Religion and Propriety in Martial's *Epigrams*

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1. Introduction

This dissertation examines Martial's use of religious language and imagery in his poetics of propriety. Martial adheres to principles that there is a proper time, place, and manner for everything, which is analogous to the tendency of the Roman social and religious elite to impose control over the calendar, space and ritual norms. The three chapters will present the major groups of poems which I consider: epigrams about poetry, epigrams about patronage, and invective epigrams. The introduction consists of two parts: the first part is an overview of scholarship about Roman religion and literature with a focus on Martial, while the second part uses the Saturnalia as an example which illustrates the topics of the dissertation in one case study. The first chapter is about the proper way to write poetry. Since Martial had to reckon with potential criticisms that his poetry is obscene and thus detrimental to Roman morality, he uses religion to justify his poetic choices. Just as indecent and illegal things are allowed within the spatial and temporal constraints of festivals of license, so is obscenity allowed to be an integral part of epigram. On the other hand, in books which do not feature obscenity, the notion of religious purification is used as an analogy to justify its absence. The second chapter examines proper communication with patrons and its relationship to communication with the gods. In the first half, I argue that Martial does not depict his patrons as gods and creates a distinction between communicating with gods and patrons. Prayer plays an important role because it gives clients a sense of agency in the relationship. The second half looks at Martial's strategies of communicating with the emperor Domitian. Since the emperor is presented as godlike and the most powerful patron, his status as somewhere between human and divine had to be repeatedly renegotiated. The third chapter examines the way religious language is used in invectives to describe individuals and behavior that Martial considers to be out of order. On the one hand, sacred architecture is used to signal imperial presence in epigrams that mock

parasites and other individuals whose presence in Rome might subvert social order. On the other hand, the language of pollution is used to mock individuals perceived to be sexually deviant or socially unacceptable by the narrator. Overall, there is a sense that Martial uses religion to impose control over his poetic world: his poetry exists in a ritual space within which he is able to exercise complete authority. The language of prayer allows him to construct an ideal patron, and religious imagery and architecture provides a basis for mockery. The only person above Martial's authority is the emperor, and the poet therefore attempts to stay within a religious framework when explaining how the emperor's presence changes his poetry.

1.1 Scholarship Overview

The goal of this dissertation is to learn more about Martial's poetry through its use of religion.[1] This section of the introduction will offer a more general scholarly overview, while each chapter will include an introduction that introduces each topic in more detail. Scholarship on the intersection of Roman religion and literature is generally interested in literary perspectives on religion and the use of literature as a source of religious knowledge, which has led to a particular interest in texts such as Ovid's *Fasti*.[2] This interest has, however, not been exclusive to higher genres concerned mainly with major gods of the state, but has also been extended to lower genres like comedy and satire, this time with an eye to popular religion.[3] In this project, I do not seek to examine Martial's insights into contemporary religion or interrogate his corpus as a source of religious knowledge. Instead, I will be focusing on the role of religion in his programmatic

[1] Major modern introductions to Roman religion are Beard, North and Price 1998, Rüpke 2001 and Scheid 2003. Important scholarly discussions include Ando 2008, Scheid 2015, Rüpke 2016, Rüpke 2018 and Mackey 2022.
[2] For general studies of the intersection between Roman religion and literature see Liebeschuetz 1979, Feeney 1998 and Jenkyns 2013: 193-234. For the *Fasti* see Barchiesi 1997 and Miller 1991.
[3] For comedy see Germany 2019 and Dunsch 2014 and for satire see Miller 2012.

statements and narratives about Roman society. Martial's prose prefaces project an image of an author who wished to have control over the way his text should be read, and his invectives and social critiques sometimes present the poet's voice as a controlling figure.[4] In terms of religion, it has been argued that the main religious authorities, who also happened to be Rome's ruling class, exercised control over the proper time, place, and code of conduct through calendars, temples and other sacred spaces.[5] Especially in the early Principate, the imperial family gained monopoly over the calendar and the sacred landscape of Rome, and the state was brought together under the unifying figure of the godlike emperor.[6]

These developments may have influenced the posturing of Martial's authorial persona. Even though Martial does not adopt the persona of the poet-priest (*vates*) from his Augustan predecessors he nevertheless has religion in mind when he defines his poetry and communicates with his patrons and the emperor. At this point it would be useful to bring in Hans-Friedrich Mueller's treatment of religion in Valerius Maximus. At first glance, anecdotes expounding the virtues of the great men of antiquity appear to be nothing further from the sordid demimonde that populates Martial's epigrams. Mueller's work, however, shows that religion is an important organizing principle in Valerius even though humans are the main subject. Human conduct is always in the foreground, although the gods are always present and observing.[7] Moreover, Valerius' communication with the emperor Tiberius offers important parallels to Martial's communication with Domitian. In his preface, Valerius invokes Tiberius to preside over the beginning of his work, drawing parallels between the emperor and Jupiter, and hints at his

[4] For Martial's prose prefaces see Johannsen 2006 and Borgo 2003.
[5] For elite control over proper religious conduct see Rüpke 2001: 37-45 and Gordon 1990.
[6] For the calendar in the Imperial period see Feeney 2007, and for control of space see Chapter 7 in Rüpke 2018.
[7] Mueller 2002: 9-11.

deification.[8] The language of prayer and the attribution of divine qualities to the emperor anticipate the major role of religion in the work, which is similar to Martial's employment of rituals of license to define his poetry, which I examine in the first chapter. Furthermore, communicating by means of the language of prayer and dedication is not only common for both authors, but is also closer to the average Roman than an elite author who had closer contact with the emperor, such as Horace or Seneca. Although gods do not play a direct role in human lives in Martial in the same way as they do in Valerius, prayer still plays a role in defining proper communication, as I show in my second chapter. Martial may have attempted to be casual in his early addresses to Domitian, but he later became more formal and attempted to make the emperor the center of his poetry.

Within scholarship on Martial, there has long been an interest in religion. In the first half of the 20th century, the main topic of interest was emperor worship during the Flavian period. Franz Sauter offers an overview of the topic in the *Epigrams* and Statius' *Silvae*, aiming to go beyond a formal analysis into a historical investigation of the motifs of imperial praise which go as far back as the Hellenistic period.[9] Kenneth Scott follows with a larger overview of emperor worship under the Flavian dynasty which relies primarily on literary sources.[10] More specific to Martial is Otto Weinreich's study of epigrams about arena spectacles and animals. He argues that the narratives about the influence of Domitian's divine will (*numen*) over animals are meant to be a way of creating popular stories and folk legends about the emperor. Outside of the topic of the emperor, E.E. Burriss attempts to reconstruct Martial's personal religiosity on the basis of the attitudes expressed by the poet's voice in the epigrams. The conclusion is that Martial was "religious in the

[8] Mueller 2002: 11-20.
[9] Sauter 1934.
[10] Scott 1936. Another important contribution to the understanding of emperor worship under the Flavians is Friesen 1993, a study of the imperial cult in Asia Minor.

Roman sense," namely that he worshiped the state gods and domestic cults, having little to no interest in eastern cults and rites.

In the second half of the 20th century, J. P. Sullivan's foundational monograph on Martial continued the discussion of religious discourse in the *Epigrams*. Two important points are his discussion of apologetic poetics and emperor worship. Sullivan shows that festivals of license, such as the Saturnalia and Floralia, are crucial for understanding how Martial defends his poetry. Additionally, he argues that Martial's treatment of the imperial cult reflects Domitian's own propaganda.[11] In the field of Martial's personal religiosity, Ulrike Kaliwoda attempted to analyze his statements about the gods and their involvement in human lives in order to gain an insight into his attitudes about religion and how they relate to his apparent Epicurean affinities.[12] In more recent years, Alison Keith continues the trend of bringing together Martial's philosophical and religious posturing, especially his Epicureanism and his use of social and religious ritual.[13] My dissertation contributes to this recent development of interest in religion in Martial by trying to elucidate his poetics through religion. In the following section, I will use the Saturnalia as a short case study which demonstrates how Martial uses a religious framework when approaching programmatic statements, imperial praise and social commentary.

1.2 Martial and Saturnalian Poetics

The festival most often associated with Martial's poetry is the Saturnalia. This festival, with its jovial nature, gift-giving, and potential for subversion, has become a shorthand for

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[11] For Martial's apologetics see Sullivan 1991: 64-72, and for the imperial cult see 137-145, as well as the more extensive treatment of Domitianic propaganda in Martial and Statius in Leberl 2004.
[12] Kaliwoda 1998.
[13] Keith 2023 and Keith 2021. For Martial's Epicureanism more broadly see Keith 2018 and Adamik 1975. For social and religious ritual in Martial see also Neger 2023.

Martial's poetry, and the well-known line *clamant ecce mei 'Io Saturnalia' versus* (11.2.5) echoes through many scholarly works discussing this subject.[14] The Saturnalia was originally celebrated on December 17, but the festivities were extended to five days by Martial's time.[15] It is believed to have originally been connected with agriculture due to its proximity to other festive days of a similar nature.[16] The most conspicuous aspects of the festival, however, were the temporary dissolution of social order and exchange of gifts. Slaves gained temporary freedom and were exempt from punishment, gambling was legal and the toga was exchanged for the more comfortable *synthesis*. In the literary sphere, especially in imperial Latin poetry, the Saturnalia gave authors the opportunity to challenge traditional norms in different ways, either by pushing the boundaries of social criticism or by literary experiments which test their creative freedom.[17] The world of epigram, with its tendency towards paradox and juxtaposition, fits well into this carnivalesque atmosphere. For Martial, the Saturnalia presents an inversion of both social and literary order and his Saturnalian books explore the place of epigram in literature and society. From the standpoint of literary *apologiae*, the Saturnalia is important because it is a period of time during which things that are otherwise forbidden become allowed, which provides a fitting parallel for epigram. This section will begin by focusing on the apologetic poetics of the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, and the importance of the analogy between festival time and the time for epigram. This will be followed by some observations on Saturnalian and golden age imagery in Book 11,

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[14] The key discussions of Martial's Saturnalian poetics are Citroni 1989; Sullivan 1991: 66-69; Lorenz 2002: 85-87; Rimell 2008: 140-180; Grewing 2010.

[15] Evidence for five days in Martial: 4.88.2; 7.53.2; 14.79.2; 14.142.1. For a full list of ancient sources on the Saturnalia see Leary 2001: 5 and Leary 1996: 2.

[16] For a full discussion of the origins of the Saturnalia see Versnel 1993: 136-227 and Graf 1992. According to Versnel, since the Saturnalia is between the Consualia (December 15) and Opalia (December 19) the festival represents the opening of the wheat stored underground after harvesting, as well as all the risks and anxieties associated with it. The opening of the storage, the temporary liberation of slaves and the "unfettering" of the cult statue of Saturn all reflect the nature of the Saturnalia as a festival of crisis.

[17] Bernstein 1978.

as well as the use of the end of the Saturnalia and the return to order as a closural device. Finally, I will compare the use of the Saturnalia as a setting for poetic activity in Horace and Martial. This comparison will help tease out some further considerations on the role of dialogue and the audience from the lens of religious festivals, which will lead into the main discussion of the role of festal license in Chapter 1.

Although the December festival is best known for its major role in Book 11 and its highly licentious nature, Martial had been writing poetry with Saturnalian themes since the early stages of his poetic career. Before the numbered books, Martial wrote the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, two collections of snappy elegiac couplets which were meant to accompany Saturnalian gifts.[18] Many of his other books (4, 5, 7, 10, 11) were also published in December on the occasion of the festival.[19] The idea that the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* are appropriate as Saturnalian books may be traced back to Ovid's account of poetry customarily written for the Saturnalia in *Tristia* 2. These were technical treatises and didactic poems concerning various games with dice, sports and dining. For Ovid, this poetry of December was an example of literature which would generally be considered indecent, but the context of the festival makes it harmless and its author blameless (491-492 "such are the jokes in smoky December, whose composition brought harm to no one," *talia luduntur fumoso mense Decembri, / quae damno nulli composuisse fuit*). Ovid's account of this kind of poetry provides a model for using festal license as an analogy for poetic freedom, which will be adopted and expanded by Martial. The use of *luduntur* can be seen as anticipating Martial's fashioning of his poetry as playful. He also hints at this passage of Ovid in Book 5 when

[18] The two collections were published between 83 and 85. For a general overview of Martial's early poetry see Leary 1998 and Leary 2019.
[19] For the connection between the Saturnalian theme and the chronology of book publications see Citroni 1989: 214-216. I follow Kathleen Coleman's chronology of the publication of Martial's books, which is the most recent refinement of Friedländer's fundamental chronology (Coleman 2006: xxvii; Friedländer 1886: 50-67).

he sends his epigrams to a poet named Varro.[20] Martial asks Varro not to busy himself with more elevated genres like tragedy, lyric or elegy, but to read epigram (5.30.5-6 *sed lege fumoso non aspernanda Decembri | carmina, mittuntur quae tibi mense suo*). The allusive phrase "smoky December" (*fumoso…Decembri*) refers to lighting fires and suggests that Martial's poetry should be associated with the more technical and didactic poetry from *Tristia* 2, which might not seem fitting at first glance. While the numbered books might seem to be far removed from this kind of literature, the case has been made that the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* are fashioned as works belonging to this Saturnalian literary tradition. They are both in the form of lists and their didactic value is found in the discussion of quality and price of certain objects.[21] Beyond this connection, the early books also make use of the idea that the Saturnalia is a period of time during which things that are otherwise forbidden become allowed and that order is inverted. This temporal aspect is translated into the literary sphere through Martial's claim that, just as the dissolution of social order allows for illegal activities, so does the dissolution of the literary canon call for spending one's free time reading lower poetic genres rather than the more elevated ones. In the *Apophoreta*, this point is made in a pair of epigrams which are meant to accompany works attributed to Vergil, the *Culex* and his collected works. The first epigram urges the addressee to accept the poem and, hopefully, continue reading it even after the festival is over (14.185 *accipe facundi Culicem, studiose, Maronis, | ne nucibus positis 'arma virumque' legas*).[22] The *Culex*, ideal Saturnalian reading, is juxtaposed to the *Aeneid* (*arma virumque*), something that Martial anticipates will be discarded in

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[20] For a discussion of Varro see Moreno Soldevila et al. 2019: 603 and Canobbio 2011: 318-319.
[21] Citroni 1989:207-208. These books have also been studied for their encyclopedic elements and possibly parodying Pliny's *Natural History* (Blake 2011).
[22] Grewing 2010: 134; Citroni 1989: 209-210. This pair is part of a longer sequence of epigrams meant to accompany works of literature (14.183-196); for a full analysis see Pini 2006. In the prose preface to the first book of the *Silvae*, Statius justifies writing occasional poetry in addition to the *Thebaid* by claiming that Vergil wrote the *Culex* before the *Aeneid* (Stat. *Silv*. 1.pr.7-9 *sed et Culicem legimus et Batrachomachiam etiam agnoscimus, nec quisquam est inlustrium poetarum qui non aliquid operibus suis stilo remissiore praeluserit*). For the early reception of the *Culex* by Martial and Statius as an early work of Vergil see Janka 2005.

favor of more elevated poetry. The end of the Saturnalia is marked with leaving the nuts (*nucibus positis*), which were used in gambling during the festival instead of real money.[23] This idea was carried over into the numbered books, where one prominent example of the Saturnalia as the time for epigram is 4.14, a poem addressed to the epic poet Silius Italicus. The text indicates that this epigram probably accompanied a collection of poems sent as a Saturnalian gift (7-10 *dum blanda vagus alea December…sonat…nostris otia commoda Camenis*). The mention of December brings together two different ideas of time in this epigram. The resounding noise of the dice is a reminder of the tolerance for gambling during the Saturnalia, and by extension urges Silius not to treat these poems too harshly (11-12 *nec torva lege fronte, sed remissa | lascivis madidos iocis libellos*). On the other hand, Silius, a member of the senatorial elite and a prolific poet, is expected to understand that leisure time (*otia*) ought to be devoted to poetry.[24] By placing this leisure time in December, Martial is conflating it with the time of the Saturnalia, reinforcing the point that this is the right time to read epigram.

Besides the analogy between festival time and epigrammatic time, the end of the festival and the return to the established order of things also plays an important role in Martial's Saturnalian poetics. The final poem of the *Apophoreta* is about *adipata*, fatty pastries eaten by schoolboys on the morning after the Saturnalia, which indicates both the end of the book and the festival (14.223 *surgite: iam vendit pueris ientacula pistor | cristataeque sonant undique lucis aves*).[25] Staying true to its Saturnalian nature, this epigram inverts the closure of Vergil's tenth and last Eclogue, in

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[23] Cf. Mart. 5.30, 13.1 and 14.1.

[24] Cicero's philosophical writings offer many examples of the idea that matters of state should be the priority for a Roman senator, while *otium* ought to be reserved for other intellectual pursuits (e.g. *Div*. 2.7; *Rep*. 1.8; *de Orat*. 1.3; *Off*. 2.4). A similar sentiment is voiced by Pliny the Younger in his advice to Fuscus Salinator on how to spend his free time. One of Pliny's suggestions is writing short poetry, since composing long poems requires plenty of *otium* (*Ep*. 7.9.9 *fas est et carmine remitti, non dico continuo et longo (id enim perfici nisi in otio non potest), sed hoc arguto et brevi…*). Silius' retirement from politics, which would have given him enough *otium* to devote himself to epic poetry, is also the topic of Mart. 7.63.

[25] For *adipata* see also Cic. *Or*. 25 and Juv. 6.631.

which the shepherds rise to go home as the sun sets, and the erotic motif of lovers parting at dawn. Furthermore, it invokes the imagery of a Callimachean *recusatio* through its association of fatty food with higher literary genres.[26] Since the Saturnalia in Martial is a time when literary hierarchies were turned on their head, epigram was king. The return to the regular state of things is signaled through the return of children to school since the Saturnalia also served as winter break (5.84.1-2 *iam tristis nucibus puer relictis* | *clamoso revocatur a magistro*). Themes from the previously discussed *Culex* epigram appear again, with nuts presenting a symbol of careless festival games, whose abandonment signals the return of the supremacy of epic. The strict genre hierarchies are imposed anew and placed within the context of education, which is a theme which will emerge again in Book 1. In 1.35, Martial is criticized for writing poetry that is not fit for being taught in school, which again brings up the contrast between his poetry and higher genres (1-2 *versus scribere me parum severos* | *nec quos praelegat in schola magister*). Defense against the criticism of writing indecent verse is an important theme in the first book, and the connection with the poetic program of the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* is visible through continued use of the analogy between poetry and festal license. The main difference is that, instead of the Saturnalia, the analogy is founded on the Floralia, a festival of April and early May in honor of the goddess Flora which featured ritually sanctioned nudity.

