[98] 8.44.10-11. See Mankin (1995) 87 on Horace, *Epode* 2.67-70: "Interest was reckoned by the month, from one Kalends, Nones, or Ides to the next…Alfius calls in his debts on the Ides, the last settlement day of the month, intending to put the money to better use, but is up to his old tricks by the Kalends, the first lending day of the month following." See also footnote 227.

[99] See 5.42.3 for the terms *sors*, principal, and *usura*, interest; see 2.44 for the rattling off of *nomina*, the names of indebted people.

Epigram 6.27 combines the theme of duplication with a melding of coins and wine, perhaps suggesting an analogy for the revenues of capital lent at interest. Martial addresses the poem to Nepos who is the poet's neighbor twice over, having places near him in Rome and Nomentum:

bis vicine Nepos – nam tu quoque proxima Florae
  incolis et veteres tu quoque Ficelias –
est tibi, quae patria signatur imagine vultus,
  testis maternae nata pudicitiae.
tu tamen annoso nimium ne parce Falerno,
  et potius plenos aere relinque cados.
sit pia, sit locuples, sed potet filia mustum:
  amphora cum domina nunc nova fiet anus.
Caecuba non solos vindemia nutriat orbos:
  possunt et patres vivere, crede mihi.

Twice-neighbor Nepos – for you cultivate both the proximity of
  Flora's temple and the old town of Ficeliae –
to you belongs one whose face is stamped with her paternal image,
  a daughter who is a testament to her mother's virtue.
Still, don't be too sparing of your old Falernian,
  it's better to leave behind jars filled with bronze [coins].
Let her be chaste, let her be rich, but let her drink young wine:
  the now-new amphora will turn into an old woman along with its mistress.
Caecuban vintages should not nourish only the childless:
  even fathers are allowed to live it up, trust me.
(6.27)

Not only is Nepos doubly Martial's neighbor, his daughter duplicates the mother's virtue, while her face is stamped, *signatur*, with her father's likeness, not unlike a coin.[100] This resonance anticipates the intrusion of coinage in line 6.[101] It is clear, as Shackleton Bailey points out in the apparatus of his Teubner edition, that we are not to imagine the

[100] *OLD* s.v. *signare* 7.

[101] Grewing (1997) 207 links the image of jars filled with cash to a story recapped at Aulus Gellius 15.12.4.

daughter drinking new wine but old wine that is new at the present moment. Martial thus telescopes the stages of development for wine into lines 7-8, capturing its different temporalities. The exact use for the bronze coins remains unclear nor is there indication that the daughter or father will lend at interest. But in blurring the distinction between the jars of cash and *mustum*, Martial may be suggesting that capital can enrich itself as passively as wine that improves in the cellar. We would then have an intertemporal dimension to factor into the ontology of money. That much is at least suggested by the blending of wine and paternity with coinage. Both images – the daughter who is her parents in another timeframe and the *mustum* that likewise is aged Caecuban or Falernian – provide another way to analogize the potential for money to exist in multiple places at once. In other words, looking back to 8.44 in the preceding paragraph, the *usura* of a loan is as much already present with the principal, *sors*, as the matured wine is there in the freshly pressed juice. The form of presence for one is a mathematical percentage, for the other a biological potential of vinification.

The physical properties of coins offer Martial a goldmine of metaphors as he criticizes the stinginess of patrons and expresses frustration at his own barely remunerated status as the freeborn *cliens* caught between commercial and non-commercial networks of exchange. Coins can connote the stinginess of benefactors. For instance, in book 1 we hear of a once-liberal friend who, after coming into a windfall of ten million sesterces, reverts to penny-pinching. Now his once-sumptuous dinners are put on for *nigrae sordibus monetae*, "the dregs of dirty money."[102] The epithet rubs off on the stingy

[102] 1.99.13.

host. Meanwhile the guests take away "half pounds of leaden [silver plate]," *plumbea selibra*.[103] So too in 10.74, Martial complains that Scorpus, a celebrity charioteer, carries off "fifteen heavy sacks of gold hot [from the mint] in one hour," *una quindecim graves hora/ ferventis auri…saccos*, while he only gets "one hundred leaden [coins] in a whole day," *centum…plumbeos die toto*.[104] The diminishing returns for the client's attendance at *salutationes* is felt in the physical properties of the money. Coins can also connote the social turpitude of banausic occupations. Martial threatens to become a *causidicus* in book 5, noting that this employment would be more lucrative than poetry and, incidentally, once more juxtaposing wine and cash: *plurimus Hispanas mittet mihi nauta metretas/ et fiet vario sordidus aere sinus*, "many a sailor will send me casks from Spain and my pocket will become dirty with sundry bronze."[105] Dirty money appears again in book 9, when Martial praises Domitian for putting a halt to the traffic in child prostitutes as well as castration; we see the image of an infant wailing for "dirty bronze coins," *sordida…aera*.[106] So, typically, the stuff of coins reflects social attitudes towards the conditions of their acquisition, whether in patronage networks or in selling labor or the body for profit. But what is more interesting: if the gleam of new gold coins signals their ability to be taken out of monetary circulation and become jewelry, grime or patina marks the only remaining social use of

[103] 1.99.15; see Citroni (1975) 303 on the identification of bronze and silver plate. Chemical compounds build up on metal coins over time, and coins can also accumulate a dubious grime along their travels, *aerugo*.

[104] 10.74.4-6; I take this passage to mean that the coins seem leaden, but Thornton (1980) 348 argues that lead *tesserae* were sometimes used as "peasant's money" or small denomination coinage, not their intended use. On Scorpus, see Syme (1977), Ciappi (2001), Tafaro (2016).

[105] 5.16.7-8.

[106] 9.7.4; see also 9.5.6. Henriksén (1998/9) 83 rightly rejects Shackleton Bailey's argument that the child is merely begging for coins.

grubby bits of metal, as currency. The dirtier they become, the more they become coins; that is, only coins. The condition of *nigra moneta* coincides not with disposal but with a curious refusal to be discarded. Martial depicts these coins not as abject but as the undying embodiments of exchange value the use of which is clarified as they show signs of age. Dark or dirty qualities paradoxically enhance the capacity of coinage to exist as pure quantity.

In addition to its literal and moral coloration, cash has a particular sound in Martial's poetics of degradation. Martial urges a friend named Flaccus to forgo poetry and take up a profitable line of work instead. Minerva will pay the bills, not Apollo: *quid petis a Phoebo*? *nummos habet arca Minervae*:/ *haec sapit*, *haec omnes fenerat una deos*, "what do you want from Apollo? The cashbox of Minerva has the coins; she's figured it out, she's got a monopoly on charging the gods interest."[107] Martial points to the forum as closer and more lucrative than Helicon or Delphi:

> Romanum propius divitiusque forum est.
> illic aera sonant: at circum pulpita nostra
> et steriles cathedras basia sola crepant. 15
>
> The Roman forum is closer and wealthier.
> in that place cash sings: but around our platforms
> and fruitless performance chairs only kisses clink. 15
> (1.76.12-15)

Poets receive only kisses, *sola basia*, and the empty bravo, *perinane sophos*.[108] Martial transposes the verb *crepare*, meaning to clink or jingle, onto the sonic engagement between poet/performer and audience, while *sonare*, which would be expected of poetic

[107] 1.76.5-6.

[108] 1.76.10.

performance, belongs instead with the transactions of the market and the activity of money changers or lenders.[109] *Crepare* describes a sudden noise and a burst of such noises.[110] The mouth, when puckered into a kiss repeatedly, evidently can sound like coins jostling together. For the coins, this clinking sound evinces their strange, impersonal vibrancy. They take on some of the demonstrative force of the audiences' kisses, as if communicating their enthusiasm for certain types of production or their eagerness to disperse and multiply.

Martial twice uses the verb *crepare* to describe a sound generated by gold coins, *aureoli*. Lamenting the stinginess of wealthy *amici* in an age otherwise blessed by Domitian, he supposes that only one person will come away from the Saturnalia with these coins as a gift: *qui crepet aureolos forsitan unus erit*, "perhaps there will only be one man who jingles gold coins."[111] Another epigram on the same theme states that Labullus only seems liberal by contrast with the parsimonious norm in contemporary patronage relations. Among other things, Labullus may give enough jingling coins to last his client for two months: *interdum aureolos manu crepantis/ possint ducere qui duas Kalendas*.[112] But he is no Piso, Seneca, Memmius, or Crispus, examples from a bygone era of true generosity. The collocation of *crepare* and *aureolus* appears nowhere else in the extant corpus of Latin literature. Indeed, outside of Martial the verb and its derivatives virtually never pertain to

[109] See the *nummularius* at 12.57.7-8.

[110] *OLD* s.v. *crepare* § 1, 4.

[111] 5.19.14.

[112] 12.36.3-4.

coins or, for that matter, to kisses.[113] The same cannot be said about his other uses of *crepare* and derivatives, even if the crackling material in question has to do with metals and the production and reception of poetry. For instance, at 11.16.3-4 Martial warns the reader that he is adopting a more obscene tone: *iam mea Lampsacio lascivit pagina versu*/ *et Tartesiaca concrepat aera manu*, "now my page is getting lascivious with Priapean verse and rattles bronze castanets with a hand of Cadiz."[114] In 1.76, when Martial follows the phrase *aera sonant* with *basia sola crepant*, it is not odd that bronze should resound in a manner best conveyed by the verb *crepare*. What is striking is that the word *aera*, when in combination with *crepare*, means coins.

Two further instances of the verb *crepare* demonstrate how for Martial the sound of cash is echoed in the sound given off by accumulated wealth more generally. Epigram 9.22 contrasts common reasons to ask a patron for wealth, *opes*, with Martial's more noble if somewhat cryptic purpose: *ut donem*…*et aedificem*, "[I ask for wealth] so I can give…and build."[115] Amidst the gauche consumer fantasies of the thick-minded crowd, *crassa turba*, we discover couches covered in a crinkly gold foil: *crepet in nostris aurea lamna toris*, "[do

[113] The only other examples are Neronian: Petronius, *Satyrica* 132.1.1: *pluribus osculis collisa labra crepitabant*, "they were smacking their conjoined lips with many kisses"; Persius 2.10-12: *o si*/ *sub rastro crepet argenti mihi seria dextro*/ *Hercule*, "Oh if only a jar of silver would rattle under my mattock with Hercules willing." See Juvenal 1.113-16 where the sound of *crepare* is adjacent to money: *etsi funesta Pecunia templo*/ *nondum habitat*, *nullas nummorum ereximus aras*,/ *ut colitur Pax atque Fides*, *Victoria*, *Virtus*/ *quaeque salutato crepitat Concordia nido*, "even if deadly Money does not have a temple to inhabit, and we have not erected altars to Cash, just as are worshiped Peace and Loyalty, Victory, Valor, and Concord who clatters when her nest is greeted."

[114] See Kay (1985) 102-103 on the famously erotic dancing girls of Gades; *crepare*/derivatives and *aes* appear often in Latin literature; see, e.g., Ovid, *Fasti* 5.441 and Petronius, *Satyrica* 23.1.1 (*concrepare* and *aera*).

[115] 9.22.16; see also 9.46 where a man named Gellius uses constant building projects as an excuse to deny gifts: *oranti nummos ut dicere possit amico*/ *unum illud verbum Gellius* '*aedifico*', "so that Gellius can say that one special word to a friend begging for coins: 'I'm building'" (9.46.5-6). See Henriksén (1998/9) 125 for the interpretation that Martial aims to model good patronage with the money he would receive.

you think that I ask] so that gold foil may crackle on my couches?"[116] Later in book 9, Martial offers prayers for the safe return of Flaccus from Cyprus, addressing the young man before his departure as the two enjoy a *locus amoenus*.[117] In contrast to the cool shade of the present moment, Flaccus will endure the heat of summer on the island:

> observes moneo precorque, Flacce,
> messes area cum teret crepantis
> et fervens iuba saeviet leonis.
>
> Flaccus, beware – I beg and warn you –
> when the threshing floor wears down the rattling harvests
> and Leo's hot mane rages.
> (9.90.10-12)

Martial means the period of late July through August, and the association between this time and an arid threshing floor is conventional.[118] But given that the epigram contains an implicit warning to Flaccus against pursuing provincial wealth at the cost of a safer, more modest life at home, the rattling threshing floor works as an analog for a heap of coins, chaffing and wearing down each other.

Martial further synthesizes the material properties and abstract valuation of coins when he uses the same language of desire for coins and things purchased with coins. We can begin to see this synthesis by revisiting the term *dominus*/*domina* that has cropped up in several already-discussed epigrams. Coins are *domini* at 4.28.5, referring to the faces of

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[116] 9.22.6.

[117] See Pitcher (1984) on Flaccus.

[118] See, e.g., Tibullus 1.5.22, Ovid, *Fasti* 3.577, and especially Silius Italicus 13.671-2: *octava terebat/ arentem culmis messem crepitantibus aestas*, "the eighth month wears down the dry harvest with its rattling stalks."

the *princeps*. Yet also, as at 3.31.3, there can be the implication that coined money holds over people a power analogous to the command of a master, as with the power of a creditor to extract payments from his debtors.[119] In 11.70, we see the term applied to slave boys about to be sold by Tucca:

vendere, Tucca, potes centenis milibus emptos?
  plorantis dominos vendere, Tucca, potes?
nec te blanditiae, nec verba rudesve querelae,
  nec te dente tuo saucia colla movent?
ah facinus! tunica patet inguen utrimque levata,
  inspiciturque tua mentula facta manu.
si te delectat numerata pecunia, vende
  argentum, mensas, murrina, rura, domum;
vende senes servos, ignoscent, vende paternos:
  ne pueros vendas, omnia vende miser.
luxuria est emere hos – quis enim dubitatve negatve? –,
  sed multo maior vendere luxuria est.

Tucca, can you really sell [boys] bought for a hundred thousand,
  can you really sell your weeping masters, Tucca?
don't their allurements move you, their words and artless cries,
  their necks, wounded by your tooth?
Oh outrage! With tunic lifted the groin is visible from either side,
  their cocks are inspected, fashioned by your hand.
If counted-out cash delights you, sell
  silver, tables, murrine ware, farms, your home;
sell old slaves (they will forgive you), sell your father's slaves:
  sell everything, wretched man, so you don't sell the boys.
Buying these boys is extravagance – who would doubt or deny it? –
  but selling them is a much greater extravagance.
    (11.70.1-2)

Calling the *pueri* masters updates the typifying inversion of erotic elegy where the *puella*, the love interest, becomes a *domina* controlling the elegiac poet. But there is more to

[119] Given this notion, we may provisionally see an additional resonance at 6.27.8 (*amphora cum domina nunc nova fiet anus*): the "mistress" – daughter and invested capital, that is an *arca* holding the ledger of names of borrowers – will mature along with the wine.

the term in an epigram so focused on the conversion of household objects into ready cash. The *pueri* as *domini* are contrasted with the *pecunia numerata*, Tucca's overriding object of desire: the boys, weeping and marked by his tooth, should maintain over Tucca a greater allure than *nummi*, his new "masters." The epigram blends the two points of contrast. Lines 5-7 segue seamlessly from the inspection of the boys' penises to the counting of cash.[120] The bite marks on the boys' necks even recall the countermarking or test marking of coins.[121] It is as if the *pueri* have already taken on the physical properties of the coins that will be derived from their sale, as if Tucca looks at them and inspects their monetary value in the tangible form that is cash. Rather than criticize this mode of perception, Martial attempts to redirect it to an expanded field, the rest of Tucca's property.

The short circuiting of purchased things and purchasing power occurs much more succinctly in epigram 11.29, where the number associated in Martial's corpus with slave boys is enough to bring the poet to ejaculation. One hundred thousand sesterces, the price for each *puer* in 11.70, appears already in 1.58, where Martial regrets not giving the *mango*, slave dealer, that amount for a *puer* of his own. The amount is high but not without historical parallels.[122] The epigram from book 11 has Phyllis, an elderly woman, masturbating the poet to no effect. Martial advises her to rub him not with her fingers but with words:

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[120] See 7.14 for the measuring of a prized slave boy's penis and 10.55 on Marulla who weighs penises before and after ejaculation, noting the difference down to the *scripulum*: *non ergo est manus ista*, *sed statera*, "therefore hers is not a hand but a scale" (10.55.7).

[121] See Jones (1990) 76-7 on countermarking and test marking coins.

[122] Citroni (1975) 193-4; compare 3.62, discussed above, and 2.63 where a man pays the same amount to have sex with Leda in the *via sacra*. See Bodel (2003) 275 on the number in Petronius.

blanditias nescis: “dabo” dic “tibi milia centum
et dabo Setini iugera certa soli;
accipe vina, domum, pueros, chrysendeta, mensas.”
nil opus est digitis: sic mihi, Phylli, frica.

You don’t get sexy talk: say “I will give you one hundred thousand
and I will give a fixed amount of acreage in the soil of Setia;
take wines, a house, boys, dishes inlayed with gold, tables!”
there’s no need for fingers: *this* is how to masturbate me, Phyllis.
(11.29.5-7)

The verb *dare* has a charged meaning here as the term both for paying for and providing sexual services.[123] Rather than giving her body or paying for sex with Martial, Phyllis should promise to give money and luxury goods. The number in line 4 functions as an advance version of the luxuries in lines 6-7, a shorthand that can be elaborated with commodities. Thus, tracing monetary valuation through its different instantiations, from number to commodity, becomes a sexual act. We may compare 3.75, an epigram that describes how Lupercus, a man with erectile dysfunction, pays for oral sex with *puras...buccas*, “pure cheeks,” corrupting off-limits sexual partners whose identity is not specified.[124] The punchline here involves a pun on the verb *stare* which can mean both to become erect and to cost: *quod non stat*, *magno stare*, *Luperce*, *tibi*, “what does not stand [erect] for you, Lupercus, stands at a high price/costs a lot.”[125] While both epigrams have a different thrust to their humor, each involves the fusion of prices and sexual activity.

Epigram 2.51 puts a new spin on the notion of coins as numerical tokens that people treat as effectively equivalent despite their material differences. In mocking the compulsive

[123] See 7.75 where it is used in both senses.

[124] 3.75.5.

[125] 3.75.8.

prurigo or itch of Hyllus, Martial aligns sexual drives and spending habits with the anonymous wear inflicted upon these coins, the legacy of so many exchanges:[126]

unus saepe tibi tota denarius arca
cum sit et hic culo tritior, Hylle, tuo,
non tamen hunc pistor, non auferet hunc tibi copo,
sed si quis nimio pene superbus erit.
infelix venter spectat convivia culi
et semper miser hic esurit, ille vorat.

Often when a single denarius remains in your whole
cashbox, and it's worn down more than your asshole, Hyllus,
still, the baker won't take it from you, nor the innkeeper,
but any cocky guy with a massive dick.
Your impoverished belly watches the banquet of the asshole:
the former always starves pitiably while the latter gorges itself.
(2.51)

The size queen Hyllus, whenever he is down to the dregs of his cashbox, spends his remaining *denarius* to satisfy one appetite, ignoring his stomach. Elsewhere Martial makes the same connection between mouth and anus, each capable of feeding on something.[127] The *denarius* of 2.51 is not merely a prize for competing hungers, however. Its form anticipates the choice that Hyllus will make, implying through its wear that he has made it many times before. The coin vies with the *culus* for promiscuity, being more worn, handled by more people, in more transactions. Thus, the epigram develops an analogy between penetrative sex and commercial spending. Each iteration of buying or copulating marks a compulsive return to a site of friction. The *culus* and *nummus* have anonymous histories of use populated by generic figures: *pistor*, *copo*, *si quis*…*superbus*. Each user leaves a trace of

[126] See the same *prurigo* in 4.48.

[127] 12.57.3: *pastas glande natis habet Secundus*, "Secundus has butt cheeks fed on acorns (i.e. the tips of penises)."

his presence in the absence of matter worn or rubbed away, smoothed out of existence, a tinkle of silver or gleam of flesh. In being used repeatedly as numerical tokens, the features of coins become effaced as they approach a material stage appropriate to their ideal existence as property without properties. But 2.51 draws our attention to this non-feature that is wear, a patent removal of features.

Martial revisits the obscene image of a worn anus in 9.57, linking it to a set of other worn things. He obliquely approaches the cliché of a would be Stoic or Cynic philosopher who ostentatiously embraces poverty but has anal sex, stripping the gag down to its essentials.[128] The only cue that Hedylus belongs in this category is the stereotypical thick woolen cloak:[129]

nil est tritius Hedyli lacernis:
non ansae veterum Corinthiorum,
nec crus compede lubricum decenni,
nec ruptae recutita colla mulae,
nec quae Flaminiam secant salebrae,
nec qui litoribus nitent lapilli,
nec Tusca ligo vinea politus,
nec pallens toga mortui tribulis,
nec pigri rota quassa mulionis,
nec rasum cavea latus visontis,
nec dens iam senior ferocis apri.
res una est tamen – ipse non negabit –,
culus tritior Hedyli lacernis.

[128] Henriksén (1998/9) 38 rightly comments: "yet another epigram on an ostensible moralist who is really a pathic." The cliché of an austere, would-be philosopher, who ostentatiously embraces poverty and acquires a stock set of accoutrements – but bottoms in male-male anal sex – appears in Roman comedy, satire, and the Greek epigrammatic tradition, not to mention elsewhere in Martial: see, e.g., epigrams 1.24, 1.96, 2.36, 4.53, 6.56, 7.58, 12.42, and 14.86. 11.56 inverts the problem: a man named Chaeremon talks like a Stoic or Cynic but lives too luxuriously; for the Greek epigrammatic tradition, see Book 11 of the Palatine Anthology: 139, 154, 156, 157, 410, and 430.

[129] The figure of Hedylus, "sweetling," (the name recalls Hyllus in 2.51) appears in 1.46 (where he is engaged in sex with Martial) and 4.52 (where he is warned to go easy on bottoming lest he develop hemorrhoids), both poems confirming the same enthusiasm by Hedylus for this sexual position. Most editors agree on the masculine gender of Hedylus; see Howell (1980) 209-10.

Nothing is more worn than the cloak of Hedylus:
not the handles of old Corinthian bronzes,
not the shin slippery from ten-year-old shackles,
not the abraded neck of a busted mule,
not the ruts that cleave the Flaminian way,
not pebbles that gleam on the shores,
not the mattock, polished by the Tuscan vineyard,
not the pale toga of a dead poor man,
not the jostled wheel of a sluggish mule driver,
not the flank of a bison, scraped by the cage,
not the already elderly tooth of a fierce boar.
But there is one thing: he himself/itself will not deny,
Hedylus' asshole is more worn than Hedylus' cloak.
(9.57)

Ring composition, with the last line altering the first three words of the first line – *nil est tritius Hedyli lacernis* becomes *culus tritior Hedyli lacernis* –, corrects an oversight. One thing is more worn than Hedylus' cloak, his *culus*. The parallel with Hyllus in 2.51 suggests that Hedylus, whatever his status, has the same ability to pay for sex with men just as often. The anaphora of *nec*, the particle beginning lines 3-11 of 9.57, recalls through sonic repetition the iterated pounding of anal sex and other penetrative sexual practices. Martial gives voice with this anaphora to the repeated friction, expansion, and contraction that renders the *culus Hedyli* superlatively worn. Several items have been worn down by labor coded by submission and domination. So, we see the depersonalized shin – calloused, but perhaps also slippery with blood? – of an enslaved person, the neck of a she mule long subjected to the yoke, a mattock polished from the servile occupation of hoeing vines in Etruria. By association, the *culus Hedyli* functions as a space of repeated use on the model of exploitative, servile labor. Even if Hedylus is not of servile status, the poem undeniably eroticizes the laborious service of the anus.

The examples of worn things evoke poetic labor as well, especially the process of refinement central to the aesthetic language of epigram. Catullus famously appropriates the notion of polish to describe his poetry at 1.1.1-2, a passage that Martial riffs on: *nondum murice cultus asperoque/ morsu pumicis aridi politus/ Arcanum properas sequi*, *libelle*, "little book, you are eager to follow Arcanus, although not yet adorned in purple nor polished by the rough bite of dry pumice."[130] The polish of the mattock, *ligo*…*politus*, suggests the craft of refining epigrams to where they are ready for circulation, the literal polishing of the page long being seen to parallel the writer's figurative polishing of his compositions. But if polish can define poems, what about wear? Epigram 9.57 may be refined, but the theme is worn, hackneyed, a fact winked at by Martial as he makes wear the focus. Elsewhere the descriptor *tritus* defines Martial's epigrams, encapsulating the image of reading and writing the same themes over and over.[131] Poems that have been attempted too many times are worn, or poems in well-loved books. 9.57 plays on this ambivalence in the notion of being subjected to literal or figurative friction: rubbing – reading, writing, sexually penetrating – something one more time, after so many times, demonstrates a hope that it will release still-enjoyable sensations.

Spinoza, in the appendix to the fourth book of his *Ethica*, observes the potential for money to become a compendium of all things: *unde factum*, *ut eius imago mentem vulgi maxime occupare soleat*, "whence it happens that its image is exceedingly accustomed to

[130] 8.72.1-3.

[131] 1.66.8, 2.58, 10.72.1-2, 11.34.

occupy the mind of common folk."[132] Taken out of context and somewhat literally, this idea sums up the role of money in Martial's poetry: the *imago pecuniae numeratae* – the physical properties of coins, their ghostly presence as numbers, their anonymous histories of haptic encounters – haunts the perception of other things, from commodities to poetry. This is not the specter of a morally suspect mode of exchange. Rather, it is the properties of coins, things that are the distillation of property itself, that impinge upon sensation. We could conclude this section with the point that this habit in Martial reflects the limited role of coinage in his social world – the embeddedness of this form of value in networks of *amicitiae* and the limited degree to which goods were fungible in antiquity. It is unsurprising to find sex slavery and prostitution featuring here, given that those activities define a position of dominance for Martial amidst all his professed degradation. But there is a more interesting conclusion in the discovery of the anonymous alteration of matter that can occur with coinage. In essence, what we find in epigrams such as 2.51 and 9.57 is a poetics of social connectivity and a poetics of the effacement of human labor and human desire. Apart from the sort of ideological mystification that can occur through elite moral discourses on wealth and exchange, Martial finds in coins a broad record of economic activity. Indeed, the wear on coins provides a neat image for this record: the laboring people are there but as non-features.

[132] Spinoza, *Ethica* 4, Appendix 28: *verum omnium rerum compendium pecunia attulit*.

Fungible Sensations

I conclude this chapter with six epigrams that overlap with Martial's description of coins and their sensuous properties. To be sure, these epigrams are not explicitly about coins or even commercial transactions. Rather, they are lists structured around the repetition of certain words, often relative pronouns, in anaphora. After providing a formal overview of these poems, which have already been treated as a unit by scholars, I argue that fungibility is a central criterion for reading them and that they explore fungibility as a ghostly substance – sniffing it, feeling it, looking glancingly at it. In part, these poems evoke lists of enumerated prices, but in them verbal repetition performs the sound of coins expressed by the verb *crepare*. We could say that they clink their way through a list. The six epigrams fixate on a single material property or configuration of matter, discovering it in the list of each poem. Hence, through a sequence of verbal exchanges, they identify a sensation or property that is present in each item and distilled – and here Martial confronts us with the inevitable residue of poetic exchange – in the primary object of each poem. That is, Martial crafts each poem around a tension between deictic abstraction and residual description. I therefore argue that Martial's poetics of commodity exchange continues in these poems, detached from the theme of coinage per se.

Catalog or list poems are prevalent in Martial's collections. In the six epigrams of concern in this section, however, one person or object takes a place of privilege over the others through a rhetorical operation.[133] Consider, for example, the opening lines of 11.8:

[133] La Penna (1992) 28 terms these poems kaleidoscopic priamels: "Io lascerei fra le Priameln i casi in cui un termine della series (molto raramente più di uno) si stacca dagli altri perché con essi confrontato, o per analogia o per comparazione (per lo più in quanto ad essi superiore) o per antitesi; quando ciò non avviene e i termini della series, quindi, restano tutti sullo stesso piano, parlerei di catalogo."

lassa quod hesterni spirant opobalsama dracti,[134]
ultima quod curvo quae cadit aura croco;
poma quod hiberna maturescentia capsa,
arbore quod verna luxuriosus ager;
de Palatinis dominae quod Serica prelis,
sucina virginea quod regelata manu;
amphora quod nigri, sed longe, fracta Falerni,
quod qui Sicanias detinet hortus apes;
quod Cosmi redolent alabastra focique deorum,
quod modo divitibus lapsa corona comis…

What wearied balsam perfumes in yesterday's jar exhale,
what the last breeze falling through the bending saffron,
what apples aging in the winter chest,
what a field luxuriant with spring green,
what the silks of the empress from Palatine presses,
what amber melted in a young girl's hand,
what a broken amphora of dark Falernian at a distance,
what gardens that detain Sicilian bees,
what the unguent boxes of Cosmus and altars of the gods smell of,
what the garland sliding just now off hair enriched with unguent…
(11.8.1-10)

After this delightful list, Martial reveals what the poem is actually describing: *singula quid dicam*? *non sunt satis; omnia misce/ hoc fragrant pueri basia mane mei*, "Why should I list each individually? They are not enough; mix them all together: this is how my boy's kisses smell in the morning." The kisses of the here unnamed *puer*, fragrant even in the morning, exist conceptually on a different plain than scents remaining in a perfume jar opened the previous day or breezes blowing through bending saffron flowers. The boy is not simply the final item of a list that constitutes a field of sensations. His presence gives a retroactive meaning and erotic charge to the elements introduced before him. In this

[134] See Kay (1985) 83 for Housman's famous emendation of *drauci* to *dracti*. Friedländer (1886) 172 prints the first line as *lapsa quod externis spirant opobalsama truncis*, "what the juice of the balsam tree exhales, dripping from the outer bark," a solution to the problem of *drauci* rejected by Shackleton Bailey in his Teubner text. See Richlin (1992) 43 on the word *draucus* in Martial.

epigram, we see two common themes of Martial's poetry: exaggeration, comic or otherwise, and the collapse of cultural distinctions. But, as Antonio La Penna observes, the greater effect is an ontological destabilization for the primary object: "l'oggetto non conta per ciò che è."[135] What matters is, in the case of 11.8, a scent that can conjure up other scented images, little scenes flashing by of the impermanent conditions of an odor.

The mode of identification between list and primary object is partial, and the one thing they have in common piques the interest of the reader, inviting her to circle through the setup and answer to a riddle of sensation. Martial has us sense temporary animations of matter, alluring because they are fleeting and part of the search for a special sensation eluding more direct enunciation. The scents depicted in 3.65, 4.4, 6.93, and 11.8 and the haptic or visual qualities in 8.33 (the epigrams under discussion in this section) are most striking when they are about to fade out of perception. Paradoxically, the smell or feeling is profoundly present but departing, almost already gone or beyond observation. But who senses in these poems? Martial does place some animals and humans in the transient tableaux. Poem 3.65, for instance, begins with a young girl biting into an apple: *quod spirat tenera malum mordente puella*, "[the scent] which an apple exudes when a tender girl bites into it." A few lines later, a sheep eating grass strangely echoes this image: *gramina quod redolent quae modo carpsit ovis*, "[the scent] which grass smells of, grass just torn by a sheep." Yet these beings do not sense so much as produce and enhance sensations. The six epigrams contain experience unmediated for the reader by someone seen in the act of

[135] La Penna (1992) 28: "l'oggetto non conta per ciò che è, ma per le immagini che può suggerire, e le immagini, partite dalla funzione di meglio definire e raffigurare l'oggetto, se ne sganciano per acquistare funzione solo nella serie in quanto libera fuga del gioco immaginifico." See also La Penna (1992) 12: "l'oggetto di partenza, anche se non è un puro pretesto, ha la funzione di moltiplicare liberamente le immagini."

smelling, touching, or seeing. The scents of 3.65 and 11.8 diffuse themselves with an indifference to sentient beings. Things change dramatically, however, when Martial intrudes at the ends of the poems. The solution to each riddle occurs at the moment when we find ourselves complicit in Martial's exploitative sex life or, elsewhere, his misogyny and social biases, no longer *just* sensing.

Prior assessments of the key rhetorical operation in these poems often fail to capture how Martial dismisses the list as an insufficient apparatus for description. Along with priamel, the poetic figure of these epigrams has been called an inventory,[136] *cumulatio*,[137] una serie[138] or una serie di esempi,[139] Katalog,[140] Häufungsfiguren,[141] or Häufung hyperbolischer Vergleiche.[142] None of these terms are incorrect, but Martial's stance towards the accumulated items must be emphasized. Epigram 4.4, for example, states clearly that the list is a set of alternatives to the primary object:

> quod sicca redolet palus lacunae,
> crudarum nebulae quod Albularum,
> piscinae vetus aura quod marinae,
> quod pressa piger hircus in capella,
> lassi vardaicus quod evocati, 5
> quod bis murice vellus inquinatum,
> quod ieiunia sabbatariarum,
> maestorum quod anhelitus reorum,

[136] Howell (1980) 192.

[137] Kay (1985) 82, 114.

[138] Fusi (2006) 416.

[139] Citroni (1975) 130.

[140] Grewing (1997) 579.

[141] Siedschlag (1977) 39-55.

[142] Schöffel (2002) 302.

quod spurcae moriens lucerna Ledae,
quod ceromata faece de Sabina,
quod vulpis fuga, viperae cubile,
mallem quam quod oles olere, Bassa.

What odor the dry swamp of a marsh exudes,
what the mists of raw Albulae,
what the old breeze of a saltwater fishpond,
what a sluggish billy goat on top of a nanny taken in the rut,
what the boot of a weary army reservist,
what wool twice stained by purple dye,
what the fasting breath of Jewish women,
what the sighs of sad defendants in court,
what the dying lamp of dirty Leda the prostitute,
what wrestler's mud made from cheap wine dregs,
what the flight of a fox, what a snake's lair exude;
I would prefer to smell [of each of these] than what you smell of, Bassa.
(4.4)

Bassa smells bad, worse than the other smells. Later in book 4, we learn that the cause is flatulence.[143] In 4.4, Martial attempts to draw a line of preferentiality between her odor and the revolting, manifold stench gathered in the body of the poem. The reader, of course, cannot help but sense Bassa's odor through the list, however much Martial presents it as less than. Indeed, the failure in maintaining a separation is what makes this poem and the other five I discuss here such remarkable – alluring, repulsive – aesthetic objects.