Saturnalian closure was also a way for Martial to tie his poetry in with other similar festivals. In the final epigram of Book 5, Martial complains that he has received no gifts during the Saturnalia from Galla (5.84.7-8 *nec munuscula parva nec minora* | *misisti mihi, Galla, quam*

[26] For the full metapoetic reading of 14.223 see Grewing 2010: 134-143. For the bucolic parallel cf. Verg. *E.* 10.75-77. Other examples of *recusatio* in Martial include 1.107, 8.3 and 10.4. Martial's engagement with Callimachus and Hellenistic poetry in general is understated in his epigrams and understudied in scholarship, but it has received some attention in recent years (Cartlidge 2018, Lucci 2015, Cowan 2014, Neger 2014, Spisak 1994).

solebas).[27] He says that he will give her the same treatment on the Matronalia, the festival celebrated on the first day of March during which women would receive gifts.[28] Since the Matronalia was considered to be a kind of Saturnalia directed towards women, the theme of gift-giving is what connects the two festivals (*vestra…Saturnalia*).[29] Furthermore, the Kalends of March were also the old New Year festival which featured some elements of role-reversal similar to the Saturnalia, such as matrons serving dinner to slaves.[30] Martial plays with the idea of role-reversal and gift-giving in 10.24, a poem about his birthday, which falls on the same date as the Matronalia. On this day, women are the ones giving gifts to him, and not the other way around, which would agree with the point of 5.84 that Galla would receive nothing (10.24.1-3 *natales mihi Martiae Kalendae…qua mittunt mihi munus et puellae*).[31] Martial's playful relationship with the Matronalia in these epigrams is reflective of a deeper engagement with festivals of license and reversal throughout his poetry.

As previously mentioned, the Saturnalia was an opportunity for poets to explore tensions not only in literary genres but also in society and Book 11 exemplifies this tendency. Published in 96, after the assassination of Domitian and the ascension of Nerva, this book celebrates the end of

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[27] In Book 4, the end of the Saturnalia also coincides with the end of the book and contains a complaint by Martial about not receiving gifts, this time from an anonymous *dissimulator* (4.88.1-2 *nulla remisisti parvo pro munere dona, | et iam Saturni quinque fuere dies*). For closural strategies in Martial see Canobbio 2007 and for closure in ancient epigram see Höschele 2013. Coleman 2005 believes that the end of Book 5 anticipates the publication of Book 6 on the Matronalia of the following year.

[28] 5.84.9-12 *sane sic abeat meus December: | scis certe, puto, vestra iam venire | Saturnalia, Martias Kalendas; | tunc reddam tibi, Galla, quod dedisti*. The name Galla is very common across all the numbered books and is used for various female stereotypes in scoptic epigram (Moreno Soldevila et al. 2019: 248-250). Within the context of Books 4 and 5, Galla is often found in epigrams that play with the sexual connotation of verbs *dare* and *negare* (Lorenz 2004).

[29] For the Matronalia in general see Gagé 1963. In *Fast*. 3.167-258, Ovid has Mars explain possible causes for the apparent incongruity of a festival devoted to matrons on the Kalends of March, which were dedicated to the god of war.

[30] Macr. *Sat*. 1.12.7 and Versnel 1992: 158. Other ancient claims of similarity between the Saturnalia and Matronalia are Juv. 9.50-53; Suet. *Vesp*. 19.1.

[31] For Martial's birthday see Damschen & Heil 2004: 114 and Lucas 1938. Another mention of the Kalends of March is an otherwise unattested claim that Venus was worshiped on this date, which is interpreted as a reference to the love affair between Mars and Venus (Henriksén 2012: 351-352). Another example of male appropriation of the Matronalia is Hor. *Carm*. 3.8.

the reign of a censorious emperor and welcomes the new ruler with an increased freedom of expression. As Henk Versnel has shown, starting with Vergil's fourth *Eclogue*, and especially in the Imperial period, the reign of Saturn becomes tied to the golden age and the *princeps* became an idealized monarch who ushers in and perpetuates the golden age.[32] In praise poetry, emperors were associated with the positive aspects of the Saturnalian king, who is arbitrary but benevolent. On the other hand, bad emperors, like Claudius in the *Apocolocyntosis*, embodied the negative aspects of the Saturnalian king, like tyranny, lawlessness and being a slave to his own slaves.

In Martial, this duality of the emperor as a good or bad Saturnalian king is best reflected in Book 11 and the contrast between Nerva and Domitian. The Saturnalian demeanor is evident from the start, with 11.2 serving as a warning to strict and serious readers to stay away from his book ("Behold, my poems exclaim 'Io Saturnalia;' under your rule, Nerva, I do this with permission and with pleasure," 7-8 *clamant ecce mei 'Io Saturnalia' versus: | et licet et sub te praeside, Nerva, libet*). These lines do more than simply justify the book's licentious nature (*libet*); they also create an atmosphere that establishes Nerva as the good king who encourages freedom of expression (*licet*). Nerva's golden age is equated with the that of of Augustus in the next epigram, along with careful anticipation of a new Maecenas who would support ambitious endeavors of Roman poets. Although the term "golden age" is not used explicitly, epigram 11.4 suggests that it might be ushered in by Nerva. In it, Martial prays for Nerva's safety on occasion of his third consulship, and one of the gods invoked is "Jupiter, now for the first time sculpted in eternal gold" (3 *scriptus et aeterno nunc primum Iuppiter auro*). This refers to a new cult statue of Jupiter in the Capitoline temple, but the use of *primum* also suggests a new beginning, while its proximity to *aeterno* hints

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[32] Versnel 1992: 191-210. In Martial's earlier books traces of golden age imagery can be found in 6.3, a poem that anticipates the birth of Domitian's heir, whose thread of life will be spun from a golden fleece (5-6 *ipsa tibi niveo trahet aurea pollice fila | et totam Phrixi Iulia nebit ovem*; with Grewing 1997: 91-92 and Garthwaite 1990).

at Nerva's reign as an eternal golden age under the protection of Jupiter. There is tension between past and present, however, in the construction of Nerva as the new Augustus ushering in a new golden age. Within the context of the book, everything is situated within the transient period of the December festival, and beyond it Martial's status in the reign of Nerva remains uncertain. This is reflective of the wider tensions which the book explores, such as past and present or freedom and restriction.[33]

One notable Augustan poet who engages with the Saturnalia on a literary level, and could be instructive as a comparison with Martial, is Horace in his *Satires*. Horace's use of the Saturnalia as a poetic model is significantly different from Martial's since he focuses primarily on the carnivalesque elements of the festival. In her Bakhtinian reading of the two books of the *Satires*, Suzanne Sharland notes the importance of dialogue, both as a means of communication within the poems and as a way of describing how the books interact with each other. Book 1 contains diatribes in which Horace is the main speaker, so-called "dialogic monologues," while in Book 2 there is a reversal and voices of others become more prominent and Horace becomes the listener.[34] According to Bakhtin, carnival is an inverted world in which there is no clear division between performer and spectator and everyone communicates freely. This carnivalesque turn is more prominent in Book 2, especially in *Sat*. 2.3 and 2.7, which are set during the Saturnalia and contain the most striking role-reversals. The reversal of social roles is most evident in the cases of the slaves Damasippus and Davus, who monopolize the speaking time in their respective satires, relegating Horace to the status of listener.[35] Overall, Martial and Horace focus on different aspects of freedom in the Saturnalia, with Martial being more interested in the transient nature of the

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[33] Rimell 2008: 161-180.
[34] Sharland 2010: 4-5.
[35] Sharland 2010: 189-194.

festival and the inversion of social order as ways of examining the place of epigram in literature and society. Horace, on the other hand, is more interested in the festival as a space in which a diverse cast of characters can engage in conversation without fear of repercussions. These tendencies are also visible in the different ways they extend the analogy of the Saturnalia into other religious spaces and festivals. As we have seen, Martial's interest in role-reversal and gift-giving resurfaces in his account of the Matronalia, with women becoming those who give gifts to him. Meanwhile, Horace chooses *compita*, small shrines or altars found at crossroads, as his model. The *compita* were also a site where individuals from adjoining neighborhoods would come together and exchange rumors and gossip, which made them a useful site for free dialogue within a religious context. Religious activities around these shrines culminated in the Compitalia, a moveable feast which took place in late December or early January after the Saturnalia. This festival had more in common with the Saturnalia than just calendrical proximity, since it was also celebrated by slaves and shared the same urban space, which meant that their association would invoke similar sentiments. In Horace's poetry, especially *Sat*. 2.3, *compita* become a place where an individual's fame, or infamy, becomes amplified and their lives put on display. [36] These much-frequented shrines, therefore, become an ideal analogy for the *Satires* themselves since they are imagined as casual conversations (*sermones*) about everyday topics.[37]

This comparison shows that Horace used the communicative aspects of the Saturnalia and *compita* as a model for the way the *Satires* present themselves and convey information to the reader. While Martial does use the Saturnalian festal license as an analogy for his own poetry, there appears to be a lack of interest in dialogue as a medium for conveying information. This absence raises the question whether Martial looked for a different model for his own poetry, and

[36] Egelhaaf-Gaiser: 331-333. For a list of sources on the Compitalia see Versnel 1992: 158-159.
[37] Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2020: 323-324.

the answer might be found in theatrical performances. The following discussion of Book 1 will explore how Martial uses a religious framework to present his poetry as theater and his readers as viewers. He achieves this by shifting his attention to the Floralia festival, which featured mimes that contained nudity. Just as in the case of the Saturnalia, the point of creating a comparison with the Floralia is to justify certain aspects of his poetry. The main difference is that the focus is no longer on epigram as a lower genre opposed to higher genres, but on the obscene language of epigram. The analogy of festal license will receive new focus: just as nudity is allowed in the Floralia, so is obscenity in epigram justifiable as a convention of the genre.

2. Chapter 1: The Poetics of Obscenity and the Framework of Ritual

The topic of this chapter is religious themes in Martial's poetics, which constitute an important strand in his self-definition and apologetics. I will first give an overview of previous scholarship on Martial's defense of obscene poetry. Building on this scholarship, I discuss the use of ritual license as an analogy for epigram. I then move to the discussion of poetic apologetics in Martial's early books, which forms a basis for his later programmatic statements. My main focus in this part of the chapter is the Floralia festival, best known for its public display of female nudity, which made it an ideal candidate for advertising the idea that indecent things can be allowed under proper religious circumstances. In the second half, I contrast this literary paradigm with Books 5 and 8, because they do not feature obscenity. This shift in tone is in part to seem favorable to Domitian and to present epigram as a medium suitable for imperial praise. I argue that Martial explains this departure from his literary principles through religious imagery, this time using purification as a means of justification.

2.1. Religion and Obscenity in Martial: Preliminaries

The importance of religious concepts for a better understanding of Martial's poetic program was first laid out by J.P. Sullivan in his seminal monograph *Martial: The Unexpected Classic*. In the chapter on Martial's *apologia pro opere suo*, Sullivan shows that Martial's defense of obscene language in his epigrams often involves analogies with festivals of license, like the Floralia and the Saturnalia. In these festivals, things that are usually prohibited are the norm; for example, the Floralia allowed nudity and the Saturnalia allowed gambling. It is important to situate the discussion of Martial's treatment of festal license within his treatment of the obscene more

generally. To this end, Sullivan draws on anthropology, particularly Mary Douglas and her book *Purity and Danger*, and uses her definition of pollution as "matter out of place" to show that obscenity in epigram is not dirty or inappropriate because it is a part of the conventions of the genre.[38] Amy Richlin gives further consideration to the Roman concept of the obscene, stating that its defining factors are "the restriction of certain words from certain situations and the association of ideas of staining with sexuality."[39] This conclusion comes in part from the reading of poetic *apologiae* from Catullus, Ovid, *Carmina Priapea*, Martial and Pliny. In many examples, obscene poetry is marked out as a space separate from the proper world (and proper poetry), and often described using religious imagery.[40] In my discussion of Book 1, I intend to give a more detailed look at how Martial reflects Roman concepts of obscenity through close readings of apologetic poems in which he defends the obscenity of epigram through analogy with festal license.

Another claim made by Richlin about Martial's poetry is that "he never arrives at a unified formulation of the significance of his obscene verse."[41] Later scholarship has been more generous in trying to understand the place of obscenity in Martial's poetic program. Sven Lorenz gives an excellent overview of Martial's enormous debt to Catullus, pointing out that obscenity was an important way for him to forge a connection with his poetic predecessor. While Catullus statistically has more obscenities, Martial places them strategically throughout his work and often draws attention to them through *apologiae*.[42] The importance of the connection with Catullus is picked up by Bret Mulligan, who concludes that Martial uses obscenity as a distinctive feature that defines Latin epigram in opposition to Greek epigram, which seems to have employed primary

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[38] Sullivan 1991: 64-69; the idea that Martial's defense of epigrammatic language was motivated by ethical considerations was hinted at by Citroni 1968.
[39] Richlin 1992: 30.
[40] Richlin 1992: 2-13. While Martial is important for Richlin's discussion, she seems to be left unimpressed by his apparent lack of overall ambiguity and playfulness that she notes in his poetic predecessors, especially Catullus.
[41] Richlin 1997: 7.
[42] Lorenz 2007; see also Banta 1998.

obscenities far less often.[43] We cannot be certain, however, how common obscenity was in Greek epigram due to possible expurgations and general lack of evidence. For example, the Vienna incipits (*P.Vindob*. G 40611), a collection of 226 first lines of an epigram collection which dates to the late 3rd century BC, show a propensity for erotic epigrams. It is also possible that sexual themes may have been even more prominent in the epigrams since only the first lines have been preserved.[44] Our perception of trends in Greek epigram is shaped by influential collections, such as the Garland of Philip and the Palatine Anthology, but discoveries such as the Posidippus papyrus and the Vienna incipits show us that there was a much larger variety of themes than has come down to us. In light of this, it remains inconclusive how influential obscene Greek epigram could have been on Martial's literary *apologiae*. Greeks did not seem to have the same reservations about obscene writing, so there are very few justifications for it.[45] We can assume that one reason why Martial chose obscenity as a defining factor of epigram as a genre was influenced by the fact that, as Richlin has shown, in the Roman world obscene utterances had the power to stain, which was not the case with the Greeks.[46]

Martial's strategies for incorporating and defending obscenities are interwoven with the wider discussion of the internal structure of the epigrammatic book. The questions of book composition and the ordering of epigrams are some of the most widely discussed in scholarship about Martial. The dispute about composition and publication centers around the reception of Peter

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[43] Mulligan 2019: 117-121; see also Swann 1998 and Neger 2012: 54-73. For a similar reconstruction of how reading Martial can influence our perception of Ovid see Hinds 2007.
[44] Floridi and Maltomini 2014.
[45] Sullivan 1991: 64-65.
[46] Henderson 1992: 1-9 discusses the place of obscene language in the Greek world, concluding that Greeks had nothing that corresponds exactly with the Roman concept of *obscenus*, namely the idea that certain words were by themselves unclean. Romans could comfortably speak of things that are shameful (*turpe*) without using words that are dirty (*obscenum*), while for Greeks these concepts were not distinct from each other (αἰσχρολογεῖν). This difference is further illustrated by the case of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, whose unique view of anything related to sex as polluting, including words or images, would have been perceived as highly unusual by an ancient audience (Petrovic and Petrovic 2016: 203-205).

White's *libellus* theory, which states that Martial's primary method of publication were small collections of epigrams (*libelli*) that were sent out to individual patrons. Meanwhile, the larger *epigrammaton liber* was a later publication and merely a receptacle for existing poems, whose internal structure was of lesser importance. These claims were criticized by Don Fowler, who stressed how epigrams to individual patrons were carefully integrated into the wider context of the book and pointed out the importance of the internal structure and epigram arrangement.[47] While the issue remains inconclusive, Lorenz makes the important observation that, in the absence of any actual *libelli*, the most productive approach to Martial's work is to focus on the *epigrammaton libri*.[48] A related question is the role of thematic groupings of individual epigrams in giving the book structure and meaning. An important advance in this area was made by Karl Barwick, who was the first to introduce the concept of an "epigrammatic cycle" to the study of Martial.[49] According to him, cycles are groups of poems characterized by having a common addressee or subject, as well as metrical cohesion. This kind of reading was criticized by some later scholars due to its inconsistency and lack of interest in the actual content of the epigrams.[50] In response to Barwick, Elena Merli has proposed reading the individual book linearly, which seems to be a more fruitful approach to understanding how a book of epigrams conveys a message to its readers. The linear reading is further advocated by the fact that, in the study of cycles, epigrams are not read as part of the book and the meaning of an epigram within its immediate context is disregarded.[51] A

[47] Key articles are White 1974, Fowler 1995 and White 1996. For a recent overview and discussion see Lorenz 2019: 527-531.
[48] Lorenz 2019: 531.
[49] Barwick 1958.
[50] Various commentators have taken a critical stance against Barwick, e.g. Henriksén 2012: xxxvi-xxxviii or Citroni 1975: xxvii; Grewing 1997 chose not to use the term "cycle" at all, while other commentators use it with caution.
[51] Merli 1998; for the application of this approach see Merli 1993 (introductory sequences of Books 1-12), Garthwaite 1998a (Book 5) and Lorenz 2004 (Book 4), and further discussion in Lorenz 2002: 10-14 and Lorenz 2019. For more on the arrangement of individual poems see Scherf 2001; on Martial's Hellenistic models in structuring epigrams see Burnikel 1980.

major contribution to linear reading is Victoria Rimell's monograph on Martial.[52] In the first chapter, she discusses the analogy between a book of epigrams and the city of Rome, noting the ever-present vocabulary of touching and the anxiety regarding contagion found not only in poems about physical interactions between individuals, but also in metapoetic statements. Just as Rome is a complex space full of activity and interaction, so is a book of epigrams full of small poems that constantly interact with each other, defying the borders of the page and the meanings imposed upon them. Merli's approach of sequential reading and Rimell's idea of cross-referencing between poems will form the basis of my methodology in the first chapter, since I will be reading sequences of epigrams and examining how they create an interpretative web that reinforces the connection between religious language and programmatic statements.

2.2 Literary *apologiae*: Book 1

The first book of Martial's *Epigrams* opens with the so-called *Paradeepigramme*, ten poems that exemplify the style and meters of his poetry.[53] They also introduce the major themes found throughout Martial's books: poetics, patronage, imperial praise and satire. Furthermore, some themes specific to Book 1 are introduced, like philosophy and exemplarity. Besides themes, these epigrams also introduce the various addressees of the book, which include the common reader and some distinguished individuals. The aim of this section will be to examine the use of festival motifs in literary *apologiae* found in the beginning of Book 1 and how this strategy is further developed in subsequent programmatic statements. Within these *Paradeepigramme*, the first five, along with the prose preface, form a smaller unit which is framed on both sides by *apologiae* and religious discourse. The prose preface, potentially addressed to the reader, discusses

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[52] Rimell 2008.

[53] For the *Paradeepigramme* see Holzberg 2002: 35-39, Fitzgerald 2007: 69-71.

the content of Martial's poems that might be perceived as an attack on real individuals, as well as the obscene language of epigram.[54] Following this, the first two poems are addressed to the reader, the first being Martial's self-introduction and a claim to worldwide fame in his own lifetime, and the second advertising a place to buy his poetry books.[55] In the third poem, Martial tells his book, which is eager to set out on the streets of Rome, about the fastidious nature of the Roman audience and the anxiety of publication. Finally, Martial turns to the emperor Domitian, asking him not to look down on his poetry, but to appreciate it for the light, harmless verse that it truly is. Domitian offers a witty response in the fifth epigram. Within this introductory sequence, the preface and the fourth epigram both serve as literary apologies for the language and content of the epigrams. Furthermore, what ties them together is their reliance on the analogy between epigram as a genre and religious festivals that contain elements of theater and spectacle, namely the Floralia festival and the triumphal procession.