The attempt to move beyond the list is as much a feature as the failure of that attempt. The list form offers Martial a path whereby to assert the quality of something axiomatically, a path to a place where a list expressed in vivid, sensuous language is rendered ancillary to a truer, more austere formulation. Hence, at the end of 4.4, Bassa's

[143] See 4.87 where Bassa is accustomed to carry a baby with her to explain away the smell of her habitual flatulence: *ergo quid in causa est*? *pedere Bassa solet*, "so what's the thinking in her reason [for doing this]? Bassa is always farting."

odor is just *quod oles*. Similarly, epigram 6.93, which, with the same type and degree of misogyny, attacks another woman, Thais, for her body odor, ends with the tautology *Thaida Thais olet*, "Thais smells of Thais." Both poems on the kisses of a *puer* end with a deictic gesture: *hoc tua, saeve puer Diadumene, basia fragrant* (3.65.9); and *hoc fragrant pueri basia mane mei* (11.8.12). To get closer to this strange dynamic, it is helpful to consider Alain Badiou's comments on listing in the novels of Samuel Beckett. Beckett's writing, according to Badiou, is motivated by the subtraction of ornamentation, the purging of everything that is peripheral to an exhibition of generic humanity:

> In Beckett's "novels" this subtraction of ornaments has an inner metaphor: the characters, who realise the fiction of generic writing, lose their inessential attributes in the course of the text: clothing, objects, possessions, body parts and fragments of language. Beckett often lists what must be lost so that the generic functions may emerge.[144]

The terms of Badiou's analysis do not perfectly match my reading of Martial, but the kernel of his insight still applies to my reading. Martial lists scents and other sensations that must be transcended so that a sensation virtually devoid of all descriptors can be abstracted by each poem. When we read *quod oles* in 4.4 and feel a revulsion not simply at the thought of a dry marsh or old boot but at the fact that Martial implicates these items with a human being, we experience the same residue that Martial joked about in 10.31. Just as the identity of the slave survived through a transmutation of economic value into money and then mullet, here too, at the end of 4.4, we encounter something at once abstractly *simplex* and materially *multiplex*.

[144] Badiou (2003) 3.

The already-mentioned epigram 3.65 provides a figure for this technique: perfume. Addressing the boy in question by name, Martial complains, at the end of the list, that he gives kisses less than willingly:

quod spirat tenera malum mordente puella,
  quod de Corycio quae venit aura croco;
vinea quod primis cum floret cana racemis,
  gramina quod redolent, quae modo carpsit ovis;
quod myrtus, quod messor arabs, quod sucina trita,
  pallidus Eoo ture quod ignis olet;
gleba quod aestivo leuiter cum spargitur imbre,
  quod madidas nardo passa corona comas:
hoc tua, saeve puer Diadumene, basia fragrant.
  quid si tota dares illa sine invidia?

What an apple exhales when a tender girl bites into it,
  what the breeze blowing through Corycian saffron,
what the pale vines blossoming with the first clusters,
  what the grass smells of when a sheep has just torn it,
what myrtle, what the Arabian harvester, what rubbed ambergris,
  what the fire pallid with eastern incense exudes,
what a clod of soil when sprinkled lightly with summer rain,
  what the garland sliding down hair wet with unguent:
this, Diadumenus, cruel boy, is how your kisses smell.
  What if you were to give them whole, without ill will?
(3.65)

The poem functions as a seduction technique, inviting Diadumenus to lavish his kisses as Martial has lavishly praised them. Martial uses anaphora to engage in a poetry as perfume, each epigram mingling and enveloping a bouquet of scents in the manner of a blended unguent, *unguentum*, or fragrant powder, *diapasma*, popular in the upper echelons of the market.[145] 11.8 mentions the figure of Cosmus, the name referring either to a

[145] For a background on scent in Roman literature, see Lilja (1972); for the notion of poetry as perfume, see Butler (2015).

particular famous perfumer or prototypically to anyone with this occupation.[146] Each item in 3.65 by itself does not adequately express the sensory quality of these kisses, but rather the reader and Sabinus must envision them mixed together to obtain the referent of *hoc*. Martial thus presents the blending of perfume as the model of aesthetic engagement. He tempers the aesthetic impact of each new item introduced with *quod* by assuring us that there exists a combination inexpressibly more appealing. All we must do is combine these scents in our mind. As is true with all blends, perfumed or otherwise, one can always simply list their ingredients or attempt to isolate and identify each in smelling or tasting, but the worry persists that each note will cause the nose to block out others, that the *singula* will detract from *omnia*. Such a worry is more poignant because of the intimacy and ephemerality of each scented image, as if, like bees, we risk lingering too long in one covert nectary, forgetting other flowers or the honey itself.

Epigrams 3.65 and 11.8 combine the tension between part and whole with a persistent desire to get more, a desire pulled along by the trajectory of the list. This desire is the exact inverse of Martial's nauseating misogyny in epigram 4.4 and also 6.93, which I discuss momentarily. The pair of 3.65 and 11.8 is about smell as a transitory and elusive sensory experience merging with other senses – taste, primarily, but also touch – and the failure to separate decisively the olfactory notes comprising a smell.[147] Each epigram has an important sonic dimension as well. Already we saw the anaphora of *quod* in 4.4, the

[146] Kay (1985) 85, Citroni (1975) 270; see 3.55 on Cosmus – or rather a woman who wears so much perfume that she smells like his shop.

[147] See Bradley (2015) 1-11 for an overview of the problematics of smell in antiquity; he reiterates the point (7) that "there is a sense [in antiquity] that the olfactory represents for poets an enticing and elusive dimension that is beyond normal human understanding."

epigram attacking Bassa for her odor. In 3.65 and 11.8, the embodied sound of this word, repeated ten times in each poem, echoes the smacking of kisses, obliging the reader to perform the *basia*. In some lines, Martial redoubles the echo with *quae* or *qui*, such as with 11.8.8: *quod qui sicanias detinet hortus apes*. The mouth must pucker and forcefully channel breath from within to make the sounds of these words. Whether kisses or body odor are being voiced, the momentary configuration of the reader's mouth parallels the short-lived material interactions that form the olescent list. We can describe the sonic iterations of 3.65, 4.4 and 11.8 with the verb *crepare*, which, again, Martial uses at 1.76.13-14 to describe the sterile clinking of kisses and, incidentally, at 12.77.11 of flatulence.[148] In the expectoration of breath required by words such as *quod*, and in the anaphora that, provocatively, expresses both kisses and farts, the odor of Bassa and the *basia*, we have a sonic record of fungibility. It is this sound that recalls *nummi crepantes*.

A similarly structured epigram, 8.33, haughtily describes a gift given to Martial by a patron named Paulus, a man of praetorian rank and therefore wealthy enough to give something more substantial than the small, thin *phiala*, a ceremonial vessel used to pour libations. The vessel is so thin that it conjures up a world of ever more gracile objects, ending up as nothing in the last lines:

de praetoricia folium mihi, Paule, corona
  mittis et hoc phialae nomen habere iubes.
hac fuerat nuper nebula tibi pegma perunctum,
  pallida quam rubri diluit unda croci;
an magis astuti derasa est ungue ministri
  brattea, de fulcro quam reor esse tuo?
illa potest culicem longe sentire volantem
  et minimi pinna papilionis agi;

[148] We might also think of the *poppysmata cunni* in 7.18.

exiguae volitat suspensa vapore lucernae
et leviter fuso rumpitur icta mero.
hoc linitur sputo lani caryota Kalendis,
quam fert cum parco sordidus asse cliens.
lenta minus gracili crescunt colocasia filo,
plena magis nimio lilia sole cadunt;
nec vaga tam tenui discurrit aranea tela,
tam leve nec bombyx pendulus urget opus.
crassior in facie vetulae stat creta Fabullae,
crassior offensae bulla tumescit aquae;
fortior et tortos servat vesica capillos
et mutat Latias spuma Batava comas.
hac cute Ledaeo vestitur pullus in ovo,
talia lunata splenia fronte sedent.
quid tibi cum phiala, ligulam cum mittere possis,
mittere cum possis vel cocleare mihi, –
magna nimis loquimur – cocleam cum mittere possis,
denique cum possis mittere, Paule, nihil?

You send me a leaf from your praetorian garland,
Paulus, and you bid *this* to have the name of *phiala*?
With this film your platform was recently smeared;
a pale wave of ruddy saffron washed it away.
Or is it rather a flake scraped off by the fingernail of a clever slave,
I think maybe from your couch?
That bowl can feel from afar the flight of a gnat
and be moved by the wing of the tiniest butterfly;
it flits suspended in the vapor of a little lamp
and is broken when struck lightly by poured wine.
With this spittle a date is coated on the Kalends of January,
brought by a dirty client along with a tiny penny.
Pliant beans grow on a less slender filament,
thicker are the lilies that droop in excessive sun.
The wandering spider does not run about on so thin a web
nor does the dangling silkworm ply so light a work.
Thicker stands chalk on the face of old Fabulla,
thicker swells a bubble when water is struck;
stronger is the net that preserves braided hair
and the Batavian foam that changes Latin curls.
The chick in Leda's egg is clothed in such a skin,
patches of this sort sit on a wizened forehead.
Why bother with a *phiala* when you could send to me
a ladle or a spoon (I speak of things too large)
or indeed the shell of a snail?
When, to sum it up, you, Paulus, could send nothing?

(8.33)

Martial's litany of images explores the air, water, and heat dynamics of thinness, with a hypersensitivity to that property in both foreground and background. Notably, we find in lines 5-6 the gold foil or leaf, *brattea*, said to rustle or rattle, *crepare*, in 9.22.6. The indignant response to Paulus' social slight, a doubly appropriate word here, finds corroboration in how the material world would interact with the *phiala*. Lively hypothetical scenarios prove that the bowl is thin. Descriptors of the bowl can apply to Martial's tone in the poem, as with *offensae* in line 18, for example. The bowl's nothingness is predicated on its status as a gift, which is nothing if it fails to operate effectively in the beneficial giving networks enmeshing clients and patrons. Martial makes something, a not inconsiderable epigram, out of the non-gift. As the poem moves closer to the non-matter of the bowl and the final *nihil*, a dense, vibrant world of matter emerges, and, paradoxically, we get a thick description of an ever-thinner object.

The epigram carefully evokes the symbolic language of patronage relations. The verb *iubere*, found in line 2, has a charged meaning, as is clear from an awkward anecdote related by Pliny the Younger involving the recitation of elegies by an equestrian descendant of Propertius named Passennus Paulus.[149] Accepting a name for a certain configuration of matter here requires acknowledging the appropriateness of one gesture in a reciprocal relationship. Martial calls it instead a leaf from the praetor's garland. The term *folium* recalls the gift tickets that I discuss in the next chapter. This mode of gift exchange relies on a restricted fungibility – the ticket can be exchanged for one thing only – and a degree of

[149] Pliny, *Letters* 6.15.2.

faith in the patron that the real gift will materialize, allowing the token to have the affective capacities of the gift in advance. Martial obliquely criticizes a betrayal of faith in inverting the historical practice: the gift is no different materially from a ticket, and Paulus might as well have given the poet an unredeemable *pittacium* or *folium*. But if the *folium* cannot become the *phiala*, it can be promiscuously fungible with the items in the rest of the poem. The leaf is only the first interchange in a long list, and Martial removes the restriction on its fungibility, allowing for identifications between the *phiala* as *folium* and a series of thin things. The epigram criticizes Paulus and the *amicitia* between him and Martial but does not overtly offer a wholesale condemnation of patronage. Indeed, outrage from the client, as a form of restorative justice, could be viewed as a positive aspect of the system. By voicing his displeasure in Paulus, the epigram underscores Martial's license as a client who can roast a patron with evident impunity. Martial may have received a useless bowl, but his audience, among whom are other patrons, gets a lengthy epigram, and Paulus appears as a singular aberration in self-correcting social network, one whose stinginess shows up the *liberalitas* of others.

Curiously then, midway through the list an apparently random image depicts patronage in a different light. The squalid client bringing his little coin and smeared date as gifts to a patron on the Kalends of January recalls the obligations of a political economy that Martial emphasizes elsewhere when he rages against the humiliation, discomfort, and inadequacy of the *salutatio*, as I will discuss in chapter 3. The frame of 8.33 gives us one version of patronage wherein aggressive poetry can correct the occasional failures of the system. But a line at the center of the poem reveals the mentalities and structures at Rome that compel free, entitled, and impoverished individuals to do symbolic labor for the

sportula, spurred by the impossible dream of the *ius ingenuae pigritiae*, "right of a freeborn laziness."[150] These conflicting attitudes to patronage remain separate, and the negative one provides only a brief taste of bitterness, overcome by the ameliorating exercise of frank speech that Martial enjoys throughout. The point is not that we should pity the gap here between Martial's sense of entitlement and perceived material condition. Rather, it is to observe how the privileging of one quality in each scene over other determinations gives Martial cover to include a more damning criticism of patronage in his attack on an individual praetor. With the fungible list, Martial succeeds in alienating one image of patronage from another. We can choose to picture the same angry poet trudging up to a patron's door, coin and date in hand, nevertheless a victim of the durable structures of society despite his epigrammatic outburst. Paulus, or other readers in his position, may continue viewing lines 11-12 as just another random sliver. Epigram 8.33 thus uses a poetic fungibility to muffle a deeper criticism of patronage relations.

Two further epigrams, 1.41 and 6.93, invoke the imagery and language of coined money and commodity exchange in subtle but pointed ways in addition to employing the perception of fungibility to relate one thing or person to others. Epigram 1.41, which attacks a rival poet named Caecilius, aims to puncture his pretensions to urbanity by asserting that Caecilius is in fact a variety of people with servile or otherwise disgraceful occupations:

urbanus tibi, Caecili, videris.

[150] See epigram 12.36 for the phrase, where Martial thanks Terentius Priscus for finally remunerating him to a point where he does not have to debase himself and praises the regime change that allows Terentius to be so liberal: *largiri, praestare, breves extendere census/ et dare quae faciles vix tribuere dei,/ nunc licet et fas est*, "now it is permitted and right to bestow lavishly, furnish, extend someone's meager property, and give what indulgent deities have scarcely bestowed."

non es, crede mihi. quid ergo? verna es,
hoc quod transtiberinus ambulator,
qui pallentia sulphurata fractis
permutat vitreis, quod otiosae
vendit qui madidum cicer coronae,
quod custos dominusque viperarum
quod viles pueri salariorum,
quod fumantia qui thumatla raucus
circumfert tepidis cocus popinis,
quod non optimus urbicus poeta,
quod de Gadibus improbus magister,
quod bucca est vetuli dicax cinaedi.
quare desine iam tibi videri,
quod soli tibi, Caecili, videris,
qui Gabbam salibus tuis et ipsum
posses vincere Tettium Caballum.
non cuicumque datum est habere nasum:
ludit qui stolida procacitate,
non est Tettius ille, sed caballus.

To yourself you seem urbane, Caecilius: you're not,
trust me. What then? You are a buffoonish homeborn slave,
that which a transient from across
the Tiber [is], someone who swaps
glowing sulphur for broken glass, what the
chickpea man [is] for the encircling crowd,
what the snake lord and tamer [is],
what the cheap slaves of men who sell salt fish [are],
what the hoarse cook [is], bringing around smoky
sausages to the lukewarm food stalls,
what an urban poet, not the best one, [is],
what the pederastic pedagogue from Cadiz [is],
what the talky mouth of the old cock sucker [is].
So, stop seeming to yourself what you
seem only to yourself, Caecilius; you who could
beat Gabba with your wit
and Tettius Caballus.
It is not given to everyone to have a "nose";
the guy who jokes stupidly, without
shame – he's not a Tettius, but a hack.

(1.41)

This poem also makes use of the anaphora of *quod* to drag Caecilius through a list of disgraceful individuals offering goods and entertainment in the streets of Rome and to

compare him, in concluding, to the well-known Augustan era *scurra* Gabba, mentioned also at 10.101, and to Tettius Caballus, presumably also, in the words of Mario Citroni, "un famoso buffone."[151] Martial chooses the second name in anticipation of the punchline: Caecilius is a hack, a nag, a pack horse, *caballus*. The conclusion also makes it clear that Caecilius' aspirations to urbanity manifest in some type of witty literary activity, which Martial calls *salibus tuis* or *stolida procacitate*. The poem condescendingly gathers a set of poetic and non-poetic activities. The essence of Caecilius, which is also the essence of his entertainment, is the transverse of this set. The pivotal phrase *hoc quod* marks the point of commonality and therefore mode of identification between Caecilius and the other exemplars of "this thing that" he is. It is thus surprising to find among these exemplars not simply a poet but one who is called *urbicus*: *quod non optimus urbicus poeta*. The adjective *urbicus* can in general be synonymous with *urbanus* – both words being antonyms to *rusticus*, the very adjective used to describe Gabba at 10.101.4: *rustice Gabba*, *tace*, "shut up, Gabba, you bumpkin."[152] The addition of *non optimus* alone does not give *urbicus* new meaning, for if that were the case, Martial would undermine the fundamental point of his insult, i.e. "Caecilius, you are not urbane; you are what a second-rate city poet [is]." Although not a direct antonym to *urbanus*, *urbicus* in line 11 comes to connote the gritty, servile/low-class/debased urban flavor of the surrounding people, a change that is felt also

[151] Citroni (1975) 135.

[152] An earlier generation of commentators would capitalize *urbicus*, making him Urbicus, a writer of *Atellanae* and *exodia* mentioned by Juvenal at 6.71. But see Friedländer (1886) 189-90 on the impossibility of taking *urbicus* as a proper noun.

for the word *poeta*, i.e. "you are what a second-rate street scribbler/graffitist [is]."[153] It is precisely this connotation, the semantic residue accruing from the anaphoric interchanges, that allows Martial to present an image of a non-urbane second-rate poet while keeping distinct the possibility that second-rate poets might nevertheless be considered urbane. Martial by his own admission may well merit the label *non optimus urbicus poeta*.[154] But here, through the alienating device of the anaphoric list, he can distinguish between that subject position and the hack, *caballus*.

In 1.41, the underlying principles of exchange and fungibility are embodied in the actions of a *transtiberinus ambulator*, "transient from across the Tiber," in lines 3-5. Opinions diverge on the exact nature of his occupation: *qui pallentia sulphurata fractis/permutat vitreis*, "one who swaps glowing sulfur for broken glass." Perhaps he exchanges a type of match or taper – i.e. the *sulphurata ramenta* of 10.3.3, used to transfer fire from one place to another – with odd bits of glass.[155] But for what purpose is the glass acquired? Leon postulated that broken glass bits would be added to molten glass to improve its quality.[156] Another possibility, one that lends itself by analogy to the tessellated style of Martial's poetry, is that these bits were used by makers of mosaics.[157] Scholars have debunked the old theory that the sulfur would be used to glue together broken

[153] Akin to the drunken scribbler-poet in 12.61.8: *nigri fornicis ebrium poetam*, "the drunken poet of the dark arch."

[154] See 1.16 and 6.82.9-10 for Martial's self-deprecation.

[155] Howell (1980) 193-4.

[156] Leon (1941).

[157] Smyth (1947).

glassware.[158] I follow the argument of Harrison that bits of sulfur, not processed into matches or tapers, "provided for a multiplicity of needs in everyday life," and therefore Martial is referring to a person who deals in pure grade sulfur, hence *pallentia*; also, it would be easy to crumble into smaller pieces. The same person could deal in broken glass, be motivated by the acquisition of either commodity, and be willing to swap between the two, thus shuffling his wealth through various forms.[159] The little bits of sulfur are therefore a faux coinage, glowing like the cashbox, *arca*, mentioned at 8.44.10: *superba densis arca palleat nummis*. In this context, the verb *permutare* means "to give and take reciprocally, exchange." But that general meaning blurs with more specific ones, "to give up (commodities, possessions) while receiving others in return" or, in the passive voice, "to be received as equivalent for other coins."[160] That is, *permutare* describes the operation of fungibility in monetary and commodity exchange, akin to the fungibility that structures the other epigrams of this type.

That *permutare* does not simply mean "to exchange" becomes clear in poem 6.93, on the body odor of Thais, a woman whose attempts to conceal her stench are futile. After a list of disgusting smelly things, we encounter Thais at the baths, desperate to purify herself:

tam male Thais olet quam non fullonis avari
    testa vetus, media sed modo fracta via,
non ab amore recens hircus, non ora leonis,
    non detracta cani transtiberina cutis,
pullus abortivo nec cum putrescit in ovo,
    amphora corrupto nec vitiata garo.
virus ut hoc alio fallax permutet odore,

[158] Harrison (1987) 203.

[159] Harrison (1987) 205.

[160] *OLD* s.v. *permutare* §1, 2.

deposita quotiens balnea veste petit,
psilothro viret aut acida latet oblita creta
aut tegitur pingui terque quaterque faba.
cum bene se tutam per fraudes mille putavit,
omnia cum fecit, Thaida Thais olet.

Thais smells so bad, worse than the old clay vessel
of a greedy fuller, just now broken in the middle of the road,
worse than a goat fresh from rutting and the maw of a lion,
worse than a hide dragged by a dog from across the Tiber,
worse than a chick rotting in an aborted egg,
worse than an amphora polluted with tainted garum.
To deceptively switch this stench for another odor,
whenever she heads for the bath and disrobes, she is green
with depilatory or lurks, smearing herself with vinegar
and chalk paste, three and four times covered in thick bean goop.
When she thinks herself safe through a thousand tricks,
when she's done everything: Thais still smells of Thais.
(6.93)

It is through interchanges with reeking verbal images that Thais obtains her smelly determination. But by the end of the poem, the piece of rhetoric that makes the interchanges possible disappears as *tam male Thais olet quam* is replaced by *Thaida Thais olet*. The tautology strives to portray Thais as a purely quantitative abstraction, foul smell to the nth degree and without the fresh contingencies that release sensory particles into the breeze. At the same time, Thais cannot become a quantitative abstraction because of the residual nauseating notes that continue to waft from the first half of the poem. What the reader experiences in reading this poem is then experienced by Thais in the drama narrated by the poem's second half. Because Martial emphasizes the freshness of each item listed in the first half, we might expect Thais' body odor to be likewise transient and ephemeral. The joke, however, has it that she cannot escape this smell no matter how hard she tries. No matter how many cosmetic tricks she deploys, the stench remains, even attending her when she bathes. When she goes to the baths epically smeared, Thais has in

mind a sort of exchange that would change her smell throughout, altering it constitutively. Contrast this logic of exchange with the one that Martial sees in Thais' failure, and which the reader views in the poem as a whole. Rather than replacing bodily odor, exchange only affirms and perpetuates it.

What stuff does one touch or comprehend when holding a coin, something imbued with the socially ordained and recognized power to transfer ownership, or valuing any object or person as a number? Monetary value is not simply the physical properties of something bought or sold but it does seem intuitively to be within them somehow. Moreover, how can the abstraction enacted by coinage persist in the face of our attachments to the manifold sensual dimension of everything valued in this way? The six fungible sensation epigrams give these questions the opportunity to emerge in a space that is not immediately economic. More properly, they feel and sniff their way through them, trying to perceive a strange category of matter – the homogeneous quantity in every commodity; the homogeneous quality found in a set of things or people related to one another in the manner of commodity exchange – that can best be thought of as transient and resistant to clear memory. Already in book 1, we find both the poem that connects the verb *crepare* to coins and kisses, and book 1 also contains the first poem in our set, 1.41, which deals with the status of poetry as entertainment. Moreover, the subset of themes elaborated by these six epigrams is remarkably coherent: patronage relations and remuneration for poetic performance, the dichotomy in sexual appeal between fresh *pueri* and older or sexually exhausted women, and interactions between *amici*. We could view the striving to comprehend material homogeneity in its most purified form as an analog for the much larger problem of finding a center in Martial's world. Whatever this center is, the

fungible sensation epigrams suggest that experience of it would be fleeting and spectral, as with the brief scent of freshly torn grass.

Chapter 2: Lots of Things

rape, congere, aufer, posside: relinquendum est

snatch, heap up, consume, possess: it must be left behind

Martial, *Epigrams* 8.44.9

Introduction & Argument

In defending the satirical bite and iambic venom of his epigrams, Martial invokes the festal promise of real play without real consequences. He makes a division between the contents of his poetry and his personal morals, asserting that his books function as a space set apart for licentious and aggressive *ludus* on the model of the Floralia, Saturnalia, and other cultural moments when rules of behavior were relaxed.[161] But if this premise, however disingenuous, is central to Martial's explicitly programmatic poems, the greater part of his corpus is comprised of epigrams that are neither bilious nor crude. Moreover, for as much as Martial is a satirical poet of personalities drawn from throughout a social spectrum, the apt characterization of his work as a "poetica degli oggetti" points to the lingering of the original epigrammatic concern with inhuman objects as paradigms of closure and containment.[162] It is partly by engaging in a sort of book architecture that Martial toys with closure, arranging his poems into thematic cycles that re-open the meaning of each epigram through juxtaposition with those around it, as I note in my introduction. We encounter in miniature the same sort of compilation in individual epigrams that are congeries of objects. It can seem that programmatic statements about the distance between content and reality extend only to the satirical or iambic pedigree of Martial's *epigrammaton libelli*, that is, to his literary aggression. In this chapter, however, I argue that a formal resonance between an allegedly harmless, *innocuus*, poetry of *personae*

[161] Sullivan (1991) 56-77 provides a comprehensive view of Martial's *apologia pro opere suo*; see also Banta (1998), Di Giovine (2003), Gnilka (2005).

[162] The expression belongs to the central thesis of Salemme (1976).

and one that lists objects is found in lots: *nomismata*, *tesserae*, or *sortes*, pieces of matter used in the randomized or coordinated distribution of foodstuffs and other gifts.

Lots in Martial's poetry offer the same experience of real play without real consequences: they allow for a virtual experience of getting and having, one that depends on the temporary duplication of a thing. Allotment imbues bits of ceramic, bone, metal, glass, and wood with the value and affective potency of an allotted object, be it a gift, a move in a game, a political position, or some other privilege or advantage. Acquiring and holding a lot induces a feeling of having the real thing – lots distill the sensual plenitude of things into an immediate form of presence; they therefore act as an accelerant in consumption. Because they are not in fact the real thing, the pleasure of lots lies in the deferral of certain forms of consumption that would result in the material destruction of gifts. In an allotment of food, for example, the lot suspends bodily consumption, if temporarily: distilled also in the use of lots for this purpose is the social significance of getting food from private or imperial benefactors.[163] In the secondary pleasure of moving between lot and real thing, we find the kernel of a much larger dynamic of capture and release, both of which are equally constitutive of Martial's poetics. For instance, the epigraph to this chapter, from a poem that takes up the *carpe diem* theme, encapsulates

[163] I have in mind here Martial's pessimism in 12.48.5-10: *lauta tamen cena est*: *fateor*, *lautissima*, *sed cras*/ *nil erit*, *immo hodie*, *protinus immo nihil*,/ *quod sciat infelix damnatae spongea virgae*/ *vel quicumque canis iunctaque testa viae*:/ *mullorum leporumque et suminis exitus hic est*/ *sulphureusque color carnificesque pedes*, "still, it's a very nice dinner: the nicest, I must confess, but tomorrow it will be nothing – nay rather today, or more accurately in a few moments it will be nothing! Something for the unfortunate sponge on the condemned stick to become acquainted with, or some dog or a roadside urinal made of clay: this is the outcome for mullets and hares and sow's udder, along with a jaundiced complexion and torturing, gouty feet!"

these competing impulses at a much grander level than gift-giving. For when Martial says *rape*, *congere*, *aufer*, *posside*: *relinquendum est*, he is speaking of the trajectory of life itself.

I begin by explicating the logic of *sortes* and *nomismata* in the epigrams. With the figure of lots in Martial's poetry we find a drive that is common to distribution, exchange, and acquisition beyond the limited sphere of *sparsiones*, the "sprinklings" of gift tokens to be traded in for *congiaria*.[164] Moreover, not all sortition is alike: it occurs with varying degrees of randomness and anonymity in Martial's poems. Next, after showing how the virtual experience afforded by lots can be found in similar practices, not least in gambling, I argue that this experience provides Martial with a basic conceptual framework for his poetry of objects. I develop this argument by reading closely longer epigrams that enact what I call an aleatory and "numismatic" logic before concluding with some thoughts on what it means for Martial to implicate the drive to write epigram with sortition, moving from consumption to production.

[164] Cassius Dio 66.25.5: σφαιρία γὰρ ξύλινα μικρὰ ἄνωθεν ἐς τὸ θέατρον ἐρρίπτει, σύμβολον ἔχοντα τὸ μὲν ἐδωδίμου τινὸς τὸ δὲ ἐσθῆτος τὸ δὲ ἀργυροῦ σκεύους, ἄλλο χρυσοῦ ἵππων ὑποζυγίων βοσκημάτων ἀνδραπόδων, ἃ ἀρπάσαντάς τινας ἔδει πρὸς τοὺς δοτῆρας αὐτῶν ἀπενεγκεῖν καὶ λαβεῖν τὸ ἐπιγεγραμμένον, "[Titus] would throw down into the theatre from above little balls inscribed in different ways, some designating an article of food, others clothing, others a dish of silver or maybe one of gold, others horses, pack animals, cattle or slaves. The people who grabbed them were to carry them to the dispensers of the prize, from whom they would receive the gift named [on the ball]." See also Cassius Dio 67.4.4: τοῖς τε θεωμένοις συχνὰ διὰ τῶν σφαιρίων ἐδίδου, "to the spectators [Domitian] used to give many presents by using little balls."

Nomismata in Martial's Epigrams: Lots and Presents

More often than *sortes*, Martial uses the term *nomismata*, a loan word from Greek, to refer to lots or tickets distributed in venues of consumption.[165] The noun *nomisma* appears in five epigrams. Another potential term for a lot, *tessera*, also appears five times in the corpus. Of those uses, four clearly denote a gaming piece or die.[166] In this section, I discuss all the uses of *nomisma* and the one instance of *tessera* where that word is used as a synonym to the first term. Most readers will more readily think of a coin for νόμισμα, in Latin *nummus*. This bilingual association is not without value here, for the *nomismata* and *tesserae* that Martial speaks of operate like tokens of currency with a very restricted potential for exchange, and the figure of commercial exchange often lurks in the epigrams where lots appear. With lots, there is the attempt to implement a quasi-market where consumer choice is subordinated to the prerogative of the host or sponsor and his *liberalitas* or the randomness of chance. Yet, a *nomisma* or *tessera* in Martial is not a coin, and the ability for a lot to feel like an allotted gift depends on it being denied the radical fungibility of money, the topic of my previous chapter. The use of quasi-money in beneficial practices that are ideologically divorced from commercial exchanges does, however, set up a contradiction: we can see in the use of *nomismata* the attempt to neutralize the threat that commercial exchange and commodity valuation pose to gift exchange, to subordinate exchange – trading in the *nomisma* for the actual gift at a stall or with attendants – to giving.

[165] Citroni (1975) 52 points out the rareness of *nomisma* in Latin literature: "e certo di uso limitato al linguaggio quotidiano." See also Henriksén (1998/9) 167.

[166] 4.66.15, 13.1.5, 14.15.1, 14.17.1.

In two epigrams near the beginning of book 1, 1.11 and 1.26, Martial addresses the figure of Sextilianus, an *eques* who drinks excessive amounts of wine at some sort of theatrical or circus event. Both epigrams feature *nomismata* or what might be called in this instance *tesserae vinariae*, coupons given to select individuals at shows for an allowance of wine. Martial opens 1.11 by making it explicit that these *nomismata* are allotted on the basis of status groups: *cum data sint equiti bis quina nomismata*, *quare/ bis decies solus*, *Sextiliane*, *bibis*? "Although twice five drink tickets are given to each equestrian, why do you alone drink twice ten, Sextilianus?"[167] If a consistent number of *nomismata* would confirm the collective nature of the privilege granted to this legally demarcated *ordo*, Sextilianus stands alone, *solus*, in taking twice as much as what is due to his status. How can he do so? The reason does not emerge clearly from the next two lines: *iam defecisset portantis calda ministros*,/*si non potares*, *Sextiliane*, *merum*. "Hot water would already have run out for the waiters toting it, if you were not drinking your wine undiluted, Sextilianus."[168] Perhaps, and we shall see in a moment that another explanation is more plausible, one *nomisma* should be good for one vessel of wine mixed with water, but since Sextilianus trades his tokens in for pure wine, he gets twice as much wine as intended by the system. What is certain now is that the unit of measure for how much wine Sextilianus gets or should get is *nomismata*, not some unit of volume such as, for example, the *unciae* mentioned at 1.106.2-3. Indeed, the syntax of 1.11.1-2 has Sextilianus drinking not wine but *nomismata*. The tongue clucking of the epigram relies on the potential for *tesserae vinariae* to embody wine

[167] 1.11.1-2.

[168] 1.11.3-4.

metonymically. The socially recognizable dimension of consuming wine at spectacles is the *nomisma*, for it has the capacity to confirm Sextilianus' membership in a status group enforced by beneficence and also to mark his transgression.

As if to assure us of the value of epigrammatic cycles in co-adjudicating hypothetical and eliminating incorrect interpretations of any one epigram, Martial spells out the missing piece of 1.11 in 1.26. We learn here that Sextilianus is bumming drink tickets from his neighbors, a detail that sits better with the final lines of 1.11:

> Sextiliane, bibis quantum subsellia quinque
> solus: aqua totiens ebrius esse potes;
> nec consessorum vicina nomismata tantum,
> aera sed a cuneis ulteriora petis.
>
> Sextilianus, you drink as much as five theater rows, all by yourself:
> You can get drunk on water, drinking it that many times;
> nor do you just seek the neighboring drink tickets of those seated near you
> but also, more remote bronze [tickets] from the wedges of the theater.
> (1.26.1-4)

The next four lines of the epigram elaborate on the wine. It is not Paelignian plonk but quality Opimian and Massic, intended for sipping not chugging.[169] The extent of Sextilianus' faux pas comes to light. He redistributes drink tickets inequitably to himself, he gets drunk on fine wine which he drinks neat, disregarding the explicit and implicit rules of behavior at the spectacle. The final thought of the epigram directs Sextilianus to a venue where his dipsomania would be appropriate: *a copone tibi faex Laletana petatur*,/ *si plus quam decies*, *Sextiliane*, *bibis*. "Get you some Laletanian dregs from an innkeeper if you

[169] 1.26.5-8.

drink more than ten tickets worth, Sextilianus."[170] Distribution of wine via *nomismata* in the theater or circus and the consumption thereof belongs to an ordered, order-enforcing symbolic exchange between a patron, probably the emperor here, and his interpellated subjects. But the unrestrained, privately interested consumption of wine belongs to the commercial exchanges of *cauponae*. The potential for Sextilianus to treat fine wine like plonk reveals something that is lost in the replacement of wine by lots: gradations of quality. A lot can be made of more or less valuable stuff, but in reducing different things to lots, distinctions between consumer goods are temporarily effaced, to be restored, we might imagine, when the lot is traded in for actual wine. The other salient aspect of this epigram is the way Sextilianus' desire for wine latches onto the *nomismata*, which are not just the social dimension of patronage but the object for his emotive and affective energies and therefore, curiously, the primary site of his thirst. Lines 3-4 even elide the fellow spectators with the bronze coupons as Sextilianus roams circus or theater stands populated, as it were, with *nomismata*.

The practical reasons for using *nomismata* to absorb the energies of spectators become the focus in epigram 8.78, a longer piece that praises the triumphal celebrations put on by an *amicus* of Martial, the senator Lucius Arruntius Stella.[171] After declaring that these events outshone mythical exempla, Martial describes at some length the distribution of goods:

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[170] 1.26.9-10.

[171] 8.78.3: *Hyperborei celebrator Stella triumphi*. See Schöffel (2002) 650-2 for the dating of the triumph, background information, and Martial's relationship to Stella. Domitian had in fact declined a triumph, so the term is less than literal here.

omnis habet sua dona dies; nec linea dives
cessat et in populum multa rapina cadit:
nunc veniunt subitis lasciva nomismata nimbis,
nunc dat spectatas tessera larga feras,
nunc implere sinus securos gaudet et absens
sortitur dominos, ne laceretur, avis.

Each day has its own gifts; the luxurious cord takes
no breaks and a great booty befalls the people:
now obscene/unrestrained tickets come from sudden clouds,
now the lavish coupon gives away the beasts on display,
now the bird rejoices to fill safe pockets and, while absent,
selects masters by lot, lest it be torn apart.
(8.78.7-12)

The *linea dives*, "luxurious cord," refers to a rope strung with gifts, a device mentioned also by Statius.[172] The one arrayed by Stella is more laden with riches than the Hermus and Tagus, rivers fabled to be muddy with gold.[173] Adjacent to this image is the cloudburst of *lasciva nomismata*, about which more soon. It is the number of *nomismata* or *tesserae* that makes Stella's largesse apparent: they, not the gifts, are called *lasciva* and *larga*. Lots enhance the symbolism of giving. This private *sparsio* differs from the distribution in 1.11 and 1.26 in that Martial does not mention discrete status groups: everyone is indiscriminately a master, *dominus*. In lines 11-12, Martial hints at the mob frenzy brought on by a *sparsio*, one that could end up destroying gifts if they were tossed directly into the audience. Assorted tickets or coupons keep the *congiaria* safe from the excitement of recipients. The result is that each gift comes to exist in two separate places at once. Thus, one particular example, some sort of bird, finds its new owner even though it is

[172] Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.10-27, especially 10: *iam bellaria linea pluebant*, "now desserts were raining down from a cord."

[173] 8.78.5-6.

absent, *absens*. Again, we encounter an elision of coupon and allotted item. *Avis*, not *nomisma* or *tessera*, is the subject of the three finite verbs in lines 11-12. Martial withholds the noun until the end of the syntactic unit, a nice surprise for the audience after we encounter the full *sinus* (i.e. "the gift you already have is…a bird!"). These two lines capture the ambivalence of having a coupon in one's pocket – the gift itself, which is on display nearby, but not quite yet.

Epigram 12.62, sixteen lines on the annual Saturnalian feast of Terentius Priscus, another *amicus*, likewise pairs gifts dangling from a string with the use of *nomismata*. Martial invites the god Saturn to behold a private spectacle:

> cernis ut Ausonio similis tibi pompa macello
> pendeat et quantus luxurietur honos?
> quam non parca manus largaeque nomismata mensae,
> quae, Saturne, tibi pernumerentur opes?
>
> Do you see how a procession similar to the Ausonian market
> hangs [from the cord] and how luxuriant the honor is?
> How unsparing is the handout, gift tokens from so bountiful a spread!
> [do you see] what wealth is counted out in your honor, Saturn?
> (12.62.9-12)

These *nomismata* invoke the practice of giving *apophoreta* to guests at lavish dinners, the subject of books 13 and 14.[174] Again, the presentation of largesse recalls the market, *macellum*. Priscus can recreate the experience of holiday shopping at his own table except here the guests presumably do not spend money. The emphasis of 12.62 lies on the provider of largesse as much as on its display. The reader's view is directed through the eyes of Saturn, and we hear nothing of the human recipients. In this respect, 12.62 differs

[174] See Ullman (1941), Johnson (2005), Culpepper Stroup (2006).

from 1.11, 1.26, and 8.78 where lots and allotted objects were seen finding their way to a consumer, named or anonymous. Still, as with Sextilianus, the gift tokens allow the wealth of Priscus to be counted, *pernumerentur*, lending the concrete abstraction of a number to the symbolic exchange of this Saturnalia. The most conspicuous part of the host is his hand, *manus*, a term that is at once literal and figurative, a body part as well as a capacity and gesture of *liberalitas*. Although it is unlikely here that Priscus himself flings *nomismata* into an audience of guests, the *manus* temptingly recalls the point of departure for lots in a *sparsio*. The hand would be the mysterious mechanism of allotment, a concavity with its own unknowable logic of distribution and a focal point for the hopes of people in the audience, akin perhaps to a whirring raffle drum or the digital enigma of a slot machine in the present day.

Whereas it is only a supposition in 8.78 and 12.62, the dynamic of *nomismata* bursting forth from an enclosed space is central to epigram 9.31, a poem that records a portentous event that occurred during the sacrifice of a goose. A certain Velius, likely the Gaius Velius Rufus distinguished in *ILS* 9200 for his military exploits under the Flavians, vowed the bird to Mars during Domitian's campaign against the Sarmatians along the Danube.[175] Eight months later, when he was fulfilling the vow, eight silver *nomismata* were discovered in the goose's entrails. The epigram does not refer directly to this event but to a picture of the miraculous goose. Hence, as Otto Weinreich posited, when Martial inquires

[175] See Henriksén (1998/9) 163 for background and this epigram's importance for dating the Second Pannonian war. Friedländer (1886) 66 identifies Velius Paulus here.

whether Domitian and the reader comprehend the details, we are to imagine not the scene of sacrifice but a pictorial convention for representing the discovery:[176]

octo vides patulo pendere nomismata rostro
alitis? haec extis condita nuper erant:
quae litat argento pro te, non sanguine, Caesar,
victima iam ferro non opus esse docet.

Do you see the eight tokens hanging from the bird's beak?
These recently had been stashed in its entrails:
a sacrificial victim giving good omens on your behalf, Caesar, with silver,
not blood, teaches that now there is no need for iron.
(9.31.7-10)

When the bird was cut open the tokens did not fly out of its beak, but the artist of whatever picture is under consideration here probably used that image to capture the dramatic revelation of tokens corresponding to the eight months of Domitian's absence from Rome. The contexts of poems 1.11, 1.26, 8.78, and 12.62 make it clear that the term means lots or tickets to be traded in for goods. Are we to suppose that the goose somehow ate tokens of this sort, ones made from silver? Or perhaps, as in later Latin, the noun signifies rare or ceremonial coins, something like a contorniate.[177] Regardless of the exact identity of the *nomismata*, 9.31 provides a parallel experience to that found in 1.11, 1.26, 8.78, and 12.62. Although we shift from collective consumption to the religio-political interpretation of signs, the goose sacrifice sees *nomismata* used to inform or instruct, *docet*, the audience of a grander social order, here the division of time into war and peace. The pertinent aspect of the pseudo-coins stuck in the goose's craw is their number, not unlike

[176] Weinreich (1928) 133.

[177] Henriksén (1998) 167 suggests this interpretation and gives citations where *nomisma* means an ornamental or ceremonial coin.

the spectacular situation that was disordered by Sextilianus. Moreover, the theme of presence and absence in 9.31 – Domitian's absence from Rome being synonymous with war, his presence with peace; the manifestation of silver tokens symbolizes his manifestation in Rome – had appeared with the bird in 8.78. The numinous energy of *nomismata* in 9.31 derives from the same sort of surprise and randomness generated at the previously mentioned *sparsiones*. While we shift with 9.31 into a sphere of life where gods are the mysterious agents of allotment, nevertheless we find the same delight in bits of metal meaningfully bursting forth, making present a political situation otherwise dispersed over space and time.

Objects exist in the archeological record that may correspond to what Martial means by *nomismata*. However, what is found today in public and private collections might have played different roles in Roman society than did the *nomismata* mentioned by the epigrammatist, while examples of what Martial means might not have survived from antiquity at all. My argument makes no claims about Martial's place in identifying the function of metal, ivory, and bone *tesserae* collected, for example, in the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque nationale de France or in the British Museum. Moreover, the scope of sortition in Roman society extends far beyond the view of it we receive from Martial, while the use of tokens or placeholders extends further still. Sortition and the use of tokens were pervasive but hardly co-extensive in the Roman world.[178] Not all coin-like *tesserae* or tokens were given out by lot.

[178] On sortition, see Johnston (2003).

However, a quick description of some objects clarifies the possibility that *nomismata* sprinkled into audiences involved visual representations. There are various disk-shaped *tesserae* with depictions on them of fish, birds, boars, grain, and fruit, among other goods.[179] There are also the so-called *tesserae configuratae*: pieces of bone or ivory actually in the shape of these edible goods.[180] Both sets of *tesserae* tend to have numbers or Greek letters on them. Perhaps the depiction refers directly to the object for which it would be exchanged, while the number or letter denotes the location where it could be traded in.[181] At 8.78.9, as we have seen, Martial speaks of *lasciva nomismata*, "obscene lots" or just "bounteous lots," raining down from the sky at a triumphal celebration. There have long been attempts to connect these *nomismata* to certain erotic *tesserae* colloquially known as *spintriae*, coin-like disks of brass or copper with obscene images on one side and numbers on the other.[182] Again, we are left speculating as to the literalness of the image. Do these *spintriae*, if indeed they are the *lasciva nomismata*, belong to the distribution of sex slaves or sexual services?[183] Or is their iconography less direct? This cursory survey enforces the notion that *sparsiones* and other distributions involved a lively play of images and cultural literacies. The difficulty in saying today whether a given *tessera* was used for gaming or *sparsiones* or some other activity speaks to the perceptible similarities shared by these

[179] See Froehner 244-78 in the catalog of the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[180] See Froehner 81-134 in the catalog of the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[181] Simon (2008).

[182] Simonetta and Riva (1981) for the extant *spintriae*. Buttrey (1973) argues against identifying the *lasciva nomismata* with these objects; see also Thornton (1980) and Schmieder (2008). Statius, *Silvae* 1.6.67 mentions the distribution of brothel tokens.

[183] Perhaps at events like Nero's sex market mentioned by Tacitus, *Annals* 14.15.

activities in antiquity: *nomismata* might have evoked gaming pieces, and vice versa. Both subtypes of *tesserae* could have resembled others in turn.

A passage in Petronius suggests that, at least in private distributions, images or words on lots could be used for riddling dinner games. This type of gift lottery involves the use of slips of parchment and a play of imagistic resonances:

> iam etiam philosophos de negotio deiciebat, cum pittacia in scypho circumferri coeperunt, puerque super hoc positus officium apophoreta recitavit. "argentum sceleratum": allata est perna, supra quam acetabula erant posita. "cervical": offla collaris allata est. "serisapia et contumelia": xerophagiae ex sale datae sunt et contus cum malo. "porri et persica": flagellum et cultrum accepit. "passeres et muscarium": uvam passam et mel Atticum. "cenatoria et forensia": offlam et tabulas accepit. "canale et pedale": lepus et solea est allata. "muraena et littera": murem cum rana alligatum fascemque betae accepit. diu risimus. sexcenta huiusmodi fuerunt, quae iam exciderunt memoriae meae.
>
> …[Trimalchio] was just throwing the philosophers out of work, when tickets were carried round in a cup, and a boy who was entrusted with this duty read aloud the names of the presents for the guests: "Tainted silver": a ham was brought in with vinegar bowls on top of it. "Something soft for the neck": a scrap of neck-end was put on. "That feeling 'wise but it's all so late' and 'appalling impoliteness'": he was given dry biscuits all so salty, and a little pole with a bad apple. "Flip of leeks and peaches piquant": he got a whip and a knife coupant. "Siskins and fly-paper": up came dry-skin grapes and Attic honey. "Dinner-dress and public dress": he received a piece of meat and note-books. "Something for a dog and something for a foot": a hare and a slipper were served up. "A murry muraena and a letter": he received a "mury"-mouse with a rana-frog tied to it and a bunch of b-eets. We laughed loud and long: there were any number of these jokes, which have now escaped my memory.[184]
>
> (Petronius, *Satyrica* 56)

Certainly, in other, extra-literary venues as well, trading in the lot for the allotted object would require solving the true meaning of the image or text on the lot.[185] This

[184] Given the puns in this passage, I use here the translation by Michael Heseltine and W.H.D. Rouse from the Loeb edition.

[185] See also Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 75.

possibility could be pressed into an explanation for why we find *tesserae* with mythical creatures, such as a hippocampus, or temples. These *tesserae* could simply be gaming pieces, not used for distributions, or they could be something else entirely.[186]

Lots and Presence: A Compositional Model

We now have a sense of the metonymic embodiment effected by *nomismata*. They absorb the emotions of people at events where presents are distributed, structuring sensation and serving a symbolic role in demarcating social hierarchies and temporalities. What is more, in several passages the use of *nomismata* corresponds to an accelerated or excessive consumption, freed from practical constraints. Sextilianus roams widely through the stands in book 1 to get the *aera ulteriora*; the *linea dives*, a device used in 8.78 to distribute gifts along with the *lasciva nomismata* and *larga tessera*, is said not to cease, *nec*…*cessat*; both methods of giving bring about a sort of frenzy that is echoed by the awe of the poet; compare also the *non parca manus* and *larga mensa* at 12.62.11. So, *nomismata* in *sparsiones* and other distributions are used both for practical reasons and as a presentational mode, a way of condensing gifts into a form that provokes a variety of emotional and affective responses by recipients. How does this mode relate to Martial's poetry? Actually, in his book 14, the *Apophoreta*, Martial explicitly models his collection on sortition. Although that book differs markedly from the central twelve of the corpus, its project demonstrates Martial's early interest in the image of poetry *qua* lottery. It also corroborates something that for us has become apparent already from discussing 8.78:

[186] On gaming tokens, see Alföldi-Rosenbaum (1971).

lotteries, as social practices and as poetic models, are not conceived of in isolation but in a layering of references that overloads the aesthetic paradigm of the epigrams. Hence, this section locates a compositional model that is itself composite.

The affinity between sortition and gambling suggested by the uncertainty as to whether objects in the archeological record were game pieces or gift tickets finds expression in the inaugural poem of book 14. After four lines that conjure up the world of the Saturnalia, Martial addresses the reader: *divitis alternas et pauperis accipe sortes*:/ *praemia convivae det sua quisque suo*, "receive the alternating 'lots' of poor man and rich man: let each give the rewards that are appropriate to its own guest."[187] These lines reference an intimate connection felt between recipient and lot as well as the role of sortition in marking social status. Then follow over two hundred distichs that function as substitutes for *apophoreta*, building on the format of book 13 which refers more specifically to foodstuffs. But if we align this logic of substitution exclusively with lotteries of *sortes*, the analogy for both books becomes too neat. Martial concludes 14.1 by also characterizing his poetry in this book as playing with nuts, *nuces*, a traditional Saturnalian gift and a cheap version of gaming counters.[188] Indeed, the run of distichs from 14.3 to 14.21 enforces the predominance of this metaphor. After listing writing implements,[189] Martial turns to cash boxes[190] and then gaming pieces, a dice tower, game board, more

[187] 14.1.5-6.

[188] 14.1.12.

[189] 14.3 to 14.11.

[190] 14.12, 14.13.

gaming pieces and nuts[191] before returning to writing implements.[192] He uses ring composition to establish both that his poetry is at once multiple types of gaming and that these games resemble gift lotteries. Book 13 seems more direct in aligning poetry with gambling and the logic of the Saturnalia: *haec mihi charta nuces, haec est mihi charta fritillus*:/ *alea nec damnum nec facit ista lucrum*, "this parchment is my nuts, this parchment is my dice box: this game brings neither profit nor loss."[193] But then it implicates yet other venues: *haec licet hospitibus pro munere disticha mittas*,/ *si tibi tam rarus quam mihi nummus erit*, "you may send these distichs to your guests in lieu of a gift if cash is as scarce for you as it is for me."[194] Sortition, different games with varying stakes, holiday shopping for gifts – Martial's poetry in these books is all of the above.

Akin to the lupini beans used as ersatz money by stage performers, gambling with nuts gives Martial an analogy to support his claim of a *ludus* that is without *damnum*.[195] But he is also interested in the element of chance in gaming. A distich in book 14 describes how this element might be rigged. 14.16 speaks in the voice of a *turricula*, dice tower: *quae scit compositos manus inproba mittere talos*,/ *si per me misit*, *nil nisi vota facit*, "the dishonest hand which knows how to send forth knucklebones already composed – if this hand uses me, it can only effect prayers." That is, a gambler using the dice tower can only rely on

[191] 14.14 to 14.19.

[192] 14.20, 14.21.

[193] 13.1.7-8.

[194] 13.3.5-6; the preceding lines describe how the book can be bought from the *bibliopola* Tryphon for four or even two *nummis* (13.3.1-4).

[195] See Horace *Satires* 2.3.182 and *Epistles* 1.7.23 on lupini beans; see Richlin (2017) 440: "funny money, prop money, gold-painted cattle chow, *playing* what is itself a symbol of value." See also Bowditch (2001) 196-202.

prayers, not on a stealthy hand loading the irregularly shaped pieces of bone. The *turricula* is an interiority without the guiding hand of human bias, a randomizer. In the twelve primary books of the corpus, the verb *componere* refers exclusively to literary composition.[196] Gambling, meanwhile, continues to hold a privileged place in the characterization of these books, sustained by the etymological interplay between *nuces* and *nugae*.[197] We can sense in the analogy the doubt that may well have been a constitutive feature of games that required players to toss dice in a variety of shapes by hand, a doubt that calls into question the division between skill and cheating. This question of a possibly rigged aleatory poetics is one of authorial intent, politically sensitive in the age of Domitian. The reader's perception of patterns in the *Epigrammaton libelli* or in individual epigrams corresponds to the normal practice of reading meaning into a throw of the dice, and the prayers, *vota*, of gamblers function as a shorthand for the cultural and literary expectations that readers brings to a text. But is Martial using, so to speak, his hand or a dice tower when he tosses out lists of objects or gathers epigrams into collections? The impossibility of deciding between the two alternatives that are introduced in 14.16 provides a cover for any politically sensitive interpretations that could arise from the juxtaposition – maybe it *is* just incidental? – of epigrams.

Martial famously gives us a detailed view into the Roman world of book production, publication, and marketing. Several passages revolve around the way literature becomes

[196] For instance, at 2.7.3: *componis belle mimos*, *epigrammata belle*, "you compose mimes prettily, you compose epigrams prettily…"; see also 4.6.4.

[197] On *alea* and literary composition see Purcell (1995) 4: "[types of gambling] lent themselves to a particular sort of cognitive intricacy because of their mathematical and geometrical intricacy. The numerical sophistication of ancient gambling may ultimately be related to the patterns of ancient literacy."

tokenized when tickets or labels are affixed to parchment rolls, codices, or the stalls of booksellers. Following manuscript variants, we may read *sittybos* or *sittybas*, "name tags," in epigram 1.61 at the beginning of a list of literary celebrities, rather than *syllabas* or *sillybos*: *Verona docti sittybos amat vatis/ Marone felix Mantua est*…, "Verona loves the name tags of its learned poet, Mantua is blessed by Maro…"[198] Oeuvres as rich and complex as Vergil's or even Catullus' can be reduced to a little tag, something manageable and marketable, a ready recipient of home-town pride. Even if the correct reading in 1.61 is "syllables," the compression into tags of authors whose work is expansive forms the joke in a run of distichs in 14.183-96. These little tags would accompany, as the premise has it, book rolls and codices. Martial delights in the conceit of reduction in 14.186: *quam brevis immensum cepit membrana Maronem!/ ipsius vultus prima tabella gerit*, "how small a parchment contains vast Maro! The first page holds his portrait." Putting the author's face on the front signals another way to reduce Vergil to a neat, immediately accessible commodity. We also hear at 1.117.11-12 of a book seller's stall covered in written advertisements: *scriptis postibus hinc et inde totis/ omnis ut cito perlegas poetas*, "[a shop] with doorposts inscribed on this side and that so you can read through all the poets quickly." Such advertisements do not take the same exact shape as tags, but they offer the same opportunity to consume poetry rapidly. They collapse entire corpora into brief notes that can be read at a glance. A window shopper could be deluded into supposing that she

[198] Shackleton Bailey prints *sillybos* in his Teubner text, while Lindsay's OCT has *sillybas*; see Citroni (1975) 202 on the variant readings.

had already read through all the poets, just as getting a lot could be mistaken for already getting the allotted object.

Another example of attempting to make present the complexity of experience is the custom of putting glass pebbles, *calculi*, into a vessel each day to commemorate time. In this practice, which, according to the elder Pliny, was Thracian in origin, Romans would mark a good day with a white piece of glass and a bad day with a black one.[199] Perhaps the vessel holding these tokens was made from transparent glass, framing a dichromatic record of happiness and sadness. Both Pliny and Martial speak of a time, late in life or at its conclusion, when the *calculi* would be sorted and counted. So Martial at 12.34.5-7, reminiscing on a life shared with Julius Martialis: *et si calculus omnis huc et illuc/ diversus bicolorque digeratur,/ vincet candida turba nigriorem*, "and if every glass pebble was arranged on either side by color, the white crowd would overwhelm the black." To some extent, this experience would capture and make present the emotional roller coaster endured over the years by the *amici*. Such a presentation of time would be a powerful aesthetic encounter with lived experience. Epigram 8.45, celebrating the return to Rome of Terentius Priscus, positions the recording of this good day with a white pearl, the luxury version, alongside the pouring out of well-aged wine from an amphora: *defluat et lento splendescat turbida lino/ amphora centeno consule facta minor*, "let an amphora made less

[199] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* 7.131*: vana mortalitas et ad circumscribendam se ipsam ingeniosa conputat more Thraciae gentis*, *quae calculos colore distinctos pro experimento cuiusque diei in urnam condit ac supremo die separatos dinumerat atque ita de quoque pronuntiat*, "Mortality, vain and clever at circumscribing itself, calculates itself in the fashion of the Thracians. These people put pebbles in an urn, distinguished by the color corresponding to the outcome of each day. At the end of a life, they count out the separated pebbles and thus make a pronouncement about each person." Martial mentions the custom in 9.52, 10.38, and 12.34. See also Persius 2.1-2.

through one hundred consulships pour out and gleam turbulently, slowed by the linen strainer."[200] The enjoyment of wine that has aged for one hundred years, strained dramatically and gleaming with its slowly accrued properties, anticipates an analogous enjoyment of seeing the *calculi*, proof of a life mostly well lived but similarly afflicted by some impurities, so to speak. The notion of aging well like wine is a commonplace in Greek as well as in Latin literature, but it clarifies the hope that time could be captured, preserved, and presented in a vessel just like glass pebbles or pearls. And yet, as 10.38.12-14 reminds us, the *calculus* is hardly the day itself. The glass pebble can only ever be a metonymic reduction of the increments of life. Again, we can recall from 8.44.9 the principle of life that lies at the heart of these allegedly trivial activities: *rape*, *congere*, *aufer*, *posside*: *relinquendum est*.

Accumulation in Epigrams

One could see in Martial's work a sustained moral project that may be opportunistic but nevertheless deploys the same view of behaviors and boundaries that we find in his literary contemporaries. We could dismiss poems about food and dining – for example ones that depict people who take home food from *cenae* in napkins – as prescriptive statements on the correct way to consume, evidence of Martial's social aspirations and his anxieties about being in the same position as subalterns who violate rules of decorum. But this dismissal would ignore Martial's aesthetic investment in the way individuals in his poems view and respond to the culinary wealth presented at *cenae*. For as much as moral

[200] 8.45.3-4.

injunctions and pointed barbs do structure the epigrams that I will examine in this section, an understanding of their role must be complemented by establishing a connection between the fundamental gestures of each poem and what I have shown up to this point. In other words, I demonstrate that these epigrams take the postures and configurations of what I am calling aleatory and nomismatic practices. The broader argument here is that Martial's calling out of behaviors has the contours and feel of a set of activities, a set that Martial composes in his poetry and that comes to connote a habit of thought rippling outward from the festal license of the Saturnalia and similar events. By partaking in this habit, by enacting it iteratively, Martial can expose assumptions both about where an object is if it exists – if it provokes the feeling of possession – in two material forms, as object and as *nomisma*; and about where meaning exists in the experience of poetry. In short, he can model his epigrams on the drive to acquire.

Epigram 2.37 describes a person who shamelessly and assiduously gathers up the dishes of a meal, handing them to his slave for transport home and reuse the next day:

quidquid ponitur hinc et inde verris,
mammas suminis imbricemque porci
communemque duobus attagenam,
mullum dimidium lupumque totum
muraenaeque latus femurque pulli
stillantemque alica sua palumbum.
haec cum condita sunt madente mappa,
traduntur puero domum ferenda:
nos accumbimus otiosa turba.
ullus si pudor est, repone cenam:
cras te, Caeciliane, non vocavi.

Whatever is served you sweep up from this side and that:
the teats of a sow's udders and rib of a pig
and a woodcock to be shared by two people,
half a mullet and a whole pike
and the fillet of a lamprey and leg of a chicken

and a pigeon dripping with its own gravy.
When these items are stored in a dripping napkin,
they are given to a boy to be carried home:
we, on the other hand, recline, a leisurely crowd.
If you have any decency, put back the meal:
I did not invite you to dinner tomorrow, Caecilianus.
(2.37)

Caecilianus hoovers up the meal from the table like *analectae*, slaves who sweep the floors after dinner. Perhaps, as with the goose in epigram 9.31, we are to think of a visual representation, here one of the unswept floor mosaics but come to life and finally swept. Half of the poem consists of short syntactic units, rarely more than two words apiece, rattling off the expensive items as they are taken up from the table. The frenetic energy of Caecilianus contrasts with the attitude of the other diners, among whom the first-person host reclines. This leisurely crowd, *otiosa turba*, also functions as a counterpoint to the grip of foods crowded into a dripping napkin and handed over to a slave in the immediately preceding lines, *haec* contrasted with *nos*. Caecilianus' faux pas is one of trying to duplicate a singular experience, an attempt to get two *cenae* from one invitation. Perhaps he takes inspiration from the large woodcock in line 3, a dish that is supposed to be enough for two people, *communem duobus*. That is, Caecilianus tries to share his meal today with the himself of tomorrow, also involving his slave in the consumption of food meant for him only in his identity as a recipient of an invitation for dinner today. The epigram as a whole is about how an urge to consume food in some other scene, to transfer the social value of an invitation as signified by food, construes an ethics of responding to whatever is set forth, *quidquid ponitur*. The inappropriate feeding frenzy of Caecilianus resembles that brought about by casting lots into a seething crowd.

The complementary gestures of putting down and taking up that mark the aesthetic and satirical force of this epigram partake in this logic of duplication. Martial portrays Caecilianus' consumption as both established and incomplete. The foods are settled, *condita sunt*, but not yet lodged at home, *domum ferenda*.[201] The epigram speaks from this space between two degrees of having: thus Caecilianus can put back – *repone*! – what he does not yet have. The verb picks up from *ponitur* in line 1. Both verbs, *ponere* and *reponere*, can have the technical meaning of serving dishes at a meal, with the second form denoting replacing one dish with another.[202] Martial in effect demands that Caecilianus occupy the position of the host, distributing a bounty of foods from his napkin. The correct social behavior prescribed by this poem would also be the presentational mode of the poem itself. With this point in mind, the verb *verris* in the first line draws renewed attention. We learn only in the last line, after the foods are bundled, that Caecilianus is the proper subject. Until this moment the "you" works as a proxy for the reader, sweeping up words *hinc et inde* on Martial's page and aspiring to transport them to the next venue. We might become more less interested, modelling our engagement with Martial's poetry on the leisure of the crowd. Or, in suspecting Martial of re-serving food from a submerged original meal, himself unable to live up to the ideal of the *otiosa turba*, we can point out that this poem is not nearly as interested in suspending thoughts of re-use and contentedly enjoying

[201] Compare the coins in the belly of the goose at 9.31.8: *haec extis condita nuper erant*. For *domum*, compare Richlin (2017) 190 on money and the idiom *domi* in Plautus: "The house then is not only identified with the self ('at my house'), even with the body, but with availability; this is ready money, money a person actually has, and does not have to go to the forum to get – to borrow; or to withdraw from a credit account, as wealthy persons are able to do onstage."

[202] *OLD* s.v. *ponere* § 5; *reponere* § 2. Compare my discussion of *ponere* in chapter 1.

food in the moment as it is in the competing impulses to take up and put back down. However derisible, Caecilianus would serve up foods as this epigram does.

The verb *ponere* features in an image of a *cena* as circus arena, *harena*, in an epigram from book 1. Here Martial takes up the aggrieved cry as one of sixty dinner guests who were served a single boar:

bis tibi triceni fuimus, Mancine, vocati
et positum est nobis nil here praeter aprum,
non quae de tardis servantur vitibus uvae
dulcibus aut certant quae melimela favis,
non pira quae longa pendent religata genesta
aut imitata brevis Punica grana rosas,
rustica lactantes nec misit Sassina metas
nec de Picenis venit oliva cadis:
nudus aper, sed et hic minimus qualisque necari
a non armato pumilione potest.
et nihil inde datum est; tantum spectavimus omnes:
ponere aprum nobis sic et harena solet.
ponatur tibi nullus aper post talia facta,
sed tu ponaris cui Charidemus apro.

Twice thirty of us were summoned to dinner, Mancinus,
and nothing yesterday was placed before us beyond a boar:
not grapes which are preserved on the maturing vines
nor honey apples which rival sweet honeycombs,
not pears which hang tied with a long piece of broom
nor pomegranates imitating short-lived roses;
rustic Sarsina did not send milky cones [of cheese]
nor did olives come from jars of Picenum:
a naked boar, but on top of that a tiny one, such as
an unarmed little person could kill.
And after that nothing was given; we all just watched:
thus is the arena also accustomed to putting a boar before us.
After such deeds, may no boar be put before you
but may you be put before the same boar as Charidemus![203]
(1.43)

[203] Presumably someone who was exposed to a wild boar in the arena; see Howell (1980) 206, though: "perhaps M. uses the name because of its etymology ('one who pleases the people' – appropriate for a victim at the games)."

The metaphors are delightfully mixed. Martial and the other guests – their identities are purely numerical – dispatch with their only course with the ease of a little person fighting a beast his size. The contrast between *tibi* and *nobis* in the first two lines implies that the host gorges himself on the list of rustic treats. For the rest of the meal the guests are mere spectators of a scene playing out in miniature, edible tokens of gustatory combat in a menu infused with rivalry and theatricality. The late-harvest grapes are reserved like the star of the show. Honey apples sweet it out with honeycombs, while the pomegranates perform as roses. Martial sources snacks like gladiators – cheeses from the depths of Umbria, fighting olives from the slopes over the Apennines. The cheese cones, *metas*, also resemble turning posts around which chariots would hurl. The pears are armed with broom, the olives girded in ceramic. Throughout, *ponere* encapsulates the spectacular dimension of Mancinus' *cena*, a meal that is put on like an event in the circus for an audience that leaves unengaged and unfulfilled.

While the sight of a *cena* as *harena* fills epigram 1.43 and suggests the curse directed at Mancinus, it is possible to draw parallels between this spectacle and the nomismatic presentation of objects. The riddle of each dish as fighter or performer recalls the gift lottery in Petronius. The *praeteritio* in lines 3-8 gives vent to the frustrated expectation of the guests. It is as if Martial solved the game of guessing which event the meal mimicked but never got his *nomisma* redeemed from the servile attendants. Even the tiny portion of boar that was served is not remembered as eaten but just seen, set before them for display. Eating little becomes another form of not having, along with merely looking. This epigram and 2.37 seem to exchange positions vis-à-vis the meal that never properly materializes.

Martial looks back from the eternal today of his book collections at yesterday's meal, *here*. We can imagine Caecilianus in the same situation tomorrow, *cras*, forced to relinquish yesterday's meal. Also, the breach of dining protocol in each epigram involves the act of enclosing. Caecilianus binds up food to consume apart, on a second occasion. The fruit, cheese, olives, and boar are figuratively encircled below the stands of an amphitheater; if only Mancinus were down on the sand too. Epigram 1.43 is epigram as *harena*, while 2.37 looks like the sweeping of an unswept floor. But the poetic enactment of each scene owes an aesthetic debt to aleatory and nomismatic virtual experience.