The prose preface of the first book falls into two halves: the first half serves as a disclaimer regarding any poems that may be perceived as slanderous against real, living individuals. Martial claims to distance himself from earlier satirical authors who abused real individuals and warns his readers not to interpret his poems in a harmful way (pr.8-9 *improbe facit qui in alieno libro ingeniosus est*). The second half turns to another aspect of Martial's poetry which his audience might consider offensive, namely his obscene verse. He offers two lines of defense, literary predecessors and the analogy of festal license:

> lascivam verborum veritatem, id est epigrammaton linguam, excusarem, si meum esset exemplum: sic scribit Catullus, sic Marsus, sic Pedo, sic Gaetulicus, sic quicumque perlegitur. si quis tamen tam ambitiose tristis est, ut apud illum in nulla pagina latine loqui fas sit, potest epistula vel potius titulo contentus esse. epigrammata illis scribuntur, qui

[54] The manuscript family γ contains the title *Valerius Martialis lectori suo salutem*.

[55] The first two poems are generally believed to be part of a later edition of Book 1, which originally started with 1.3 (Citroni 1975: xviii-xxi; Citroni 1970). John Garthwaite also believes that the preface is part of the original edition (Garthwaite 2001: 71).

> solent spectare Florales. non intret Cato theatrum meum, aut si intraverit, spectet. videor mihi meo iure facturus, si epistulam versibus clusero:
>
> nosses iocosae dulce cum sacrum Florae
> festosque lusus et licentiam vulgi,
> cur in theatrum, Cato severe, venisti?
> an ideo tantum veneras, ut exires? (Mart. 1.pr.9-21)
>
> Lewd and truthful words, that is the language of epigram, I would excuse if I were setting the precedent; but Catullus wrote this way, just like Marsus, Pedo, Gaetulicus and anyone else who was read all through. If there is anyone, however, who is such an ostentatious prude that it is not allowed to speak plainly on any page in his presence, let him be satisfied with the preface or, even better, the title. Epigrams are written for those who have the habit of watching the Floralia. Let not Cato enter my theater, but if he does, let him watch. I believe I will be working within my rights if I finish the preface with a poem:
>
> Since you knew about the lovely rites of jesting Flora,
> the festive games and the license of the people,
> why, strict Cato, did you come into the theater?
> Did you only come so you could walk out?[56]

Out of all the authors mentioned in this preface, Catullus plays the most prominent role and serves as a constant reference point for Martial in Book 1. Due to the overall lack of evidence, we know little about the other three.[57] What is more interesting for this study, however, is the end of the preface and its comparison of the readers of epigram to the audience of the Floralia. By making this parallel, Martial is drawing on the tradition of Latin poets who use religious language to create a sort of "sacred space" in which their poetry, which would otherwise be considered improper, can be properly justified.[58] The festival in honor of Flora, the goddess of flowers and blooming, is important for Martial's poetic program both because of its literary background and the contents of the games themselves. The Floralia took place yearly starting on April 28 and went on into early

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[56] The text of Martial is from Shackleton Bailey's Teubner edition. All translations are my own unless stated otherwise.
[57] C. Albinovanus Pedo was a contemporary of Ovid who wrote epigrams and epic poetry. M. Domitius Marsus was an Augustan poet, author of epigrams, epitaphs of Vergil and Tibullus, and a prose work *De urbanitate*. Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus was a prominent Roman politician of the early first century AD known for his erotic verse. For a list of references to these authors in Martial see Citroni 1975: 10.
[58] For examples from Ovid and the *Priapea* see Richlin 1992: 8-9.

May, featuring five days of theatrical performances and one day of *ludi circenses*.[59] The most notable aspect of the Floralia for Martial's purposes were the performances of mimes by prostitutes which ended in a striptease.[60] The importance of this element of the games is illustrated by an anecdote about Cato the Younger found in Valerius Maximus, which Martial alludes to in the preface. In the anecdote, the audience of the games is too ashamed to ask the performers to strip because Cato's presence exerted such great moral authority. When this was brought to Cato's attention, he willingly left the theater, not wanting to impede the popular custom, and was applauded by the audience.[61] For Martial, the Cato anecdote seals the analogy between his poetry and the Floralia. Martial's poetry is generally represented as entertainment on the occasion of festivals, since many of his books are published around the time of the Saturnalia. At the start of Book 1, he represents his poetry as festive theatrical entertainment (*theatrum meum*), to which those with the right disposition are invited (*qui solent spectare Florales*). Just as the theatrical performances at the Floralia feature nudity, which is allowed within the context of the festival, so Martial's epigrams contain obscenity, which is allowed because of generic conventions. The parallel between reading and watching as a means of consuming lascivious content is prominent

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[59] The most recent study of the Floralia is Fabbri 2019. For the performance of mimes at the Floralia and their content see Wiseman 1999 and for the performative context see Favro 1999: 211-213. For mime in general see Beacham 1991: 129-140 and Fantham 1989; for mime and Martial see Canobbio 2001.

[60] For the full doxography on the causes of nudity in the Floralia see Fabbri 2019: 146-161. The old views that the nudity was apotropaic or connected to fertility have fallen out of favor. Wiseman 1998: 198 believed that the nudity comes from mimes whose material was Rome's mythical prehistory, like the story of Cloelia and other young Roman women who took their clothes off to swim across the Tiber. On the other hand, Cordier 2005: 222 believed that the striptease had no inherent religious function and that it was only a form of entertainment. Nevertheless, the fact that nudity was considered to be a customary part of the Floralia, and was not considered shameful due to its close association to a religious festival, may have given Martial enough cause to use it as an example in his literary *apologia*.

[61] Val. Max. 2.10.8 *Eodem ludos Florales, quos Messius aedilis faciebat, spectante populus ut mimae nudarentur postulare erubuit. quod cum ex Favonio amicissimo sibi una sedente cognosset, discessit e theatro, ne praesentia sua spectaculi consuetudinem impediret. quem abeuntem ingenti plausu populus prosecutus priscum morem iocorum in scaenam revocavit, confessus plus se maiestatis uni illi tribuere quam sibi universo vindicare.* The anecdote is also mentioned by Seneca (*Ep.* 97.8 *Catonem inquam illum quo sedente populus negatur permisisse sibi postulare Florales iocos nudandarum meretricum*) to illustrate Cato's commanding presence. Cato's "performance" could also be seen as a precursor to Shadi Bartsch's idea of the actors in the audience (Bartsch 1998).

also in the opening programmatic epigrams. If Martial's readership is equated with the audience of the festival, then the figure of Cato is an individual critical of epigram who is asked not to read. In this sense he is comparable to the *malignus interpres* from the first half of the preface, who is asked to stay away from Martial's books because he poses a threat with his subversive interpretations of the allegedly simple and straightforward epigrams.[62] He claims that scoptic epigrams are aimed at real individuals, which is an accusation that Martial, who is posturing as a satirist, is quick to disavow.[63] An important difference between the *interpres* and Cato, however, is the fact that the former apparently ought to completely remove himself from Martial's works (*absit*), while the latter is told to stay away, but can still be allowed under certain conditions (*non intret…aut si intraverit, spectet*). The line between those allowed and those not allowed to read Martial is more permeable than the preface initially makes it seem. As I will show later in the analysis of Book 1, individuals who are perceived as very strict might still be included into Martial's poetic theater, provided that they are familiar with the rules of the genre.

In the literary sphere, Martial's use of Flora draws on Ovid's account of his conversation with the goddess in the fifth book of the *Fasti*. The very first line of Ovid already characterizes Flora as a goddess known for her jesting games (*Fast*. 5.183 *mater, ades, florum, ludis celebranda iocosis*). Martial picks up the key adjective *iocosis* in the epigram with which he concludes the preface (*iocosae…Florae*), but chooses to make Flora herself the jesting one, which implies the bawdiness of the games. When Ovid is about to ask Flora why her games are marked by jokes and ribaldry, it occurs to him that she is not a divinity known for being proper (333-334 *sed mihi succurrit numen non esse severum, / aptaque deliciis munera ferre deam*). Martial could also be

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[62] Mart. 1.pr.6-9: *absit a iocorum nostrorum simplicitate malignus interpres nec epigrammata mea inscribat: improbe facit qui in alieno libro ingeniosus est*.
[63] For Martial and the satirical tradition see Sullivan 1991: 104-105.

picking up on *severum* by using the same adjective to characterize the proverbially strict Cato in the introductory epigram (*Cato severe*).[64] The claim that the readership of the *Epigrams* is similar to the audience of the Floralia may also have its roots in Ovid's description of the participants (*Fast*. 5.349 *turba quidem cur hos celebret meretricia ludos*). It is unclear from this line whether the phrase *turba…meretricia* refers to the performing prostitutes or the members of the audience, however. In her study of Augustan festivals that feature public nudity, Molly Pasco-Pranger argues that the *turba* is describing all the women in the audience, regardless of class, since they would all presumably be wearing colorful clothing and sitting together in the back rows. This claim is based on the opposition between the white robes worn by those attending the Cerialia (355 *ut dantur vestes Cerialibus albae*) and the colorful clothes of Flora. Furthermore, bright and colorful clothing is regularly associated with prostitutes, which would make the contrast unremarkable unless it referred to the female audience in general.[65] The verb used to describe the crowd is *celebret*, which often refers to those who celebrate a festival or worship a divinity.[66] In the following couplet the notion that Flora is not the serious type and that she is open to the common people is restated (351-352 *non est de tetricis, non est de magna professis: / vult sua plebeio sacra patere choro*). The phrase *plebeio…choro* points not only to the plebeian origin of the festival but also to the class of those who are participating.[67] Just as the *turba*, *choro* is ambiguous since it could refer to both the

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[64] Cf. *Fast*. 5.287-288, 367-368. Vallat 2008: 144-150 shows that the name Cato, whether referring to the Elder or the Younger, is often used as a generalized example of morality.

[65] Pasco-Pranger 2019: 237-239.

[66] This verb is listed in the *TLL* 3.0.743.8 under "festive aut religiose agere, agitare, frequentare" which would mean that it also falls under *OLD* s.v. *celebrare* 3b ("to observe hold, celebrate…a show, games"). Compare also the celebration of the festival of Anna Perenna on March 15 (3.656 *et celebrant largo remque diemque mero*; with Heyworth 2019: 217) and the prostitutes celebrating the anniversary of Venus Erycina's temple on April 23 (4.865 *numina, volgares, Veneris celebrate, puellae*).

[67] The institution of yearly games in honor of Flora in 173 BC is recounted in *Fast*. 5.311-330.

performers and the audience, and this lack of clarity creates an affinity between the two.[68] Martial picks up on Ovid's account of the audience and uses it as a model for his own description of the readers of epigram as spectators of the Floralia. Pasco-Pranger's argument that the female members of the audience, including the *matronae*, would have been unified by wearing clothes similar to prostitutes could also be of service for Martial's conception of his audience.[69] The inclusivity of all women in his readership is a notion Martial engages with while also navigating the possible pitfalls it brings. As I will elaborate in my discussion of Book 3, he takes the idea of permeability between the performers and audience of the Floralia even further, exploring its potential for tension and transgression.

The importance of understanding the rules of epigram is a major theme in 1.4, which brings back the analogy of festal spectacle. One important difference in this poem is that the religious dimension is expressed not by the Floralia, but by the triumphal procession. Mime is still featured prominently in this epigram, with the focus now being shifted to the emperor's attitude towards it. In this epigram, Martial urges the emperor not to hold his poetry in contempt while simultaneously showing us a different, more jovial side to the emperor:

> Contigeris nostros, Caesar, si forte libellos,
> terrarum dominum pone supercilium.
> consuevere iocos vestri quoque ferre triumphi,
> materiam dictis nec pudet esse ducem.
> qua Thymelen spectas derisoremque Latinum,
> illa fronte precor carmina nostra legas.
> innocuos censura potest permittere lusus:
> lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba. (Mart. 1.4)
>
> If you perhaps come across our little books, Caesar, set aside the sternness that rules the world. Even your triumphs are used to tolerating jokes and it is not shameful for the general

[68] In spite of the primary meaning of *chorus* being a group of dancers and performers, this particular use of the word is interpreted in a broader sense by the *TLL* 3.0.1025.51 as "caterva, comites, conventus" and the *OLD* s.v. *chorus* 5 ("a group, band or company of people").

[69] Pasco-Pranger 2019: 244.

> to be a source of amusing verses. I pray that you read my poems with the same face with which you watch Thymele or the jester Latinus. The censor can allow innocent games; my work is lewd, but my life is pure.

Domitian's first interaction with Martial's epigrams is expected to be by chance (*contigeris…si*), not as the result of a direct dedication. This hesitation shows not only fear of the emperor's judgement, but also the fact that this is an early epigram from the time when the poet had not yet reached great renown. The phrase *pone supercilium* refers to the emperor's stern brow, which implies that he is, at first glance, a Catonian figure which could cause Martial some trouble.[70] In order to present Domitian as someone who would indulge in epigram, Martial doubles the number of spectacles in which he takes part, introducing both theatrical entertainment and triumph. The main religious element of the Roman triumph is repaying the gods, especially Jupiter, through sacrifice and the dedication of insignia and spoils at the Capitoline temple.[71] For Martial, however, the mocking songs directed at the emperor by the soldiers present the main point of interest. The purpose of these songs remains an object of discussion, the main arguments being that they served either an apotropaic or a sociological function.[72] Just as in the case of public nudity in the Floralia, Martial emphasizes the obscene element, something that is allowed in a ritual context but would otherwise be considered improper. The use of the triumph as a religious analogy may have been motivated by Domitian's triumph against the Chatti in 83, which adds a panegyrical element to the poem.[73] Martial will employ triumph as a religious analogy only once more in Book 7, which was published in 92 after the emperor's return from the Dacian campaign. In the conclusion of 7.8, which celebrates the emperor's arrival, Martial notes that it is proper for the emperor to listen to

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[70] For the trope of the stern moralist in *apologiae* see Richlin 1992: 10-11.
[71] Zaleski 2014: 592.
[72] For discussions of older scholarship on the function of triumph songs and new approaches see O'Neill 2003: 1-6, Beard 2007: 248-249 and Hahn 2015: 153-156.
[73] Book 1 was published in 85; for a detailed study of the publication date see Citroni 1975: ix-xiii.

light verse, whether it be from the triumphal procession or poetry (9-10 *fas audire iocos levioraque carmina, Caesar, / et tibi, si lusus ipse triumphus amat*).[74] The triumph and the Floralia are connected on a lexical level through the use of *iocos* to describe the triumphal songs, which is the same type of modifier used for Flora and her games. Furthermore, participation in triumphal jesting is shown as something that the emperor is used to participating in (*consuevere*), just as Martial's ideal readers are those who have a habit (*solent*) of watching the Floralia. After claiming that Domitian is someone who would enjoy epigram on the basis of his toleration of the triumph, Martial reinforces his argument by invoking the emperor's appreciation of the theater. Domitian is urged to read epigrams in the same way that he would watch mime performers Thymele and Latinus. The choice of Latinus in this epigram is motivated not only by his status as a mime actor, but also by his contemporary fame. Latinus often appeared in adultery mime as the sneaky, elegant adulterer, alongside Thymele as the sly wife and Panniculus as the boorish husband.[75] A potential issue is created by the use of *derisorem* to characterize Latinus, since it might imply open mockery of the emperor. The word originally means "mocker" or "derider," but here it might have a more technical meaning of mime actor.[76] Garthwaite sees Latinus as someone who mocks authority through his role as the adulterer who ridicules the head of the household.[77] I would propose that

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[74] For the publication date of Book 7 see Galán Vioque 2002: 1-8. The theme of triumph in the imperial epigrams of Books 7-9 and its connection to Horace's fourth book of Odes is analyzed by Henriksén 2002.

[75] The plot of adultery mime is most succinctly described in Ov. *Tr*. 2.499-500: *in quibus adsidue <u>cultus</u> procedit <u>adulter,</u> / verbaque dat <u>stulto</u> <u>callida nupta</u> <u>viro</u>?* The contents of adultery mimes, especially those featuring Latinus, can be inferred from other epigrams (Mart. 2.72, 3.86, 5.61), as well as Juvenal 1.36, 6.41-44 and 8.196-197 (see also Moreno Soldevila et al. 2019: 326 and Reynolds 1946). McKeown 1987 argues that adultery mime was the most popular type since Roman poets refer to it most often. He further argues that the theme of adultery must come from mime since that theme rarely occurs in Hellenistic erotic poetry and New Comedy.

[76] According to the *TLL* 5.1.633.51-52, this particular use of *derisor* does not have a specialized meaning ("qui ex professo deridet, scurra"). The *OLD* s.v. *derisor* gives only one meaning ("a mocker, derider"), but gives a further explanation "of an actor in mime" for this particular passage. Citroni appears to side with the *TLL*, stating that it is difficult to claim that *derisor* is a technical term due to a lack of comparable cases (Citroni 1975: 32).

[77] Garthwaite 2001: 77 (cf. Howell 1980: 115). Garthwaite goes on to expand the theme of harmless entertainers to other introductory epigrams by including the *verna* from 1.3, a house-slave who has freedom to joke at the expense of his master, and the hare in 1.6, who hops around in a lion's jaws but remains unharmed. The slave, Latinus and the hare are all meant to represent Martial and his claim that he ought to enjoy the same kind of immunity.

Martial diffuses this issue by juxtaposing the mockery of mime with the ritualized mockery of the emperor found in the triumphal procession in the previous couplet. After all, this mockery is something that the emperor was expected to endure (*ferre*), but it is nevertheless harmless since it serves a ritual function. The similarity between mime and epigram has already been established in the preface through the analogy of festal license in the Floralia and it is further expanded in 1.4 with the inclusion of ritualized mockery of the triumph. Martial thus hopes to justify mockery in the same way he justified obscenity. In the final couplet, *censura* refers to Domitian's recent assumption of the title of *censor perpetuus* and subsequent moral reforms, but it also recalls the image of Cato from the previously discussed texts. The censorious Domitian of 1.4 presents a refined image of the stern Cato of the preface who is familiar with the genre conventions of epigram. He understands that obscenity and mockery have their place in religious festivals and theatrical performances and is therefore expected to understand that there is no harm in poetry that contains such themes.