A longer epigram in book 11 returns us to the dynamics of enclosure and eruption that structure a virtual experience brought about by mimetic correspondence. Here Martial, who has just received a suburban *rus* as a gift from his *amicus* Lupus, surveys the *rus* that is formed in his urban window by plants and little creatures:

donasti, Lupe, rus sub urbe nobis;
sed rus est mihi maius in fenestra.
rus hoc dicere, rus potes vocare?
in quo ruta facit nemus Dianae,
argutae tegit ala quod cicadae,
quod formica die comedit uno,
clusae cui folium rosae corona est;
in quo non magis invenitur herba
quam Cosmi folium piperve crudum;
in quo nec cucumis iacere rectus
nec serpens habitare tota possit.
urucam male pascit hortus unam,
consumpto moritur culex salicto,
et talpa est mihi fossor atque arator.
non boletus hiare, non mariscae
ridere aut violae patere possunt.
finis mus populatur et colono
tamquam sus Calydonius timetur,
et sublata volantis ungue Procnes
in nido seges est hirundinino;
et cum stet sine falce mentulaque,

non est dimidio locus Priapo.
vix implet cocleam peracta messis,
et mustum nuce condimus picata.
errasti, Lupe, littera sed una:
nam quo tempore praedium dedisti,
mallem tu mihi prandium dedisses.

Lupus, you gave me a suburban farm
but the farm in my window is larger.
Can you say this is a farm, can you call it a farm?
Where a rue plant makes a "grove of Diana"
roofed by the wing of a shrill cicada:
an ant can eat it in one day,
the leaf of a rosebud is its garland;
in it, grass is not found any more than
the leaf of Cosmus or green pepper;
in it a cucumber cannot lie straight
nor can a snake house its whole self.
the garden barely feeds a single caterpillar,
once the willow grove is consumed, the flea dies,
and I have a mole for a ditch digger and plowman.
The mushroom cannot guffaw, nor can figs
split their sides in laughter, nor can violets bloom.
A mouse despoils the boundaries and
is feared by the farmer like the Calydonian swine;
and, borne aloft by the talon of a flying Procne,
my crop is in a swallow's nest;
and, although he stands without his pruning hook and cock,
there is no room for a pint-sized Priapus.
Scarcely does the gathered harvest fill a snail shell,
and we must store the new wine in a pitch-smeared nut.
You erred, Lupus, but only by a letter:
for when you gave me a ranch (*praedium*),
I'd rather you'd given me a lunch (*prandium*).
(11.18)

Just as the items not served by Mancinus came to resemble gladiatorial fighters, here the creatures and plants in the window box come to resemble the typical features of a *rus*. With the real suburban *rus* at a stage of remove, we find ersatz farmyard flora and fauna already at hand as well as a "grove of Diana." The sight of a farm in the *fenestra* shades into the realm of mythology. The mouse despoiling its boundaries reminds the

farmer of the Calydonian boar, while the crop is carried away in the claws of Procne the swallow. The inclusion of Priapus – or, more precisely, the lack of room for him *and* his large phallus and pruning hook – points to the commonplace of statues and other mythological figures in Roman horticultural landscapes. Such a game of resemblances again recalls the lottery from Petronius, giving a connotation to the word *folium* that Martial uses twice, in lines 7 and 9. These leaves, reminiscent of Trimalchio's *pittacia*, evoke the practice informing the poetic puzzle as to what in the real *rus* they represent. The *folia*, as both vegetal leaves and tickets, underscore the feeling that the real *rus* is no more than a gift token.[204] Hence the conclusion: Martial would rather have gotten a lunch, *prandium*, instead of the out-of-town *praedium* that is no greater than leaves and the other remnants of life left in his window box.

Martial's criticism of the size of the gifted suburban farm relies on the epigram's immersion in the experience of that farm's double and the feeling of claustrophobia brought about by that immersion. We are transported into his window box and made to feel cramped in his small farm, stuck in claustrophobia-inducing interiorities. For example, the garland, *corona*, in line 7 is formed by the leaf of a rosebud, literally a shut-up rose, *clusae*…*rosae*. Lines 10 and 11 see a cucumber and a snake struggling to stretch out straight, both contorted by the space.[205] In a set of images that variously evoke sexual organs and hungry mouths, lines 15 and 16 list things that are prevented from gaping, guffawing, or blooming. Rather than enact a dialectic of stillness and motion, this

[204] Epigram 8.33 begins with the same conceit; see my discussion in Chapter 1.

[205] *rectus* has a loaded meaning in the context of patronage, connoting proper *liberalitas*; see the *cena recta* at 7.20.2, for instance.

ekphrastic epigram is situated in the tension between contraction and expansion, enclosure and eruption. Such is the force of all the negations throughout the poem: they check the riotous vegetal and an(im)al dilations on this ersatz farm. Martial also shifts between noting things that, while small enough, are too big to be contained and things that, because they are small, are the only capable inhabitants or containers. In this second category, we find instances of successful encapsulation that recall the fundamentally nomismatic urge to embrace and acquire. The swallow in lines 19 and 20 takes home to her nest the crops in her claw, *ungue*, a little detail of the scene that resembles the slip of matter that is a *nomisma* as well as the napkin, *mappa*, of Caecilinaus. Moreover, several lines later we encounter a pitch-smeared nut, *nuce*…*picata*, used in lieu of an amphora. This image provides a real corollary to the conceptual reduction brought about by using nuts as gaming counters. Here the distillation of Martial's home garden, represented by the distilled *mustum*, is quite literally reduced to the form of a *nux*. So, the list in this poem also appropriates on an aesthetic level the scenario of aleatory and nomismatic activities.

Epigram 7.20 returns us to the theme of 2.37, except in this version Santra, the gauche guest in question, succeeds in making off with the food he has pocketed. 7.20 is more explicit about the goal of the parasite: he aims to repurpose the food as commodities in tomorrow's market. The opening sets the scene and implies that Santra spends his life as a *captator*, living by chance off invitations to dine:

> nihil est miserius neque gulosius Santra.
> rectam vocatus cum cucurrit ad cenam,
> quam tot diebus noctibusque captavit,
> ter poscit apri glandulas, quater lumbum,
> et utramque coxam leporis et duos armos,
> nec erubescit peierare de turdo
> et ostreorum rapere lividos cirros.

buccis placentae sordidam linit mappam;
illic et uvae collocantur ollares
et Punicorum pauca grana malorum
et excavatae pellis indecens volvae
et lippa ficus debilisque boletus.
sed mappa cum iam mille rumpitur furtis,
rosos tepenti spondylos sinu condit
et devorato capite turturem truncum.
colligere longa turpe nec putat dextra
analecta quidquid et canes reliquerunt.
nec esculenta sufficit gulae praeda:
mixto lagonam replet ad pedes vino.
haec per ducentas cum domum tulit scalas
seque obserata clusit anxius cella
gulosus ille, postero die vendit.

Nothing is more wretched and gullet-ier than Santra.
When he scurries to an expensive meal, invited
after angling for an invitation for so many days and nights,
he asks for three servings of tender pork bits and four of loin,
and both haunches of a hare and two shoulders,
nor does he blush to lie about a thrush
and to snatch at the purple fringes of oysters.
He lines his filthy napkin with mouthfuls of cake:
there too are lodged potted grapes
and a few grains of Punic apples
and the unseemly skin of a hollowed-out sow's womb
and an oozing fig and a limping boletus mushroom.
But when the napkin is bursting with a thousand stolen items,
he stashes half-eaten mollusks in his warm, damp pocket
and does not think it shameful to gather with a long arm
the body of a turtle dove with its head devoured
and whatever the gleaning slave and dogs have left.
Nor is edible booty enough for his gullet:
by his feet he refills a flagon of mixed wine [i.e. from other people's dregs].
These things he takes home with him up two hundred stairs
and anxiously bolts himself up in his tiny apartment.
That gluttonous man…on the next day, he sells it all!
(7.20)

Again, Martial gives us little bits of syntax, scattering them out as if onto the floor. Indeed, here the presence of a slave who sweeps up after the meal is made explicit, the *analecta*. Santra does what even this figure or dogs refuse to do, picking up the trash. So

much emphasis is placed on his gullet, *gula*, that the conclusion – Santra does not eat the food at all – comes as a surprise. This is a *gula* that does not eat, a *gula* that does not digest but vomits out food onto the market. Just as with Caecilianus in 2.37, Martial stages the indiscretion of Santra as the principle of the poem itself: Santra "does not blush" to act in a way that allows Martial to list, sometimes enumerating, the objects stolen from this meal. Moreover, this fusion of social disgrace and poetic presentation relies on the partial possession by Santra of the foodstuffs. In line 9, we get a figure of thought for this non-ownership when tinned grapes are lodged, *collocantur*, in the filthy napkin. It is as if Santra will proceed to sell food that he is merely renting.

In a more dramatic fashion than 2.37, epigram 7.20 consists of efforts to enclose that precipitate the bursting forth of foods. Santra stuffs everything into a napkin, *mappa*, but when this cloth interiority bursts open, *rumpitur*, he fills his warm pocket, *tepenti*…*sinu*. He refills a flagon, *lagonam*, inverting the hospitality of his host, and retreats to his bolted apartment, *obserata*…*cella*, enclosing himself before the next day. The descriptor *anxius* marks the culmination of these acts of binding or pressing together, actions expressed by the verb *colligere* in line 16, which may have the added sense of begging.[206] Looking back at the foods, many are seen to form concavities as well. Santra plucks the livid fringes from oysters in line 7, while the cake in the next line is measured by mouthfuls, the shape of the mouth turned inside out and replicated in pastry. The aforementioned grapes in line 9 are potted, *ollares*, while line 11 gives us the obscene skin of a hollowed-out sow's womb, *excavatae*…*vulvae*, and in line 14 he picks up bivalve shells with only the hard muscle left.

[206] Although one would expect also to see *stips*.

The epigram thus portrays a drive to acquire that bounces from one concavity to the next, pausing only to scoop up again what has broken out. Santra's shameless efforts recall the dipsomania of Sextilianus from 1.11 and 1.26 in another way in the final details of 7.20. In this menu of resemblances, one is tempted to spot a parallel between the wedges of the theater through which Sextilianus climbs and the stairs, *ducentas*…*scalas*, that Santra ascends. Santra climbs up out of the spectacular space of the *cena* only to retrace his steps back down to the world of commerce the following day.

The notion of renting, which in 7.20 could offer an analogy for the possession Santra held over the items from the *cena*, is central to a longer epigram from book 12 that lists objects emerging from hidden, interior spaces. Epigram 12.32 mocks Vacerra – his name, "block," announces his stupidity – for being evicted after failure to pay rent for two years.[207] Despite this eviction, Vacerra and his family are able to take their movable goods with them, and so the epigram revels in the revelation of this man's wealth, unbundled from his prior living situation:

> o Iuliarum dedecus Kalendarum,
> vidi, Vacerra, sarcinas tuas, vidi;
> quas non retentas pensione pro bima
> portabat uxor rufa crinibus septem
> et cum sorore cana mater ingenti.
> Furias putavi nocte Ditis emersas.
> has tu priores frigore et fame siccus
> et non recenti pallidus magis buxo
> Irus tuorum temporum sequebaris.
> migrare clivum crederes Aricinum.
> ibat tripes grabatus et bipes mensa
> et cum lucerna corneoque cratere
> matella curto rupta latere meiebat;

[207] See Watson (2004), who argues that the evicted family is Celtiberian; see also Marsilio (2008), who draws out the intertextual connections to Catullus 23.

foco virenti suberat amphorae cervix;
fuisse gerres aut inutiles maenas
odor impudicus urcei fatebatur,
qualem marinae vissit aura piscinae.
nec quadra deerat casei Tolosatis,
quadrima nigri nec corona pulei
calvaeque restes alioque cepisque,
nec plena turpi matris olla resina,
Summemmianae qua pilantur uxores.
quid quaeris aedes vilicosque derides,
habitare gratis, o Vacerra, cum possis?
haec sarcinarum pompa convenit ponti.

O, dishonor of the Julian Kalends,
I saw, Vacerra, I saw your movables;
these, not repossessed in lieu of two year's rent,
were toted by your redheaded wife with her seven locks of hair
and by your white-haired mother and portly sister.
I thought the Furies had emerged from the night of Pluto.
You followed these women, parched with cold and hunger,
more pale than old boxwood,
the Irus of your times.
You would have thought the slope of Aricia was migrating.
There went a three-footed cot and two-footed table
and, along with a lamp and cornel-wood bowl,
a broken chamber pot with a busted side, pissing everywhere;
underneath a glowing brazier was the neck of an amphora;
the unchaste odor of a pitcher confessed that
it had been cheap salt fish and worthless sardines,
a stench like not even a salt-water pond farts out.
Nor was absent a bit of Tolosan cheese,
nor a four-year-old garland of black pennyroyal,
nor ropes bald of garlic and onions,
nor your mother's pot full of dark resin,
with which the wives of the Summoenium depilate themselves.
Why do you seek a house and make mockery of landlords
when, Vacerra, you could dwell for free?
This procession of movables is perfect for the bridge.
(12.32)

Vacerra's disgusting moveable property signals his true status as a beggar, one of the occupants of the infamous slope of the Via Appia descending from Aricia, where vehicles slowed and gave mendicants an opportunity, or a similar spot, the bridge

mentioned also at 10.5.3. The epigram echoes many of the themes picked out of those hitherto discussed. Vaccera resembles Irus, the beggar from the Odyssey, while his female relatives emerge from slime like the Furies, further recalling the play of mimetic correspondence effected by the lottery in Petronius. Vacerra even looks like a very pale piece of wood, perhaps reminiscent of a wooden token itself. The broken, pissing chamber pot in line 13, as well as the stinky vessel in lines 15 and 16 and the amphora juxtaposed with a coal pan in 14, mirror in miniature the rupture that has occurred for Vacerra's domestic life. Nothing is ultimately private and contained when a home is rented, not least hoarded filth, however desperately it clings to the inside of pots like depilatory resin; or, like the pitch smeared on the nut in 11.8.[208] The bald ropes in line 20 anticipate the designation of Vaccera's stuff as *sarcinarum pompa* in the final line: here is the sterile double of the *Ausonio similis*…*pompa macello* from 12.62.9, the barren counterpart to the *linea dives* from 8.78.7. Certain in his derision, Martial reads meaning into all these possessions that fall out before him, interpreting them like a throw of dice: Vacerra and family belong on the streets.

The epigrams just discussed, all of which present a set of objects to the reader and align this set with an invective trajectory, do not have scrambling for lots or gambling with nuts as their primary analogs. 2.37 serves up food crowded into a *mappa*, 1.43 gives the spectacle of a *cena* as *harena*, 11.18 finds a *rus* in the *fenestra* of Martial's urban home, 7.20 turns the *gula* of Santra into a napkin, pocket, or amphora, and 12.32 jeers on the *pompa* of an evicted family. But on a more fundamental level, the compositional dynamics of each

[208] On the rental market, see Frier (1977).

epigram come together in the figure drawn from my survey of aleatory and nomismatic practices when they are mentioned explicitly by Martial: the use of lots, stringing gifts from ropes, gambling with a variety of gaming pieces, putting *calculi* in jars to record time, even fixing little tags to books or advertising inscriptions to the stalls of booksellers. Martial's longer epigrams take on the feel of these practices in their interplay of enclosure and eruption, and we are left to ponder the curious juxtaposition of his and the readers' investment in the drive to stuff so many things into concavities or see them spilling out again, a drive that is embodied in these epigrams by people who are objects of derision. One point I made in explicating the logic of *nomismata*, that they allow for an immediate, virtual experience of getting and having, re-emerges in the frustration of a promise or expectation in four of the five epigrams just discussed: the failure to lodge stuff permanently at home. With the exception of 1.43, these epigrams take a home – *domum* (2.37); *rus* (11.8); *cella*/*domum* (7.20); *aedes* (12.32) – as the endpoint. It is in this commonality that Martial's invective discloses the deeper structure of a fantasy, one that subtends the social strata and, from time to time, acknowledges its own futility. Not even home is a secure repository for material wealth. As the poet reminds a fellow hustler in 8.44: *rape*, *congere*, *aufer*, *posside*: *relinquendum est*. Thus, we arrive at the ambivalence of the pleasure taken in seeing objects gathered and scattered in these poems: they are proxies for seeing wealth gathered and lost.

Conclusion: The Accumulation of Epigrams

Martial's habit of listing the particulates of life in his epigrams has been seen as an inscription in poetry of the atomization of social life in the Flavian period, a postmodern

aesthetic *avant la lettre* to fit a world saturated with consumer goods and a groundless hodgepodge of cultural codes.[209] What I have intended to show in the preceding sections is that, apart from this question of the tenability of meta-narratives, his poetry of objects and the *personae* interacting with them habitually takes an aleatory and nomismatic form. To conclude this chapter, I telescope outward to suggest in brief that Martial's poetry collections themselves are portrayed as little capsules slipping between hollows, on the one hand, while the compiling of epigrams appears as an effort to contain, with the drive to write epigrams threatening to burst such containment. As such, the composition of epigrams into epigram books also internalizes the opposing tendencies of aleatory and nomismatic practices.

If poetry books can be reduced for commercial purposes to labels and advertisements, becoming tokens that the conscientious reader will, it is hoped, exchange for actual reading, two further requisites for literary consumption in Martial's world mirror the nomismatic and aleatory scenario. These features are the ear, *auris*, the allegedly private organ of poetic reception, and the pocket, *sinus*, a frequent home to books in addition to foods surreptitiously pocketed at *cenae*. Both form concavities for epigrams to fill. For instance, Martial directs some scazons at 1.91.3 to speak into the ear of Maternus so that he alone can hear the insults contained in the rest of the poem: *dicas in aurem sic ut audiat solus*. When reading this epigram, it is as if we have overheard the words that did not remain discretely ensconced in this aural interiority, drifting into public earshot. Along with the nose – see, for example, 1.3.5-6 – the ear can be, intuitively enough, an organ of

[209] See my discussion in the introduction.

discrimination. So, at 6.82.6 people who have not read Martial are considered to have the ear of a Batavian, *aurem Batavam*. The *sinus* offers another retreat for poetry to reside in, one that allows for content to reveal itself to the public. In epigram 2.6, we hear that Severus used to scribble down Martial's poems eagerly in *Vitelliani*, expensive notebooks, to carry everywhere, probably to recite as his own: *haec sunt singula quae sinu ferebas/ per convicia cuncta per theatra*, "these are the poems that you would carry individually in your pocket to every dinner party, to every theater event."[210] Martial also commends his little book for desiring to flee into the pocket of Faustinus at 3.2.6: *Faustini fugis in sinum*? *sapisti*. The *sinus* and the *auris* offer temporary safety from public exposure, but they also offer places from which to stage dramatic disseminations.

And yet, the containment of epigrams within books is not secure. Book 1 of Martial's corpus begins with five poems that revise and re-revise the boundaries of a poetry collection. Epigram 1.1, the famous inauguration to the first book – but also, probably, to a larger anthology or anthologies – braggadociously widens the largest scope possible for poetry's reception: *hic est quem legis ille quem requiris/ toto notus in orbe Martialis*, "it's him, the guy you read, the guy you seek out: Martial, renowned throughout the world."[211] Martial is known everywhere for his poems; his reputation extends through time as well, for he has obtained poetic immortality already in life.[212] In the following epigram, we learn

[210] 2.6.7-8.

[211] 1.1.1-2; see Morelli (2005) on the *toto notus in orbe*, an expression I revisit in chapter 4. See Citroni (1975) 12-14 on the status of 1.1.

[212] 1.1.4-6.

that this global exposure is predicated on the convenient format of the book, easily purchased, easily portable:

> qui tecum cupis esse meus ubicumque libellos
> et comites longae quaeris habere viae,
> hos eme, quos artat brevibus membrana tabellis;
> scrinia da magnis, me manus una capit.
>
> You who desire for my books to accompany you everywhere
> and seek to have them as comrades for your long journey,
> buy these, which the membrane binds in short pages;
> give book boxes to big books, one hand can hold me.
> (1.2.1-4)

Martial contrasts the parchment roll stored in *scrinia* with the brief bound pages of his book. A hand, *manus*, can enclose the small book. Book publication physically reduces the experience of the epigrams into something hand sized, allowing it to range on long journeys. The *scrinia* would be more capacious to accommodate the parchment roles, but that size would ultimately limit its readership for practical reasons. But, sent out into the world, the book becomes hard to locate. In the remainder of the poem, we see the aspiring reader wandering lost in the city, ignorant of where to purchase a Martial: *ne tamen ignores ubi sim venalis et erres/ urbe vagus tota*.[213] The expression *urbe vagus tota* reworks *toto notus in orbe* from epigram 1.1. Global exposure is thus a process of unmooring from fixed locations, and Martial must intercede to direct the reader to the book stall situated near the Temple of Peace and Forum of Nerva.[214]

[213] 1.2.5-6.

[214] 1.2.7-8.

Epigram 1.3 segues into a different concern: security from the condescension of masculine Roman readers: *iuvenesque senesque/ et pueri*.[215] Exposure to a broad readership brought about by ready commercial availability in the shops of the Argiletum[216] means also exposure to harsh criticisms. In retrospect, the vacant *scrinia* at Martial's home seem safer: *sed poteras tutior esse domi*, "but you could have been safer at home."[217] The book may earn huzzahs and kisses. But it may also be subjected to the *sagatio*, a type of bullying where people, usually, or books in this case were tossed into the air by men holding a thick blanket, *sagum*, by the edges.[218] The blanket forms a concavity for propelling the book upward, presumably to the laughter and mockery of bystanders in an impromptu spectacle. But why endure these humiliations? The alternative is constant revision by the author Martial at home, constant erasures and re-writing.[219] Poetic immortality first requires a scission between author and work, an arresting of the fluidity of composition. It also resembles the *sagatio*: *aetherias, lascive, cupis volitare per auras*, "naughty book, you desire to flit through the ethereal breezes."[220] We may recall here the cloudy flight of the *nomismata* in 8.78.9: *subitis lasciva nomismata nimbis*. Epigrams 1.4 and 1.5 focus on Martial's reception by Domitian. Although he is given no quotidian directions to the book stall, Domitian, like the wandering reader, may alight on the epigrams:

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[215] 1.3.5-6.

[216] 1.3.1.

[217] 1.3.12.

[218] 1.3.8; see Suetonius, *Otho* 2.1 for a description of the *sagatio*.

[219] 1.3.9-10.

[220] 1.3.11.

contigeris nostros, Caesar, si forte libellos…, "if perchance, Caesar, you chance upon my books…"[221] But Martial, as we learn in the next epigram, risks being cast into the water along with his book for giving such a paltry response to a *naumachia*.[222] This five-epigram set fixates on a progressive encircling of poetry as well as the role of chance in coming across Martial's book(s) in various spheres of activity. Neat packaging serves as a prelude to ever more uncertain distribution. For a book to be tossed into the breezes of celebrity it must first be crystalized out of the flux of composition.

Above, Santra and Caecilianus were seen to embody a drive to accumulate, stuffing their respective napkins full of food to a point where, in one case, the food threatens to burst out again, cascading before the eyes of the reader in a manner that recalls Martial's entire poetic project. We can locate this same drive to keep filling concavities – a shape which, as we have seen, describes Martial's books – in the context of composing epigrams. Epigram 4.89, the last of book 4, evinces the compulsive need to keep churning out epigrams:

> ohe, iam satis est, ohe, libelle,
> iam pervenimus usque ad umbilicos.
> tu procedere adhuc et ire quaeris,
> nec summa potes in schida teneri,
> sic tamquam tibi res peracta non sit,
> quae prima quoque pagina peracta est.
> iam lector queriturque deficitque,
> iam librarius hoc et ipse dicit
> "ohe, iam satis est, ohe, libelle."
>
> woah there! now's enough, woah there, little book,
> now we've come all the way to the knobs.

[221] 1.4.1.

[222] 1.5.1.

You're asking to proceed further and keep going,
nor can you be restrained by the last strip of papyrus,
as if the matter wasn't finished in your opinion,
the matter which really was over and done on page one.
Now the reader complains and is tired,
now the copyist says this too:
"woah there! now's enough, woah there, little book."
(4.89)

Martial speaks to his work as if it has a mind of its own, as if the drive to write is external to himself and resides inside the epigrams. Not even the token-like strip of papyrus, *summa schida*, can hold back the impulse for epigram production. The poems are raring to burst out of their own material container. Now the reader and copyist are wearied, but already, Martial admits, the project was a bust at the outset, dead in its first tracks. Here epigrams appear in their most material condition: things that march inexorably toward the end of parchment scrolls, things copied down by the hand of the *librarius*. We find juxtaposed one synoptic view of epigrams – perhaps akin to that expressed in 1.117, where poets can be read all the way through, *perlegas*, in a brief glance – with the notion that epigrams contain dynamisms that break the boundaries making a rapid-and-total reading possible. Epigrams, like other things bursting out of concavities, reassert their own complexity. The lot is only ever a temporary form of abstraction. In other words, the lot can never absolutely reduce anything, least of all poetry and the drive to create more poetry, to a ready consumerist package, as instantly legible as the label bearing the poet's name or the advertisements on the book seller's stall.

Chapter 3: A Loan in Time

nunc vivit necuter sibi, bonosque
soles effugere atque abire sentit,
qui nobis pereunt et imputantur.

Now neither of us lives for himself, and
each perceives good days slip away and depart
which die for us and are charged to our account.

Martial, *Epigrams* 5.20.11-13

cras istud quanti, dic mihi, possit emi?
cras vives? hodie iam vivere, Postume, serum est:
ille sapit quisquis, Postume, vixit heri.

how much, tell me, does that damn tomorrow cost to buy?
will you live tomorrow? Postumus, it's already too late to live today:
that man was wise, Postumus, who lived yesterday.

Martial, *Epigrams* 5.58.6-8

nunc nos maxima Roma terit.
hic mihi quando dies meus est? iactamur in alto
urbis, et in sterili vita labore perit...

now mightiest Rome grinds us down.
when is a day *mine* here, for *me*? we are tossed in the deep
of the city, and life dies in fruitless labor...

Martial, *Epigrams* 10.58.6-8

ingenti fruor improboque somno,
quem nec tertia saepe rumpit hora,
et totum mihi nunc repono, quidquid
ter denos vigilaveram per annos.

I enjoy an enormous, obscene amount of sleep,
which even the third hour only sometimes breaks up,
and now I repay myself in full for whatever
kept me anxiously awake for thirty years.

Martial, *Epigrams* 12.18.13-16

Introduction & Argument

This chapter explores the ambivalence of Martial's relation to time and its contents. It does so through an alignment of time as it is rationalized in the epigrams with what I call credit, a collective term both for the strategic giving of gifts and for loans of money that come with some rate of interest, regardless of the legal mechanism that secures this *usura*.[223] I make this alignment on the basis of form. Credit – whether a gift, interest-free loan, or loan with interest – creates something more, *plus*. A person receives the gift/loan and later, perhaps, returns its value. But also, in this process of reciprocation or repayment a new value comes into being. With a loan at interest, this *plus* is the interest generated. With non-monetary gifts and interest-free loans, it can be referred to as *gratia*, the immaterial bond created between giver and receiver. Interactions of credit that create *plus* rely on a temporal disjuncture. In contrast to a purchase with money, where buyer and seller discharge their obligations to one another in a moment, credit generates *plus* by extending across moments in time a power to demand repayment or a social expectation of reciprocation. This understanding of credit, which I derive from Martial as well as from Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, is one where loans at interest function as the lens through which to view gifts. In these works, however, there is also another view of credit that does not

[223] Much is made in the scholarship of the distinction between *amici* who lend casually among themselves and *feneratores* who operate officially as money lenders and, at least according to the stereotype, would be liable to charge usurious rates; that is, between *mutuum* and *fenus*. In Martial, however, it is impossible to keep the two categories separate, so I treat all types of loans along with giving. Moreover, while the legal sources provide a clear enough view of what constitutes a *mutuum* in Martial's era (i.e. a contract brought about by a *datio*, not a *conventio*; interest could be claimed only with a *stipulatio*), legal definitions are hardly as important in assessing Martial's view of lending as the informal obligations that attend people of his status, however much those obligations take legal objects into account metaphorically. On lending in patronage networks, see Verboven (2002) 116-32 (writing on the Republic but, as he readily admits, looking to the early empire) and Saller (1982) 120-6.

involve temporal disjuncture. The extension of credit inaugurates a situation where objects and, indeed, a person's existence come, to some degree, to be owned by other people, in being owed to them. But we also find a dream of time and possessions that are held in common, in particular the object that is poetry and the time that is used to create poetry. This is the dream of communal ownership without exclusive claims.

Martial's depiction of time in his epigrams, and the way time is used to structure epigrams in his collections, depend on credit on both a metaphorical and formal level. We can begin to see this conceptual influence by considering the epigraphs above. The passages from 5.20 and 12.18 demonstrate how credit is used as a metaphor to think about how time feels dispossessed of one's volition. In 5.20, written while Martial is in Rome, he uses the verb *imputare* to capture the sense that he has yet to live for himself, that in living for others now, he will need to pay himself back. And indeed, in 12.18, now from Spain, he does just that, describing it with the verb *reponere*. 5.58 elaborates on the theme of 5.20. Here Postumus, nominally belated, feels his life to be out of sync with the present; he is unable even to seize the day. Postumus can try to purchase tomorrow but doing so points to his non-ownership of today. 10.58 riffs on Vergil to dream of a day that will, in fact, be "mine." All these passages invoke the rationalization of time in arrangements of borrowing and paying back. The possibility that time might be owned coincides with a realization that the present time is not, in fact, owned by the person experiencing it.

This chapter situates these passages in the wider scope of Martial's interest in time and credit. I argue that Martial models epigrams on the creation of *plus* through credit: because of his habit of speaking from between moments in time and foregrounding the temporal contradictions of his work, Martial suggests *plus* – *usura* or *gratia* – as a formal

model for his work. I begin by surveying the epigrams wherein he mentions various types of credit. I then look closely at a set of epigrams that feed off the temporal disjuncture to which they are subjected before concluding with a qualification of the dream of a time that is possessed entirely by the poet. Two secondary points are drawn out from this discussion. First, I suggest that the alignment of time and lending allows us to qualify the time of Martial's epigrams: rather than belonging to fixed sympotic occasions, knowledge of which is lost through publication in book form, these poems are cast by their author as belonging ideally to any time that is free. Second, accusations of plagiarism by Martial reveal two alternative forms of sharing poetry between individuals. These modes of extended authorship are another way in which the language and form of credit re-emerge in Martial's poetic project.

The Time of Debt

The theme of lending money in Martial's epigrams is caught up with the gift, a central element of the Roman social networks sampled here. In this respect, he owes a conceptual debt to Seneca's elaboration of giving in the *De Beneficiis*, for, as in Seneca, we find a juxtaposition of gift and loan – or debt as variously reciprocation and repayment – that ends up rationalizing gifts or, conversely, sketching the possibility that loans may revert to gifts, with the calculation of interest due dissipating into a more nebulous *obligatio* or *gratia* felt or denied by the recipient of *beneficia*.[224] For Martial as well as

[224] Seneca in *De Beneficiis* dwells on the correct way to give, emphasizing that reciprocation is often impeded by the attitude of the giver.

Seneca, a third figure looms large in thoughts of giving and lending: commercial exchange. We see, in ethical and satirical conversations about the status of objects and sentiments circulating between *amici*, a contestation over time. Typically, time has been characterized as a necessary element of mystification or amelioration that, along with the precise numerical valuation of the commodity, differentiates beneficial from commercial exchange: a gift, or indeed a loan, is an exchange dispersed across different moments in time, whereas buyer and seller complete their transaction and discharge their obligations to each other in an instant. Building on this notion, I argue that in Martial's epigrams time is in fact the primary object. Credit – loans and gifts that take on features of loans – is a relation of power that constrains time. When credit is given or debt taken on, what is confirmed is the ability of one person to extract repayment from another in the future or, in other words, for the creditor to determine the contents of the debtor's time.

As conceptual categories, gift and credit in Martial rely on the distinction between the object that is given or lent – what Seneca, in the case of *beneficia*, calls *materia beneficii*; a physical object in some cases, but also a set of legal privileges afforded by an office, for example – and the social value marked by that object.[225] So, in a strategically idealizing epigram, Martial argues that a gift transcends its perishable form:

callidus effracta nummos fur auferet arca,

[225] Most directly expressed at Seneca, *De Beneficiis* 1.5: *debere enim se ait alius pecuniam*, *quam accepit*, *alius consulatum*, *alius sacerdotium*, *alius prouinciam*. *ista autem sunt meritorum signa*, *non merita*. *non potest beneficium manu tangi*: *res animo geritur*. *multum interest inter materiam beneficii et beneficium*; *itaque nec aurum nec argentum nec quicquam eorum*, *quae pro maximis accipiuntur*, *beneficium est*, *sed ipsa tribuentis uoluntas*, "For one person says he owes the money he has received, another a consulship, another a priesthood, another a province. These, however, are the emblems of favors, not favors themselves. A *beneficium* cannot be touched by the hand: it is born in the soul. There is a great difference between the material dimension of a *beneficium* and the *beneficium* itself; thus, neither gold nor silver nor any of those things which are received *pro maximis* is a *beneficium*. A *beneficium* is rather the intention of the giver."

prosternet patrios impia flamma lares:
debitor usuram pariter sortemque negabit,
non reddet sterilis semina iacta seges,
dispensatorem fallax spoliabit amica,
mercibus extructas obruet unda rates.
extra fortunam est quidquid donatur amicis:
quas dederis, solas semper habebis opes.

A clever thief will carry off your coins from the cracked safe,
unholy flames will lay low your familial estate,
your debtor will repudiate both principal and interest,
a barren field will not return the seeds you sow,
your lying mistress will plunder your steward,
a wave will overturn your ships heaped up with merchandise.
Whatever is given between friends is beyond the ravages of Fortune:
whatever you give, only this wealth will you always have.
(5.42)

Giving involves an exchange of permanent possessions that is tracked by impermanent, destructible things. But indeed, curiously and paradoxically, the ideal gift would dispense with the logic of exchange entirely. To give, in this rather pointed *sententia*, means not to part with a gift but to come to possess it in a more profound way, to have it eternally in common with a friend such as our poet. The ideal gift inaugurates a sort of timelessness; always, *semper*, belongs to no moment in particular. In contrast, with *debitor*, *sors*, and *usura* in line 3, epigram 5.42 puts credit into a list of equally risky ventures. These ventures imply a separation in time in the temporal gap between outlay and expected return, the gap in time inhabited by thieves, insolvents, barren soil, grifting girlfriends, and shipwrecks. The careful use of *amicis* in the penultimate line reveals that gifts can only aspire to be sempiternal wealth in special personal relationships: *amici* are not, it is implied, *debitores*.

In the same book, we hear more about the ethics of giving. In 5.52, Martial never praises the largesse he receives from Postumus because Postumus himself does all the

boasting: *crede mihi*, *quamvis ingentia*, *Postume*, *dona*/ *auctoris pereunt garrulitate sui*, "trust me, Postumus: however grand they are, gifts die from the garrulity of their giver."[226] Epigram 6.30 sees Paetus ruin *gratia* by giving begrudgingly. Martial, who would have felt that he owed two hundred thousand sesterces in recompense for a loan of six thousand, is put off by Paetus' attitude:

> sex sestertia si statim dedisses,
> cum dixti mihi "sume, tolle, dono,"
> deberem tibi, Paete, pro ducentis.
> at nunc cum dederis diu moratus,
> post septem, puto, vel novem Kalendas,
> vis dicam tibi veriora veris?
> sex sestertia, Paete, perdidisti.
>
> If you had given at once six thousand sesterces
> when you told me, "take it, carry it away, I give,"
> I would be indebted to you to the tune of two hundred thousand, Paetus.
> But now, when you have given only after long delaying,
> after seven, I think, or even nine Kalends,
> do you want me to say to you things truer than true?
> You've thrown away six thousand sesterces, Paetus.
> (6.30)

This poem invokes the language of credit in referring to the Kalends when new loans would be issued, a meaning of *Kalendas* made clear at 8.44.11.[227] But rather than plotting the time over which Martial paid back his loan to Paetus, these months demarcate Paetus' reluctance to do anything but flirtatiously promise, as his name *paetus*, "always winking," predicts. Martial, or so he claims, would have owed much more to Paetus than he received, if Paetus had given at once. That is, he would have reciprocated both the

[226] 5.52.7-8.

[227] See the more famous ending of Horace, *Epode* 2.67-70: *haec ubi locutus fenerator Alfius*,/ *iam iam futurus rusticus*,/ *omnem redegit Idibus pecuniam*,/ *quaerit Kalendis ponere*, "…when Alfius the moneylender has said these things, always about to be a farmer, he calls in his cash on the Ides, seeks to put it out on the Kalends."

monetary value of the loan *and* Paetus' *gratia*-producing generosity, were it to have been immediate. The obvious analogy here is with the interest, *usura*, compounding on top of principal, *sors*. Martial thus implicates *beneficium* and *feneratio* by pointing out that each mode of exchange involves the creation of and traffic in *plus*, whether interest that can be extracted or the ethico-emotional component of giving.[228] The phrase in line 6, *veriora veris*, "things that are truer than true things," points to another form of *plus*, epigram's iambo-satirical force as the addendum to true things. Martial appropriates this *plus* to deny Paetus the supplement and original amount of his loan. He thus models the latitude to convert debts into obligation-free gifts.[229]

Elsewhere Martial is more precise about what makes a loan different from a gift. Credit assumes both the ability of the creditor to extract repayment and the ability of the debtor to repay. Without these conditions, there can be no debt: *Sexte*, *nihil debes*, *nil debes*, *Sexte*, *fatemur*./ *debet enim*, *si quis solvere*, *Sexte*, *potest*, "Sextus, you owe nothing, you owe nothing, Sextus, we admit it. For someone owes something if he is able to repay it, Sextus."[230] Debt is as much the condition of repayment as it is what is owed. We find this

[228] See also 5.59, 5.73, and 7.3 where Martial hesitates to send his books to other authors lest he get their books in return; the act of giving takes into account – and seeks to avoid – the obligation attendant upon getting a gift. 8.56 claims that people love Domitian's largesse because of him, rather than loving Domitian because of his largesse.

[229] See also 3.41 where Martial asserts that Telesinus is not a *magnus amicus* for giving a loan; rather, Martial is one for repaying it. The name Telesinus, which appears also in 6.50 and 12.25, suggests *telos*, the end (*finis*) of a loan that is paid off: he is Mr. Fin-ance (and almost certainly not the consular Gaius Luccius Telesinus); cf. Telethusa in 6.71 and Vallat (2008) 545, 570-1 who argues for wordplay with τελέω – both "to pay" and "to finish" – and therefore also a sexual connotation. 8.9 inverts the power relation, urging a friend who is owed money to accept whatever he can as the debtor promises to pay back progressively less and less.

[230] 2.3; repeating the name three times suggests a legal formula. See also 2.13: *et iudex petit et petit patronus*./ *solvas censeo*, *Sexte*, *creditori*, "the judge is asking [for money] and your attorney is asking. I recommend, Sextus, that you pay your creditor."

notion echoed throughout the corpus. In book 6, having purchased an expensive rural property, Martial asks Caecilianus to lend one hundred thousand:

> rustica mercatus multis sum praedia nummis:
> mutua des centum, Caeciliane, rogo.
> nil mihi respondes? tacitum te dicere credo
> "non reddes." ideo, Caeciliane, rogo.
>
> I bought a country property for a lot of cash:
> I ask you, Caecilianus, to give me one hundred thousand sesterces as a loan.
> You say nothing to me in response? I believe that you silently say
> "You will not return it." Yeah, Caecilianus, that's why I'm asking!
> (6.5)

Martial claims in the first line to have already bought the farm with cash down, *mercatus multis...nummis*. With all his liquid assets tied up in this real estate venture, he needs spending cash from Caecilianus. Martial makes insolvency the punchline, an insolvency that Caecilianus can reliably assume despite Martial's ability to purchase *rustica praedia*.[231] There is also the implication that were Caecilianus to give Martial the *mutuum*, it would become a *donum*. Both parties know that money given by Caecilianus to Martial cannot really be a loan.

Martial qualifies the power to extract repayment with interest. Book 9 begins with praise of Domitian's building projects and his renaming of September and October before turning, astonishingly, to a speculative image of Caesar as a moneylender calling in his debts from the Olympian deities:[232]

> quantum iam superis, Caesar, caeloque dedisti

[231] Grewing (1997) 98-9 rightly notes that, however sarcastic the tone of the epigram, it nevertheless captures the financial difficulties of people in Martial's day.

[232] 9.1.3-4 evokes the language of lending: *dum grande famuli nomen asseret Rheni/ Germanicarum magna lux Kalendarum*, "so long as the great light of the Kalends of Germanicus [i.e. September, now called Germanicus] claims for itself the name of the enslaved Rhine…"

si repetas et si creditor esse velis,
grandis in aetherio licet auctio fiat Olympo
coganturque dei vendere quidquid habent,
conturbabit Atlans et non erit uncia tota
decidat tecum qua pater ipse deum.
pro Capitolinis quid enim tibi solvere templis,
quid pro Tarpeiae frondis honore potest?
quid pro culminibus geminis matrona Tonantis?
Pallada praetereo: res agit illa tuas.
quid loquar Alciden Phoebumque piosque Laconas?
addita quid Latio Flavia templa polo?
expectes et sustineas, Auguste, necesse est:
nam tibi quo solvat non habet arca Iovis.

How much you have given already, Caesar, to the gods and heaven –
if you were to call it in and want to be a creditor,
although there would be a huge auction on ethereal Olympus
and the gods be compelled to sell whatever they have,
Atlas will go broke and there will not be a full twelfth
with which the father of the gods himself may settle with you.
What indeed can he pay you for the Capitoline temples,
what for the honor of the Tarpeian wreath?
What can the Matron of the Thunderer pay for her twin roofs?
I pass over Pallas: she handles your financials.
What can I say about Alcides and the dutiful Laconians?
What about the temple of the Flavians added to the Latin sky?
It is necessary, Augustus, for you to wait and restrain yourself:
Jove's safe doesn't have enough to pay you back.
(9.3)

The opening lines of this epigram underscore Domitian's prerogative to turn a gift into a loan, to become a creditor to the immortals. But, as the conclusion points out, the one thing stopping him is the insolvency of the gods, their inability to become debtors instead of mere recipients.[233] Thus, Martial can present himself as an advisor to the *dominus*

[233] See also 11.76 where Paetus makes Martial pay up because another one of his debtors has gone insolvent: *solvere*, *Paete*, *decem tibi me sestertia cogis*,/ *perdiderit quoniam Bucco ducenta tibi*./ *ne noceant*, *oro*, *mihi non mea crimina*: *tu qui*/ *bis centena potes perdere*, *perde decem*, "you compel me, Paetus, to pay you back ten thousand sesterces since Bucco has lost you two hundred thousand. Don't let crimes that are not mine harm me, I beg: you who can lose twice one hundred thousand, lose ten!" Martial would become the solvent debtor in place of the insolvent Bucco.

deusque, giving advice on how he should allocate his efforts in time. A similar thought appears at the end of book 9, where Martial clarifies that forgiving a loan is not the same thing as giving:

> quadringentorum reddis mihi, Phoebe, tabellas:
> centum da potius mutua, Phoebe, mihi.
> quaere alium cui te tam vano munere iactes:
> quod tibi non possum solvere, Phoebe, meum est.
>
> You return to me, Phoebus, promissory notes for four hundred thousand:
> give me instead, Phoebus, a loan of one hundred sesterces.
> Look for someone else to whom you can brag of so empty a gift:
> What I can't repay to you, Phoebus, is mine.[234]
> (9.102)

Phoebus can have no claim of ownership on money that Martial cannot pay back. Again, debt can only exist on the condition of the debtor's solvency. We might suppose then that 9.102 deals with a gift, but Martial denies the possibility that money lent can revert to money given, that a creditor can decide to become a giver after all. Why is this metamorphosis impossible?[235] Elsewhere, as we have seen in 6.5, the epigrammatist does suggest that a loan might become a gift. The use of *tabellae*, here promissory notes, makes the situation in 9.102 and 8.37 different. The formal apparatus of lending at interest marks a power to extract that begins as soon as the loan is granted, before the extraction of repayment with interest begins.[236] Phoebus is hardly just a friend giving a loan, he is a

[234] Compare 2.3: repeating the name three suggests a legal formula.

[235] 8.37 also argues that forgiving a loan in this way is not giving: *quod Caietano reddis*, *Polycharme*, *tabellas*,/ *milia te centum num tribuisse putas*?/ "*debuit haec*" *inquis*. *tibi habe*, *Polycharme*, *tabellas*/ *et Caietano milia crede duo*, "Because you give back to Caietanus his promissory notes, Polycharmus, do you think for that reason that you have bestowed one hundred thousand? 'He owed this much,' you say. Keep the promissory notes for yourself, Polycharmus, and trust Caietanus with two hundred thousand."

[236] On *tabellae* and the institution of credit/debt generally, see Seneca inventing words for Demetrius the Cynic at *De Beneficiis* 7.10.3-4: *video istic diplomata et syngraphas et cautiones*, *vacua habendi simulacra*, *umbracula avaritiae quaedam laborantis*, *per quae decipiat animum inanium opinione gaudentem*; *quid enim*

fenerator or *creditor* with unforgetting ledger books. According to the logic applied paradoxically by Martial, the *mutua quadringentorum* is, properly speaking, neither a loan nor a gift.

The struggle over time and its contents that is at the heart of lending, whether formally with a *creditor* or *fenerator* or informally with an *amicus*, starts even before the approval of a loan. The key terms of these negotiations are *rogare*, *dare*, *praestare*, and *negare*. It is in book 6 that Martial enunciates the dynamics of asking and waiting to receive. Discouraged because Domitian seems to have denied his request for money, the poet is chastised by Athena:

> pauca Iovem nuper cum milia forte rogarem,
> "ille dabit" dixit "qui mihi templa dedit."
> templa quidem dedit ille Iovi, sed milia nobis
> nulla dedit: pudet, ah, pauca rogasse Iovem.
> at quam non tetricus, quam nulla nubilus ira,
> quam placido nostras legerat ore preces!
> talis supplicibus tribuit diademata Dacis
> et Capitolinas itque reditque vias.
> dic precor, o nostri dic conscia virgo Tonantis,
> si negat hoc voltu, quo solet ergo dare?
> sic ego: sic breviter posita mihi Gorgone Pallas:
> "quae nondum data sunt, stulte, negata putas?"
>
> Recently, when I was asking Jove perchance for a thousand,
> he said, "That guy will give it who gave me temples."
> Indeed, that guy gave Jove temples, but a thousand to me
> he did not give: ah, how shameful to have asked Jove for so little.
> But how not stern, how not overclouded by anger,

ista sunt, quid fenus et calendarium et usura, nisi humanae cupiditatis extra naturam quaesita nomina [...] *quid sunt istae* ***tabellae****, quid conputationes et venale tempus et sanguinulentae centesimae*, "I see here documents and contracts and loan guarantees, empty illusions of possession, certain dark corners of a greed that labors to deceive the mind that rejoices in the assessment of empty things; what indeed are those things? What is credit and a ledger and interest if not names sought for human greed from beyond nature? [...] what are those promissory notes, what are financial calculations and time that is for sale and the bloodthirsty one percent monthly interest?" As ever, this passage should not be read without Cassius Dio 62.2.2 in mind, where Seneca suddenly calls in a massive amount of money lent at interest, possibly provoking war in Britain.

with how calm a face did he read my prayers!
In such manner does he bestow diadems on suppliant Dacians
and goes up and down the roads to the Capitol.
Say, I beg, say, oh Maiden, knowing of our Thunderer,
if he *denies* with this face, with which is he then accustomed to *give*?
So says I; so, with her Gorgon quickly set aside, Pallas says:
"Idiot, do you think that what has not yet been given has been denied?"
(6.10)

The epigram speaks with two successive degrees of awareness from the space between asking, *rogare*, and, variously, denying, *negare*, or granting, *dare*. For most of the poem, we assume, along with Martial, that Domitian has denied the request, but Minerva's injunction at the end re-opens the possibility of approval. The calm face of Domitian, which up to line 11 connotes a lack of interest in both small and large political matters, comes at the end to express an unsatisfying lack of closure. A request that seemed completed, to belong to the past, is revealed to be lingering in the present. Martial gets to vent his frustration *breviter* in 6.20:

mutua te centum sestertia, Phoebe, rogavi,
cum mihi dixisses, "exigis ergo nihil?"
inquiris, dubitas, cunctaris meque diebus
teque decem crucias: iam rogo, Phoebe, nega.

I asked you, Phoebus, for a loan of one hundred thousand sesterces
when you had said to me, "So is there nothing you need?"
You run a credit check, you review, you delay, and torture
yourself and me for ten days. Now I'm asking, Phoebus: say no!
(6.20)

What Martial cannot say to Domitian he can say to Phoebus. The request for a loan is replaced by a new request for denial, a clear answer if not in the affirmative. The frustration of waiting on a response or failing to realize a promise crops up elsewhere in

Martial's work.[237] Even applying for a loan takes time away from the poet. Creditors would have a degree of leverage over how Martial lives his life once indebted to them; they would acquire the right to chastise and harass him. But in 2.30, a potential creditor feels entitled to lecture the poet in lieu of giving him a loan. Here Martial asks a wealthy comrade, *fidusque vetusque sodalis*, for a loan of twenty thousand sesterces but only gets career advice: *is mihi* "*dives eris*, *si causas egeris*" *inquit./ quod peto da*, *Gai*: *non peto consilium*, "He says to me, 'you will be rich if you plead cases.' Give me what I'm asking for, Gaius: I'm not asking for counsel."[238] Taking on debt and repaying it with interest form the center of a wider set of power relations that precede the instantiation of credit and debt proper.

Unsurprisingly, there is also an erotic version of these dynamics between giver and recipient, with the same themes and frustrations appearing in the sexual economy that characterizes Martial's poetry as much as networks of patronage. Partly, this involves a play on the meanings of *dare*: both "to give" money for sex and "to give" oneself sexually to a client or other sex partner, "to put out."[239] The gap of indeterminacy between asking and giving or denying also characterizes sexual transactions. Martial chides Galla: *das numquam*, *semper promittis*, *Galla*, *roganti./ si semper fallis*, *iam rogo*, *Galla*, *nega*, "you never put out, you always promise, Galla, when I ask you for sex. If you always lie, now I'm

[237] For promising but not giving, see 5.82, 10.17, and 12.12. For only giving a portion of the requested loan, see 4.76. For Martial having to listen to excuses as to why an *amicus* cannot give, see 2.44 (see also 4.37 on a related theme: Martial complains that his time is unremunerated for listening to Afer rattle off all the money he has lent at interest).

[238] 2.30.5-6.

[239] See, for example, 2.9, 2.49, 2.56, 9.5.

asking, Galla: say no!"[240] As we have seen already, the last words of this epigram are repurposed in 6.20, with *Phoebe* substituted for *Galla*.[241] Martial, speaking again to Galla in 4.38, is more explicit about the erotic potential for delay: *Galla*, *nega*: *satiatur amor nisi gaudia torquent*:/ *sed noli nimium*, *Galla*, *negare diu*, "Galla, say no: desire is satiated if its joys do not torture: but don't, Galla, say no for too long!" Later in the same book, Martial distills a paradoxical principle out of the different degree of assent that girls might demonstrate: *quid ergo*/ *casta facit*? *non dat*, *non tamen illa negat*, "so what does a chaste girl do? She doesn't put out, but, on the other hand, she doesn't say no."[242] If the ideal of chastity is demonstrated by a *puella* who can tantalizingly manipulate the ambiguous space between assent and denial, this ideal is the opposite of the ideal creditor, who would leave no time between request and outlay or denial of credit. The torture of delay is sexual in one set of relations, outrageous in another. This structural similarity draws attention to the intensity with which time makes itself felt in exchanges involving credit.

The claim exerted over a would-be debtor's time is reified in the *pignus*, a security required as collateral for some loans.[243] In book 12, Martial parodies the abstraction at work in this institution, once more criticizing Telesinus:

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[240] 2.25.

[241] In total, the collocation *Gall-* and *neg-* appears six times in the corpus: 1.108.8, 2.25.2, 3.54.2, 4.38.1 and 4.38.2, 10.75.14. See also 8.76 and 10.95 for proximate uses of *Gall-* and *neg-*.

[242] 4.71.5-6. Denying/granting sex forms a leitmotif in book four: see also 4.12 (on the difference between refusing nothing and refusing no one) and 4.81. The theme occurs in other books as well: see, for example, 2.25 and 10.75.

[243] Except for once, the term *pignus* is used in the corpus without its technical meaning: see *Liber spectaculorum* 16.1 (for the fetus of a sow), 4.75.7 (for the love shown by a wealthy, deceased wife earlier in life), 7.17.11 and 9.99.6 (for Martial's books), 7.86.4 (for mutual pledges between *amici*), and 10.73.1 (for a toga; cf. 9.34).

cum rogo te nummos sine pignore, "non habeo" inquis;
idem, si pro me spondet agellus, habes:
quod mihi non credis veteri, Telesine, sodali,
credis coliculis arboribusque meis.
ecce reum Carus te detulit: adsit agellus.
exilio comitem quaeris: agellus eat.

When I ask for coins without security, you say, "I don't have the money";
again, if my little farm becomes the security, you *do* have it:
what you don't lend to me, Telesinus, your old comrade,
you do lend to my young cabbages and my trees.
Lo! Carus[244] has informed against you: let my little farm testify for you.
you want a companion for your exile: let my little farm go with you.
(12.25)

This epigram provides a cynical view of the rearrangement of priorities in personal relationships that are dominated by questions of finances. Telesinus comes to value Martial only insofar as his property stands in for him, and so, according to this logic, he is friends not with Martial but with his property, and, bizarrely, that property will remain as loyal to him as he to it. The fact that the *agellus* functions as a security comes to determine its future actions. The personified *agellus* will be compelled to go to court and into exile with Telesinus, normally duties expected of a friend. The joke illustrates the constraint of time that is exchanged through material proxies in the granting of credit. Moreover, the epigram reveals the pervasiveness of a logic that persists in more or less formalized acts of lending.

The counterpart to a creditor, potential or actual, occupying the time of the debtor with uncertainty and irresolution in advance of a loan is the creditor's claim of possession on goods purchased with credit. Martial again gives us formal and informal examples of

[244] Presumably the infamous *delator* Mettius Carus, in keeping with his reputation; see Pliny, *Letters* 1.5, 7.19, 7.27, Juvenal, *Satires* 1.36, Tacitus, *Agricola* 45. As with the mention of Baebius Massa in the nearby 12.28 (see introduction, footnote 3), there is also wordplay in the choice: *carus* picks up from the sarcastic *veteri*…*sodali*.

competing ownership. Spotting Saufeius and his expensive-looking entourage, the poet snidely points out the financial mechanism on which his wealth depends:

> cinctum togatis post et ante Saufeium,
> quanta reduci Regulus solet turba,
> ad alta tonsum templa cum reum misit,
> Materne, cernis? invidere nolito.
> comitatus iste sit precor tuus numquam.
> hos illi amicos et greges togatorum
> Fuficulenus praestat et Faventinus.
>
> Saufeius, girded by people in togas in front and behind,
> with as big a crowd as Regulus is customarily led home by
> when he has sent a shorn defendant to the lofty temples –
> do you see him, Maternus? Don't be jealous.
> I pray that your entourage is never like *that*.
> These "friends" of that man and his herds of people in togas
> were bought on credit from Fuficulenus and Faventinus.
> (2.74)

The identity of Fuficulenus and Faventinus is made clear by the verb *praestat* in the last line.[245] Their names drop as the other shoe to *Saufeium* in the epigram's opening. Although Saufeius may seem to have acquired his herd through lawyering like Marcus Aquilius Regulus, in fact he owes everything to loans. The personal adjective *tuus* in line 5 is central to the language of credit, a term with a technical meaning as well as a broader, contested thematic in the philosophy of possession and community.[246] Martial hopes that Maternus' *comitatus* will be "yours" in the truest sense, uncompromised by a *fenerator*. Another such adjective forms the punchline of 6.94. Why does Calpetanus only ever eat off

[245] See Williams (2004) 235 for the appearance of the two names in the epigraphical record: "either these were real men known to Martial's readers as moneylenders, or they are fictional names created ad hoc, the context implying their function."

[246] See above on the use of *meum* in 9.102 and *non mea* in 11.76. See also the pseudo-etymology of *mutuum* in Gaius, *Institutiones* 3.90: *mutuum quia...ex meo tuum fit*.

plates inlaid with gold, *chrysendeta*? Has he none of lesser value? No, he has none of his own: *non habet ergo aliud*? *non habet immo suum*.[247] Once more, extravagance conveys a false impression of ownership. The possessions of Calpetanus are owned by and owed to someone else. Just as, in a sexual or social connection, Martial could take up a satirical posture in the space between asking and granting, so too here he skewers Calpetanus and Saufeius for being stuck between using and paying off, having and owning.

In less formal relations of obligation, Martial dramatizes the slow transfiguration of objects as they lose their indebtedness. 9.49 refers to a toga given to the poet by Parthenius and already beloved by his readership:

haec est illa meis multum cantata libellis,
  quam meus edidicit lector amatque togam.
Partheniana fuit quondam, memorabile vatis
  munus: in hac ibam conspiciendus eques,
dum nova, dum nitida fulgebat splendida lana,
  dumque erat auctoris nomine digna sui:
nunc anus et tremulo vix accipienda tribuli,
  quam possis niveam dicere iure tuo.
quid non longa dies, quid non consumitis anni?
  haec toga iam non est Partheniana, mea est.

This is that thing much sung of in *my* little books,
  which *my* reader has learned by heart and loves, a toga.
Once it was Parthenian, the memorable gift of a poet:
  in it I walked about, a knight worthy to be admired,
while it was new, while it gleamed brilliantly with shining wool,
  and while it was worthy of the name of its giver:
now, an old hag and scarcely to be received by a trembling commoner,
  you could, within your rights, call it snowy.
long days, years – what do you not consume?
  Now this toga is not Parthenian, it is *mine*.
    (9.49)

[247] 6.94.4.

Blending the metapoetic trope of woven fabrics with an assertion that Parthenius' once-generous patronage has become threadbare, Martial plays with the etymology of his powerful contact's name: the toga is no longer virginal but an old crone.[248] Throughout the epigram, the poet carefully deploys a succession of personal adjectives. After the assertive "my little books" and "my reader," we hear of an erstwhile alien object that was lodged in Martial's poetry, *Partheniana*…*quondam*. Parthenius' claim on the toga dissipates in a series of reminiscences, and, by line 6, the *auctoris*…*sui* belongs squarely to the past along with the garment's distinguishing glory. Or rather, Martial has become its exclusive *auctor*. The use of *iure tuo* in line 8 anticipates the final point made by Martial acting in his own right. With no more potential for ennobling social distinction, the toga can be fully claimed as *mea*. Although this epigram is not about something bought on credit, the gift in question nevertheless comes with an obligation that is analogous to the degree of ownership held by a creditor. This analogy comes across in the use of personal adjectives.[249]

To sum up, credit in Martial involves a blurring between the categories of *donum*, *mutuum*, and *fenus*. This overlap is seen in the way *usura* is a figure for the *gratia* that attends either *mutua* or *dona*. The primary object of exchange and ownership when credit and debt occur is time. It is for this reason that the epigrams discussed up to this point deal often with frustrations about the uncertainty of time in the present and anxiety about how time will be structured and filled in the future. Credit, which as a theme in Martial's work underscores his fundamental reliance for liquid assets on *amici* with discretion over ready

[248] i.e. Parthenius = παρθένιος.

[249] Compare the use of *mea* in 2.58 and *tuum* in 4.79.

nummi, thus relies on the rationalization and dispossession of time. On the other hand, as is clear from epigram 9.34 on the toga of Parthenius, dispossession must be thought of as a contestable process, traceable sometimes in the material properties of things, and one that may be reversed. Dispossession may become repossession, both of time and tangible things. The key words here, in addition to the verbs that mark the different aspects of obtaining a loan, are the personal adjectives *meus*, *tuus*, and *noster*.

Between Mine and Y(ours)

The dispossession of things in Martial's corpus is a question that goes beyond the epigrams that depict more or less formalized relationships between creditors and debtors. It is, indeed, a question that goes beyond things: Martial also dwells on how the thoughts of people and their symbolic labors become determined and to some extent owned by some other subject. This section expands my analysis of dispossession, beginning with the much-noted accusations of plagiarism that are lobbed by Martial especially in his first book. When Martial uses the word *plagiarius* to attack another poet who has laid claim to his epigrams, he adopts the legal term for someone who fraudulently sells a person into slavery.[250] But as I will show, there is a secondary element in the metaphor: the extension and repayment of credit. Moreover, plagiarism is an illicit appropriation of poetry that has a licit counterpart. Martial also gives us epigrams wherein other people appropriately recite his verse. These legitimate recitations belong to a larger theme of living and indeed

[250] On the historical significance of Martial's use of *plagiarius*, see Seo (2009) and McGill (2012) 74-114. Seo (2009) argues that Martial's reason for foregrounding literary plagiarism derives from the way he aggressively commodifies his work.

being plagued by the thoughts of others. I conclude this section by showing that this mental condition is itself aligned with lending and owing money. It is also through accusations of plagiarism that we begin to see the importance of the verb *praestare* in defining poetic relationships modelled on credit: the gift of time toward hearing or listening to poetry is denoted by this verb.[251]

The dominant metaphor that informs Martial's almost unparalleled claims of literary plagiarism is not credit but the kidnapping of slaves or re-enslavement of free or freed people by people other than their original masters.[252] Epigram 1.52, the first poem in antiquity to deploy the word *plagiarius* in a literary sense, demonstrates that personal adjectives are equally central to legal wrangling over human beings and, by analogy, books:

> commendo tibi, Quintiane, nostros –
> nostros dicere si tamen libellos
> possum, quos recitat tuus poeta –:
> si de servitio gravi queruntur,
> assertor venias satisque praestes,
> et, cum se dominum vocabit ille,
> dicas esse meos manuque missos.
> hoc si terque quaterque clamitaris,
> impones plagiario pudorem.
>
> I entrust to you, Quintianus, my –
> if, however, I can call them my
> little books, which your poet recites –:
> if they complain about their harsh enslavement,
> come as the formal claimant of their freedom and put up enough money,
> and, when that [poet] calls himself their master,
> say that they are *mine* and that they have been manumitted.

[251] Compare a rosier if tortured thought in Pliny, *Letters* 8.21, on going to the recitations of friends: *amat enim qui se sic amari putat*, *ut taedium non pertimescat*; *et alioqui quid praestant sodales*, *si conueniunt uoluptatis suae causa*, "and he who loves himself thus thinks himself loved such that he does not fear boredom; and for the rest, what are your friends giving up if they come together for the sake of their own pleasure?"

[252] The closest parallel is in Pliny, *Letters* 2.10; see Citroni (1975) 175-7, who explains in full the legal procedure alluded to in 1.52.

If you shout this three and four times,
you will put upon [this poet] the shame of a slave-kidnapper.
(1.52)

The plagiarism in question, reciting Martial's poems as one's own, is one of three types of falsification discerned in Martial's corpus by Mira Seo, along with publishing Martial's poems as one's own and falsely – at least, according to the somewhat dubious self-defense of our poet – attributing bilious, politically offensive verse to Martial.[253] Quintianus should act as an *assertor libertatis*, the figure who, in a proceeding to determine the legal status of an individual, will guarantee the freedom of the person under dispute and put up the money – *satis praestare* – to satisfy the would-be new owner. Martial parodies the pronouncements that the litigants would be required to make: the rival poet naming himself as master, the *assertor libertatis* proclaiming *terque quaterque* Martial as the true master and the manumission of the once-servile books. Martial's ability to invoke the legal issue of slave stealing depends on his general emphasis on the uncontrollable circulation of his poems as commodified physical objects. The commercial exchanges through which rival poets can obtain and plagiarize Martial's little books clarify the stakes of the extra-commercial networks through which Martial, in appealing to Quintianus as doubly the patron of himself and the rival, would reclaim his work.

But the theft of slaves is not the only figure lurking in 1.52 and other epigrams about plagiarism, and, as is Martial's tendency, the tenor is imagined through more than one vehicle in this metaphor that inaugurates the concept of literary plagiarism. Martial

[253] Mira Seo (2009) 569. Plagiarism is a theme in the following epigrams (clustering in books 1 and 10): 1.29, 1.38, 1.52, 1.53, 1.63, 1.66, 1.72, 2.20, 7.12, 10.3, 10.5, 10.33, 10.100, 10.102, 11.94, 12.63.

discovers an overlap between *assertio libertatis* and the extension of credit. We can begin to see this overlap in the bivalence of the verb *praestare* which means both to furnish credit and to put up the amount necessary to satisfy the *plagiarius*. Behind Martial's phrase *satis praestes* is the more common *satis dare* or, in a word, *satisdatio*, a term that can also signify the satisfaction of a creditor.[254] Moreover, in epigrams 1.29, 1.38, 1.53, and 1.72, the plagiarist is a person named Fidentinus, clearly a name intended to evoke the concept of *fides*, more precisely the lack thereof in the actions imputed to this persona.[255] *Fides* is a central value in relations of credit, especially in the more encompassing beneficial relationships that characterize networks of *amici*.[256] Plagiarism itself in 1.52 is not cast as a type of credit. Rather, the action of a patron to re-secure correct ownership comes to be reminiscent of either granting or paying off a loan.[257]

With this further dimension in mind, we can now trace the careful use of personal adjectives in 1.52. The first three lines establish a vexed, asymmetrical set of relationships. The books are *nostros* in the opening line, but this *nostros* is repeated in the next line as it is called into question. *Tuus* in line 3 suggests the complicity of Quintianus in the rival poet's

[254] See Citroni (1975) 175 on *satis praestare* = *satis dare*/*satisdatio*. On *satisdatio* as the satisfaction of a creditor, *solutio*, see *D*. 46.3.49.

[255] A point made by Barwick (1958) 308.

[256] See, e.g., Verboven (2002) 40: "[*fides*] expressed both a debtor's solvency and his credibility." See also Richlin (2017) 184-95 for comparable terms in Plautus.

[257] Compare 1.29 where Fidentinus, who, according to rumor, recites *nostros libellos* not otherwise than if they were his own (*non aliter*… *quam*…*tuos*), is told to buy the poems outright to establish a legitimate ownership over them: *si mea vis dici*, *gratis tibi carmina mittam*:/ *si dici tua vis*, *hoc eme*, *ne mea sint*, "if you want them to be called mine, I shall send poems to you for free:/ if you want them to be called yours, pay so that they are no longer mine." The neatness of a commercial transaction contrasts with the debt relation that creates a common ownership; for buying books as an alternative to plagiarism, see also 1.66 and 2.20.

efforts to deprive Martial of *nostros libellos*, as if the poems are, along with the poet, "yours" in the singular and therefore no longer "ours." The suspicion that *nostros* is more than a synonym of *meos* is confirmed with the use of *meos* in line 7. If we take this line too literally, we get Quintianus claiming the poems as his own, his "mine." Whose poems are these? They are at once *nostros*, the common property of Martial and Quintianus, and *meos*, the sole creations of Martial. But by the same logic that would share Martial's poetry between himself and a patron, the plagiarized poems would belong to the rival poet and Quintianus in a bond that excludes Martial. The intrusion of a third party, the rival poet, problematizes the possibility for poetry to have multiple legitimate owners. If Quintianus wants to have the same *nostros libellos* in common with two other poets, he will necessarily have to have them at some point as exclusively his.[258] So, the legal action of Quintianus as *assertor libertatis* would not re-establish the poems as exclusively Martial's but rather exclusively in common between Martial and Quintianus, *nostros libellos*. This common ownership has as its model the dual claim of creditor and debtor on an object: Martial would owe Quintianus a debt for putting up the money, so to speak, to get back his poems, and that debt would be reflected in their joint possession of *libelli*.