Epigram 1.4 also has similarities with the first epigram of the *Priapea*, the largest single collection of Priapic poems in Latin poetry, which raises the question of their relationship and relative chronology. The end of the first couplet (*terrarum dominum pone supercilium*) is reminiscent of the beginning of *Priap*. 1, in which the reader of licentious poetry is urged to set aside their stern brow which is considered typical of the Latins (1-2 *carminis incompti lusus lecture procaces, / conveniens Latio pone supercilium*). The poetic space is referred to as a religious space (3 *hoc…sacello*) from which virginal goddesses such as Diana, Vesta and Minerva are absent. Instead, it belongs to the ithyphallic god Priapus. Mario Citroni argues that there is a further parallel between the end of 1.4, when Martial urges Domitian to look at his epigrams the same way he looks at mimes (6 *illa fronte precor carmina nostra legas*) and the request of the speaker

of *Priap*. 1 for the reader to read the poems with the same regard they would have for the penis of Priapus (8 *aut quibus hanc oculis aspicis, ista lege*). On the basis of this, he argues that the Priapea were collected after the publication of Martial's first book.[78] It remains inconclusive, however, whether or not the *Priapea* predate Martial and if he is drawing on the collection as a source.[79] If the *Priapea* did come first, Martial's lack of interest in sexual themes found in that collection might mean that he is distancing himself from it, since he considers it to be too lascivious, especially since he is dedicating it to Domitian.[80] Whatever the relative chronology may be, the *Priapea* provide a valuable parallel for Martial in the literary tradition of the Imperial period.

Martial's request to the emperor to look kindly on poetry that might be considered a threat to Roman morals draws on Ovid's petition to Augustus in *Tristia* 2. In terms of Martial's engagement with Ovid's exile poetry, scholars have so far mainly focused on *Tristia* 1 and the way Martial engages with Roman topography and poetic spaces, but I propose that *Tristia* 2 also plays an important role in Martial's definition of his own poetry. In epigrams 1.1-3, *Tristia* 1 is used to create a parallel not only between the two poets, but also the emperors they are writing under. By sending a book of poetry into the streets of Rome, both poets are taking the risk of being received poorly by the people of Rome and, what is more important for a post-Ovidian poet, the emperor.[81] By casting Augustus and Domitian in a similar light, Martial hints at the possibility that the emperor might punish the poet for writing poetry which he finds to be indecent. This tension is

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[78] Citroni 2008; see also Citroni 1975: 31.

[79] Buchheit 1962 argues that the *Priapea* was written after Martial by a single author and is followed by Holzberg 2002: 51-62; Plantade and Vallat 2005; Höschele 2010). Kißel 1994 argues for a single author an Augustan date for the collection, Hallett 1996 argues that it was before Martial. Other scholars believe that it is an anthology from the Imperial period that predates Martial (O'Connor 2019: 544-547; Grewing 1997: 459-464; Richlin 1992: 141-143).

[80] The case of Sabellus shows that it was possible for one's verses to be too scandalous (12.43.1-2 *facundos mihi de libidinosis / legisti nimium, Sabelle, versus*; with O'Connor 1998: 192-193). Furthermore, Richlin 1992: 3-5 shows that the idea of an immoral life being reflected in one's literary output (*qualis oratio, talis vita*) was a matter that poets in the Imperial period took very seriously.

[81] Rimell 2008: 74-80, 165-168; Holzberg 2002: 63-64; Lorenz 2002: 18-19.

diffused by turning Ovid's argumentation in *Tristia* 2 on its head and constructing Domitian as an emperor whose love of epigram would be a logical extension of his enjoyment of mime. In *Tr.* 2.497-518, Ovid argues that mime is obscene and promotes adultery, but it is still very popular and its production is even funded by Augustus himself. He emphasizes the irony of Augustus watching mimes while sending Ovid into exile ("with your eyes, which the whole world enjoys, you watched adultery on stage as if it were nothing" 513-514 *luminibusque tuis, totus quibus utitur orbis, / scaenica vidisti lentus adulteria*), claiming that he thus deserves at least a reduced punishment. Ovid describes Augustus here as being nonchalant (*lentus*) towards the adultery right before his eyes, which exposes his hypocrisy. Martial picks up on the obscenity of mime (497 *mimos obscena iocantes*) but, as the preface to Book 1 makes clear, he chooses to align his poetry with theatrical performance. Domitian's enjoyment of mime is thus turned into a positive characteristic, which implies that the emperor would enjoy reading epigrams as well. In order to resolve the moral issue of mime condoning adultery, Martial concludes his epigram with separation of an individual's artistic production from their personal morals (*lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba*). This kind of statement ultimately goes back to Catullus (16.5-6 *nam castum esse decet pium poetam / ipsum, versiculos nihil necesse est*), but Martial engages with it through the lens of Ovid. As Richlin has shown, Catullus does not appear to be concerned with obscene language in 16, and his claim to be *castum* and *pium* is reduced to a joke in the light of the verbal abuse of Furius and Aurelius featured in the poem. Authors in the imperial period, who had more legitimate concerns about publishing poetry which could be perceived as immoral, adapted these lines for the purposes of their own literary *apologiae* which focus on the separation of art from the artist.[82] Ovid himself presents his amatory poetry as fictional and not as a reflection of his character (*Tr.* 2.353-354 *crede mihi,*

[82] Richlin 1992: 12-13.

distant mores a carmine nostri / *vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea*). Ovid's Muse is *iocosa*, which is reflected in Martial's use of the same adjective to modify Flora in the epigram at the end of the preface and the jokes (*iocos*) of the triumph in 1.4.[83] According to Sullivan, Martial modeled his phrase after Ovid.[84] Beyond verbal modeling, however, a reference to *Tristia* 2 also brings up the question of the emperor's tolerance for risqué verse. The Catullan disdain for moralizing and Ovidian awareness that incurring the emperor's wrath may have real consequences create a tension which Martial is able to diffuse by presenting Domitian's appreciation for mime as a positive trait which also results in his approval of epigram.

The statement that one's life is separate from their literary output has many iterations in Martial, but the one with the most bearing on the topic of religion is 9.28, a poem spoken by the mime Latinus himself. The main religious element revolves around the emperor and the claim that he possessed divine omniscience. Latinus boasts to be the pride of the Roman stage and that he could even turn Cato into a spectator. His apologetic lines greatly resonate with 1.4:

> sed nihil a nostro sumpsit mea vita theatro
> et sola tantum scaenicus arte feror;
> nec poteram gratus domino sine moribus esse:
> interius mentes inspicit ille deus. (Mart. 9.28.5-8)
>
> But my life has adopted nothing from my acting career and I am known as an actor only because of my art. I could also not be dear to my master without good morals; that god sees deep into the minds of men.

The similarities between the Latinus epigram and Martial's *apologia* are striking. Since Latinus is an actor, it is logical that he would talk about his acting career (*nostro…theatro*), but the

[83] Martial's use of *ioci* and similar terms can also be viewed in light of the fact that Catullus borrowed these terms from comedy to characterize his poetry as mocking and satirical (Garthwaite 2001: 72-73; Newman 1990: 7-42). It should be noted, however, that Martial does not indiscriminately adopt all vocabulary that Catullus used to describe his poetry. He avoids the use of *iambi* and *hendecasyllabi*, replacing them with *epigrammata*, which does not seem to denote aggressive poetry (Lorenz 2007: 430). He does use *scazon* twice (1.96, 7.26), but this is not a term used by Catullus.

[84] Sullivan 1991: 106-107. Other examples in Ovid: *Tr*. 1.9.56-64, *Pont*. 2.7.47-50.

vocabulary corresponds to the *theatrum meum* of the Book 1 preface. The emphasis on the distinction between one's own morality and their art brings both passages together. There is a sense that Latinus represents Martial's alter-ego, or at least that Latinus is the model of a jester on good terms with the emperor.[85] According to Suetonius, Latinus was close to Domitian and may have even been his informant.[86] As we have seen from the way Martial uses *Tristia* 2, the theme of adultery both in Martial and in mime had to be deemed by imperial authority as something not morally detrimental. The Latinus epigram elaborates that the artist's moral uprightness is guaranteed by the emperor's divine omniscience. There is also a potential reference to Domitian's title of *dominus et deus*, since these two words are used in close proximity. Martial therefore manages to praise both the actor and the emperor himself. While an explicit statement about Domitian's intimate knowledge of Martial's thoughts is absent from Book 1, and the Latinus epigram is much later, Martial does allude to the divinity of the emperor in 1.4 (*terrarum dominum pone supercilium*) and this theme is revisited in 1.6, the first epigram of the lion-hare cycle, in which the emanation of the emperor's *clementia* affects the animals in the amphitheater, thus allowing a hare to skip freely in the mouth of a lion. Nevertheless, the figure of the all-knowing emperor is meant to demonstrate a specific kind of knowledge: familiarity with the inner workings of mime and, by extension, epigram.

In response to Martial's plea, Domitian says that epigrams are not sufficient in return for a spectacular sea-fight, which might mean that Martial will end up in the water along with his book

[85] The closeness of *domino…deus* is also reminiscent of the phrase *dominus et deus* which is often associated with him (Jones 1992: 108-109). In the context of 9.28, however, the use of *domino* might be explained by its juxtaposition with *famulus* in the very last line, in which Rome is described as a servant of the emperor, who is Jupiter on earth (10 *Roma sui famulum dum sciat esse Iovis*). One interpretation does not necessarily exclude the other, since Martial often expresses the phrase simply by using *dominus* and *deus* in close proximity (these instances have been collected in Scott 1936: 102-112).

[86] Suet. *Dom.* 15.3. It was not unheard of for prominent Romans of the Late Republic, as well as some emperors, to associate themselves with mime actors (Beacham 1991: 133-135) and some actors enjoyed imperial favor (Henriksén 2012: 123-124.

(1.5 *Do tibi naumachiam, tu das epigrammata nobis: | vis, puto, cum libro, Marce, natare tuo*). As Sven Lorenz has shown, epigrams 1.4-5 serve to construct for Domitian a persona of an informed reader who possesses extensive knowledge of epigram as a genre, which he calls an "epigrammatischer Kaiser."[87] Domitian's witty response in 1.5—matching his grand *naumachia* against the poet's paltry epigrams—thus presents a punchline to the more straightforward tone of Martial's request in the previous poem. Building on Lorenz, I would add that Domitian is presented not only as an expert on epigram, but more specifically as someone familiar with Martial's use of religious discourse in his poetic program. Martial makes Domitian respond to the serious tone of 1.4 with a joking epigram, which indicates that he understands the rules of the genre.[88] John Garthwaite interprets this epigram within the wider context of spectacles in the arena and theater referenced in Book 1. According to him, in 1.4 Martial asks for the emperor to be indulgent to the book, while Domitian's response misses the point of the petition and focuses on the unequal quantity of the reciprocation. It is not the content of the poetry, but its smallness that the emperor finds offensive.[89]

There is, however, a further layer of interpretation which has received some attention in the past and ties this epigram in with the theme of religious discourse found in programmatic poems so far. The threat that Martial and his book might end up in the water belongs to a much larger tradition of criticizing literary works by concluding that they ought to be destroyed by means of fire or water.[90] Alessandro Ronconi proposes that this theme might originate from purification

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[87] For the full discussion of 1.4-5 see Lorenz 2002: 112-120.
[88] The notion of reciprocity (*do…das*) can also be said to evoke the principle of *do ut des* which underpins the logic of Roman prayer and sacrifice.
[89] Garthwaite 2001: 78.
[90] This theme in Martial is self-deprecatory (3.100 and 9.58)but it can also be aimed at works by others (5.53 and 14.196). The Greek literary model is Lucillius' epigram which mocks a painter's works in the same manner (*AP* 11.214 with Floridi 2014: 411-413 and Burnikel 1980: 16-18). Martial transfers this motif from painting to works of literature. A more exhaustive list of examples from Latin literature can be found in Canobbio 2011: 451-452.

rites, since fire and water were common purifying agents. This "impure" poetry could be seen as potentially defamatory and, by extension, a curse (*malum carmen*), or, at a later stage, could simply come to mean bad poetry.[91] Domitian is here presented as someone familiar with Martial's use of religious discourse, and uses it to criticize his poetry jokingly, implying that it is "impure" by threatening to throw it into the water. The *naumachia* continues the theme of spectacle, which will carry over into the amphitheater games in the next epigram. Another iteration of this theme which is particularly interesting in the context of 1.4-5 is 9.58, the offering of a poetry book to a nymph. After a prayer in which Martial praises the nymph and his patron Caesius Sabinus, who built a temple to her, the nymph herself responds, saying that those who offer their poetry to a water deity are themselves suggesting what ought to happen with the books (7-8 *Nympharum templis quisquis sua carmina donat, / quid fieri libris debeat, ipse monet*). The Nymph, just like Domitian, is alluding to the destruction of Martial's poetry by means of water. Both epigrams are also similar in structure: they start with a request or prayer and are met with a snubbing response.[92] The main difference is that Martial offers his poems to the nymph (5 *excipe sollicitos placide, mea dona, libellos*), whereas in 1.4 the request to Domitian rests on the possibility that the emperor might come across them (*contigeris…forte*).

The themes of divinity, obscenity and spectacle are continued in the next two epigrams. As mentioned above, 1.6 elaborates on the divine status of the emperor and 1.7, addressed to Martial's patron Arruntius Stella, contains an obscene interpretation of the Catullan *passer*. It is notable that the first direct Catullan reference in Book 1 is both to a Lesbia poem and an obscene pun, which

[91] Ronconi 1964, esp. 968-969.
[92] Barwick 1932: 64 goes even further in proposing that the nymph's response should be treated as an epigram of its own (9.58b), just like in the case of the generally accepted 9.95 and 9.95b (for which see Henriksén 2012: 371-372).

will become important in the analysis of 1.34-35.[93] The thematic cluster of Catullus, obscenity and religion appears later in the book, starting with epigram 1.32. Martial states that he does not like Sabidius, but cannot say why, which is a reference to Catullus 85.[94] These themes are more prominent in epigram 34, which criticizes the exhibitionism of a matron called Lesbia.[95] This is also the first epigram in Book 1 that features a primary obscenity, because the adulterous Lesbia is not criticized for having sex, but for wanting to get caught (9-10 *numquid dura tibi nimium censura videtur? | deprendi veto te, Lesbia, non futui*).[96] The *censura* in the final couplet is possibly Martial's own, referring to his self-fashioning as a normative and controlling figure in his epigrams.[97] On an intratextual level, it could also refer to Catonian moral censorship in a wider sense, summoning up the various critiques of epigrams as morally detrimental which have already been mentioned. The promise of obscene verse, which has been laid out in the preface and teased in 1.7 and 1.32, has finally been fulfilled. Obscenity has again been paired with Catullus, this time through the name Lesbia. T. P. Wiseman observed that Catullus does not use primary obscenities in any poem where Lesbia is mentioned by name, choosing innuendos instead. Martial often inverts this Catullan tendency, using Lesbia's name in obscene contexts.[98] We cannot discern

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[93] Martial gravitates towards the interpretation of the Catullan *passer* as the penis both here and in other instances (7.14, 11.6). For the history of interpretations of the *passer* see Dyson 2007 and for Martial's reception of Catullus see Lorenz 2007.
[94] Mart. 1.32 *non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare: | hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te*. The only other time Sabidius is mentioned is in 3.17, where Martial mocks his gluttony and bad breath at a dinner party. Since bad breath (*os impurum*) is usually associated with oral sex in Martial, this might be yet another case of implicit obscenity being attached to Catullan verses. For a review of scholarship on Sabidius see Moreno Soldevila et al. 2019: 531.
[95] This is also the only attested instance of female exhibitionism in antiquity (Krenkel 1977).
[96] This poem also engages with *Amores* 3.14, in which Ovid complains about a girl who will not stay quiet about her sexual exploits; Ovid does not judge her actions, but rather the fact that she does not keep them secret (3-4 *nec te nostra iubet fieri censura pudicam, | sed tamen, ut temptes dissimulare, rogat*). Martial goes one step beyond Ovid by making Lesbia wish to be caught in the act (Howell 1980:179).
[97] O'Connor 1998.
[98] On the name Lesbia see Wiseman 1987: 130-137 and Swann 1998. Other examples in Martial are 2.50, 5.68, 6.23, 10.39, 11.62 and 99. This debasement of Lesbia is an example of Richlin's model of Roman sexual humor, which in its more sophisticated form relies on "staining" a familiar literary figure or an idea by placing it in an obscene context (Richlin 1992: 57-64).

anything about the social position of Martial's Lesbia, but since she engages in adultery and is juxtaposed with prostitutes, who are fonder of privacy than she is, it can be assumed that she is a matron. This brings Martial into an uncomfortable position, since in the concluding verse he only condemns her exhibitionism, implicitly condoning the act of adultery.[99] Martial must also address the possibility of his association of epigram with adultery mime, which has been hinted at in 1.4. Martial must now defend himself from criticism of his use of obscenity and the possible accusation that he condones adultery, which are brought before him by Cornelius in the following epigram. He justifies obscenity in poetry by comparing it to obscenity in a ritual context, which is a strategy he has already used in previously discussed poems:

> versus scribere me parum severos
> nec quos praelegat in schola magister,
> Corneli, quereris: sed hi libelli,
> tamquam coniugibus suis mariti,
> non possunt sine mentula placere.
> quid si me iubeas talassionem
> verbis dicere non talassionis?
> quis Floralia vestit et stolatum
> permittit meretricibus pudorem?
> lex haec carminibus data est iocosis,
> ne possint, nisi pruriant, iuvare.
> quare deposita severitate
> parcas lusibus et iocis rogamus,
> nec castrare velis meos libellos.
> Gallo turpius est nihil Priapo. (Mart. 1.35)

Cornelius, you complain that I write verses that are not strict enough and which a teacher would not recite in school; but these books, just like husbands to their wives, cannot bring pleasure without a penis. What if you told me to sing a wedding song without the words of a wedding song? Who dresses the Floralia and allows prostitutes to wear the modest garment of a matron? This law was given to light verses, that they cannot be pleasing unless they are provocative. Therefore, I ask you to put aside your seriousness and leave my jokes and games alone and not to wish to castrate my books. There is nothing uglier than a gelded Priapus.

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[99] Watson 2005: 71.