Apart from his plagiarism poems, Martial gives us other examples of how recitation involves the embodiment of another person's property. The *causidicus* Pompeius Auctus, a Martial super fan and aug-menter, has memorized the epigrams to such perfection that he could pass as their author. He will provide a more intimate encounter with the text:

[258] 1.63 outlines a similar but more direct scenario: *ut recitem tibi nostra rogas epigrammata*; *nolo*./ *non audire*, *Celer*, *sed recitare cupis*, "you ask me to recite our epigrams for you; I don't want to./ You don't want to hear them, Celer, but to recite them."

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 decima – 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.

If it annoys you, Urbicus, to buy my little jokes
and, nevertheless, you want to know my lascivious verses,
you will seek out Pompeius Auctus – perhaps you even know him;
he sits at the entrance of the temple of Mars Ultor.
Steeped in law and filed smooth in the mottled uses of the toga,
this man is not my reader, Urbicus, but my book;
To such a degree does he possess and recite my absent little books
that not a letter perishes from my pages:
in short, if he wanted to, he could appear to have written them;
but that man prefers to protect my reputation.
From the tenth hour on – before then he will not have sufficient free time –
you may seek out this man, a small dinner will accommodate you two;
that man will read, you should drink; with you unwilling, on he will boom,
and when you have said, "now is enough," that man will read on.
(7.51)

Pompeius Auctus is a book in human form. His multi-purpose legal training recalls the soaking of books with wine or other liquids, *madens*, and the polishing of parchment, *limatus*, that connotes the process of revising poetry as well.[259] But he is not for sale in the way that a book can be bought. Urbicus will have to respect the fact that up to hour ten he is at work, unable to indulge in the evening activities of epigram. Again, the epigram

[259] For literally and figuratively wet books, see, e.g., the *madida papyro* at 3.2.4 and *lascivis madidos iocis libellos* at 4.14.12; for the filing/polishing of books, see, e.g., the *lima* at 10.2.3. See Merli (2010).

carefully deploys the distinction between the personal adjectives *meus* and *noster*. The poems are *nostras nugas* and *nostros libellos*, items amicably distributed between Martial, Urbicus, and Pompeius, while Pompeius himself, the pages of the books, and fame are, respectively, *meus*, *meis*, and *meae*. This arrangement is not to be censured because Martial can enjoy personal fame despite the form of distributed *auctor*-ship. The name Auctus contains other humorous dimensions. Pompeius is not just a hype man for Martial but himself overladen, *auctus*, with Martial's poetry. Hence the punchline: Pompeius, who earlier in the day did not have enough free time, *neque*…*satis*…*vacabit*, now at dinner cannot thunder out enough of Martial – how like an attorney he amplifies! – when Urbicus proclaims *iam satis est*. Although giving them a personal touch, Pompeius is even too much the embodiment of Martial's *nugae*.[260]

Epigram 7.52 finds a variation on a theme that occurs more frequently in Martial outside of the context of poetic production: living with the thoughts of others.[261] In some epigrams, this theme appears as an exhortation to free oneself from economic anxieties produced by the aspirations of other people. So, in 2.53 Martial urges Maximus to ignore wealth and be content in his mediocrity; in this way will be he free, *liber*.[262] A related idea occurs in 2.68, where Martial asserts his own "freedom" from the desires and demands of patrons:

> quod te nomine iam tuo saluto,
> quem regem et dominum prius vocabam,

[260] For another epigram on a poet who will not stop reciting, see Ligurinus – the polar opposite of Horace's indecorously silent *puer* in *Carmina* 4.1 – in 3.44. 7.52 also refers to an Auctus who reads Martial's poems.

[261] I discuss some examples in detail; see also 6.31, 6.58, 7.7, 7.88, 8.11, 9.79, 9.92, 10.92.

[262] e.g. 2.53.10: *liberior Partho vivere rege potes*, "you can live more freely than the king of Parthia."

ne me dixeris esse contumacem:
totis pillea sarcinis redemi.
reges et dominos habere debet
qui se non habet atque concupiscit
quod reges dominique concupiscunt.
servum si potes, Ole, non habere,
et regem potes, Ole, non habere.

Because I now greet you by your name,
you whom I formerly called king and master,
don't you go saying that I am contumacious:
I have bought my freedman's cap with all my possessions.
He ought to have kings and masters
who does not have himself and desires
what kings and masters desire.
If you are able, Olus, to not have a slave,
you are able, Olus, to not have a king.
(2.68)

Martial greets Olus by his own name, *nomine*…*tuo*, a sign that Martial has control over himself, *se habet*, and is no longer obliged to use the honorifics *rex et dominus*.[263] This retrieval of social identity from the prerogatives of someone else is characterized as "buying back," *redemi*. Martial buys his freedom, so to speak, from Olus. The principle arrived at in the second half of the poem zeros in on the way clients come to assume the desires of their *domini*. The verb *concupiscere*, used twice, suggests not only an intense desire but also a desire that is held in common. The desire to have a "slave" – the use of *servum* here is not literal – would seem to be a foreign desire, determined not by Olus but by someone higher up in the social hierarchy, a *dominus* figure.

[263] Cf. 2.18, 2.32 (e.g. 2.32.8: *sit liber*, *dominus qui volet esse meus*, "whoever wants to be my master must be free!"), and 12.40, where Martial assimilates himself perfectly to the actions of his patron; see Damon (1997) 16-7 on *rex* in the context of parasites.

Curiously enough, the name Olus appears again in book 7, attached to a busybody who spends all his time thinking about other people's embarrassing personal lives.[264] Martial, peering into Olus' life like a busy-body himself, urges Olus to think only of himself. Among other things, this Olus gossips about the loans taken out by others:

> septingenta Tito debet Lupus: Ole, quid ad te?
> assem ne dederis crediderisve Lupo.
> illud dissimulas ad te quod pertinet, Ole,
> quodque magis curae convenit esse tuae:
> pro togula debes. hoc ad te pertinet, Ole.
> quadrantem nemo iam tibi credit: et hoc.
>
> Lupus owes Titus seven hundred thousand: what's it to you, Olus?
> Don't give or lend Lupus a dollar then!
> You conceal that which does pertain to you, Olus,
> and what should take up more of *your* concern.
> You owe for your little toga. This pertains to you, Olus.
> No one now lends you twenty-five cents: this also [pertains to you].
> (7.10.7-12)

Epigram 7.10 grounds the rubbernecking of Olus in transactions of consumer credit used to buy clothing. Olus might have good reason to be concerned with Titus' credit worthiness, if he were thinking about lending or even giving Titus money. Martial's answer – if you don't think Titus is credible, don't give him money! – is modelled on the larger command to stay out of other people's business. This model is then paired with Olus' insolvency. Echoing the logic of 2.3, Martial seems to suggest that in not being able to pay for his *togula* – and, concomitantly, in not being able to take out more credit – Olus is somehow insulated from further relationships of credit that would give him a legitimate reason to care about other people, namely his creditors. The outcome of 7.10 would be that

[264] "Olus" also appears in 3.48, 4.36, and 10.54.

in focusing on himself and in paying off the money owed on his clothing, Olus will be able to expose once more his property to the interest, both *cura* and *usura*, of lenders. Martial eagerly takes on a *cura* towards Olus, pointing out all that is embarrassing inside his home, moralizing as a creditor might in turn.

Two panegyric epigrams, 7.7 and 8.11, develop an image of crowds in the amphitheater who are so engaged with envisioning Caesar, absent from Rome in the campaigns against the Chatti, Dacians, and Sarmatians, that they fail to see the games playing out in front of them. The thought of Domitian conquering the races of the far North entrances the people, depriving them of their outward senses:

hiberna quamvis Arctos et rudis Peuce
et ungularum pulsibus calens Hister
fractusque cornu iam ter improbum 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.

Although the wintry bear and wild Peuce
and the Hister, warming at the pounding of hooves,
and the Rhine, shattered with its impudent horn for the third time,
keep you as you master the kingdoms of the deceitful race,
highest ruler of the world and parent of the globe:
still, you are not able to be absent from our prayers.
We are there with our eyes and souls, Caesar,
and to such an extent do you, one man, hold the minds of all
that the crowd of the Circus Maximus does not know
whether Passerinus runs or Tigris.
(7.7)

Domitian holds the attention, *tenes*, of the crowd just as the personified geographical features keep, *tenet*, Domitian away from the capital.[265] By extension, the icy North holds Rome. The *fides* of the Roman people towards their emperor contrasts by implication with the *perfidae gentis*. Thus Domitian's charismatic power is felt even in his absence; he is effectively not absent, *non*...*abesse*. The subjective experience of the crowd, *mentes omnium*, is replaced by that of the singular Domitian, *unus*. We might read line 7 without the comma dividing *sumus* and *Caesar*: "there with our eyes and minds, we are Caesar." Epigrams 7.7 and 8.11 realize to a degree of seamlessness the assimilation of *dominus* and subject, the intrusion of an all-powerful being into lesser minds.[266]

In sum, both the permitted and the illicit recitation of poetry in Martial belong to a larger interest in same the way concerns and poetic labors of others come to occupy the minds of people. What appeared as an issue for inanimate objects in the previous section now includes poetic objects, aspirational or moral thoughts, and political assent. Throughout, whether we are examing the plagiarism of Martial's poetry by rival poets or the shameful finances of Olus, Martial takes up a posture that mirrors the moral authority held over debtors by their creditors or – and the two relations, as we have seen, verge on being the same – over clients by patrons. But just as with the idealizing epigram 5.42,

[265] In 8.11, Domitian has returned to Rome but again we see him dominating the attention of the audience; see 8.11.6-8: *nemo quater missos currere sensit equos*./ *nullum Roma ducem*, *nec te sic*, *Caesar*, *amavit*:/ *te quoque iam non plus*, *ut velit ipsa*, *potest*, "no one perceived that the horses, sent forth four times, were running. Rome has loved no leader as it loves you, Caesar: even you she is not able to love more, although she wants to."

[266] Compare 9.79.7-8 on the once-despised members of the imperial *familia*: *nemo suos – haec est aulae natura potentis* – / *sed domini mores Caesarianus habet*, "no Caesarian [slave/freedman] has his own personality traits – this is the nature of the imperial court – but rather those of the *dominus*."

where Martial spoke of exchanges that lead to wealth being truly communal, we also found in this section the possibility of an unproblematic common ownership. Pompeius Auctus, for all his bloviation, demonstrates an ideal of extended authorship. If someone can imprint Martial's words so deeply into his mind that he supplants the need for a book *and still* attributes fame to our poet, what else do we have hinted at but a model of co-existing subjectivities wherein neither person feels deprived of anything?

Epigram out of Joint

In epigram 7.51, where we meet Pompeius Auctus, there is a disjuncture between Urbicus' desire to experience Martial's epigrams in an extra-commercial setting and Auctus' daytime activities. Epigram belongs to the evening, after the tenth hour. Before that time, Auctus is busy lawyering: *neque enim satis ante vacabit*. Moreover, a second disjuncture between desire and delivery occurs when Urbicus will tell the reciter *iam satis est*, and the reciter will persist in booming out epigrams. Auctus either does not have enough time for Urbicus or has too much time. In this section, I explore further examples of disjunctures in time, instances where desires fail to sync up with the temporal frameworks that govern the lives of the people encountered in Martial's pages. Two familiar dimensions of Martial's poetry are brought together. First, we find, as a constant source of aggravation for Martial, a temporal contradiction in the way the epigrammatist maintains an interface with his patrons: composing a mode of poetry that is essentially for the evening, he must nevertheless trudge through all manner of indignities to meet with *amici* during the morning *salutatio*. Second, we find habits of giving, irksome for the way they demonstrate an insincerity pervasive in social life, that are not directed to the present but to rewards

that will be reaped at some future moment. The irony here is that epigram thrives in these two types of disjuncture, even though it longs for truly free time. Without these disjunctures, as Martial hints in the prose introduction to book 12, written from Spain after his return home and published posthumously, the epigrammatist struggles to write.[267]

The temporal contradiction of epigram, from Martial's perspective, is encapsulated in the fact that the epigrammatist is pressured to become a *salutator*, something to which he is constitutionally averse. Epigrams 1.70 and 1.108 describe the problem and its solution, a book that can go in place of the writer. 1.70, an itinerary poem, directs the book along its journey to the gleaming, lofty house of Proculus.[268] When Proculus will ask why Martial has not come in person, the book is to respond: *quia qualiacumque leguntur/ ista*, *salutator scribere non potuit*, "because, however good those things are that are read, a *salutator* could not have written them."[269] 1.108 uses the same premise to excuse Martial's absence from the *salutatio* of Gallus:

> sed tibi non multum est, unum si praesto togatum:
> multum est hunc unum si mihi, Galle, nego.
> ipse salutabo decima te saepius hora:
> mane tibi pro me dicet "havere" liber. 10

[267] The book 12 *epistula* offers a *patrocinium* for Martial's *contumacissimae trienni desidiae*. Lines 9-21 describe the incentives to write and sources of inspiration that do not exist in Spain; see, e.g., 11-15: *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*, "if indeed there was anything that was pleasing in my little books, the listener dictated it to me: that subtlety of judgement, that discovery of material, libraries, theaters, gatherings – where pleasures do not feel themselves learning; in sum, I desire, as if they had abandoned me, all those things that out of fastidiousness I left behind." For Martial's prose introductions, see Johannsen (2006), Craca (2008).

[268] The route takes the book up to the Palatine from the forum. Proculus' house is described as lofty and somewhat intimidating, with *nitidos lares* (1.70.2), *clari…Penates/ atriaque excelsae…adeunda domus* (1.70.11-12), and with *fastus limenque superbum* (1.70.13).

[269] 1.70.17-18.

But for you it is not worth much if I offer one togate body:
it is worth a lot for me if I deny, Gallus, this one [togate body].
I myself shall greet you often at the tenth hour:
in the morning, my book will say "hello" in my place. 10
(1.108.7-10)

This epigram makes use of the verb *praestare* to signify the gift Martial would make by being present at Gallus' house in the morning, *mane*. Perhaps this offer would mean little to Gallus, but in losing the time Martial would lose a lot. So, the epigram figures attendance as credit. The proximity of *mihi* to *nego* suggests that Martial is denying himself whatever profit would come from the *salutatio*. Martial becomes the creditor who denies himself a sort of interest.[270] We may compare the use of *praestare* in 3.36, where Martial complains that he is too experienced and too loyal a friend to greet Fabianus in person *mane*: *quod novus et nuper factus tibi praestat amicus*,/ *hoc praestare iubes me*, *Fabiane*, *tibi*, "what a new and freshly made *amicus* gives to you, you order me to give to you, Fabianus."[271] In effect, Fabianus demands – *iubere* is the iconic action of the more powerful *amicus* in asymmetrical relations of patronage – that Martial enter into a relation of credit obligation, even after he has proven his worth. The temporal contradiction of epigram, which the book can only dream of solving absolutely, is thus expressed in the language of credit.

The awareness of epigram's ideal place in the day relies on an itemization of time that we find in poems that move through the hours of the day, paralleling the trajectories of

[270] 4.26 crunches the numbers: Martial would get maybe forty or sixty sesterces from the *sportula* but would need to pay more for the requisite *togula*.

[271] 3.36.1-2.

itinerary poems. Already, we have seen references to the *decima hora*. Epigram 4.8 fills out the daily schedule:

prima salutantes atque altera conterit hora
  exercet raucos tertia causidicos,
in quintam varios extendit Roma labors,
  sexta quies lassis, septima finis erit,
sufficit in nonam nitidis octava palaestris,
  imperat extructos frangere nona toros:
hora libellorum decima est, Eupheme, meorum,
  temperat ambrosias cum tua cura dapes
et bonus aetherio laxatur nectare Caesar
  ingentique tenet pocula parca manu.
tunc admitte iocos: gressu timet ire licenti
  ad matutinum nostra Thalia Iovem.

The first and the second hour grind down the callers,
  the third tires out hoarse lawyers,
Rome extends various tasks into the fifth,
  the sixth is rest for the weary, the seventh its end,
from the eight to the ninth suffices for the oily palaestras,
  the ninth orders us to crush heaped-up couches:
the hour of my little books, Euphemus, is the tenth,
  when your care tempers ambrosial feasts
and cheerful Caesar relaxes with ethereal nectar
  and holds small cups in his huge hand.
Then let in the jokes: our Muse fears
  to approach matutinal Jove with a licentious step.
    (4.8)

As Martial adds more hours, the poem moves steadily away from the time of the *salutantes*. By the end, we reach an hour, far from morning, when Caesar will be receptive to *ioci*.[272] Evidently, the first recipient of the poem, Euphemus, has the ability to ensure that it makes its way with others to Domitian.[273] His *cura* will ensure a suitable space for

[272] The same conceit of evening is found in 7.26 (scazons sent to Apollinaris) and 10.20 (to the younger Pliny).

[273] Moreno Soldevila (2006) 138.

epigram's imperial reception. 4.8 gives us a neat, ordered vision of how epigram will fit into a day where everything has its proper time and place. Here is a city where time is entirely rationalized and the evening does not run over into the morning; to make epigrams bridge that gap would risk angering Domitian. In contrast, epigram 8.67 sees Martial in a panic when Caecilianus shows up to hear poetry around the fifth hour. The slaves are still at the baths, the couches are not yet set up, there is no cold water let alone hot, the kitchen remains cold.[274] In the middle of the day, Caecilianus is both too early for dinner and too late for breakfast: *mane veni potius*; *nam cur te quinta moretur*?/ *ut iantes*, *sero*, *Caeciliane*, *venis*, "better to come in the morning; for why does fifth hour keep you waiting? you come too late, Caecilianus, to eat breakfast."[275] Epigram may begrudgingly tolerate the morning *salutatio*, but any other time before the *cena* is unthinkable. The rationalization of time down to the hour makes improper poetic interactions feel even more out of joint.

A crucial part of epigram's reception by patrons is free time that is also devoted to the evening activities that are conducive to *ioci* and *nugae*. So, the verb *vacare* frequently signals the required leisure for listening fully to Martial's work.[276] But the counterpart to free time is time wherein it is impossible for the poet and patron to meet up, either because the patron is totally occupied or because he has no fixed place in time. Thus we get another set of epigrams with a decidely more pessimistic view of time and its contents. Epigram 2.5

[274] 8.67.5-8.

[275] 8.67.9-10.

[276] See, e.g., 4.82, 5.80, 7.29, 7.97, 8.55, 8.82; see also Connors (2000).

complains that although Martial would be ready to spend all his time with Decianus, his slogs to that man's house are often in vain:

ne valeam, si non totis, Deciane, diebus
et tecum totis noctibus esse velim.
sed duo sunt quae nos distinguunt milia passum:
quattuor haec fiunt, cum rediturus eam.
saepe domi non es; cum sis quoque, saepe negaris:
vel tantum causis vel tibi saepe vacas.
te tamen ut videam, duo milia non piget ire;
ut te non videam, quattuor ire piget.

May I be unwell if, Decianus, I would not wish
to be with you for all my days and nights.
But there are two miles that separate us:
these become four, when I go the return journey.
Often you are not at home; even when you are, you deny it:
often you have time only for your cases or for yourself.
Still, so that I can see you, it isn't irksome to go two miles;
it is irksome to go four so that I don't see you.
(2.5)

Decianus – his name gently evokes the *decima hora* – denies Martial his company, often on false pretenses. He presents Martial with an example of someone who does have time for himself, *tibi saepe vacas*. This time for himself comes at Martial's expense, however. Epigrams 5.22, 7.73, and 9.6 offer variations on the same theme. In all of these poems, Martial fails to meet up with his patron.[277] Epigram 7.73 speaks to Maximus, someone with so many residences around the city that it is hard to know where to find him: *quisquis ubique habitat*, *Maxime*, *nusquam habitat*, "whoever lives everywhere, Maximus, lives nowhere."[278] The impossibility of meeting Maximus at a certain place becomes the

[277] See 5.22.4: *rex*, *nisi dormieris*, *non potes esse meus*, "unless you sleep in, you cannot be my patron."

[278] 7.73.6.

impossibility of meeting him at a certain time; Maximus also dwells nowhere in time. All of these epigrams turn a non-delivery of epigram into not inconsiderable epigrams. By contrast, 9.6, which is considerably shorter, has finally had enough:

> dicere de Libycis reduci tibi gentibus, Afer,
> continuis volui quinque diebus "have":
> "non vacat" aut "dormit" dictum est bis terque reverso.
> iam satis est. non vis, Afer, havere? vale.
>
> To say to you, Afer, now returned from the Libyan tribes,
> I have wanted for five continuous days: "hello":
> "He's not free" or "he's asleep" is said to me as I return two times and a third.
> Now is enough. You don't want "hello," Afer? Goodbye.
> (9.6)

Urbicus may long for Pompeius Auctus to stop reciting with a *iam satis est* in 7.51; here Martial really does bring poetry to a close. Poetry thrives in the disjuncture between poet and patron, but only up to a point. Some gaps are not worth keeping open at all, and time runs out for people whose time is out of sync.

Martial employs this same form in epigrams that refer to their true creation at some future moment, dwelling in the present on all the other obligations that get in the way of poetry. Here epigram is always longing for the day when it can write itself without acknowledging that it comes into being precisely in the process of that lament. 11.24 is a good example:

> dum te prosequor et domum reduco,
> aurem dum tibi praesto garrienti,
> et quidquid loqueris facisque laudo,
> quot versus poterant, Labulle, nasci!
> hoc damnum tibi non videtur esse,
> si quod Roma legit, requirit hospes,
> non deridet eques, tenet senator,
> laudat causidicus, poeta carpit,
> propter te perit? hoc, Labulle, verum est?
> hoc quisquam ferat? ut tibi tuorum

sit maior numerus togatulorum,
librorum mihi sit minor meorum?
triginta prope iam diebus una est
nobis pagina vix peracta. sic fit
cum cenare domi poeta non vult.

While I escort you and lead you back home,
while I offer you my ear as you prattle on,
and praise whatever you say and do,
how many verses could have been born, Labullus!
Does this not seem to you to be a loss,
if what Rome reads, a foreigner seeks out,
a knight does not scorn, a senator has by heart,
a lawyer praises, a poet criticizes –
if this perishes because of you? Are you for real, Labullus?
Would anyone endure this? So that the number
of *your* little togate men be greater,
should that of *my* little books be smaller?
Now in almost thirty days there is
barely one page completed by me. So it happens
when a poet does not wish to dine at home.
(11.24)

When will Martial be able to write poetry when he has to attend to the egomania of Labullus? The question itself is worthy of a poem. 11.24 emerges from the very contradiction of epigram enunciated above. Martial's contribution to Labullus' retinue should be his poetry, but being in Labullus' retinue allegedly hinders poems. Yet again, the verb *praestare* refers to what is given by clients. And yet again, the figurative *usura* that comes back from the loan of time is poetry itself. Epigram 10.70 makes a similar claim. Accused of laziness by Potitus, Martial cites the various activities that eat up his day, hour by hour.[279] But this excuse becomes a poem of fourteen lines, detailing quotidian life in Rome from the perspective of an equestrian.

[279] So, e.g., 10.70.8: *nunc me prima sibi*, *nunc sibi quinta rapit*, "now the first hour snatches me for itself, now the fifth."

The corollary to these poems are ones in which Martial refers to the disordering of time in *captatio cenae*, hustling for invitations to dinner, and *captatio testamenti*, showering old people with gifts to get a place in their wills.[280] Indeed, 11.24 specified that Martial attended to Labullus to get a dinner. Epigram 2.14 runs through all the places where Selius attempts to pick up an invitation, including some literary spots in the Campus Martius: *si nihil Europe fecit*, *tunc Saepta petuntur*,/ *si quid Phillyrides praestet et Aesonides*, "if [the porticus of] Europa has done nothing, then the Saepta Julia is sought out [to see if] the sons of Phillyra and Aeson will offer anything."[281] The artworks in the Saepta Julia – of Chiron and Jason, respectively – can offer – again, the key verb is *praestare* – the opportunity to get a dinner. Time is especially out of joint in epigram 11.77 where Vacerra spends all day at the public bathrooms trying to get a meal:

> in omnibus Vacerra quod conclavibus
> consumit horas et die toto sedet,
> cenaturit Vacerra, non cacaturit.
>
> Because Vacerra in all the privies
> consumes the hours and sits all day –
> Vacerra is about to eat, not about to shit.
> (11.77)

Vacerra, our friend "blockhead," has it backwards, going to the restrooms before he has secured a meal. Rather than eating food, he consumes time itself in this fashion, *consumit horas*, eating hours like the courses of a meal. In *captatio cenae* and *captatio testamenti*, the actions taken are not of the moment but in anticipation of some future

[280] I discuss in detail only some of the *captatio cenae* poems; see also 2.27 and 7.86. For *captatio testamenti*, see 2.40, 3.10, 4.30, 4.56, 5.32, 6.62, 6.63, 8.27, 9.88, 10.8, and 11.44.

[281] 2.14.5-6; see Prior (1996) for an immersive study of the places mentioned in this poem.

windfall. They are fundamentally disjointed and therefore analogous not only to other forms of giving and receiving in turn, lending and repaying, but also to the structure of many of the poems in which they are depicted.

Situations where time is out of joint are then productive for epigram, just as the temporal disjuncture brought about in reciprocating a gift or repaying a loan appears in the sub-categories of *captatio cenae* and *captatio testamenti*. Throughout, Martial again demonstrates a fixation on shared time, a longing for time that he can have to himself, and a frustration about patrons who keep their time exclusively to themselves. The sense of time that is apart from people becomes even more pronounced with the rationalization of the day into hours with their proper activities. Moreover, this rationalization allows Martial to point neatly to gaps or disjunctures or the more fundamental contradiction experienced by epigram. Time feels dispossessed because each hour is thought to possess something of its own, a special set of activities. Epigram, at least as Martial engages with it, must face the fact of being claimed by both morning and evening, *cena* and *salutatio*. But in finding ways to idealize this dual claim or in giving voice to frustration about it, epigram nevertheless finds a way to write itself. The *plus* that is created from disjunctures in time comes home to Martial's books.

Conclusion: Julius Martialis

The previous section of this chapter pondered the existence of time and its poetic contents that was at once and un-problematically "mine" and "ours." I noted that epigram thrives in the absence of temporal situations wherein patron and client are not held back

by obligations from their mutual desires. To conclude, I will suggest that Martial can be said to have something like a relation of "cruel optimism" with the fantasy of "his own" or "our own" time, using as a test several epigrams that refer to a figure named Julius Martialis. I take this term from Lauren Berlant, who defines a relation of cruel optimism as one that "exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing."[282] We might describe the instantiation of this type of desire in Martial's epigrams as one that is necessarily impossible. As seen in the *epistula* of book 12, total removal from the frenetic, time consuming, time depriving activity of Rome – which may in the past seemed to have taken away from Martial his ability to write – is in fact that which most effectively destroys his ability to write. Time entirely for himself is creative death, and indeed Martial's return to Spain was a journey towards death. When Martial might have said that he was finally living he was in fact about to die. The sleep boasted about in 12.18 verges on the sleep of death. Credit and debt, however much they connote exploitative, asymmetrical power dynamics, are to some degree redeemed as figures for a necessary social indebtedness, a taking onto one's self of someone else, a vitalizing dispossession.

With this in mind, we can pause at the end to consider the curious Julius Martialis, a *persona* who is not evidenced outside of Martial's epigrams.[283] Martialis – his name may

[282] Berlant (2011) 1; see more generally her introduction (1-16) and 23-28; Berlant (2011) 2 describes an affective structure for optimism: "optimism is cruel when the object/scene that ignites a sense of possibility actually makes it impossible to attain the expansive transformation for which a person or a people risks striving; and, doubly, it is cruel insofar as the very pleasures of being inside a relation have become sustaining regardless of the content of the relation, such that a person or a world finds itself bound to a situation of profound threat that is, at the same time, profoundly confirming."

[283] See Soldevila et al. (2019) 304-5, Balland (2010) 24-6. Lucius Julius Martialis, whether named as Julius or Martialis or Lucius Julius or Julius Martialis, is mentioned in 1.15 (a *carpe diem* poem), 3.5 (Martial, calling himself "Marcus," sends his books to Julius), 4.64 (a description of Julius' suburban villa on Monte Mario and its panoptic view of Rome), 5.20 (Martial longs for days spent in leisure with Martialis), 6.1 (a favorable reception by Julius Martialis of book 6 will help to gain Domitian's favor), 7.17 (Martial's seven books are

come from being born in the same month as our Martialis – appears in epigrams that touch on a variety of themes all having to do with the good life. *Carpe diem* looms large, as seen already in the epigraph from 5.20 above, and the reckoning of time as either one's own or not. For instance, 1.15.5-6 reminds Julius: *non bene distuleris videas quae posse negari*,/ *et solum hoc ducas*, *quod fuit*, *esse tuum*, "not well will you put off what you see can be denied to you, and this alone should you consider as your own – what was." Equally important are literary success and its attendant jealousy and fantasies of what it would be like to live perfectly, without cares. Whether he was a real person or not, Julius Martialis functions as an *alter ego* for Marcus Martialis throughout the epigrams, someone with the same anxieties and fantasies.[284] Thus, Martial can make subtle jokes about their shared name. 3.5.4 states: *Iulius*, *assiduum nomen in ore meo*, "Julius, name constantly on my lips." This line hints that Martial, in saying repeatedly the other key part of Julius' name, would be saying his own *Martialis*. 7.17.9-12 elide Julius and his library:

> at tu munere dedicata[285] parvo
> quae cantaberis orbe nota toto
> pignus pectoris hoc mei tuere,
> Iuli bibliotheca Martialis.
>
> But you, consecrated by a little gift,
> you who will be sung, known throughout the whole world:
> guard this pledge of my affection,
> library of Julius Martialis.

given to Julius Martialis for his library in the aforementioned villa), 9.97 (Martial tells Julius Martialis about an unnamed person who bursts, *rumpit*, with envy at his fame, 10.47 (Martial describes to Julius Martialis his fantasy of the good life), 11.80 (Martial longs for Martialis and Baiae), and 12.34 (Martial looks back at 34 years together with Martialis).

[284] See Craca (2012) for a similar argument.

[285] The manuscripts read *dedicata* or *delicata*; Shackleton Bailey suggests *munerata*, Goold *praedicata*. See Galán Vioque (2002) 141-2 for an overview and citations.

(7.17.9-12)

The phrase *orbe nota toto* picks up the famous *toto notus in orbe Martialis* from 1.2, about which more in the following chapter. Martialis, both Julius and Marcus, will be known through these books alike. 11.80, eight lines addressed to Flaccus and longing for a reunion at Baiae between the two Martials, ends with a delightfully *multiplex* line: *quid gaudiorum est Martialis et Baiae*, "Martial and Baiae – what joys!"[286] Addresses and references to Julius Martialis may indeed be directed at another person, but they have a secondary function of pointing back to the poet himself.

Winking humor is not the only purpose of this overlap in names. Read next to each other, epigrams 5.20 and 12.34 offer diverging views of how close someone should be to his *alter ego*, to a person who feels like himself:

si tecum mihi, care Martialis,
securis liceat frui diebus,
si disponere tempus otiosum
et verae pariter vacare vitae:
nec nos atria nec domos potentum
nec litis tetricas forumque triste
nossemus nec imagines superbas;
sed gestatio, fabulae, libelli,
campus, porticus, umbra, Virgo, thermae,
haec essent loca semper, hi labores.
nunc vivit necuter sibi, bonosque
soles effugere atque abire sentit,
qui nobis pereunt et inputantur.
quisquam vivere cum sciat, moratur?

If for me with you, dear Martialis,
it would be permitted to enjoy carefree days,
if it would be permitted to dispose of our time in leisure
and for both of us to have free time for a true life:

[286] See Kay (1985) 236 on the various attempts to make sense of this epigram, including the old argument of Paley and Stone that Martialis here is in fact the poet.

not the atria and homes of powerful men
nor gloomy lawsuits nor the woeful forum
would we know, nor haughty deathmasks;
but rather riding around, stories, little books,
the field, the portico, shade, Aqua Virgo, baths –
these would always be the places, these the tasks.
Now neither of us lives for himself, and
each perceives good days slip away and depart
which die for us and are charged to our account.
Does anyone, when he knows how to live, delay?
(5.20)

Both Martials know how to live, and yet they delay. The epigram as a whole, in its contrast between knowing how to live a true life and being permitted to live a true life, could be read as a subtle hint to Julius Martialis, who from his ownership of a large suburban villa appears to be quite wealthy, to give Martial enough to empty his life of obligations and live without cares. Yet, the language enfolds the two subjects: in *tecum mihi*, *care Martialis*, the poet could well be talking with himself. 12.34, written from Spain with an air of melancholy, revisits the notion of a friend who is entirely co-extensive with the self. Here Martial the poet urges Julius Martialis to keep part of himself apart:

si vitare velis acerba quaedam
et tristis animi cavere morsus,
nulli te facias nimis sodalem:
gaudebis minus et minus dolebis.

If you wish to avoid certain bitter things
and to be without sadness gnawing the soul,
to no one make yourself overly a friend:
you will rejoice less and also feel less pain.
(12.34.8-11)

The *nimis sodalis* would have to feel his companion's pain and joy as acutely as the friend. Sharing experience entirely overwhelms with pain and happiness. "Our time" would double the intensity of life. Perhaps then, credit and debt – forms of exchange where a part

of “ours” is still just “mine” or “yours” – offer a positive model for social interaction. Perhaps time truly in common with another would be too much for epigram to handle.

lomento rugas uteri quod condere temptas,
  Polla, tibi ventrem, non mihi labra linis.
simpliciter pateat vitium fortasse pusillum:
  quod tegitur, maius creditur esse malum

Because you try to hide your belly wrinkles with beanmeal,
  Polla, you smear your stomach, not my lips.
Perhaps a little blemish should appear openly:
  what is hidden, is believed to be much worse.
    (3.42)

mentiris iuvenem tinctis, Laetine, capillis,
  tam subito corvus, qui modo cycnus eras.
non omnes fallis; scit te Proserpina canum:
  personam capiti detrahet illa tuo.