Cornelius' qualification of Martial's verses as *parum severos* might refer both to the language of his poetry and the possible accusation that he condones adultery. The use of *severus* also recalls the critical Cato from the preface, which suggests that Cornelius should be read as a similar censorious figure. It also recalls Cat. 16 again, in which Catullus is accused of being *parum pudicum* because of his verses. As previously discussed in the analysis of 1.4, Cat. 16 is not concerned with defending obscene language, but Martial has adapted for the purposes of his poetic program. The first justification for the obscenity of epigram is an analogy with marriage (3-5), which requires a sexual component to be pleasing. By focusing on the married couple, Martial presents himself as someone who supports traditional values, which also addresses the issue of his implicit support of adultery. In the next two lines he continues the marriage analogy, but shifts to the wedding ritual, stating that he would not be able to sing *talassio* without using the appropriate, namely obscene, language. The word *talassio* warrants further attention, as Martial uses it in different ways throughout his poetry. It is used metonymically to mean marriage or intercourse (3.93.25, 12.95.5) or as the name of a nuptial deity (12.42.4). In this poem, however, the term is most likely conflated with fescennine verses, a ribald wedding song that jokes at the expense of the bride and groom.[100] In her study of Roman marriage, Karen Hersch points out that the concept of fescennine verses is similar to triumphal songs, as they are both obscene songs, possibly with an apotropaic function.[101] This is an important observation, as it shows that Martial creates a parallel between obscene language that is considered proper within the boundaries of a religious

[100] Another poem by Catullus which might be considered relevant at an intertextual level is 61, the epithalamium for L. Manlius Torquatus. The theme of marriage and festal license does not seem to have a similar metapoetic role that it has in Martial, but the importance of similes in epithalamium as a genre might have some significance. Similes can be seen as a means of bringing together elements of life and nature that are seen as discordant (Feeney 2013), which might be felt in Martial's comparisons between poetry and marriage and poetry and ritual as a way of reinforcing the idea that obscenity belongs in poetry.
[101] Hersch 2010: 153-155; Citroni 1975: 117. The origin of the phrase is considered by Livy to be connected to the rape of the Sabine women (Liv. 1.9.12). For etymological considerations see Ogilvie 1965: 69.

ceremony and the obscene language of epigram. A similar strategy is employed in 1.4, in which the obscenity of the mocking songs of the triumphal procession, and the emperor's willingness to endure them, are key elements in Martial's defense of his poetry. The language with which he describes his poetry remains the same (*carminibus…iocosis*, *lusibus et iocis*), which reinforces the connection between the wedding and triumphal songs. He then mentions the Floralia, which brings us back to the prose preface. This connection is made stronger through the repetition of *iocus* and related words, which he often uses to describe Flora and her games. The paradoxical expressions of dressing up the festival performers and endowing a prostitute with the modesty of a matron by dressing her in a *stola* show the absurdity of trying to change nudity which is religiously sanctioned. The contrast between the clothing of matrons and prostitutes is also reminiscent of Ovid's juxtaposition of the colorful clothes worn at the Floralia and the white robes of the Cerialia. Cornelius is ultimately asked not to apply his strict standards to epigram (*deposita severitate*), which not only brings us back to the *severos* from the beginning, but also connects him to Domitian in 1.4, to whom Martial makes a similar request (*pone supercilium*).[102] Criticism of obscene language is presented violently as an act of "castrating" the poems, and the poem culminates in the final paradox of a castrated Priapus. This image brings back religious imagery with the juxtaposition of a castrated priest of Cybele and the ithyphallic god. The priests of Cybele are generally found in Martial as an object of mockery and a source of sexual humor, with no interest in their cultic activity. In fact, he uses *Gallus* more often as shorthand for a castrated male.[103] The

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[102] A similar request was also made in 4.14 to Silius Italicus, an epic poet, senator and follower of Stoic philosophy, on the occasion of the Saturnalia (6-12 *paulum seposita severitate…nec torva lege fronte, sed remissa | lascivis madidos iocis libellos*).

[103] This kind of conflation is first attested in Horace (*Sat*. 1.2.121 with Gowers 2012: 114-115). An important parallel is the end of *Priapea* 55, in which a statue of Priapus talks about losing its genitals and puns on the double meaning of *Gallus* (5-6 *quae si perdidero, patria mutabor, et olim | ille tuos civis, Lampsace, Gallus ero*). Other examples from Martial include 2.45; 3.24, 73, 81; 7.95; 11.72, 74. Of particular note are 11.72, another juxtaposition of Gallus and Priapus (*drauci Natta sui vocat pipinnam, | collatus cui Gallus est Priapus*) and 3.24, in which an Etruscan *haruspex* accidentally gets castrated while sacrificing a male goat (13-14: *sic, modo qui Tuscus fueras, nunc Gallus haruspex, |*

conclusion that can be made based on the use of religious imagery in this poem and elsewhere is that obscenity is not only important for the success of Martial's poetry, but also that it rightfully belongs in epigram, despite what any critic may say.

2.3 The Exceptions: Books 5 and 8

Having established how religious language plays a role in Martial's poetic program in Book 1, I will now move to an analysis of the proems of Books 5 and 8, which break away from the norm and do not feature obscene language. In these two books the complete lack of obscenity signals a shift in the overall tone in light of its presentation and dedication to Domitian. Even though these books appear to be an exception to the general trend of using ritual license to justify obscene language, I would argue that it is more notable that Martial remains reliant on religious themes even when justifying an apparently contrary poetic practice. The new imperial theme requires a change in religious dimension, and Martial's new *apologia* relies on the notion that the gods, and by extension the emperor, must be approached in a state of purity, which means that the book must be free of all "impure" elements, which in this case means the removal of obscenities. It is important to note that in both books these programmatic epigrams also introduce the topics of imperial patronage and being a client-poet. I will be discussing that aspect of these books in the next chapter.

The direct focus on the emperor results in a change of tone, so these books do not feature obscene language, something that Martial has previously insisted is a defining feature of his poetry. The reason given by scholars for this change in content is usually respect for Domitian's office of perpetual censor.[104] While the censorship plays an important role in Martial's reasoning, focusing

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dum iugulas hircum, factus es ipse caper). Alvar's study of Cybele's cult in Rome sees these epigrams as a reflection of Roman sexual humor in a wider sense, with no interest in the cult itself (Alvar 2008: 248-249).

[104] Book 5: Canobbio 2011: 77-78; Garthwaite 1998: 159; Howell 1995: 3-5; Book 8: Canobbio 2005: 129; Schöffel 2002: 19-20; Coleman 1998: 340.

on it does not provide the full picture. As I have discussed previously, Martial addresses the issue of the emperor as censor already in Book 1 when he justifies his poetry in terms of ritual license. In 1.4, Domitian's censorship is brought up when resolving the potential accusation that obscene language and adulterous themes reflect Martial's poor morals. The emperor, even as censor, is expected to understand that the contents of a poet's works are not an indicator of morality (7 *innocuos censura potest permittere lusus*). Furthermore, there is an important distinction between imperial epigrams in Book 1 and the two books in question. In the first book, the first contact with the emperor is imagined to have happened by chance (*contigeris*), while Book 5 is sent directly to Domitian (5.1.9 *tu tantum accipias*) and Book 8 begins with a prefatory letter addressed to him. I propose that Martial adopts a different model when it comes to direct communication with the emperor, which relies on the ancient notion of the importance of approaching the gods in a state of purity. This notion is what brings Books 5 and 8 together, and it replaces the analogy of ritual license which was established in Book 1.

The idea that gods should be approached in a state of purity in a Roman context is best expressed in Cicero's writings.[105] In *De Legibus*, the first law states that it is necessary for humans to be pure when approaching gods (2.19 *ad divos adeunto caste*). This law is later explained as mainly referring to the purity of mind, since he claims that the mind takes precedence over the body and a stained mind is impossible to purify.[106] Cicero's laws are based partly on existing Roman laws and customs and partly on Greek sources.[107] Even though the idea of the purity of mind comes from Greek thought, it must have been seen meaningful to Cicero's Roman audience

[105] For inner purity in the Greek world see Petrovic & Petrovic 2016.
[106] Cic. *Leg*. 2.24 *caste iubet lex adire ad deos, animo videlicet in quo sunt omnia; nec tollit castimoniam corporis, sed hoc oportet intellegi, cum multum animus corpori praestet, observeturque ut casta corpora adhibeantur, multo esse in animis id servandum magis. nam illud vel aspersione aquae vel dierum numero tollitur, animi labes nec diuturnitate evanescere, nec amnibus ullis elui potest.* Cf. Ov. *Fast*. 2.19-46 (esp. 45-46 *ah nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina caedis fluminea tolli posse putatis aqua!*) and *Ep*. 20.181-182.
[107] Lennon 2014: 1-3; Liebeschuetz 1979: 48-50.

and their ideas about law and religion.[108] The idea that Roman gods are interested in the personal morality of their worshipers is vaguely defined in existing sources, even though the maintenance of morality was of the highest importance for the Roman state.[109] This connection between religion and morality became more pronounced in the Augustan era and can be found in legal reforms and literature.[110] With this background of Roman religion and morality in mind, the increased emphasis on Domitian's divinity starting with Book 5 also brings in a change of perspective on his status as perpetual censor. Epigram 9.28, which I have previously discussed within the context of theater in the previous chapter, reveals Domitian's omniscience through the statement that he can read minds (8 *interius mentes inspicit ille deus*). This epigram comes from Book 9, and by the time of its writing Domitian has already been established as a divine figure in Martial's poetry. Since the emperor is both a divinity and a censor, someone greatly concerned with public morals, Martial is able to bridge the gap between religion and morality by presenting him as a god-emperor who is interested in the morality of his subjects. This shift in perception of the emperor will affect Martial's attempts to become closer to the imperial court, as he will have to create a new way of defining his poetry to make it suitable for the emperor's presence.

2.3.1. The Tonal Shift in Book 4

Before discussing Book 5, I will examine the introductory epigrams of Book 4 and the way they foreshadow the strategies of approaching the emperor which will be developed in later books. The fourth book opens with an epigram about Domitian's birthday and establishes the pattern of starting the introductory sequence with an imperial theme, which will continue in the following

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[108] Cic. *Dom*. 107.
[109] Liebeschuetz 1979: 39-54.
[110] Liebeschuetz 1979: 90-100.

Domitianic books.[111] Just as the first ten epigrams of Book 1, the first eight epigrams of Book 4 can be considered to be the "parade epigrams" which introduce the main themes, including the emperor, poetry and the book, water imagery and the contrast of black and white.[112] Merli notes that Books 4 and 5 are similar in that they both begin with a combination of epigrams to the emperor, scoptic epigrams and epigrams addressed to courtiers who would offer the poems to Domitian.[113] The first epigram of Book 4 celebrates Domitian's birthday and includes prayers for his longevity and the perpetuation of the Capitoline and Secular games. This could already be seen as a sign of departure from the festal license of the Floralia and the Saturnalia as Martial takes up festivals more closely aligned with imperial ideology. The emperor is presented not only as a divinity, but as a patron of the arts as well, which opens the possibility that he would accept Martial's poetry.

The theme of the presence of an improper poet in a place where he apparently does not belong appears in 4.6. In this epigram, Malisianus is said to want to appear chaste and innocent, but he is actually more shameless than the one who recites poetry written in Tibullus' meter in Stella's home (3-5 *cum sis improbior, Malisiane, | quam qui compositos metro Tibulli | in Stellae recitat domo libellos*). It is unclear who this anonymous reciter is supposed to be. Richlin proposes that this is Martial himself and that the poem illustrates the paradox of an obscene poet being secure outside of his domain.[114] I have previously mentioned 1.7, the first epigram to Stella, which contains an obscene interpretation of Catullus' *passer*. Although Martial may have felt confident

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[111] Even the first epigram of Book 6, which is addressed to Iulius Martialis, has the emperor in mind, since its theme is sending a draft of the book to be read before it could be delivered to the emperor (6.1.3-5 *quem si terseris aure diligenti, | audebit minus anxius tremensque | magnas Caesaris in manus venire*, with Merli 1993: 245-248).
[112] Lorenz 2004; Lorenz 2002: 120-125.
[113] Merli 1993: 242-243; see also Citroni 1988: 19-21.
[114] Richlin 1992: 30-31; see also Moreno Soldevila 2006: 129 and Lorenz 2004: 262-263. In the following epigram Martial will complain that the boy Hyllus is rejecting his advances, a theme which may be understood as encroaching on the territory of elegy (Obermayer 1998: 78-79).

in his ability to transgress boundaries in the case of a patron with whom he appears to be on friendly terms, he will be much more reserved in his endeavors to send the book to the emperor. In fact, Book 4 contains far fewer lexical obscenities than many other books and relies on innuendos and wordplay instead.[115] The first epigram establishes Domitian as a divine figure, which already places him at a great distance from the poet. Therefore, in epigram 4.8 he will resort to sending the book through an intermediary.[116] The importance of imperial freedmen as intermediaries is explained well by Statius in the preface to Book 5 of the *Silvae*. The addressee is Abascantus, Domitian's *ab epistulis*, and the preface introduces an epicedium written for his deceased wife Priscilla. Statius claims that he tries to give honors to every member of the imperial court through his poetry (Stat. *Silv*. 5.pr.9 *latus omne divinae domus*), since those who worship the gods in good faith also love their priests (10-11 *nam qui bona fide deos colit, amat et sacerdotes*). The praise of Abascantus and Priscilla also indirectly serves to praise Domitian.[117] Statius' use of religious language is also striking, because it provides important parallels with Martial's reasoning. Calling the palace a divine home (*divinae domus*) implies the emperor's divinity, and the courtiers are by extension priests, as they enjoy a proximity to the god which is denied to other mortals. Although Martial does not call imperial freedmen priests, the analogy between the palace and a temple is present. On a potentially similar note, he does claim that the palace, through the emperor's divine benevolence, has the power to make imperial freedmen take on the personality of the emperor (9.79.7-8 *nemo suos—haec est aulae natura potentis—, sed domini mores Caesarianus habet*).

[115] Only around six out of 89 epigrams in Book 4 feature explicit language, whereas sexual innuendos and puns are found in more than twice as many epigrams (Lorenz 2002: 121 n.40).
[116] It is possible that the prospect of sending the book to the Palatine may have been hinted at as early as Book 1 (Geyssen 1999).
[117] For the praise of imperial freedmen in Statius see Leberl 2004: 229-241.

The addressee of 4.8 is Euphemus, who is believed to have overseen Domitian's dining room (*tricliniarches*). The first half of the poem lists the appropriate activities for the first nine hours of the day, starting with the morning *salutatio*, while the second half elaborates on the appropriateness of epigram for leisure and dinnertime on the tenth hour. Euphemus is asked to present the book to the emperor during the banquet, when he would presumably be most agreeable:

> 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. (Mart. 4.8.7-12)

> The tenth hour is the time for my little books, Euphemus, when you carefully regulate ambrosial banquets and good Caesar relaxes with the heavenly nectar, holding moderate cups in his mighty hand. Then let in the jokes; my Thalia is afraid to wantonly approach a morning Jupiter.

The aspect of Domitian found in this epigram appears to be the more jovial emperor found in the beginning of Book 1, where he is expected to be more receptive to indecent poetry. The epithets used to describe the banquet create a divine atmosphere (*ambrosias…dapes*, *aetherio…nectare*) which does allow for light verse (*iocos*). It appears that Martial's choice to reduce the number of obscenities in this book may have been motivated by its proximity to the emperor, in spite of the convivial context. There is also a hint in the final couplet that there is more to the emperor than this one image, since Martial states that his Muse, Thalia, would not be so confident (*timet ire*) if it were approaching Domitian in the morning (*matutinum…Iovem*). Thalia's gait is described as wanton (*gressu…licenti*), which evokes the programmatic *licentia* of the epigrams. In programmatic statements, *licentia* is connected specifically to the nudity and language of mime (1.pr.19 *festosque lusus et licentiam vulgi*; 8.pr.12-13 *mimicam verborum licentiam*). It is therefore possible that *licenti* refers specifically to obscene poetry which Martial

is hesitant to present to Domitian. There is a similar situation in 10.20, a poem in which Thalia is instructed how to reach the house of Pliny the Younger. Since she is said to be drunk, Martial advises her to arrive in the evening, at a time appropriate for drinking and revelry, when even the sternest individuals would read his poems (19-21 *haec hora est tua, cum furit Lyaeus, | cum regnat rosa, cum madent capilli | tunc me vel rigidi legant Catones*). Both Pliny and Domitian are imagined as men dedicated to serious pursuits. Pliny dedicates his time during the day to intellectual pursuits (12 *totos dat tetricae dies Minervae*), while the adjective *matutinus* modifying Jupiter/Domitian hints at the emperor's role as patron. The adjective *matutinus* ties the final line back to the first line, in which the main activity of the first two hours of the day is the morning *salutatio* (4.8.1 *prima salutantes atque altera conterit hora*). This ring composition brings Martial's poetry out of the safety of the banquet setting into the world of patronage, further exposing the asymmetrical and distant relationship between him and the emperor. The notion that Thalia is only confident enough to approach the home of a serious individual in the evening and within a sympotic context means that Martial will have to change the way he delivers his poetry. The shift in tone in a book that might make its way to the emperor under more relaxed circumstances suggests that he will have to resort to even more radical strategies when approaching the emperor in a more official setting in future books.

2.3.2. Book 5

Book 5 opens with a hymnic invocation of Domitian and a dedication of the book to him. The first epigram addresses the emperor from a distance, as he is presumably somewhere in Italy, and throughout the first 19 epigrams Martial slowly progresses towards directly addressing the emperor and asking him to become the poet's patron.[118] The first six lines of 5.1 are a catalogue

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[118] For the introductory sequence of Book 5 see Garthwaite 1998; Merli 1993: 241-243; Citroni 1988: 21-23.

of geographical locations in Italy frequented by the emperor, namely his villas in the Alban Hills and Antium, as well as Caieta, Circeii and Anxur. It is notable that Caieta and Circeii are called the "nurse of Aeneas" and the "daughter of the Sun," which are also Vergilian references (5.1.5 *Aeneae nutrix seu filia Solis*).[119] It has been argued that these references reveal the Augustan aspirations of this book, whose ultimate goal is to argue that Domitian should be a patron of the arts in the same way Augustus was.[120] In a regular cletic hymn, it was common to include many locations relevant to the deity in order to reach them and give them praise at the same time. Other hymnic element include the *du-Stil* (1 *tibi*; 3 *tua*; 9 *tu…te*) and anaphora of *seu* in the catalogue.[121] The second half of the poem deals with the actual dedication of the book (1-2 *hoc tibi…Caesar*):

> mittimus, o rerum felix tutela salusque,
> sospite quo gratum credimus esse Iovem.
> tu tantum accipias: ego te legisse putabo
> et tumidus Galla credulitate fruar. (Mart. 5.1.7-10)

> I send (this to you, Caesar) fortunate protector and savior of the world, whose safety we believe guarantees the gratitude of Jupiter. You may only accept it; I will assume that you have read it and proudly enjoy the credulity of a Gallus.

Here the apostrophe to Domitian has strong connections with imperial ideology. In the phrase *rerum felix tutela salusque*, the twofold interpretation of *rerum* as the Roman state and the whole world combines the worldly image of the emperor with the divine image he was creating.[122] The next line again forges a connection between Domitian and Jupiter which can already be seen in 4.1, since the safety of the emperor becomes a condition through which Jupiter's gratitude is measured. As a sign of his devotion to Jupiter, Domitian finished the construction of his temple

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[119] Cf. Verg. *A*. 7.1, 11.
[120] For the Augustan dimension of Book 5 see Canobbio 2011: 66 and Canobbio 2005: 134-135.
[121] For hymnic elements see Agosti 2010. There is archaeological evidence for imperial residences in the Alban Hills and Antium, but the significance of the other three locations for Domitian is uncertain.
[122] Canobbio 2011: 72-73.

on the Capitoline and instituted the *Certamen Capitolinum* in his honor. The conclusion brings a twist to the story, however. Domitian is only expected to accept the book, leaving it to Martial's imagination whether or not he has read it. The meaning of the phrase in the final line remains unclear. A supposed stereotypical credulity of the Gauls is poorly attested in sources like Caesar, but there is also a possibility that *Galla* refers to Galli, the priests of Cybele. This interpretation is attractive in light of the absence of obscenity in the book, since the castration of a Gallus has already been used as a metaphor for the removal of obscenity in Martial's poetry (1.35.14-15 *nec castrare velis meos libellos | Gallo turpius est nihil Priapo*).[123] The paradox of castrating an erotic book could be heightened by the narrator's use of the adjective *tumidus* to describe himself. Other cognates of this word (*tumere*, *tumor*) have been used to describe sexual arousal in Latin poetry, which further emphasizes the tension in the book.[124] Another hint at the paradox of the book could be the juxtaposition of the narrator's belief (*credimus*) in the safety guaranteed by Jupiter in line 8 and his credulity (*credulitate*) in line 10.