You feign youth, Laetinus, with dyed hair,
  so suddenly a raven, you who were just now a swan.
You're not fooling everyone; Proserpina knows that you're white:
  she will pull the mask from your head.
    (3.43)

Eutrapelus tonsor dum circuit ora Luperci
  expingitque genas, altera barba subit.

While Eutrapelus the barber circles the face of Lupercus
  and paints his cheeks, another beard springs up.
    (7.83)

Introduction & Argument

This chapter takes up the theatrical mask, *persona*, perhaps the most familiar programmatic device of Roman satire and, more generally, discourses on social interfaces and hypocrisy.[287] It finds a new perspective by locating the tropes of the *persona* not in Martial's few invocations of theatrical masks per se but rather in a heterogeneous category of masking substances that appear more frequently in his epigrams: gold leaf, cosmetic pastes and patches used as depilatories or to conceal wrinkles, scars, and other blemishes, hair dyes and hair pieces, soot and smoky grease clinging to surfaces, and, among still other residues, wax melted with pigments and used for portraits.[288] One of Martial's most distinctive habits is finding unexpected versions of the items comprising the generic baggage for the literary traditions brought together in his corpus.[289] I begin from the assumption that the theatrical mask for Martial is this heterogeneous set of pastes, patches, and paints.

It is not novel or surprising to point out that we find masking and de-masking in Martial's epigrams. My goal with this chapter, therefore, is not to use the concept of the mask to situate Martial in the literary tradition. Rather, I argue that goop – a collective term for all the different residues that cling to things and people – is the material embodiment of

[287] See, e.g., Lucretius 3.57-8; Ovid, *Epistulae ex Ponto* 3.1.43. For an overview of the term, see Bellincioni (1981); on masks in Greek epigram, see Petrides (2009).

[288] Martial uses *persona* to refer to a literal mask in 14.176 (on a *persona germana*); see also the *epistula* to book 2 (where, incidentally, he speaks in the persona of one of his critics): *noli ergo*, *si tibi videtur*, *rem facere ridiculam et in toga saltantis inducere personam*, "so don't, if you mind, do something ridiculous and trot out the figure of a dancer in a toga." See also 11.2.3.

[289] See, e.g., Fitzgerald (2007) 26: "[Martial] alludes to the inscriptional associations [of epigram] through a number of characteristic figures that not only banalize the original but also situate it more specifically in its world: the stigma on a slave's face, or graffiti, for instance."

feelings that might otherwise remain purely virtual: fantasies about ownership, descriptors for consumer objects, aspirations to move up in society, desires to seem youthful or more beautiful or to alter one's appearance for another purpose, efforts to capture the memory of a person or a thing, advertisements that embellish something for sale, and erotic fantasies sustained between *amici*. Goop for Martial is the medium of the virtual, a residue put onto or sometimes under skin and other surfaces that gives these intensities an extension in space – one, we can add, that verges on the immaterial – but nevertheless points to something beyond goop itself. When we encounter goop in Martial's epigrams, we find a category of matter capable of suggesting more than meets the eye, capable of conjuring up something outside of goop. In other words, as with credit, there is an element of surplus, *plus*, to Martial's poetics of goop, which cuts across the three categories of exchange that I have examined up to this point.

As a result of the heterogeneity of goop, this chapter has a different structure and movement from the previous three. Rather than isolating a single rubric, it moves transversely through a jumble of interpersonal exchanges, satirizing postures, meta-literary commentary, and encomiastic expressions, beginning with various forms of false advertising and ending up with portraits. Within this trajectory, I effect a more limited movement, from instances where goop is literally smeared onto things to situations where the smearing of goop can be, I argue, a figure for the attachment of fantasies to bodies. An overriding argument is that the application of goop marks a gesture of authenticity. But Martial responds to these gestures, some of which are his own, in various ways. We find humor at the expense of those whose goopy masks are removed suddenly, a dual revelation both of their risible appearance underneath and of their desire to appear otherwise.

Conversely, we find humor in the onset of a mask, where falsified overlays sink into the object to which they are applied, altering its constitution in social life. There is also, without any satirical force, a more general fascination in the aesthetic experience of residues, whether caused by human or inhuman powers. Finally, but this time with a satirical force, we find encounters with goop itself when goop manifests as *nidor*, the fatty vapor given off by roasting food.

Partly, then, this is a chapter about how Martial construes desire in contexts where people are consuming objects that are acquired in various transactions, and the way that their desires come to be perceptible on the surfaces of objects, even themselves. Or, contexts where people are merely longing to acquire objects through exchanges that themselves have an intrinsic appeal, such as inclusion as a beneficiary or an assertation of spending potential. But also, in moving beyond situations of consumption to consider goop in, for example, the epigrams where Martial uses satire to assert a dominance over marginal, vulnerable figures, this chapter follows through with the logical extension of my argument in the first three. If epigrams that have no obvious thematic concern with commodity exchange, allotment, and credit nevertheless are informed by these exchanges, the same is true for many of the epigrams here: they are informed by Martial's poetics of consumer fantasy and false advertisement.

The Residues of Life

The mask can, broadly speaking, figure one of two things for the satirist. First, *personae* can be seen – as, influentially, in the development of persona theory – as the guises taken upon himself by the satirist, the socially cogent personalities through which

authors in this genre speak against others or themselves.[290] Second, from a different angle, the satirist can be said to rip the deceitful social masks off individuals or, again, himself, revealing the truth of identity beneath. This de-masking scenario can be expressed in analogs to the mask, as is evident from Horace's characterization of Lucilius in the first satire of his second book: *detrahere et pellem*, *nitidus qua quisque per ora/ cederet*, *introrsum turpis*, "[he dared] to pull away the skin in which each person could go about as a gleaming paragon though ugly on the inside."[291] The painful image also points to where the conceptual neatness of this model breaks down: as with skin, what part of a person's social interface, however fallacious, can be ripped away without also removing the ability for their true being to function in society? Surely, there is something authentic in a person's choice of a *persona*, literary or otherwise.

Epigram 3.43, one of the epigraphs to this chapter, readily demonstrates how things such as hair dye are conceived of by Martial as *personae*. Laetinus is old with white hair that he renders black to appear young:

> mentiris iuvenem tinctis, Laetine, capillis,
> tam subito corvus, qui modo cycnus eras.
> non omnes fallis; scit te Proserpina canum:
> personam capiti detrahet illa tuo.
>
> You feign youth, Laetinus, with dyed hair,
> so suddenly a raven, you who were just now a swan.
> You're not fooling everyone; Proserpina knows that you're white:

[290] And therefore, against the *persona* of the satirist and, ultimately, his desire to take on this *persona*; the bibliography on persona theory and its discontents is huge, see, e.g., Goffman (1959), Anderson (1982), Winkler (1993), Braund (1996), Iddeng (2000), Mayer (2003). See especially Richlin (2014) 62-8 on the abuses of persona theory.

[291] Horace, *Satire* 2.1.62-5.

she will pull the mask from your head.[292]
(3.43)

Proserpina, the personification of death, will reveal the truth about Laetinus' age. His feigned youth is like a mask that she will rip off, *detrahet*, incidentally the same verb used by Horace in the passage quoted above; Proserpina works like Lucilius.[293] Laetinus plays two parts in sequence, the swan and the raven. The collocation of *persona* and *caput* have an additional resonance in the context of death. The noun *persona* could simply mean "person," as at 10.33.9-10: *hunc servare modum nostri novere libelli*,/ *parcere personis*, *dicere de vitiis*, "my little books know how to preserve this measure: to spare persons, to speak only of vices."[294] The noun *caput*, meanwhile, could mean "life" or, more precisely, "civic life," an object of legal and political constructions. Proserpina will rip Laetinus' person from this life, depriving him of his social existence. The connotation makes the violence of the final line all the more profound. But it also complicates any neat division between *persona* – that is, a false "mask" with vigorously youthful black hair – and *tuum caput*, the authentic head of Laetinus. In short, which is the true Laetinus: his person/*persona*, the object of *detrahet* that Proserpina will carry off to the underworld, leaving behind his social existence/*caput*? Or is it the unadorned head/*caput* that lurks beneath manufactured mask/*persona*, whose old age will be confirmed by death? The

[292] See also 4.36 on Olus, who can't dye his beard: *cana est barba tibi*, *nigra est coma*, "your beard is white, your hair is black."

[293] Or is the idea that the dead Laetinus' hair will keep growing, with the authentic white hair slowly pushing the part dyed black away from his head?

[294] See also the *epistula* to book 1: *salva infimarum quoque personarum reverentia ludant*, "they make jokes without harming reverence for even insignificant persons."

potential for slippages in meaning here points to the potential for hair dye to capture something authentic about Laetinus. His desire to appear young is as much a part of him as his old age.

Practices of *cultus*, for the details of which Martial functions as a major source of evidence in this period, often have to do with dyes, foams, toupees and pastes. A misogynistic epigram, 2.41, urges Maximina not to laugh lest her three remaining teeth fall out:

> debes non aliter timere risum
> quam ventum Spanius manumque Priscus,
> quam cretata timet Fabulla nimbum,
> cerussata timet Sabella solem.
>
> You ought to fear laughter not otherwise than
> how Spanius fears wind and Priscus a hand,
> how Fabulla, powdered with chalk, fears a rain cloud,
> Sabella, whitened with lead, fears the sun.
> (2.41.9-12)

These individuals, apart from Priscus who is fussy about his clothes, make use of powders, pastes, and toupees to conceal their faults. Spanius fears wind because it would blow off his toupee.[295] The use of chalk paste also appears at 6.93.9-10, from a poem I discuss in more detail in my first chapter: *psilothro viret aut acida late oblita creta / aut tegitur pingui terque quaterque faba*, "[Thais] either gleams green in depilatory, smeared all over with chalk steeped in vinegar, or is covered three and four times over by thick bean paste."[296] There, the punchline implies that Thais' smell is made worse by her attempts to

[295] See also 5.49 (the fringes around Labienus' bald pate make him look like three people), 10.83 (a variation on the same theme), and 12.45 (Phoebus uses a kid's skin as a toupee); compare 6.74.

[296] See also 14.60 (on the use of *faba* for concealing wrinkles while bathing) and 3.74 (on a man who uses depilatories instead of going to the barber; e.g. 3.74.6: *hoc fieri cunno*, *Gargiliane*, *solet*).

conceal it; the masking pastes exacerbate the faults in the person beneath them. Elsewhere, we hear of the Batavian mousse, *spuma Batava*, used to treat hair, as at 8.33.20: *mutat Latias spuma Batava comas*.[297] For Martial, the concealment of bodily defects presumes the application of pastes, powders, treated hairpieces, and foaming dyes. The sudden, mask-like removal of these ornaments or their effects is a consistent source of humor in the epigrams, often cruelly so.

Beyond cosmetics, Martial has numerous instances of residues, figurative or literal, accruing in the process of life. Not least is the iconic cloud of saffron water misted onto crowds at theater shows, mentioned, for example, at 5.25.7-8: *hoc*, *rogo*, *non melius quam rubro pulpita nimbo/ spargere et effuso permaduisse croco*, "is this not, I ask, better than sprinkling platforms with a red cloud and being soaked in effusions of saffron?"[298] The *hoc* in question is possessing the senatorial *census*, picking up from earlier epigrams in book 5 that depict would-be senators and knights driven out of the front seats at events.[299] Book 4 has two adjacent epigrams, 4.2 and 4.3, that describe a sudden snow shower blanketing attendees and Domitian at the circus.[300] 4.2 reverses the shift from white to black in 3.43:

> spectabat modo solus inter omnes
> nigris munus Horatius lacernis,
> cum plebs et minor ordo maximusque
> sancto cum duce candidus sederet.
> toto nix cecidit repente caelo: 5

[297] See also 14.26; cf. 14.58 on *spuma nitri*, aphronitre.

[298] For more saffron, see 8.33.4; cf. 3.65.2 and 11.8.2; 8.33.11 also mentions a date smeared in goop: *hoc linitur sputo lani caryota Kalendis*.

[299] 5.8 and 5.14; see my discussion in chapter 1.

[300] Rosati (2018) explores the innovative technique of 4.3 and its elevation of quotidian enigma; see also Lorenz (2004) on the role of these poems in book 4.

albis spectat Horatius lacernis.

Just now, alone among everyone, Horatius
was watching the games in a black cloak,
when the plebs and greater and lesser orders
along with the sacred leader sat in white.
Snow fell suddenly from every part of the sky:
Horatius watches in a white cloak.
(4.2)

Horatius' cloak has become quite literally *niveus*, snowy, a term used by Martial elsewhere to characterize fresh white garments.[301] The visual effect brought about by this epigram dramatizes the conventional application of a term to a certain type of luxurious garment. In a situation where homogeneity of color marks a grander harmony between ruler and subjects, or at least those lucky enough to be at this spectacle, the residual snowflakes correct, as it were, the deviance of Horatius. Goop here operates as a normative substance, affirming the extent of Domitian's ideological control.

The color contrast between black and white, or dark and light, plays a larger role in the epigrams, especially with skin.[302] Martial has several epigrams featuring dark-skinned people, such as 1.115 on his preference for a black slave girl, an epigram where surface coloration is the choice to make for the consumer.[303] Dyes and snow have a parallel in the effects of sun exposure. Lycoris in 7.13 goes to Tibur because of reports that ivory turns white in the sun there:

[301] See, e.g., the *niveam togam* at 4.34.2.

[302] 1.115.4-5, in explicit contrast to a girl with pale skin: *sed quandam volo nocte nigriorem*,/ *formica*, *pice*, *graculo*, *cicada*, "but instead I want a girl who is darker than night, an ant, pitch, a jackdaw, a cicada"; see Starks (2011) on the racial and racist dimension of the later Greek epigrammatic tradition, which Martial may anticipate here.

[303] See also, e.g., 4.62 (a shorter version of 7.13) and 10.12.

dum Tiburtinis albescere solibus audit
  antiqui dentis fusca Lycoris ebur,
venit in Herculeos colles. quid Tiburis alti
  aura valet! parvo tempore nigra redit.

While dark-skinned Lycoris heard that ivory
  from an old tusk turns white in the sun of Tibur,
she went to the hills of Hercules. How powerful is the
  breeze of lofty Tibur! A little later she came back, black.
    (7.13)

Already dark, Lycoris returns with a deeper tan, transforming from *fusca* to *nigra*.

On a different note, epigrams 1.78 and 11.91 dramatize a sudden change in skin coloration due to – or symptomized by – a horrible *lues*.[304] The black contagion creeps over the face of Festus in 1.78.2: *inque ipsos vultus serperet atra lues*. The young girl Canace meets a similar fate in 11.91.5-8:

tristius est leto leti genus: horrida vultus
  abstulit et tenero sedit in ore lues,
ipsaque crudeles ederunt oscula morbi
  nec data sunt nigris tota labella rogis.

Sadder than her death is the sort of death: a horrible contagion
  took away her face and sat on her tender mouth,
the cruel disease ate up her very kisses
  nor were her lips given intact to the black pyre.
    (11.91.5-8)[305]

This ghastly image recalls the removal of Laetinus' "mask" in epigram 3.43. Here the *lues* rips away the countenance of Canace, *vultus*…*abstulit*. The replacement of her face by

[304] Kay (1985) 255-6 is helpful for both poems and sumarizes the efforts of commentators to identify the disease(s).

[305] The name and the opening words of the epigram, *Aeolides Canace*…, recall Ovid, *Heroides* 11 (Canace to Macareus), an epistle that begins with a memorable version of blotting and smearing: *siqua tamen caecis errabunt scripta lituris,/ oblitus a dominae caede libellus erit*, "and yet if anything I write is made uncertain by obscuring blots, it will be because my little book has been smeared over by the slaughter of its mistress" (11.1-2).

contagion is, oddly enough, analogous to de-masking. In commemorating the deceased young girl, Martial's epigram works both against this de-masking – he recalls her charming face before disease – and with it, voyeuristically indulging us in a horrifying scene. None of these passages dealing with skin involve a literal residue falling on and changing the surface coloration of an object or person. But altogether, they evince a deep interest by the poet in manipulations of surface appearance, whether by human or inhuman agency. These manipulations partake in a broader logic of masking and de-masking.

The blackening of surfaces has a stronger connection to false advertising and embellishing speech in Martial's references to smoke and soot, which form a larger nexus in his Saturnalian project. In epigram 4.5, Martial pokes fun at the naiveté of a *vir bonus et pauper linguaque et pectore verus*.[306] This man will hardly make it in Rome because he is not able to, among other things, "sell smoke": *vendere…vanos circa Palatia fumos*.[307] The precise meaning of the phrase is unclear, but not the general sense of engaging in flattery in the imperial court with the hope of a financial reward.[308] As Barry Baldwin has shown, this idiom seems to have been invented by Martial.[309] But smoke plays a much larger role in Martial's self-fashioning throughout the corpus. It connotes a rustic life without pretension at 2.90.7-8: *me focus et nigros non indignantia fumos/ tecta iuvant*, "a hearth delights me

[306] 4.5.1.

[307] 4.5.7.

[308] The following line refers to paid applause, akin to 7.64.9 (see my discussion of that epigram below): *vendere nec vocem Siculis plausumque theatris*; cf. 10.17 (on empty promises) and 10.72 (on flattery).

[309] Baldwin (1985) comments on possible Greek models and the influence of the phrase; see also Fabbrini (2011).

and roofs not offended by black smoke." That is, smoke belongs at the center of Martial's fantasy of humble, contented *paupertas*. Smokiness is also a typifying quality of the Saturnalia, a term that at 5.30.5 harkens back to Ovid: *sed lege fumoso non aspernanda Decembri/ carmina*, *mittuntur quae tibi mense suo*, "but in smoky December read poems that are sent to you in their own month, not to be scorned."[310] In a murkier light, smokiness is a quality of undesirable wines, especially those from Massilia.[311] Somewhat relatedly, we hear about steaming sausages at 1.41.9-10: *fumantia qui thumatla raucus/ circumfert tepidis cocus popinis*, "the hoarse cook who carries around steaming sausages to the warm shops." The steam coming off the food forms a visual and olfactory corollary to the cries of the street vendor, another advertisement.[312] Smoke tends to connote either products for sale or occasions – the Saturnalia, interactions with potential patrons where flattery could be profitable – wherein exchanges of wealth occur. In the case of Massilian wines, smoke is just part of the brand: these wines are recognizable as such precisely because they are *fumosus*. The flavor of the wine itself is affected by smoke, and knowledge of this fact can be thought of as a smoke-like residue that clings to them as they circulate in markets and other venues of exchange or consumption. Altogether, smoke circles around the contradictory tendencies and temptations that structure Martial's world: commerce, festivals, longing for a simple life, profiteering through poetry that might uncharitably be

[310] Cf. Ovid, *Tristia* 2.1.491: *talia luduntur fumoso mense Decembri*; Citroni (1989) discusses the connection.

[311] See 3.82.23, 10.36.1, 13.123, and 14.118; cf. 12.82.11 and the *caseus fumosus* in 13.32.

[312] Cf. the sulfurous steam of the Aquae Albulae in 1.12.2: *itur ad Herculei gelidas qua Tiburis arces/ canaque sulphureis Albula fumat aquis*, "the road is taken to the cold citadels of Herculean Tibur, where the white Albula steams with sulfurous waters."

termed flattery, and subsisting on low-quality, unpalatable consumer products. The accretion of smoke belongs to a broader interest, found in both skoptic and epideictic epigrams, in surface residues. The cultural poetics of what we would call branding are for Martial a question rather of smoky residues.

A related matter is *nidor*, the steamy, fatty vapor given off by cooking meat. In epigram 7.27, the cost of the seasonings needed to roast a very large boar would paradoxically – one of course suspects hyperbole – drive Martial to bankruptcy. The ten-line poem begins with four lines describing the massive boar resting at Martial's hearth:

> Tuscae glandis aper populator et ilice multa
> iam piger, Aetolae fama secunda ferae,
> quem meus intravit splendenti cuspide Dexter,
> praeda iacet nostris invidiosa focis.
> pinguescant madido laeti nidore penates
> flagret et exciso festa culina iugo.
> sed cocus ingentem piperis consumet acervum,
> addet et arcano mixta Falerna garo:
> ad dominum redeas, noster te non capit ignis,
> conturbator aper: vilius esurio.
>
> A boar, despoiler of the Tuscan acorn and now sluggish
> with many an ilex, a glory second only to the Aetolian beast,
> a boar that my slave Dexter skewered with a gleaming spear
> lies on my hearth, an envy-inducing prize.
> Let my penates grow sleek with wet vapor
> and let my holiday kitchen blaze with a hillside cut down.
> But my cook will consume a huge heap of pepper,
> and he will add Falernian wine mixed with expensive garum:
> Return to your master, my fire cannot hold you,
> bankrupter boar: it's cheaper for me to go hungry.
> (7.27)

The central lines of the poem, which contain the image of *nidor* gleaming on Martial's *penates*, convey a fantasy that collapses in on itself in the remainder of the epigram, a victim to cost. Fantasizing about the roasted boar is akin to only smelling its

nidor. This interpretation finds confirmation in epigram 1.92 where Martial insults Mamurianus, someone who would cause jealousy if he were not too poor. An example of his poverty is that Mamurianus "feeds only on the vapor of the sooty kitchen": *pasceris et nigrae solo nidore culinae*.[313] This phrase is tantamount to saying that Mamurianus has no share in the distribution of wealth occurring at *cenae*, not to mention the formation of social ties. Coming in a list that demonstrates his status as a non-owner of things, it once again casts *nidor* as a figure for mere fantasy, the only taste Mamurianus gets of culinary wealth and social capital.

Martial gives us a few instances of deceptive advertising in its most direct instantiation. Two of these involve *praecones*, both of whom fail comically at making their sale.[314] Warding off the idea that Marius needs to sell his property because of insolvency, a *praeco facetus* in 1.85 shoots himself in the foot:

> "quae ratio est igitur?" "servos ibi perdidit omnes
> et pecus et fructus, non amat inde locum."
> quis faceret pretium nisi qui sua perdere vellet
> omnia? sic Mario noxius haeret ager.
>
> "What then is the reason?" "He lost all his slaves there,
> and his livestock and crops; therefore, he does not love the place."
> Who unless someone who wanted to lose his everything
> would make a bid? So, the noxious farm clings to Marius.
> (1.85.5-8)

Rather than admit that Marius was obliged to sell the farm to pay his bills, the *praeco* invents a lie: the farm had become unpleasant to Marius because of various deaths.

[313] 1.92.9.

[314] See Rauh (1989) for an overview of *praecones*; see also Holleran (2012) 252-5. See Richlin (2017) 134-5 on the *praeco* as a despicable figure who enacts a form of public shaming, a point left underdeveloped by Bond (2016) 21-58, who treats the stigma against *praecones* as an attitude held almost exclusively by elites.

But the lie takes on the unintended efficacy of truth, driving away potential buyers. The words of the *praeco* become a part of the reputation of the farm, which clings to Marius, *haeret*, like a mask or residue that he cannot remove from himself. In the eyes of the audience, it morphs from being a symptom of Marius' money problems to a sterile, unprofitable venture. Similarly, Gellianus, a *praeco* in 6.66, wishes to prove the worth of a slave he is selling, a girl *famae non nimium bonae*.[315] Drawing her near against her will – *attraxit prope se manu negantem*[316] – he kisses her as if to demonstrate her purity:

> et bis terque quarterque basiavit.
> quid profecerit osculo requiris?
> sescentos modo qui dabat negavit.
>
> and he kissed her twice and three and four times over.
> Do you ask what he achieved with his mouth?
> Someone who was about to give six hundred denied it.
> (6.66.7-9)

Gellianus thinks his willingness to kiss the girl will demonstrate her relative purity. But both the potential buyer and the object for sale are repulsed by the mouth of *praeco*, itself more impure than the girl. His contaminating kisses offer an effective analogy for the words of the *praeco* in 1.85. They cling to the girl, altering her value much to everyone's horror. Moreover, as we have seen above, the epic phrase *terque quaterque* is used of Thais smearing herself with bean paste nearby at the end of book 6: *aut tegitur pingui terque quaterque faba*.[317] Gellianus, as it were, smears the girl with what he wrongly thinks will be an advertisement of her value. The verb *attraxit* also reverses the motion of *detrahet* in

[315] 6.66.1.

[316] 6.66.6.

[317] 6.93.10.

3.43.4. Here is an odd sort of mask that pulls itself without consent onto the face beneath it, coating the already-ill reputation of the girl with actual evidence of impurity.

A key verb in Martial's poetics of smearing is *linere*. Epigram 7.39 aligns this action with the theme of an artifice that becomes the truth. Feigning gout, *podagra*, to explain away his absence from *salutationes*, Caelius ends up with, in fact, gout:

> discursus varios vagumque mane
> et fastus et have potentiorum
> cum perferre patique iam negaret,
> coepit fingere Caelius podagram.
> quam dum vult nimis approbare veram
> et sanas linit obligatque plantas
> inceditque gradu laborioso,
> – quantum cura potest et ars doloris! –
> desit fingere Caelius podagram.
>
> Running around all over and mornings on the go,
> the arrogance of powerful men and greeting them –
> because by now he was refusing to endure and suffer these,
> Caelius began to feign gout of the foot.
> While, over eager, he wants to make it real,
> he smears and binds the healthy soles of his feet,
> and walks about with a laborious step,
> – how effective is his attention and technique of pain! –
> Caelius ceased to feign gout of the foot.
> (7.39)

The emphasis in the last line must be placed on the conjunction of *desit* and *fingere*: Caelius has ceased to *feign* the gout because now he really has it. Part of the *cura* and *ars* of his deception is smearing and binding his healthy feet. The act of smearing, which features first before binding and walking laboriously, constitutes a proof, *approbare*, of the disease. The epigram finds its humor in the confirmation of this proof. So, the verb *linit*, appearing immediately after *sanas* and thereby marking the inception of the true gout, begins the

process of a mask sinking into the person beneath it. Absorbed initially through contact with the surface of the skin, the *podagra* makes its way into a reality three lines later.[318]

In 2.29, we see the verb *linere* used to describe the application of *splenia*, patches made from a type of fern.[319] Martial informs Rufus that an unnamed man at the front of the theater of Marcellus is not a legitimate senator or even eques but an *infamis* of some sort:

Rufe, vides illum subsellia prima terentem,
  cuius et hinc lucet sardonychata manus
quaeque Tyron totiens epotavere lacernae
  et toga non tactas vincere iussa nives,
cuius olet toto pinguis coma Marcellano
  et splendent vulso bracchia trita pilo,
non hesterna sedet lunata lingula planta,
  coccina non laesum pingit aluta pedem,
et numerosa linunt stellantem splenia frontem.
  ignoras quid sit? splenia tolle, leges.

Rufus, do you see that man wearing out the lower benches,
  whose hand sparkles in sardonyx, even from here,
along with cloaks that have drunk in so much Tyrian purple,
  and a toga driven to be whiter than virgin snow.
whose oily hair wafts throughout the theater of Marcellus,
  and smooth arms glisten with the hair plucked out.
A new strap sits on his senator shoe, not even a day old,
  scarlet leather paints his un-chafed foot,
and numerous patches smear his starry forehead.
  You don't know what he is? Remove the patches, you will read.
    (2.29)

[318] See also 11.45.5-6, where Cantharus is paranoid about being spied on when sleeping with prostitutes: *oblinitur minimae si qua est suspicio rimae/ punctaque lasciva quae terebrantur acu*, "if there is any suspicion of the smallest crack, it is smeared over, and points that are bored by a lascivious needle"; this concealment ends up in itself suggesting a more scandalous sex act.

[319] See also 10.22 (Martial wears *splenia* on his chin to repell kisses).

More damning than the display of tacky wealth in the first eight lines of the epigram are the *stigmata* or *notae*, tattoos, hiding beneath the patches.[320] The puzzle of the last line – Martial asks Rufus not who but what, *quid*, the man is – turns cosmetic appearance into the object of a social literacy: Rufus will read, *leges*, the truth of this man, something inked into him not unlike letters written on a page or an inscription set into stone. The use of *splenia* marks the culmination in this poem of the man's *cultus*. Their truth value differs, however, insofar as covering up *notae* functions directly to efface his past life, as opposed to the possibly accurate if garish expressions of wealth. The *splenia* more reliably convey truth because they are noticeably a form of deception.

The language of 2.29 involves the reader's senses and sense of distance in the exposé brought about by the poem. The trajectory of perception moves from some place at a distance from the man, as is apparent from *hinc* in line 2, to an imagined proximity where Rufus may picture himself removing the *splenia*. In the course of this movement, we apprehend first the gleam of gaudy gemstones and the superlatively vibrant purple and white of fabric. Then, registering it with a different organ, Martial calls our attention to the scent of hair oil pervading the entire theater. This smell recalls the *nidor* of 1.92.9: just like Mamurianus, Martial and Rufus are stuck, it is implied in the nosebleed section, only smelling the man's wealth. Moreover, if our poet is famously *toto notus in orbe Martialis*,[321] here, throughout the orbit of a round building, *toto*…*Marcellano*, we have someone who is

[320] I follow the argument of Jones (1987) that *stigmata* refer to tattoos inked into the skin with needles, not brands burned into flesh. See especially Jones (1987) 147-50 on the punitive uses of tattooing: the nouveau-riche in question might be a former slave, criminal, or prisoner of war.

[321] 1.1.3.

in the process of becoming *notus*, marked and disfigured, notable for his *notae*. We zero in on the skin of the man's arms, his shoes, his feet: marked but unnamed, he features more as a dehumanized constellation of signs, an anticipation of the starry *stigmata* pock-marking his forehead. Whatever agentive power he might have had in moving up the social hierarchy is surrendered in the penultimate line to the *splenia*. They are the subject of the verb *linunt*, they smear themselves over the tattoos numerously, *numerosa*. This agency of the *splenia* complicates the neatness of their removal in a further way. Even before the last line, the reader has already begun to read the meaning of their application. We do not have to remove the patches to find out *quid sit*.

Splenia are not the only way to conceal the marks of *infamia*, and in 6.64 Martial describes his own iambic spleen as an irreversible mode of branding his targets. An effeminate man dares not only to criticize and emend Martial's poems[322] but also to attack him in verses of his own. The work of the unnamed critic will be damned to obscurity. But Martial, if he chose to name names, could leave a lasting mark:

> audes praeterea, quos nullus noverit, in me
> scribere versiculos miseras et perdere chartas.
> at si quid nostrae tibi bilis inusserit ardor
> vivet et haerebit totaque legetur in orbe
> stigmata nec vafra delebit Cinnamus arte.
>
> you dare, moreover, to write sad little verses against me
> which no one will know, and thus to waste paper.
> But if the heat of my bile tattoos you at all,
> it will live and cling and be read throughout the world
> nor will Cinnamus remove the stigmata with his cunning art.
> (6.64.22-6)

[322] 6.64.6-7.

This passage draws several images we have already encountered into a richly allusive comment. In the exchange of iambic aggression, which Martial suspends in omitting the name of his target, we encounter another echo of *toto notus in orbe* alongside a use of *vivet* that points to the famous Ovidian *vivam*, the last word of the *Metamorphoses*. If Martial did tattoo his critic, it would certainly be an eternal blemish. In this comment, the different meanings of *notus* can be felt neatly together. Martial's fame, his being *notus*, would depend directly on his making someone else *notus*, tattooed in disgrace.

While 6.64 is not about false advertising except in its negation of a hypothetical erasure of *stigmata*, several phrases in it evoke Martial's language of commercial embellishment. The verb *haerebit* takes us back to the unsold farm that clings to Marius in 1.85.8. Coming after the other writer's wasted *chartas* in 6.64, it conjures an image of the iambic *bilis*, a caustic liquid like coagulating blood or the poison of a viper, hence its resemblance to ink: *quid prodest*…/ *si qua Lycambeo sanguine tela madent*,/ *uipereumque uomat nostro sub nomine uirus*, "what does it matter…if any spears drip with the blood of Lycambes, and [someone else] vomits up viper's venom under my name?"[323] So, with the matter of literary aggression in mind, ink set into someone's skin can resemble an adhesive substance: both have a metaphoric relation to writing on paper. Martial's threat to fix his critics with irreversible tattoos is hardly the same action as what the *praeco* in 1.85 inadvertently brings to pass for Marius' farm. But both forms of marking, whether accidental or intentional, partake in the same materialist poetics of reputation and

[323] 7.12.5-7; see also 10.33.5-6: *si viridi tinctos aerugine versus/ forte malus livor dixerit esse meos*, "if perchance evil envy will say that verses dyed by green verdigris are mine."

frustrate attempts to embellish or conceal the truth. Add to this overlap the following lines, 6.64.27-8: *sed miserere tui*, *rabido nec perditus ore/ fumantem nasum uiui temptaueris ursi*, "but have pity on yourself, do not, desperately and with a rabid mouth, tempt the steaming snout of a live bear." The steaming nose of the ursine poet tightens this nexus of imagery. Vapor from nostrils predicts the blackening or coating of the critic were Martial to be provoked fully, adding yet another metaphor for writing to the mix.