The allusion to the Galli creates a thematic link with following epigram, which deals explicitly with the nature of the fifth book. Epigram 5.2 is addressed to the wider readership of Martial's books. The primary addressees are the more "chaste" audience of matrons, boys and girls, to whom the book is dedicated. The reason for the exclusion of obscenity in this book is explicitly connected with the dedication of the book to the emperor:

> matronae puerique virginesque,
> vobis pagina nostra dedicatur.
> tu, quem nequitiae procaciores
> delectant nimium salesque nudi,
> lascivos lege quattuor libellos:
> quintus cum domino liber iocatur;
> quem Germanicus ore non rubenti

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[123] Cf. Ov. *Am*. 3.14.29-30 and *Pont*. 1.1.39-44 with Canobbio 1995.
[124] Cf. Priap. 83.43, Mart. 11.61.11.

> coram Cecropia legat puella.
>
> Matrons, boys and maidens, my page is dedicated to you. And you, who prefer bolder wantonness and uncensored wit, read the four naughty books. The fifth book jokes with the master; Germanicus may read it without blushing before the Cecropian girl.

After the intended audience of the first two lines, Martial turns to a reader who might not appreciate this book. These individuals are told to enjoy his previous books, whose contents are *nequitiae* and *sales*, terms used elsewhere by Martial to describe his poetry.[125] The adjectives modifying these words also raise interest, since *procax* is found only here in Martial, and is possibly connected to the first poem of the *Priapea*.[126] On the other hand, *nudus* has been used to signify obscene poetry or words, and in the context of Martial's poetics evokes the imagery of the Floralia.[127] These phrases bring up both the trifling and obscene poems usually associated with his epigrams, which are now relegated to the previous four books, here described as *lascivos*.[128] This separation draws further attention to the difference between this book and its predecessors, as all the salient features of epigram are explicitly not found in Book 5. Due to the different nature of this book, Martial must assure his readers that its contents will not be entirely anomalous; therefore, he emphasizes that the book is still full of jokes (*iocatur*), albeit such that Domitian could read without shame. The presence of Minerva (*Cecropia…puella*) should not be surprising since she was Domitian's tutelary deity, but her virginity also guarantees that the book must remain free of obscenity. Calling her a *puella* also draws a similarity with the *puellae* from the opening line to which the book is dedicated. The introduction of Minerva's divine presence alongside the quasi-divine emperor as a reason for the chasteness of the book anticipates epigrams 5 and 6, in which the book will be sent to the imperial palace. These are the first traces of the idea that a book

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[125] *nequitiae*: 6.82; 11.15, 16; (cf. *nequam* for Martial's readers in 3.69.5). *sales*: 3.99; 10.9; 13.1.
[126] *Priap*. 1.1-2 *carminis incompti lusus lecture procaces, | conveniens Latio pone supercilium*.
[127] Examples of *nudus* referring to obscenity: Plin. *Ep*. 4.14.4; Quint. *Inst*. 8.3.38.
[128] This adjective is frequently used to describe the salacious contents of the epigrams (Canobbio 2011: 82-83).

must be "purified" by being rid of obscenities before it can be presented to the emperor. Since the emperor has been presented as closer to the gods than humans, Martial will again attempt to use intermediaries to bring his book physically closer to the emperor in Book 5. Unlike in Book 4, however, where the book was to be presented after hours during an informal gathering, the book will now be sent to the court in a more official manner, which warrants a change in tone and appearance.

The first intermediary encountered in Book 5 is Sextus in 5.5, who is generally believed to be Domitian's *a bibliothecis*, the person responsible for admission and classification of books in the Palatine library, partly because he is characterized as a worshiper of Palatine Minerva (1 *Sexte, Palatinae cultor facunde Minervae*).[129] He is urged by Martial to accept his book and find it a place in the library somewhere close to the works of Albinovanus Pedo, Domitius Marsus and Catullus. These authors are already familiar from the preface of Book 1, where they are listed as Martial's predecessors in writing light verse (1.pr.10-11 *sic scribit Catullus, sic Marsus, sic Pedo*). In the final couplet, Martial also asks Sextus to place the Domitian's epic about the civil war of 69 next to the *Aeneid*. Just as in the first book, Martial is taking an opportunity to position himself within the literary canon. Additionally, there is an opportunity to praise Domitian's poetry by comparing him to Vergil.[130] Although Domitian had abandoned his literary ambitions when he acceded to the throne, Martial would still occasionally refer to them. The way Martial describes the relationship between Sextus and Domitian is also notable, since he emphasizes the proximity that the courtier has to the emperor. This proximity is more than just physical, since he also benefits from the proximity to the *ingenium* of the god-emperor, here in the sense of literary talent (2 *ingenio frueris qui propiore dei*), which also anticipates Domitian's poetry in the final couplet.

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[129] Moreno Soldevila 2019: 555 and Nauta 2002: 343-344.

[130] For an overview of sources on Domitian's literary activities see Coleman 1986: 3088-3095.

Domitian has already been imagined as Apollo in his role as the god of prophecy with the reference to his ability to inspire the oracular responses of the Fortunae at Antium in 5.1.3 (*tua…responsa*). The Apollonian imagery now gains an even deeper Augustan connection as it extends to the Palatine and poetry. Sextus is also privy to the emperor's innermost thoughts (3-4 *nam tibi…secreta ducis pectora nosse licet*), which would make him the ideal person to bring the book closer to the palace. Euphemus played a similar role in 4.8, since it was implied that he would know at what moment the emperor would be in the mood for reading Martial's poems. There is, however, no talk of presenting the book to the emperor just yet, since the book has only made its way to the imperial library.

The following epigram comes one step closer to presenting the book to the emperor. In 5.6, Martial addresses Parthenius, Domitian's *cubicularius*, an important figure in the court who held control over the access to the emperor, which makes him another ideal intermediary for presenting poetry to Domitian. Parthenius is first mentioned in 4.45, where he is offering incense to Apollo on the occasion of the birthday of his son Burrus. The offering to Apollo is fitting since Parthenius is also a poet, and Apollonian imagery will continue in this epigram as well. Although the epigram as a whole is addressed to Parthenius, Martial first calls on the Muses to ask Parthenius to do him a favor (5.6.2 *Musae, Parthenium rogate vestrum*).[131] This provides an additional level of mediation, since Parthenius is imagined to be so close to the emperor that even he cannot be reached directly. The next part of the poem (3-6) wishes for the wellbeing and longevity of Parthenius and his son, and is followed by the actual request to make the book available to the emperor:

> admittas timidam brevemque chartam
> intra limina sanctioris aulae.

[131] Parthenius is often associated with the Muses and poetry in Martial (9.49, 11.1, 12.11).

nosti tempora tu Iovis sereni,
cum fulget placido suoque vultu,
quo nil supplicibus solet negare.
non est quod metuas preces iniquas:
numquam grandia nec molesta poscit
quae cedro decorata purpuraque
nigris pagina crevit umbilicis.
nec porrexeris ista, sed teneto
sic tamquam nihil offeras agasque.
si novi dominum novem sororum,
ultro purpureum petet libellum. (Mart. 5.6.7-19)

May you admit this brief, trembling book within the threshold of the more sacred court. You know the times when Jupiter is favorable, when he shines with his own gentle expression, with which he often does not refuse anything to those who ask. You should not fear unreasonable prayers; my page, which has grown between black ornaments, decorated with cedar and purple, has never sought anything great or burdensome. Do not present it, but hold it as if you had nothing to offer or do. If I know the master of the Nine Sisters, he will ask for the book of his own accord.

The first line of the request is reminiscent of the vocabulary of 4.8. Just as Euphemus, Parthenius is asked to bring the book into Domitian's presence (*admittas*, cf. 4.8.11 *tunc admitte iocos*) and the book is described as timid, which is reminiscent of Thalia being afraid to approach Domitian in her usual wanton way (4.8.9 *gressu timet ire licenti*). The space in which the book is supposed to be received is markedly different from the emperor's ambrosial feast and the convivial atmosphere of Pliny's home after hours. The word *aula* could be used to denote a royal residence in Augustan poetry, and it specifically denotes the imperial palace by the Flavian period.[132] The *limina sanctioris aulae* refers to the emperor's private chambers, but the use of the adjective *sanctus* adds a religious undertone to the phrase and suggests that the palace is like a temple, which would make Domitian's inner chamber correlate with the most sacred part of the temple.[133] This

[132] Canobbio 2011: 124.
[133] Sauter 1934: 172; Canobbio 2011: 123.

suggestion is also confirmed by Paul Zanker's study of Domitian's self-representation based on archaeological and literary evidence.[134] According to Zanker, the imperial palace played an integral part in the emperor's self-fashioning as someone who is close to the gods, and as a result also distant from humans. Martial's distance and apprehensiveness, as well as the sacred nature of the palace, reflect this aspect of the imperial image. In fact, Domitian is equated with Jupiter already in the following line within the context of Parthenius being familiar with the disposition of the earthly Jupiter (*nosti tempora tu Iovis sereni*), just like Sextus in the previous poem. Parthenius is expected to use this familiarity to approach the emperor when he is in a good mood, in which he does not usually say to entreaties (*quo nil supplicibus solet negare*). These entreaties are also described as prayers (*preces iniquas*), which is fitting given the atmosphere of the palace as a temple. Communication with the emperor is so far described in religious terms, his palace is a temple and requests to him are prayers, so by extension the physical book will become an offering. This is also suggested by the luxurious appearance of the book, since it is described as decorated with cedar, purple and black bosses. The book's new appearance might be a way for it to stand out, but it also suggests Martial's experiment in creating a new identity for his poetry as something more appropriate for a court context. The Apollonian imagery is present again as Domitian is called the master of the Muses (*dominum novem sororum*); the Latin interpretation of Apollo's epithet Μουσαγέτης, the leader of the Muses, as *dominus* is unprecedented and provides an imperial version of the concept.[135] This title also continues the theme of Domitian as the prophetic Apollo in 5.1 and his literary output in 5.5. Finally, despite the timidity of the book, its author shows some confidence in his assumption that the emperor will ask for it himself (*ultro*). If

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[134] Zanker 2002.

[135] Although it is a much later source, the Third Vatican Mythographer provides a translation of Μουσαγέτης as *Musarum princeps* (Vat. Myth. 3.8.19).

the book is imagined as an offering, then there appears to be some hope that it will be pleasing to the god-emperor. From the beginning of the book, Martial had merely hoped for admission to the palace and an audience with the emperor, saying nothing of the actual outcome of his request.[136]

In the following epigrams, down to 5.19, Martial continues to praise Domitian's reign through Augustan parallels. The Domitianic program of rebuilding Rome after the devastating fires in previous decades is praised in 5.7 through the lens of Ovidian intertextuality.[137] This poem is followed by the first of a cycle of epigrams which praise the *lex Iulia theatralis*, an Augustan law regarding theater seating arrangements revived by Domitian. These epigrams serve to establish Domitian as the new Augustus and his age as the new Augustan age. At the end of the sequence, in 5.19, one single flaw of this new age is revealed to be the lack of a good patron of the arts, and Domitian is asked to fulfill this role. Although it remains unclear if this request resulted in a successful outcome, the strategy used in the first few epigrams of Book 5 remains instrumental for understanding how Martial can use religious thinking to reshape his poetic program.

2.3.3 Book 8

Book 5 has laid a foundation upon which Martial will build an even more elaborate sequence of imperial epigrams in Book 8. One significant difference is the removal of imperial freedmen as intermediaries, which was hinted at through their relegation to the closure of Book 7. In the final epigram of Book 7, Martial addresses Crispinus, a member of Domitian's court, and urges him to deliver the book to the emperor.[138] The final position of this epigram is a marked departure from the frontal position of the imperial intermediaries such as Euphemus in Book 4 and

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[136] For the emergence of this notion in the early imperial period see Millar 1977: 468-469.
[137] Closs 2021.
[138] For Crispinus see Moreno Soldevila 2019: 168-169 with bibliography.

Sextus and Parthenius in Book 5. Book 7 begins with a sequence of 8 epigrams which anticipate Domitian's return from his Sarmatian expedition in 92.[139] The emperor as reader is introduced in 7.12, an epigram whose main theme is a defense against allegations of writing slanderous verses against real individuals. Martial wishes that Domitian would always read his poetry with a kindly disposition and accept the joking verse to which his ears are already accustomed (1-2 *sic me fronte legat dominus, Faustine, serena | excipiatque meos, qua solet aure, iocos*). The suggestion that the emperor already has a habit of reading epigrams (*solet*) is reminiscent of the speculation in the final two lines of 5.6 that he will ask for the book of his own accord (*ultro…petet libellum*). In 7.99 Crispinus is depicted in terms similar to other intermediaries. He is introduced as someone close to Domitian and, more importantly, enjoys his presence when he is in a good mood:

> Sic placidum videas semper, Crispine, Tonantem,
>   nec te Roma minus, quam tua Memphis amet:
> carmina Parrhasia si nostra legentur in aula
>   —namque solent sacra Caesaris aure frui—,
> dicere de nobis, ut lector candidus, aude:
>   'temporibus praestat non nihil iste tuis,
> nec Marso nimium minor est doctoque Catullo.'
>   hoc satis est: ipsi cetera mando deo. Mart. 7.99

> So may you always see the Thunderer when he is calm, Crispinus, and may Rome love you no less than your Memphis. If my poems should be read in the Parrhasian palace (for they often enjoy being listened to by the holy Caesar), venture to say this about me, as a kind reader: "He has something to offer to your times, he is not too much inferior to Marsus and learned Catullus." That is enough, I will leave the rest to the god.

The first line suggests that Crispinus knows the right time to present the poetry, just like Euphemus and Parthenius. The second couplet begins by praising the imperial palace using the heavenly epithet *Parrhasia*. Earlier in Book 7, Martial had praised the architect Rabirius for his amazing skill in constructing the imperial palace, for which he used the same epithet (7.56.2

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[139] Merli 1993: 248-249.

Parrhasiam mira qui struis arte domum).[140] The conclusion of the poem is that, if the statue of Olympian Zeus were to need a temple worthy of housing it, Rabirius would be commissioned to build it. This conclusion is a further allusion to the sacral nature of the imperial palace. The palace is also a place where Martial's poetry can presumably be heard often, since Domitian seems to enjoy it. This could also be a reason why he needs no formal introduction by Crispinus, only the claim that he is someone on par with Domitius Marsus and Catullus. Crispinus combines the roles of Sextus in 5.5, who is asked to position Martial within the literary canon, and Parthenius in 5.6, whose task is to nonchalantly make the book available to Domitian. Once this task is complete, there is nothing else for the intermediary to do, since everything is left to the god-emperor himself (*ipsi cetera mando deo*). The book of poetry is now left to speak for itself. While it might be attractive to claim that the end of Book 7 anticipates the beginning of Book 8, in which Martial's book stands on its own before the emperor, it is impossible to make this claim with any certainty. The final poem may have been part of the original seventh book, or it may have been added in a later republication as a way of forging a thematic continuity between the two books.

The reason for the changes between Book 7 and Book 8 may have been to give more space to Domitian himself. The presence of the emperor in Martial's books has been steadily growing since Book 4, culminating in Book 8, in which about a quarter of epigrams belong to what might be called an overarching "imperial theme." It remains unclear what motivated this increase, with scholars arguing that Martial began to increasingly reflect imperial propaganda in his poetry, or that he was trying to court an increasingly tyrannical and paranoid Domitian. What seems certain is that Book 8 reflects Domitian's increased physical presence in Rome after years of absence due to military campaigns.[141] In fact, the imperial epigrams of Book 8 first focus on his return to

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[140] For Rabirius and the imperial palace see Citroni 2019.
[141] For the social and historical context of Book 8 see Coleman 1998.

Rome, moving to the palace in the middle and praising the emperor's munificence by the end. The book opens with a prose preface addressing Domitian and ends with a request for the emperor to become a patron of poets.

The prose preface begins with the statement that all of Martial's books make requests to the emperor (8.pr.3-4 *omnes quidem libelli mei…tibi supplicant*). The direct supplication on this scale has so far only been seen in Book 5, although smaller requests to Domitian can be found in other books.[142] According to Martial, this prayerful demeanor is what draws the emperor's attention to his books and guarantees that they will be read. Even though the theme of this book is the emperor, Martial claims that there will still be jokes present in order to provide some variety to the panegyric tone of the book (8-9 *aliqua iocorum mixtura variare temptavimus*). The second half of the preface deals more explicitly with justifying the lack of obscene language in the book, stating that this decision is due to its direct orientation towards Domitian. There is, however, an additional religious dimension to the justification:

> quamvis autem epigrammata a severissimis quoque et summae fortunae viris ita scripta sint, ut mimicam verborum licentiam affectasse videantur, ego tamen illis non permisi tam lascive loqui quam solent. cum pars libri et maior et melior ad maiestatem sacri nominis tui alligata sit, meminerit non nisi religiosa purificatione lustratos accedere ad templa debere. quod ut custoditurum me lecturi sciant, in ipso libelli huius limine profiteri brevissimo placuit epigrammate. (Mart. 8.pr.11-19)
>
> Furthermore, although epigrams were written by the most serious men in the highest positions in such a way that they seem to imitate the verbal license of mime, I have not allowed these here to speak as wantonly as usual. Since the better and the greater part of the book is attached to the majesty of your holy name, let it be remembered that one should not approach temples without being cleansed by religious purification. So that my readers know that I will be upholding this rule, it seemed proper to express it at the very entrance of this book in a very short epigram.

[142] Such examples include 2.91-92 and 9.18.

This preface takes a different perspective on the justification for writing epigram than the one in Book 1. In the preface of Book 1, 5.5 and 7.99, Martial had attempted to establish an epigrammatic tradition which included Catullus and Marsus. Unlike the preface of Book 1, which was concerned with readers who were of a high status and moral standing, the preface of Book 8 is concerned with these individuals as authors of obscene epigrams. Despite these literary predecessors writing such poetry, Martial still asserts that he will not be writing in the same manner. The statement that obscene poetry imitates the verbal license of mime (*mimicam verborum licentiam*), evokes the imagery of the Floralia from the preface of Book 1, which is something Martial now claims to avoid. Alberto Canobbio proposes that Book 8 presents a shift from the established dependence on the Floralia to imperial ideology, with the court context now affecting the book on all levels.[143] I would add that this dismissal of the Floralia was visible already in Book 5. In 5.2, lascivious jokes are associated with nudity (*salesque nudi*) and dismissed in favor of jokes more appropriate for the divine presence of the emperor and Minerva, his patron goddess. The dismissal of obscenity is not directly connected with the book's anticipated physical presence, although it can be inferred from the likening of the palace to a temple. In Book 8, Martial's reasoning is stated in more explicit and outwardly religious terms. The book is associated with the emperor's name, which is also holy because of his divinity (*ad maiestatem sacri nominis tui alligata*), and since it is approaching his domain, the palace-temple, it must purify itself. The "purification" which the book must undergo is the removal of obscenity. At the end of the preface, Martial assures his readers that he will uphold this religious regulation by "performing" this purification in the first epigram. This epigram stands at the threshold of the book in the same way as the book itself stands at the threshold of the imperial palace:

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[143] Canobbio 2005: 135-137.