More directly telling is the phrase *vafra arte*, referring to the technique used by Cinnamus to remove *stigmata*.[324] This collocation occurs twice in Martial; the other instance refers to an effort by Amoenus to sell a property. He fills a humble *casa* with expensive furniture to enhance its appeal:

> bis quinquagenis domus est tibi milibus empta,
> vendere quam summa vel breviore cupis.
> arte sed emptorem vafra corrumpis, Amoene,
> et casa divitiis ambitiosa latet.
> gemmantes prima fulgent testudine lecti
> et Maurusiaci pondera rara citri;
> argentum atque aurum non simplex Delphica portat;
> stant pueri dominos quos precer esse meos.
> deinde ducenta sonas et ais non esse minoris.
> instructam vili vendis, Amoene, domum.
>
> A house was purchased by you for one hundred thousand,
> which you want to sell, even for a lower sum.
> But you bribe the buyer with a cunning trick, Amoenus,
> and the house lies concealed, canvassing with riches.
> Bejeweled couches gleam with the best tortoise shell
> and the rare weight of Moorish citrus wood;
> a sophisticated Delphic table bears on it both silver and gold;
> boys stand around, whom I would long to be my masters.
> Then you boom out "Two hundred thousand," saying it is not worth less.

[324] See Grewing (1997) 423 for ancient references to this "chirurgischen Eingriff." A person called Eros is said at 10.56.6 to perform a similar technique: *tristia †saxorum† stigmata delet Eros*; see also Jones (1987) 143 for descriptions of tattoo-removal in ancient medical and technical writers.

You are selling an expensively furnished house for cheap, Amoenus. 10
(12.66)

Just as with the *praecones* in 1.85 and 6.66, Amoenus, in trying to make this *locus* more pleasant, ends up revealing just how bad the deal is. The punchline, where Martial facetiously buys into the premise that the price reflects both the house and its furnishings, obliges the reader to subtract all those furnishings from the calculation of value. Without them – although it is hard to get them out of mind; they cling there – the *casa* seems all the more overvalued at two hundred thousand sesterces. The luxuries presented remind us how much more it would cost to make the house as it appears, and therefore how little the purchase price really gets. Looking back to Cinnamus in 6.64, *vafra ars* comes again to connote a concealment that instead reveals. We may rightly wonder if people like Cinnamus and Eros could ever delete the *notae* of former slaves and other reprobates, or if surgical removals would quite literally underscore these tattoos, foregrounding their permanence and the futility of efforts to rise beyond *infamia*. Tattooing, as a type of goop that gets beneath the skin, is therefore the logical extension of an idea found already with Caelius in 7.39.

So far, I have shown that smearing and tattooing form a thematic overlap between Martial's concern with advertising, especially as he reconfigures the attempts of others to re-brand goods and themselves, and the immortality and autonomy of his own poetic brand. Before turning to another overlap in this poetics of goop, one between shaving and painting, I suggest that in a few poems the application of fantasies about provenance to slaves, wool, and flowers can be conceived of as a metaphorical smearing. To set up this reading, I begin with a slight detour through epigram 9.61, a description of a numinous

plane tree planted in Corduba by none other than Julius Caesar. Evidently, this tree occupied the courtyard of a famous house:

> in Tartesiacis domus est notissima terris,
> qua dives placidum Corduba Baetin amat,
> vellera nativo pallent ubi flava metallo
> et linit Hesperium brattea viva pecus.
> aedibus in mediis totos amplexa penates
> stat platanus densis Caesariana comis,
> hospitis invicti posuit quam dextera felix,
> coepit et ex illa crescere virga manu.
>
> In the lands of the Tartessus there is a very well-known house
> where wealthy Corduba loves the peaceful Baetis,
> where fleeces glow tawny with native metal
> and living foil gilds the Hesperian flock.
> In the middle of this house, entirely embracing the penates,
> stands the Caesarian plane tree with its thick branches,
> a tree planted by the fortunate right hand of the unconquered guest;
> from that hand did the shoot begin to grow.
> (9.61.1-8)

The curiously pro-Caesarian epigram goes on to locate the immortality of the *hospes invictus* in the cultic function played by this tree, ending with an assurance: *perpetuos sperare licet tibi frondis honores/ non Pompeianae te posuere manus*, "you may expect eternal honors of the frond, Pompeian hands did not plant you."[325]

The poem participates in making both *domus* and *arbor* very well-known, *notissima*. The phrase *frondis honores* plays on the vegetal imagery that is programmatic for epigram, encomiastic or otherwise. Space is given in Martial's garland to the *arbor Caesariana*, a plant laden with fronds and garlands of its own. The tree grounds conceits of epigram in a Republican *lieu de memoire* adjacent to Martial's home province. The first four lines dwell

[325] 9.61.21-2; see Henriksén (1999) 54-5 on the ideological valence of Julius Caesar under Domitian.

on the tree's surroundings, slowly teasing the real subject of the poem. Lines 3 and 4 set the wooly and metallic wealth of Baetica into a mythical register. Here we find flocks smeared – gilded, almost – with a natural gold leaf; Martial's *laudes Hispaniae* adopt a Vergilian coloring.[326] The coated wool of the flocks visually anticipates the locks of the shaggy tree plane itself, which besotted Fauns, *madidi…Fauni*,[327] soak and strew with wine and roses:

> atque oluere lares comissatore Lyaeo,
> crevit et effuso laetior umbra mero;
> hesternisque rubens †delecta† est herba coronis,
> atque suas potuit dicere nemo rosas.
>
> and the house was fragrant with Lyaeus the reveler
> and the shade grew happier with effusions of wine;
> the grass blushed, trampled down with yesterday's garlands,
> and no one could tell which roses are her own.
> (9.61.15-18)

There was a notion in antiquity that wine would fertilize plane trees.[328] Martial focuses on the coating of altars with fragrant liquid and the rejoicing foliage, by metonymy *umbra*. The word *delecta* in line 17 has confused commentators. I am drawn to Shackleton Bailey's tentative emendation *depicta*: the grass surrounding the tree would be painted or simply adorned with indiscriminate garlands of roses plucked yesterday.[329] Even without this more obvious link back to *linit* in line 4, the description of the cult site formed around the plane tree resembles the earlier images of glowing wool: both moments elaborate an

[326] Cf. Juvenal 12.40-2; the image of colored wool of course harkens back to Vergil, *Eclogue* 4.42-5. See also epigrams 1.96.5, 5.37.7, 12.63.3, 12.64.5 on the wool production of Baetica; see 4.39.6 on Galician gold leaf: *Callaico linuntur auro*.

[327] 9.61.11.

[328] See Pliny, *HN* 12.8.

[329] Shackleton Bailey (1978) 284.

aesthetics of residual matter. The well-known properties of Baetica's commercial wealth – wool from riverine plains flecked with gold from the Sierra Morena – cling also to the reader's perception of this curious proto-Imperial cult site. The action of smearing in 9.61 figures the way Martial marks this house and plane tree at once as a cult inaugurated by *divus* Julius and as distinctively Baetican from a commercial perspective, exemplars of a place where wealth and veneration stick to things.

The wool of Baetica can appear as a non-incidental detail in 9.61, but its glow reflects the qualities of a place. In 8.28, however, we encounter a toga the provenance of which has yet to be fixed. This twenty-two line poems ends with a hint to Parthenius for a new *lacerna* to accompany his original gift:

> dic, toga, facundi gratum mihi munus amici,
> esse velis cuius fama decusque gregis?
> Apula Ledaei tibi floruit herba Phalanthi,
> qua saturat Calabris culta Galaesus aquis?
> an Tartesiacus stabuli nutritor Hiberi
> Baetis in Hesperia te quoque lavit ove?
> an tua multifidum numeravit lana Timavum,
> quem pius astrifero Cyllarus ore bibit?
> te nec Amyclaeo decuit livere veneno
> nec Miletos erat vellere digna tuo.
>
> Tell me, toga, pleasing gift to me of an eloquent friend,
> of whose flock do you wish to be the fame and honor?
> Did the Apulian grass of Ledaean Phalanthus flourish for you
> where the Galaesus soaks cultivated fields with Calabrian waters?
> Or did the Tartessian nourisher of the Iberian stable,
> Baetis, wash you on a Hesperian sheep?
> Or did your wool count Timavus with many clefts,
> the river which dutiful Cyllarus drinks with a starry mouth?
> It did not become you to be livid with the venom of Amyclae
> nor was Miletus worthy of your fleece.
> (8.28.1-10)

The machinations of the rest of the epigram are familiar enough. Four more lines list white things that the toga emulates and outdoes, including ivory whitening in the hills of Tibur. Then, a couplet allows for Parthenius the giver to be whiter still, slyly winking at the virginal connotations of his name. In four more lines, Martial would not be happier with fabled fabrics of myth, such as those embroidered by Semiramis or something spun from the golden fleece itself. Finally, a new *lacerna*, seen along with this *Palatina toga*, would bring great mirth, presumably because of the joy people would feel in Martial's good luck. One grand gesture of 8.28 is the elevation of an object from a quotidian relationship of patronage into landscapes nourished by rivers that are themselves steeped in myth. More intriguing than the gesture itself is its indeterminacy. Martial, speaking to the gift rather than, as with Catullus, to a potential recipient, explores a set of choices without selecting one. That the toga might be "dyed" with its origin – branded or tattooed, so to speak – emerges in lines 9 and 10. Here, Martial dismisses Amyclae in Sparta and Miletus as worthy origins. The phrase "to be livid with Amyclaean dye" is synonymous with being from Amyclae, not to mention oddly evocative of the *venenum* of bilious iambic poetry. Notwithstanding a literary dimension, in 8.28 we find Martial running through a list of "dyes" he could use to color the wool of this toga with an exact provenance. It is telling that in this epigram, the ostensible purpose of which is to hint to Parthenius that Martial could use a new cloak, so much space is granted to pondering the geographical origin of a toga Martial already has.

We find the same process in 9.60, only now the object in question is a garland that seems capable of participating actively in a fiction of origin. Again, the context is an exchange between *amici*, but now Martial is sending the gift to Caesius Sabinus:

seu tu Paestanis genita es seu Tiburis arvis,
  seu rubuit tellus Tuscula flore tuo,
seu Praenestino te vilica legit in horto,
  seu modo Campani gloria ruris eras:
pulchrior ut nostro videare corona Sabino,
  de Nomentano te putet esse meo.

Whether you were born in the fields of Paestum or Tibur,
  or the earth of Tusculum blushed with your flower,
or the bailiff's wife plucked you in a garden of Praeneste,
  or you were just now the glory of a Campanian estate:
so that you seem a more beautiful garland to my Sabinus,
  let him think that you are from my farm in Nomentum.
    (9.60)

The gift of a garland has an obvious meta-epigrammatic resonance, and one suspects that Martial is really sending poems. The theme pairs well with 9.61 on the garlanded plane tree in Corduba.[330] Also revealing is 9.59, which describes Mamurra window shopping in the Saepta Julia, going home with a small purchase that belies his ability to spend large.[331] That epigram is a study in a pure consumer fantasy of the senses: *inspexit molles pueros oculisque comedit*, "he inspected tender boys and devoured them with his eyes."[332] Likewise, *consuluit nares an olerent aera Corinthon*, "he consulted his nostrils [to see] whether the bronzes smelled of Corinth."[333] Coming between 9.59 and 9.61, the *corona* for Sabinus demands to be taken as more than a reference to the exchange of poetry *qua* flowers between friends, although a contrast persists between the crass

[330] Rounding out the set, 9.62 mocks Philaenis for enjoying the smell (and not the color) of clothes dyed with murex, *tinctis murice vestibus* (9.62.1); presumably, she finds it useful for concealing her own body odor.

[331] On the Saepta Julia as an upscale shopping center, see Holleran (2012) 249-52.

[332] 9.59.3.

[333] 9.59.11; on the scent of Corinthian bronzes, see Emanuele (1989) and Linderski (1992).

fantasies of Mamurra and the pleasure Sabinus and Martial feel in variously locating the genesis of epigram in so many gardens. Sabinus will prefer Nomentum, but that does not stop Martial from devoting two thirds of the poem to more luxurious places.[334] The joy of 9.60 derives from a subtle hint that Sabinus' appreciation for the vegetal growth, both literal and figurative, of Martial's lesser estate will be permeated with a pollen-like aesthetic residue, wafted from more conventionally beautiful and expensive fields. Settling on the authentic provenance of the *corona*, to the exclusion of others, is beside the point.

Lurking behind the exchange of poetic garlands in 9.60 is the figure of an exchange of servile bodies, for the subject of *genita es* could, departing from another key trope of *libellus epigrammaton* as *libertus*, be construed as a sex slave, plucked from the farm and given to Sabinus for another sort of pleasure. At least, we can find a similar process of fantasy coming to coat fungible if uncommon servile bodies in 4.42, where Martial paints a picture of his ideal *puer*. The technology of beauty in this epigram immediately recalls that in 8.28 and 9.60:

si quis forte mihi possit praestare roganti,
audi, quem puerum, Flacce, rogare velim.
Niliacis primum puer hic nascatur in oris:
nequitias tellus scit dare nulla magis.
sit nive candidior: namque in Mareotide fusca
pulchrior est quanto rarior iste color.
lumina sideribus certent mollesque flagellent
colla comae: tortas non amo, Flacce, comas.
frons breuis atque modus leviter sit naribus uncis,
Paestanis rubeant aemula labra rosis.
saepe et nolentem cogat nolitque volentem;
liberior domino saepe sit ille suo;
et timeat pueros, excludat saepe puellas:

[334] For Martial's sterile and impoverished farm in Nomentum, see 2.38, 6.43, 7.31, 9.18, 9.54, 10.44, 10.92, 10.94, 12.57.

vir reliquis, uni sit puer ille mihi.
"iam scio, nec fallis: nam me quoque iudice verum est.
talis erat" dices "noster Amazonicus."

If perhaps someone were to give me in asking,
hear, Flaccus, which boy I would wish to ask for.
First, let his boy be born in the Nile delta:
no land knows how to give greater naughtiness.
Let him be whiter than snow: for in dusky Mareotis
that color is all the more beautiful for being rare.
Let his eyes vie with stars, and let his soft tresses
whip his neck: Flaccus, I do not love twisted locks.
Let his forehead be slight, with a slight measure for his aquiline nose,
let his lips blush, emulating the roses of Paestum.
Let him often compel me unwilling and be unwilling when compelled,
let him often be freer than his master;
Let him fear boys and often exclude girls:
to the rest let him be a man, to me alone a boy.
"Now I know, you don't deceive me: for it's true by my judgement also.
Such," you will say, "was my Amazonicus."
(4.42)

The boy in question would rival stars with his eyes, his lips would emulate roses from Paestum. Especially appealing to Martial are unexpected juxtapositions such as pale skin in the sunny climate of the Nile. The poet also disturbingly looks for discordant desire: *saepe et nolentem cogat nolitque volentem*. With the verbs *praestare* and *rogare* in the opening couplet, we are squarely in the realm of gift exchange between *amici*. But the hypothetical object of exchange turns out to be a vector of fantasies that can detach and re-attach themselves to other *pueri delicati*, such as Flaccus' Amazonicus. The quasi-recognition scene in the last couplet shows Flaccus appropriating Martial's wish, with the emphasis on *noster*. Put another way, once the whole poem is read, Martial appears to have appropriated the qualities of Amazonicus into his own fantasy, which then finds its way back to the source. But of course, only partially: the past tense of *erat* implies that Amazonicus is no longer the *puer* he once was. Both Martial and Flaccus will have to locate

these qualities in yet other boys. The form of 4.42 enacts the separation between fantasy and object of fantasy, a gap that will be sutured in the acquisition of new, young sex slaves but will always re-open between *dominus* and other servile bodies aging out of their pederastic appeal.[335] The erotic joy of this poem lies in smearing the bodies with re-usable fantasy, one that can be nurtured independent of individual slaves.

Conclusion: Painting and Shaving

To conclude this chapter, I return to the phrase *vafra ars* to explore another effect of applying goop to surfaces. Martial draws a connection between paints and barbers, whose occupation in Rome, in addition to encompassing more cosmetic and medical operations than today, went with associations of servile status, unrestrained speaking and, naturally, embellishment.[336] In the process of finishing a shave, the barber, *tonsor*, would apply a substance reminiscent of paint. This connection between painting and shaving forms a key part of a larger nexus of imagery that, as we will see, also includes the facial hair that grows up in anticipation of the razor, its growth also compared to the act of painting. In poems where Martial describes paintings either of deceased young men or men at an earlier stage of life, he fixates not so much on the image depicted on the tablet as on the image suggested

[335] See also 7.80.

[336] See Richlin (2017) 247-50 on the barbershop as a place where slaves and others "took time as if free" (247); also, where "free speech is politically charged…a site for gossip…and a place where the satirist goes himself" (249). See also Toner (2015). See Richlin (2017) 249 on the association between barbers and conartists: "the verbs *tondeo*, 'shear,' and (*ad*)*mutilo*, 'clip,' are frequently used elsewhere to mean 'deceive,' 'con'."

by the painting. So, we can find another instance of goop as medium of the virtual in the overlap between painters and barbers. More specifically, the repeated joke of facial hair springing up immediately after being shorn – seen above in one of the epigraphs to this chapter – provides a figure for this mobilization of virtual experience.

The third satire of Horace's first book, which offers something of a model for Martial's epigrammatic persona in the figure of Tigellius the Sardinian *cantor* and which sketches some of the key themes of Martial's poetry, adduces the barber Alfenus in a parody of the Stoic *sapiens*. The wise man is potentially an expert in every area. After Hermogenes, the speaker cites Alfenus:

> ut quamvis tacet Hermogenes cantor tamen atque
> optimus est modulator; ut Alfenus vafer omni
> abiecto instrumento artis clausaque taberna
> tonsor erat, sapiens operis sic optimus omnis
> est opifex solus, sic rex.
>
> As Hermognes, although silent, is still the very best
> singer and musician; as clever Alfenus, even with every
> instrument of his craft thrown aside and his shop closed,
> was a barber, thus the *sapiens* alone is the best craftsman
> of every craft, thus he alone is a king.
> (Horace, *Satires* 1.3.129-33)

This passage is dense, and the noun *tonsor* in line 132 is variously read as *sutor*, "cobbler."[337] But for my purposes, it suffices to show that this brief passage from *Satire* 1.3 influences Martial writing on a barber in epigram 7.64. As with Alfenus, the *tonsor* in Martial cannot escape his occupation. But the point of the epigram differs markedly from

[337] See Gowers (2012) 144-5 for an explanation of the characters involved and the Stoic line of argumentation, and a defense of the reading *tonsor*.

that in Horace. Moreover, we are now able to grasp both its use of Horace and its use of key terms from elsewhere in Martial's corpus:

qui tonsor fueras tota notissimus urbe
et post hoc dominae munere factus eques,
Sicanias urbes Aetnaeaque regna petisti,
Cinname, cum fugeres tristia iura fori.
qua nunc arte graves tolerabis inutilis annos?
quid facit infelix et fugitiva quies?
non rhetor, non grammaticus ludive magister,
non Cynicus, non tu Stoicus esse potes,
vendere nec vocem Siculis plausumque theatris:
quod superest, iterum, Cinname, tonsor eris.

You who had been the most well-known barber in the whole world,
afterwards, made a knight by the gift of your mistress,
you sought Sicilian cities and the kingdoms of Etna,
Cinnamus, when you fled the grim rules of the forum.
By what skill now will you, useless, endure the burdensome years?
What can unhappy and fugitive retirement get for you?
A teacher of rhetoric, a grammarian, a school master,
a Cynic or a Stoic: you cannot be any of these.
nor can you sell your voice and applause to Sicilian theaters.
The option that remains, Cinnamus: you will be a barber once more.[338]
(7.64)

Cinnamus will be no more successful at removing his old career than the Cinnamus whose *vafra ars* could not remove the *stigmata* of Martial's attack in 6.64. Again, the phrase *tota notissimus urbe* cuts two ways: Cinnamus' reputation, arguably the reason for his manumission and elevation to equestrian status, is nevertheless a mark against him in his new life. Failure to conceal his past resonates with another failure at deception: Cinnamus will not be able to sell his voice – *vendere vanos fumos*, in the idiom of epigram 4.5 – in the theaters of Sicily. Martial thus reconfigures the passage from Horace by taking the figure of

[338] Schneider (2001) unpacks the ambiguity of the term *tonsor*, arguing that Martial implies that Cinnamus will become a sheep shearer, *tonsor*, in the provinces.

Alfenus, a model for Cinnamus, out of the context of the argument. Alfenus was someone who remained a *tonsor* even after putting aside that line of work. But – and we should note that Horace is mocking this line of argumentation – Alfenus was supposed to provide an example for the Stoic *sapiens* of someone who could potentially if not actually be anyone or anything. Cinnamus in Martial 7.64, conversely, is just a *vafer tonsor* who can only ever be that. On the other hand, Martial does tease the reader with a list of alternative careers for Cinnamus, the last of which is a Stoic philosopher. Just as in 9.60, where the luxurious gardens came to scent the garland from Nomentum, here we cannot help but take *tonsor* along with the other Sicilian sycophants: even outside of Rome, Cinnamus will continue to fleece people.[339]

The *vafra ars* of barbers forms a larger theme in Martial's epigrams, one that begins to overlap with the art of painting. Epigram 6.52 forms an epitaph for Pantagathus, a servile barber who, if he lived, might have resembled Cinnamus:

hoc iacet in tumulo raptus puerilibus annis
  Pantagathus, domini cura dolorque sui,
vix tangente vagos ferro resecare capillos
  doctus et hirsutas excoluisse genas.
sis licet, ut debes, tellus, placata levisque,
  artificis levior non potes esse manu.

In this tomb he lies, taken in his youth,
  Pantagathus, the care and grief of his master,
skilled at cutting back stray hairs with iron that barely touched
  and polishing shaggy cheeks.
Although, earth, you are peaceful and light, as you should be,
  you cannot be lighter than the hand of the craftsman.
    (6.52)

[339] See 2.17.

Pantagathus' gentle hand outdoes the earth covering his grave. As an *artifex*, his craft resembles the application of paint to surfaces other than skin, even though Pantagathus removes facial hair. In two other epigrams, Martial uses the verb *expingere* to describe the act of a barber. 8.52 praises another young slave barber:

> tonsorem puerum, sed arte talem
> qualis nec Thalamus fuit Neronis,
> Drusorum cui contigere barbae,
> aequandas semel ad genas rogatus
> Rufo, Caediciane, commodavi.
> dum iussus repetit pilos eosdem,
> censura speculi manum regente,
> expingitque cutem facitque longam
> detonsis epaphaeresin capillis,
> barbatus mihi tonsor est reversus.
>
> A barber – a boy, but greater in his skill
> than Nero's Thalamus, to whom
> the beards of the Drusi fell,
> summoned once for levelling the cheeks –
> him, Caedicianus, I lent to Rufus.
> While, under orders, he returns to the same hairs,
> (the censorship of the mirror ruling his hand)
> and he paints up the skin and makes a lengthy
> repeated removal, with the little hairs shorn away,
> my barber is returned to me with a beard.
> (8.52)

The action described by *expingit* most likely refers to the final process of the shave, a cosmetic aftertouch and not an application of something resembling shaving cream in advance of the razor.[340] Therefore, the appearance of *expingit* before *facit longam…epaphaeresin* is part of the joke: Rufus is so hirsute that the boy barber must shave

[340] See Schöffel (2002) 452 for a defense of *expingere* (as opposed to *expungere*) and an explanation: "Wahrscheinlich ist die Übersetzung von *tonsor* mit 'Barbier' zu einseitig, da die aufgeführten Tätigkeiten, darunter eben neben der Frisur, der Depilierung und der Nagelpflege auch die kosmetische Nachbehandlung mit Schminke (dies der Sinn von *expingere*, wenngleich das Präfix auch umfassende Gründlichkeit implizieren kann), mit einem 'Bader' eher zu vereinbaren wären."

him many times in one sitting, starting over and over again – so many times that he himself grows a beard. In a bizarre sort of parallelism that hyperbolically qualifies the passing of time, the *tonsor* as *artifex* paints the skin of Rufus to a point where the *puer* also becomes a potential subject for the *tonsio* and attendant processes. Given the way Martial elsewhere associates the emergence of a first beard with sexual activity, 8.52 seems to contain an erotic connotation. Probably, Rufus and the *puer* are involved in more than shaving. In either case, the use of *talem* and *qualis* in lines 1 and 2 recall the comparison between slaves brought about at the end of epigram 4.42. The *puer* in 8.52 is marked by the reputation established by Thalamus, the imperial *tonsor* par excellence.

But the immediate point is that the act of shaving not only resembles painting but again, in another epigram, Martial fixates on a beard that returns immediately after being shorn, pushing its way up from underneath the canvas of the face, so to speak. Epigram 7.83 is far more succinct: *Eutrapelus tonsor dum circuit ora Luperci/ expingitque genas altera barba subit*, "while Eutrapelus the barber rounds the face of Lupercus and paints his cheeks, another beard springs up." This poem is immediately followed by a longer and somewhat-clichéd piece on Martial's book, a *propempticon* that begins with the application of an author portrait: *dum mea Caecilio formatur imago Secundo/ spirat et arguta picta tabella manu*, "while my image is formed for Caecilius Secundus, and the painted panel breathes under the lively hand."[341] Against this portrait and in an expected ekphrastic maneuver, Martial sets the verbal one in his own poems: *certior in nostro carmine vultus*

[341] 7.84.1-2. The Caecilius Secundus is almost certainly not one of the famous Plinies; see, e.g., Galán Vioque (2002) 455.

erit, "a more certain face will appear in my song."[342] Both 7.83 and 7.84 feature *dum* in their opening line: in each, something emerges from behind an initial process of painting, and the second beard in 7.83 figures the second, more certain image of the poet in 7.84. Moreover, the following lines of 7.84 recall the eternal stigma effected by Martial in 6.64: *casibus hic nullis, nullis delebilis annis/ vivet*, *Apelleum cum morietur opus*, "destroyed by no accidents, by no years, this [face] will live when the work of Apelles will die." The same *vivet* pertains to Martial himself as to the objects of his scorn.

Once more, the conjuncture of shaving and painting appears in epigrams 9.74 and 9.76, another description of a dead youth but this time Martial's *amicus* Camonius Rufus. The painting in question depicts Camonius as a boy, but Camonius would die some time later, and Martial's poems speak from an even more recent time:

> effigiem tantum pueri pictura Camoni
> servat et infantis parva figura manet.
> florantes nulla signavit imagine vultus,
> dum timet ora pius muta videre pater.
>
> Only his boyhood face does the picture of Camonius
> preserve, and the little figure of an infant remains.
> With no image did his dutiful father mark his downy face,
> while he fears to see mute lips.
> (9.74)

So, looming over this painting is the recently bearded and just-deceased young man, the silence of whose likeness in adolescence would have been too veristic for the father to handle. We can imagine – and again Martial conveys the moment with *dum* – an image of

[342] 7.84.6.

the young man hidden in the minds of the father and the poet. Or, indeed, one intimated in Martial's book:

> haec sunt illa mei quae cernitis ora Camoni,
> haec pueri facies primaque forma fuit.
> creverat hic vultus bis denis fortior annis
> gaudebatque suas pingere barba genas,
> et libata semel summos modo purpura cultros
> sparserat. invidit de tribus una soror
> et festinatis incidit stamina pensis
> absentemque patri rettulit urna rogum.
> sed ne sola tamen puerum pictura loquatur,
> haec erit in chartis maior imago meis.
>
> These features which you see are those of my Camonius,
> this was the face and first form of him as a boy.
> The face here had grown stronger in twenty years
> and a beard was rejoicing in painting cheeks truly their own,
> and purplish red, consecrated just once, had just now sprinkled
> the razors' edge. One sister of the three grew envious
> and, with spinning accelerated, she cut the thread,
> and the urn brings back the absent funeral pyre to his father.
> But still, so that a picture alone does not speak of the boy,
> there will be this greater image in my pages.
> (9.76)

In recent memory, shortly before the time of this epigram, Camonius Rufus' first beard was enacting a natural process of painting, *pingere*, sprinkling the ruddy facial hair over the tips of razors. This is the *maior imago* that will endure in Martial's poem, which has the latitude to update the painting of the boy Camonius without bringing grief to his father. The opposition between textual and pictorial image occurs through a duplication of a quasi-recognition scene. So, at the beginning of the poem, Martial uses the phrase *haec sunt illa mei quae cernitis* to match the old painting with recent knowledge of the adolescent Camonius. At the end of the poem, we encounter another *haec*, ostensibly referring to what we have read in the space between the opening and closing lines.

Martial's in-text *imago* of Camonius comprises two successive scenes of, so to speak, painting, first the beard coloring his cheeks and, next, the shorn hairs spattering the razor. But then, we are left with precious little in the way of detail: only that Camonius had just begun to have red hair on his face, that he was literally *rufus*. The greater image of Rufus that is branded into Martial's pages thus depends on the location of Camonius' essence on his cheeks, hence the phrase *suas*…*genas*.

Finally, we find similar dynamics of memory in epigram 10.32, where a painted image of a man in the middle of his life recalls a still earlier stage. As with 8.52, Martial addresses Caedicianus:[343]

haec mihi quae colitur violis pictura rosisque,
  quos referat vultus, Caediciane, rogas?
talis erat Marcus mediis Antonius annis
  Primus: in hoc iuvenem se videt ore senex.
ars utinam mores animumque effingere posset!
  pulchrior in terris nulla tabella foret.

This picture which I cultivate with violets and roses,
  do you ask what face it recalls, Caedicianus?
Such was Marcus Antonius Primus in his middle years:
  in this countenance, the old man see himself as a youth.
Would that art could picture his character and spirit!
  No painting on earth would be more beautiful.
    (10.32)

Indeed, there is something of an ambiguity in assessing the original painting. Martial does not say that it is in fact of Marcus Antonius Primus, but rather that it recalls, *referat*, that man. Perhaps we are dealing with a chance resemblance, mediated by the word *talis*. That is, Martial evokes with this word the pairing of fantasy image and object that we

[343] See also 1.118 and 10.84 for the name Caedicianus.

encountered at 4.42.16: *talis erat…noster Amazonicus*. Set against the longing that visual art could capture the *mores animumque* of a person in paints arrayed on a board is a totally private experience of viewing for Antonius. He sees in the resemblance between painting and his middle-aged self an earlier stage of life, one that becomes present in the *pictura* only as a virtual image. Again, we are left wondering how literally to take the word *iuvenem*: perhaps Antonius simply feels the middle of his life to be like youth in comparison to old age. In either interpretation, the application of paint to board thus results in the emergence of still further images and memories.

The figure of the barber then is variously one that typifies deceptive advertising and false words and one that suggests the act of painting. The overlap between painting and shaving in Martial's corpus clarifies another potential effect of applying goop to surfaces: in looking at paint or facial hair, something more is conjured up in the mind of the viewer, a memory or thought in excess of what is contained on the surface. This logic leads back to the first epigraph of this chapter:

> lomento rugas uteri quod condere temptas,
> Polla, tibi ventrem, non mihi labra linis.
> simpliciter pateat vitium fortasse pusillum:
> quod tegitur, maius creditur esse malum
>
> Because you try to hide your belly wrinkles with beanmeal,
> Polla, you smear your stomach, not my lips.
> Perhaps a little blemish should appear openly:
> what is hidden, is believed to be much worse.
> (3.42)

Even though epigram 3.42 belongs to a completely different register of Martial's poetry than the epigrams that refer to dead boys, barbers, and an old man, it nevertheless anticipates the logic of this second set of poems. Polla's attempt to smear over her wrinkles,

and the perception of beanmeal coating her belly, implies something that is not there, an even worse blemish, *maius*…*malum*. So, just as with the image of Antonius Primus in 10.32, goop can mobilize something more: the memory of another time of life, another beard, another *plus*.

By saying that goop is the medium of the virtual in Martial's poetics of smeared or residual matter, I mean that in goop experiences – memories of dead loved ones or lost time in life, longings to appear otherwise and reverse the ravages of age in a society that routinely mocks the appearance of elderly women – remain virtual. Paint and beanmeal are material, but, paradoxically, they embody feelings that are not actualized, or are only partially actualized. The dynamics of this paradox explain the centrality of exposure to the epigrams discussed in this chapter. As we can see in the poems that deal with unrepresented mental images of the dead young man or the middle-aged man earlier in life, the memory is private, kept apart from common experience. Martial is respectful and considerate in his epigrammatic interactions with the grieving father and aging man. At the same time, the private mental image is somehow also there in the paint that coats the tablet. Goop is a way for people to come face to face with an intensity of desire that is somehow apart from its own physical embodiment. Using the situation of 9.72, 9.74, and 10.32, we can read against Martial's searing cruelty in epigrams such as 3.42 and infer for Polla a self-image, an alternative to her image "on the page," the aging figure that is humiliated in the eyes of the epigrammatist. This self-image is not goop, but our only means for getting at it – for respecting it – is the beanmeal that she smears on her stomach. Even though it is not the beanmeal, the beanmeal is nevertheless its medium. Goop has the power to mobilize virtual experiences, even against Martial's aggressive humor. We now

can validate the private self-image of people such as Polla, objects of Martial's derision, giving to them the same consideration and space to breath, apart from the exposure of representation, that he would perhaps only extend to people such as Marcus Antonius Primus. That is, we can choose to believe that the fact of concealment in 3.42 – the act of applying *lomentum* – is not indicative of *maius malum*.

Conclusion

The specter of property without properties that lurks in things even when feelings of attachment and social bonds and privileges have been deposited in them, the feeling of having something when it is not yet in your hand (and therefore purified of the immediate possibility that it will be destroyed or just consumed and excreted out like everything else), the disjuncture in time brought about by having something in all its richness that is not yet yours or, inversely, feeling the richness of things compromised by a time in the future when ownership will properly occur, encounters with smeared or residual matter wherein feelings still remain virtual: all these are what we find in Martial's poetics of popular consumption. The common thread running through commodity exchange, gift-giving, credit, and advertising in Martial's epigrams is a sort of ontological scission, a split in the ontology of things and people that are subjected to the exchanges that structure his poems. Commodities come to reside in two forms: abstract homogeneity and sensual heterogeneity. Gifts present themselves in advance, as a token that can be grasped firmly, fought over in a crowd. Credit means money now and payment later. Goop allows for seeing something that is not there, that is not even seen. In the end, what takes these scissions out of the mundane world of exploitation is their emergence as poetic forms.

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