Laurigeros domini, liber, intrature penates
  disce verecundo sanctius ore loqui.
nuda recede Venus; non est tuus iste libellus:
  tu mihi, tu Pallas Caesariana, veni. (Mart. 8.1)

My book, about to enter the master's laurel-crowned home, learn to speak more chastely from a modest mouth. Nude Venus, begone! This is not your book! You come to me, Caesar's Pallas.

The palace is crowned with laurel, which not only anticipates the military and triumphal imagery which will be a major theme of the book, but also hints at Apollonian and poetic imagery in a way similar to Book 5. The adjective *lauriger* has been associated with Apollo since the Augustan period and its use in a triumphal context is first attested among Flavian poets.[144] This duality lends itself well to the goal of describing the emperor as both a skilled warrior and a patron of the arts. The book is urged to speak in a more modest and scrupulous manner (*sanctius…loqui*), which is in stark contrast to the stereotypical outspoken and lascivious language of Martial's books mentioned in the prefaces of this book (*lascive loqui*) and Book 1 (*Latine loqui*). This contrast is also exemplified in the juxtaposition of Venus and Minerva. In Martial, Venus is usually used metonymically when talking about sex or sexual organs, but there are also examples of the goddess herself being contrasted with Minerva.[145] The multiple meanings of the goddess' name lend themselves to Martial's goal of creating an image of obscenity not being part of the book. The fact that the goddess is nude not only reinforces the sexual connotation of her name, but also evokes the nudity of the Floralia, hinting again at the departure from the norm in this book. Instead of Venus, Minerva is invoked with the epithet *Caesariana*, emphasizing her importance to Domitian and the increased presence of the emperor in the book. This simultaneous dismissal of Venus and

[144] *Lauriger* in an Apollonian context: Prop. 3.13.53, 4.6.54; Ov. *Ars* 3.389; Mart. 9.28.9; in a triumphal context: Mart. 3.66.3, 7.6.6, 7.8.8; Sil. 5.412; Stat. *Theb*. 12.520.
[145] Cf. Mart. 1.102 and 5.40 (Moreno Soldevila 2019: 606-609 with bibliography).

invocation of Minerva is the act of "purification" which was announced in the preface. With the new nature of the book thus established, Martial will move into what could be argued to be his most ambitious poetic project yet: the elevation of epigram into a genre worthy of court poetry.

The second and third epigram of Book 8 continue to exemplify this new poetic project. The theme of Domitian's return to Rome in January of 93[146] is introduced in the second epigram, which features the reaction of Janus to seeing the emperor. In addition to the preface and 8.1, which serves as the programmatic beginning of the book, this epigram acts the beginning of the thematic cluster of epigrams about the emperor's return. Janus is called the father of the calendar (8.2.1 *fastorum genitor parensque Ianus*) and his inclusion, alongside Minerva, further suggests that the book is attempting to orient itself towards imperial ideology. Janus' wish to have additional faces (3 *tot vultus sibi non satis putavit*) with which he could watch and praise Domitian could also be alluding to the temple of Janus Quadrifrons which was being built on the Forum Transitorium. The cult statue of a four-faced Janus thus offered both Martial and Statius a trope which they could deploy in their panegyrics.[147] Towards the end of the poem, one of Janus' reactions to seeing Domitian is to grant to the lord of the world and the god of the universe (6 *terrarum domino deoque rerum*) a lifespan longer than Nestor. Martial's conclusion is to ask Janus to grant Domitian immortality instead. The juxtaposition of *domino* and *deoque* evokes the title *dominus et deus* and the conclusion is reminiscent of the prayer for the emperor's longevity in 4.1. The rejoicing of Janus is extended to all the gods in 8.4 with the narrator's statement that the gods are also offering sacrifices in fulfillment of vows upon Domitian's return.

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[146] Even though the book was most likely not published until late 93 or early 94 (Citroni 1989: 223-224).

[147] Cf. Mart. 10.28 and Stat. *Silv*. 4.1.12-14. Although Domitian started the construction, it was dedicated by Nerva in 96. See also Darwall-Smith 1996: 120-124.

Since Martial's epigrams have now denounced obscenity as their defining feature in order to elevate the genre to something truly worthy of the emperor, it was necessary to offer a new context for the nature of epigram. In 8.3, an exchange between the poet and one of the Muses illuminates how epigram can remain justified within a new Augustan context. In the first half, the poet complains that he does not need to write any more books since he has reached worldwide fame and his poetry will outlast physical monuments. The Muse responds sharply by calling him ungrateful and asking if he truly wants to abandon sweet trifles (11 *dulcis…nugas*). She then dissuades him from writing tragedy and epic, which would make him into a school author and thus despised by his current readership. The dislike for becoming a school author has been expressed as far back as 1.35, although this time it is done within an explicitly Augustan context. The passage is reminiscent of many classic instances of *recusatio* found in Augustan poets and shows that Martial is attempting to align epigram with the "smaller" genres, such as elegy and bucolic.[148] Nevertheless, in the end the poet is urged to remain true to those principles of epigram which are associated with satire, namely helping humans understand their morality through reading poetry (20 *agnocat mores vita legatque suos*).[149] It is evident that the use of religious discourse in this book is limited to explaining the absence of obscenity and that religious language was not used in programmatic statements which inaugurate Martial's Augustan pretensions. Although it would have theoretically been possible for him to assume the role of the poet as a priest of the Muses, he never explicitly refers to himself using this imagery. This could be because of the difference in social conditions in Flavian Rome and Martial's persona of the client-poet. Both for Martial and Statius, Catullus' poetics of self-deprecation offered a model upon which they could build a less

[148] Cf. Verg. *E*. 6, Hor. *Carm*. 4.15, Prop. 3.3, Ov. *Am*. 1.1. For a discussion of 8.3 see Canobbio 2005: 139-141.
[149] Cf. Hor. *Sat*. 1.1.24. For Martial and the satirical tradition see Sullivan 1991: 63-73.

formal relationship with their patrons.[150] In Martial's case, a shift away from a satirical and self-deprecatory persona towards a more serious presentation of epigram, especially in Book 8, does not appear to have been a successful step towards his self-fashioning as an imperial poet.

2.4 Conclusion

This analysis has shown that religious themes play an important role in Martial's defintion of his poetry and the construction of both his own persona, as well as that of his readers. Building on a larger poetic tradition of creating a sacred space that legitimizes otherwise indecent poetry, Martial uses analogies with festivals of license as a way of justifying the obscene nature of his epigrams. The first festival is the Saturnalia, which creates temporal boundaries within which the poet can explore tensions between genres. The second is the Floralia, which creates spatial boundaries within which Martial can define epigram. With their religiously sanctioned nudity, Flora's games provide an analogy for obscene poetry. The necessity of nudity in the games mirrors Martial's claims that generic conventions require obscene language to be present in epigram in order for it to be proper. Martial also owes a great deal to Ovid in this regard, since the *Fasti* serve as a model for using Flora as a goddess associated with minor genres, as well as exile poetry, since Augustus in *Tristia* 2 provides a foil against which Martial can construct an image of Domitian as an ideal reader. In the second half, I have shown that even when he distances himself from obscenity, Martial still reaches for religious analogy to justify the new direction of his poetry. Books 5 and 8 start with a shift in spatial context, as the book is now being presented to the emperor in his palace. Because the palace is imagined to be like a temple, a new analogy is made between removing obscenity from the book and purification before entering the temple. Both books also

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[150] Roman 2015.

attempt to elevate epigram as a genre by showing that it is capable of imperial praise by signaling that in can be equal to Augustan non-epic genres, such as elegy and pastoral. Due to a shift in social and cultural conditions, however, Martial cannot truly hope to achieve the same status that was held by Augustan poets and their patrons. Instead, a client-poet like Martial had to rely on a different system of patronage and a much less accessible emperor for material support. In the next chapter, I will continue the discussion of how religious thinking shapes Martial's relationships with his patrons and the emperor.

3. Chapter 2: Prayer, Patronage and Imperial Praise

The topic of this chapter is Martial's use of prayer within the context of epigrams about patronage. I will begin with an overview of scholarship in which he studies of Roman religion and social history intersect, before moving to recent scholarship on Roman religion which will inform my methodology in this chapter. To introduce this topic in Martial, I first look at epigrams about birthday celebrations in order to establish his treatment of non-imperial patrons as humans, not divinities. I then move into discussion of the interplay of patronage and prayer. I argue that Martial does not present his non-imperial patrons as analogous to gods and that petitions to patrons are not like prayers. Instead, it is possible to discern a differentiation between prayers to gods and petitions to patrons within a system in which each plays an important role. Clients are expected to pray to gods to increase the wealth of their patrons, and the patrons are expected to give material support to their clients. In the second half, I will discuss epigrams with petitions to Domitian. The emperor's quasi-divine status requires a more complicated model of communication in which gods can serve as intermediaries and petitions to the emperor can be viewed as analogous to an offering or prayer.

3.1. Patronage and Religion in Martial: Preliminaries

In the study of Roman religion and Roman cultural history, it is sometimes noted that the relationship between gods and humans has striking parallels with the relationship between clients and patrons. The social institution of patronage was an important aspect of Roman culture, and according to Richard Saller it has three distinguishing features: it involves reciprocal exchange, it

lasts for a duration of time and it must be asymmetrical.[151] On the human-divine side, which is asymmetrical by nature, the relationship is characterized by *pietas*, a sense of duty, which was reciprocal and whose obligations were binding for a long time. The notion of *pietas* was not limited solely to relationships with the gods, however, but also extended to familial and political contexts.[152] These similarities show that Romans viewed the reciprocal relationships with both gods and patrons in the same light. Both of these types of relationships also relied on *fides*, the faith that fulfilling all the appropriate conditions will grant benefit and support to both parties.[153] In the Roman understanding of their own social history, the importance of mutual faith was so deeply rooted that the institution of the cult of Fides was attributed to Numa Pompilius, Rome's second king.[154] In the case of Martial, the importance of patronage went far beyond simple considerations of reciprocity, reaching into important questions of duty, gratitude and greed.[155] His epigrams on gift exchange also have *fides* as their central theme and reflect on interpersonal relations in Roman society.[156]

Until recently, most scholars have not taken a more detailed look these parallels within the social context of Rome. The new approach of "lived ancient religion," pioneered by Jörg Rüpke, emphasizes the importance of an individual's agency within the wider social context and their personal appropriation of religious practices. The three key elements of this model are agency, identity and communication.[157] For the purpose of this chapter, I will focus on communication, as

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[151] Saller 1982: 1. Other recent studies of personal patronage are Militello 2019 and Ganter 2015. For civic patronage see Nicols 2014.
[152] King 2003: 301-307.
[153] Morgan 2015: 160; Scheid 2015: 113-114. The language of trust is rarely explicit in the context of Roman patronage, since many elite authors believed it was not genuine and mutual trust was viewed as a risk that individuals had to take in order to succeed (Morgan 2015: 60-65).
[154] D.H. 2.75.2-3; Liv. 1.21. See also Militello 2019: 3-6.
[155] Sullivan 1991: 121.
[156] Spisak 1998.
[157] For studies of Roman religion as lived religion see Rüpke 2018 and Rüpke 2016, and for more general theorizing on the nature of ancient Mediterranean religion see Rüpke 2015.

I find it to be the most productive aspect to apply to Martial's epigrams. According to this model, religious communication is not concerned with correct conduct, but with creating a successful outcome, which means that it is up to the individual to choose the method which is most likely to result in success. Rüpke's own interests in religious communication revolve around sacrifice and dedication, which is less pertinent to my interest in exploring how intra-human communication maps on to divine-human communication within the context of Roman patronage, for which I find prayers and hymns to be a more promising avenue of research.[158] Importantly, part of this new trend is Maik Patzelt's study of Roman prayer within the context of lived religion. According to Patzelt, prayer should not be viewed as a normative, formalized procedure, but as a set of practices and gestures derived from the individual's experiences and ambitions.[159] His conclusions regarding non-elite prayer in Rome are the most interesting for the topic of this chapter. By studying the attitudes found in the writings of Seneca, a member of the senatorial elite, towards non-elite social conduct and religious practices, Patzelt argues that the ambition of non-elite worshipers is to create a personal relationship based on reciprocity with the gods which is modeled on a client's relationship with their patron. The patron-client relationship therefore serves as a base upon which individual worshipers create their own strategies of prayer, which is informed by their own experiences and is most suitable to their goals.[160]

While it can be further argued whether or not the claim that the Roman mode of prayer was influenced by behavior specific to Roman social relations is valid, I will leave that question open. Nevertheless, I believe that Patzelt's approach provides a valuable starting point for approaching the intersection between divine-human and patron-client relationships in Martial. My methodology

[158] For religious communication in general see Rüpke 2016: 121-138 and Rüpke 2001; for dedication see Rüpke 2018 and for sacrifice see Rüpke 2020.
[159] Patzelt 2018b: 162-164. For an "urban" approach to prayer in the city of Rome see Patzelt 2021.
[160] Patzelt 2021: 103-108; Patzelt 2018b: 180-182.

in this chapter will be informed by the lived religion approach, with its emphasis on individual appropriation and communication, especially Patzelt's theoretical framework which brings out the individual worshiper's creativity in approaching prayer and gaining favor. By reading Martial in light of this scholarship, I aim to show that his approach does not merely equate non-imperial patrons to divine figures but creates a more nuanced look at patron-client relationships in which prayer plays an important role.

Before discussing Martial, however, it is important to expand more on the intersection between gods and patrons as providers of favor. Given the identical principles on which these two types of relationships are based, the question is raised if this can result in human patrons being regarded as divine figures. This question is also warranted by the presence of the ancient notion that humans who give help to others come close to being gods. In Latin literature, an early instance of this kind of thinking can be found in a fragment of the comic author Caecilius Statius, which states that a human is like a god to another human if he knows his duties (Caecil. *Com*. 264 *homo homini deus est, si suum officium sciat*).[161] The term *officium* refers to rules and obligations proper to a category of people, which also includes favors and reciprocity.[162] As we have seen, all of these elements are also proper to relationships with the divine. In the Late Republic, Cicero's *Pro Ligario* serves as a testimony for the use of this idea in a rhetorical and political context. Cicero anticipates Caesar's potential ascent to divinity by saying that humans who help others come closest to being like gods (*Lig*. 37 *homines enim ad deos nulla re propius accedunt quam salutem hominibus dando*). Caesar's apotheosis is conditioned by his helping Ligarius, which means that

[161] A similar example is a proverb preserved in the 2nd century grammarian Diogenianus, *Paroem*. 2.1.46 ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπου δαιμόνιον: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀπροσδοκήτως ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων σωζομένων· καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν διά τινος εὐδαιμονούντων, ὡσανεὶ ἔλεγεν· ἄνθρωπος τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ θέσει θεὸς γίνεται. In fact, a 17th century editor of ancient paroemiographers cites Plin. *Nat*. 2.18 (*deus est mortali iuvare mortalem*) and Juv. 5.132 (*quadringenta tibi si quis deus aut similis dis…donaret*) as explanations for this proverb.
[162] Saller 1982: 15.

it would be achieved as a result of his actions and merit, not his ancestry.[163] In the Flavian period, Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* offers some reflection on the fact that helping other humans is the only proper expression of divinity for humans and a way towards divinization (*deus est mortali iuvare mortalem*).[164]

Divine worship of humans in Roman culture is a wide-ranging and contested issue, so I will focus on worship of the *genius* and its connection to birthday rituals, since this topic is the most relevant for the depiction of patron-client relationships in Martial's poetry.[165] Dedications to the *genius* of a master or patron by slaves and freedmen are found in epigraphic evidence from the Augustan period onward, with some evidence of similar practices from Roman comedy.[166] According to Kathryn Argetsinger, birthday rituals presented an important step towards the recognition of a person as a deity, since it involved the worship of an individual's *genius*.[167] The participation of slaves, freedmen and clients in a religious ritual dedicated to their masters or patrons elevated their relationship to a religious dimension. While it remains unclear what was ultimately worshiped in these rituals, the *genius* of the patron or the patrons themselves, what truly mattered was the expression of devotion towards one's superiors through the act of worship.[168]

In Martial's birthday epigrams involving non-imperial patrons, we find no explicit mention of worshiping the *genius* or any trace of treating the patron as a divinity. In fact, the word *genius*

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[163] Cole 2013: 129-131.

[164] Plin. *Nat*. 2.18 *deus est mortali iuvare mortalem, et haec ad aeternam gloriam via. hac proceres iere Romani, hac nunc caelesti passu cum liberis suis vadit maximus omnis aevi rector Vespasianus Augustus fessis rebus subveniens*. For the importance of helping people in Pliny's literary program and its connection to contemporary Stoic philosophy see Citroni Marchetti 1982.

[165] For strategies of divinization in the Late Republic see Cole 2013. For emperor worship and its place in Roman religion see Gradel 2002; for the Greek East in the Imperial period see Price 1984 and 1980, and for the Flavians in particular see Friesen 1993.

[166] Rives 1992: 39-43.

[167] Argetsinger 1992. In terms of relevance of this phenomenon for emperor worship, the cult of the *genius* of Octavian Augustus remains contested, with Gradel 2002: 109-139 and Flower 2018: 299-310 arguing that there was no such cult. Worship of the emperor's *genius* became a feature of state cult starting with either Caligula or Claudius (Gradel 2002: 162-197).

[168] Argetsinger: 1992: 193.

never appears in the meaning "divine or spiritual part of each individual" pertaining to humans in the *Epigrams*.[169] In his monograph on Roman birthday poems, Emanuele Cesareo notes this absence of explicit mentions of the *genius* in Martial and explains it through the influence of Greek epigram. Cesareo's overarching argument is that birthday poetry is an innovation found in Latin literature and did not fully develop as a literary phenomenon on the Greek side.[170] Additionally, he states that the poems of Martial and Statius present a new development in Latin birthday poetry, since they were more informed by contemporary philosophy and rhetoric and show less interest in religious elements.[171] Instead of speculating about the influence of literary traditions, my approach to epigrams about patrons' birthdays will attempt to explain the absence of the *genius* as a part of Martial's strategy for stripping any divinity and divine agency away from his non-imperial patrons.

There are several notable examples of references to birthday rituals for patrons. The first is a series of three epigrams written for Argentaria Polla, Lucan's widow, on the occasion of her late husband's birthday (7.21-23).[172] The first poem praises the day of his birth (*illa dies*) and censures the emperor Nero for having Lucan killed. The second poem has references to ritual silence (*favete sacris*), but the vocabulary is vague and general. In the third poem, Martial asks himself what to pray for, saying that he will pray for Polla to continue commemorating her husband (*tu, Polla, maritum / saepe colas*). A similar case is Atedius Melior commemorating his deceased

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[169] The word *genius* appears only three times in Martial. In 7.12.12, Martial swears by the *genium Famae*, which may simply be a reference to the goddess herself (*TLL* 6.2.1828.16 "de feminis mortalibus et deabus"). In 7.78.4 it refers to an individual's lack of common sense and good taste (*habes nec cor, Papyle, nec genium*, with Galán Vioque 2002: 437-438; *TLL* 6.21839.47 "sensum vitae fruendae"). In 6.61(60).10 Martial states that poetry that intends to last forever ought to have *genium* (TLL 6.2.1840.26 "gratia et lepos nativus") instead of *ingenium* (technical contrivances). See also Salanitro 1998 for the use of *genius* in Martial and Spisak 1994 for a more detailed dicussion of 6.61(60).

[170] Cesareo 1929: 43-63; for a full treatment of Martial's birthday epigrams see pages 134-152. In the Greek epigrammatic tradition, the earliest extant birthday epigrams are by Crinagoras of Mytilene, who lived in the 1st century BC, and they are mostly dedicated to Roman patrons and contain no references to religious activity (Ypsilanti 2018: 72-74; Argetsinger 1992: 180-181, esp. n. 12).

[171] Cesareo 1929: 136.

[172] Galán Vioque 2002: 168-169; Buchheit 1961. Statius has one poem written for the same occasion (*Silv*. 2.7).

friend Blaesus on the occasion of his birthday (8.38.12 *ad natalicium diem colendum*), which he turned into a feast in his name (*Blaesianum*). The examples of Polla and Melior are concerned with perpetuating birthday rituals for deceased individuals as acts of commemoration, which is quite different from the following example, which refers specifically to clients engaging in a birthday ceremony for their patron.

The topic of epigram 10.87 is the birthday of the lawyer Restitutus. This is possibly the same as Claudius Restitutus, a lawyer mentioned in one of Pliny's letters.[173] Martial begins by asking for ritual silence and says that birthday rituals are being celebrated:

> Octobres age sentiat Kalendas
> facundi pia Roma Restituti:
> linguis omnibus et favete votis;
> natalem colimus, tacete lites. (Mart. 10.87.1-4)

> Come, let pious Rome take note of the October Kalends of eloquent Restitutus. Give favor with all your tongues and prayers. We are celebrating a birthday; lawsuits, be quiet.

The phrase *pia Roma* does not only anticipate the religious dimension of the birthday, which will be brought up in the following lines, it also suggests that all of Rome is expected to take part in the festivities. Ritual silence is also connected to the closing of the law courts (*tacete lites*), which could be motivated by the fact that all Kalends were *dies nefasti*, which meant that legal proceedings were not allowed during those days.[174] The fact that Restitutus is a lawyer also makes the use of this phrase feel more personalized to this particular patron. As in the previous examples, the verb used to describe birthday celebration is *colere*, which denotes worship and devotion in a general sense. An intertextual link can be found with the account of the *processus consularis* on the Kalends of January in *Fasti* 1, in which there is also a call for ritual silence and

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[173] Plin. *Ep*. 3.9; Moreno Soldevila 2019: 524.
[174] For the importance of ritual silence in Roman ritual also compare Cic. *Div*. 1.102 and *Leg*. 2.19, 29.

silence of the law courts (71-73 *linguis animisque favete; | nunc dicenda bona sunt bona verba die. | lite vacent aures…*). The elaboration of the *favete linguis* formula is similar to Martial's. Although both celebrations happen on different Kalends, they are brought together by a similar religious atmosphere. The otherwise private celebration of a patron's birthday has been amplified through the use of this language and is being treated as a public holiday. Other useful comparisons for 10.87 are Tibullus 1.7, which ends with a description of Messala's birthday, and 2.2, written on the occasion of Cornutus' birthday.[175] The first elegy contains a cletic hymn to Osiris, at the end of which the god is invited to celebrate Messala's birthday and honor the *genius natalis* with games and dances (49-50 *huc ades et Genium ludis Geniumque choreis | concelebra*), while both mention offerings of incense (53 *tibi dem turis honores*; 2.2.3 *urantur pia tura focis*). 2.2 begins with the arrival of the birthday god and a call for ritual silence (1-2 *dicamus bona verba: venit Natalis ad aras: | quisquis ades, lingua, vir mulierque, fave*). Besides the calls to speak good things, or speak nothing at all in 2.2 (*dicamus bona verba*, *lingua…fave*), which are comparable to Martial's expressions *favete votis* and *favete sacris*, there is no mention of celebrating the Genius or giving him offerings. What follows is a brief prohibition from sending cheap gifts, such as wax tapers or napkins, which are typically sent by clients during the Saturnalia (10.87.7 *gelidi…Decembris*). In contrast to this prohibition, the rest of the poem is a series of injunctions regarding the various presents that Restitutus is expected to receive. The majority of the featured gifts are from those who have used the services of Restitutus as a pleader, which includes jewelry and antiques. Following these are the clients who are expected to provide gifts appropriate to their own means, such as a hunter sending a hare. The final two lines are a rhetorical question from Martial to Restitutus, asking what he thinks an appropriate gift from a poet should be, implying

[175] For a full overview of depictions of Roman birthday rituals in Latin poetry see Argetsinger 1992: 180-190.

that this poem, or perhaps a collection of poems, is the gift (19-20 *si mittit sua quisque, quid poetam / missurum tibi, Restitute, credis?*).[176] The proposed logic of this poem will also be important in understanding individual approaches to religious communication in the context of patron-client relationships. Just as every one of Restitutus' clients, including Martial, brings the gift they believe to be the most appropriate based on their own experiences and abilities, so do individuals engage in modes of prayer they believe will result in the most successful outcome. As I have mentioned previously, Argetsinger claims that the main focus of birthday rituals was the act of devotion towards the patron, not the cultic activity. It is impossible to know if Martial actually engaged in such ritual worship of a patron's *genius*, but we do know that he chose not to depict explicitly it in his poetry. Nevertheless, it is curious that Martial did not use an established Roman socio-religious custom in order to amplify the praise of his patrons, choosing instead to describe it in the vaguest possible language. The aim of the following section is to illustrate the relevance of Martial's choice not to treat non-imperial patrons like divinities through readings of epigrams which feature a different use of prayer as strategy which allows a client to successfully gain a patron's favor.

3.2. Religion in epigrams about non-imperial patrons

As an introduction to the place of gods and prayer within the context of social relationships, I will analyze 12.77, a satirical epigram which mocks an individual's accident during a prayer. In Martial's satirical epigrams, those performing religious practices, such as prayers, sacrifices and vows, are generally mocked and ridiculed. This forms a marked opposition to the depiction of religious practices in epigrams about friends and patrons, in which case a more serious and solemn

[176] Nauta 2002: 105-107.

tone is used.[177] More importantly, this epigram offers an example of how commentary on a religious ritual, like prayer, can also be used to gain insights into the world of social relations in Martial's world. In this epigram, Aethon's indiscretions towards Jupiter resulted in a punishment worthy of a Roman parasite:[178]

> multis dum precibus Iovem salutat
> stans summos resupinus usque in ungues
> Aethon in Capitolio pepedit.
> riserunt homines, sed ipse divum
> offensus genitor, trinoctiali
> affecit domicenio clientem.
> post hoc flagitium misellus Aethon,
> cum vult in Capitolium venire,
> sellas ante petit Paterclianas
> et pedit deciesque viciesque.
> sed quamvis sibi caverit crepando,
> compressis natibus Iovem salutat. (Mart. 12.77)

> As Aethon was calling on Jupiter on the Capitol with many prayers, standing on tiptoe and bending backwards, he farted. People laughed, but the father of the gods himself was offended, and punished the client with three nights of dining at home. After this disgrace, when wretched little Aethon wants to go to the Capitol, he first seeks Paterclus' latrines and farts ten or twenty times. But even though he has taken precautions against breaking wind, he calls on Jupiter with clenched cheeks.

In terms of structure, the first six lines describe the event and its consequences while the second half describes Aethon's precautions. In the first half, key words appear at the end of lines 3 (*pepedit*) and 6 (*clientem*), functioning as a sort of punchline. This poem operates on both the level of social and religious ritual, and this dichotomy is visible already in the first line with the verb *salutare*, which denotes greeting both in a religious and social context. Because of the immediate context of prayer, readers encounter the verb *salutare* with a religious valence, as it can

[177] Neger 2023. Other such satirical epigrams target prayer (12.90), sacrifice (3.24) and vows (8.80).
[178] The main studies of 12.77 are Agosti 2009 and Watson & Watson 2015: 83-85.

refer to greeting the gods as part of religious observance.[179] Aethon is performing a comical exaggeration of traditional Roman prayer to celestial deities, which would be performed standing with outstretched arms and palms facing up.[180] The verb *salutare* is, however, also known in the context of the *salutatio*, a customary morning greeting that clients would perform for their patrons.[181] This meaning is activated later in the poem once Aethon has been identified as a client (*clientem*), and provides an insight into the social dimension of the poem. In Martial, *salutatio* is presented in a negative light, always being described as a waste of time and a danger to the client's health and safety, and this epigram is no different.[182] Aethon is an example of the parasite, a figure used throughout Latin literature to represent all the negative aspects of patron-client relationships. In Martial, parasites are used to illustrate the hardships of living as a client, with 12.77 focusing on those who are in search of dinner invitations but end up hungry.[183] Aethon's name also evokes hunger, since this was a nickname of Erysichthon, the mythical king of Thessaly who was punished by Demeter with an endless hunger for cutting down her sacred grove.[184] This comic allusion to mythical hunger only adds to the overall bathos of a poem whose main twist is breaking wind in one of Rome's most monumental temples.

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[179] *OLD* s.v. *salutare* 1b "gods, in religious observance" with Agosti 2009: 80 and Bowie 1998: 353-354. Other examples include Pl. *St*. 623; Cato *Agr*. 2.1; Cic. *S.Rosc*. 56.

[180] For Roman prayer in general see Hickson Hahn 2007. Ancient sources for gestures in Roman prayer have been collected in Appel 1909: 184-214.

[181] For the history and development of the morning *salutatio* in the Imperial period see Ganter 2015: 203-250 and Goldbeck 2010: 263-281. The practice is believed to have started in the 2nd century BC and did not go through any formal changes in the early Principate, even though the social context surrounding it changed radically (Goldbeck 2010: 280).

[182] For *salutatio* in Martial see Militello 2019: 173-208.

[183] For the parasite in Martial see Damon 1997: 146-171.

[184] The myth of Erysichthon was told in Ov. *Met*. 8.738-878 and Callimachus' *Hymn to Demeter*. For the name Aethon see Moreno Soldevila 2019: 22 and MacKay 1961. It is also possible that the Greek origin of the name signals that Aethon was an upstart freedman who is being mocked for imitating the elite mode of prayer (Patzelt 2018a: 230-231). Vallat 2008: 349-350 claims that the name Aethon is a reference to one of the horses of Helios, arguing that Aethon is shown as animalistic throughout the poem.

Since praying in the Capitoline temple is a form of public religious communication, it carries with itself a certain amount of risk associated with any kind of public performance.[185] This is made evident from the fact that Aethon's public disgrace (*flagitium*) resulted in him being ridiculed by bystanders (*riserunt homines*) in addition to divine punishment. In his Book 12 commentary, Michael Bowie suggests that Jupiter's punishment is part of a joke about religious practices, since breaking wind also broke ritual silence.[186] I would propose that, in keeping with the existence of a religious and social dimension in the poem, Jupiter's reaction is also similar to that of an offended human patron. A useful parallel is epigram 6.88, in which the first-person speaker is a client who addressed his patron, Caecilianus, by his name during the morning *salutatio*, instead of using the formal greeting *domine*. This indiscretion meant that he would not receive the dole from the offended patron. In the second half of the poem, we see how Aethon is dealing with the consequences of his accident. The punishment of *domicenium*, dining at home, was especially humiliating for a Roman client, since not being invited to dinner is viewed as detrimental to one's status.[187] The very human (and Roman) nature of the punishment makes the entire situation seem more like a patron being offended by a client's fart during a *salutatio* and refusing to invite him to dinner than a demonstration of divine anger.[188] Aethon's reaction to this unfortunate event, however, is not to reflect on the mode of his prayer and the fickle nature of patronage. He instead chose to take precautions in order to avoid the same accident by going to the latrines and farting in advance, which makes it seem that his propriety is not to offend his

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[185] Patzelt 2018b: 170; Rüpke 2016: 121-122. The conspicuous and exaggerated nature of the prayer might also mean that it could be perceived as insincere, just as in the case of the epigram about the legacy hunter Maro, who openly prays for his sick elderly victim to recover, but then turns to pray for him not to be saved (12.90.1 *pro sene, sed clare, votum Maro fecit amico*).

[186] Bowie 1998: 355-356.

[187] Militello 2019: 135-145; Citti 1992: 50-55. For a comic description of the negative effects dining at home can have on a client see Mart. 2.11 with Williams 2004: 63.

[188] The adjective *misellus*, which is a diminutive of *miser*, can also refer to hunger, a meaning supported by similar uses in comedy (Agosti 2009: 91-95).

patron again.[189] The second occurrence of the verb *salutare* in the final line more clearly conveys the double meaning of greeting as part of social and religious ritual.[190] The many prayers (*multis…precibus*) from the beginning have been replaced with clenched buttocks (*compressis natibus*) by the end, further emphasizing the comic and human dimension of Aethon as a disgraced client rather than a worshiper of Jupiter. When read for a second time, now with full consideration of the social aspect, the epigram is revealed also to be a criticism of arrogant patrons.

Another indication that Martial is critical of patronage in this epigram is the language used to describe patrons and clients. In literary sources, *amicus* or *sodalis* were the preferred terms used by both sides. In Martial, the terms are used in a positive sense when depicting proper and idealized ways patrons should conduct themselves.[191] On the other hand, he does not use the terms *dominus* and *cliens* when he wants to show deference, but in situations in which he wants to shed a critical light on patron-client relationships.[192] Aethon's classification as a client in line 6 also brings into question the figure of Jupiter, who could be imagined as not only as a god, but also as a patron. If the term *clientem* is focalized through Jupiter, then the fact that he took offense to Aethon's behavior and punished him places him at the same level of any other patron criticized by Martial.

Furthermore, the word *cliens*, just like *salutare*, also has a religious dimension. One popular ancient etymology of *cliens* was that it was derived from *colens*, the participle of *colere*, a verb also associated with the worship of divinities.[193] The fact that *cliens* could sometimes also

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[189] The *sellae Patreclianae* might be referring to an existing monumental complex of public latrines excavated on the Capitol (Rodríguez Almeida 1989: 249-254).
[190] Bowie 1989: 358 considers this action to be a parody of purification rites before entering a temple, which would make it another element of the mock-religious theme of the poem.
[191] For the language of *amicitia* in literary sources see Saller 1982: 11-15 and for *amicitia* between Latin poets and their patrons see White 1978. For the contrast between *amicus* and *dominus* in Martial see Bianconi 89-93.
[192] Bianconi 2005: 71; Sullivan 1991: 120. For Martial's use of *domine* as a form of address see Dickey 2002: 91-93. It is also possible that the first-person speaker in 6.88 intentionally addressed his patron by name, refusing to address him as *dominus* since that would imply a master-slave relationship (Grewing 1997: 560-561).
[193] For ancient etymologies see Maltby 1991 s.v. *cliens*. The fact that *cliens* could sometimes also refer to the votary of a god further obscures the boundaries between human and divine categories

refer to the votary of a god further obscures the boundaries between human and divine categories.[194] Seneca and Pliny the Elder, who are writing some time before Martial, do not explicitly make this connection, but some of their passages strongly imply the connection between the verb *colere* and clients.[195] As we have seen from Martial's birthday epigrams, this verb was also used to denote birthday celebrations that possibly included the worship of a patron's *genius* by clients. The duality of a client as a social and religious category is something Martial does not see as part of an ideal relationship with one's patron, which is demonstrated in epigram 2.55, which directly confronts the idealized *amicus* and the unsavory *cliens*. The patron Sextus wishes to be given respect while the first-person speaker wishes to give him affection (1 *vis te, Sexte, coli; volebam amare*), but the speaker concludes that, if he is to fulfill his patron's request, it is impossible to still show him genuine affection (3 *sed si te colo, Sexte, non amabo*).[196] The central theme of the epigram is the juxtaposition of *colere*, a verb that refers to cultivating a proper relationship with both gods and humans, and *amare*, which belongs to the same word family as *amicus* and is used to describe idealized patrons. The ancient etymological connection between *cliens* and *colere* also appears to be active in this poem. Ultimately, it appears to be impossible to be a *cliens* and an *amicus* at the same time. Sextus wishes his clients to adopt a mentality of someone who conflates gods and patrons and treats them along the same lines, which is visible from the characterization of a client's duties as devotion (*coli*), while the speaker wants to strive towards a more idealized human relationship (*amare*).

The idea that gods and patrons could be perceived in a similar way is not unique to Martial. As I have mentioned previously, Patzelt has shown that Seneca's writings can offer insights into

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[194] Agosti 2009: 87. Examples include Plaut. *Poen*. 1180; Hor. *Ep*. 2.2.76-81 (with Brink 1982: 310-311); Apul. *Met*. 7.5. The noun *cultor* can also sometimes be used as a euphemism for a client (White 1978: 81 with footnotes).
[195] Sen. *Ep*. 47.18; Plin. *Nat*. 34.17.
[196] For social relations in 2.55 see Williams 2002: 189-190 and Spisak 1998: 246.

elite Roman attitudes towards the way non-elite clients view gods and patrons. A surviving fragment from *De Superstitione* describes the Capitol as a place where people prayed to the gods in a variety of different ways which they believed would catch the gods' attention and grant them a desirable outcome.[197] The speaker in the fragment appears to reveal the negative attitude that the senatorial elite may have felt towards the variety of non-elite modes of prayer practiced in public spaces like the Capitol. In a letter to Lucilius, Seneca criticizes those who throng around temples to greet the gods in the morning, claiming that such duties are more suited for human affairs, alluding to the morning *salutatio*.[198] According to Romans like Seneca, clients attempt to forge a relationship with the gods using patron-client relationships as a model, since they are founded upon personal interaction and a logic of reciprocity. In the Aethon epigram, Martial is engaging in the same discourse from the perspective of a client. He is problematizing the traditional ideas about modeling communication with the gods on the way a client communicates with their patron, bringing into question the possibility of a successful outcome. By treating a god the same way as a patron, Aethon has opened himself up to being punished by a god in the same way as he would be punished by a patron, through the denial of a dinner invitation. Furthermore, the vocabulary used in the epigram (*clientem*) shows that this is not only commentary on religious discourse, but also social relations, since Jupiter's behavior is predicated on existing negative experiences clients have had with their patrons.

A client's negative experiences and criticisms of patronage do not need to be masked or hidden in Martial's epigrams; in fact, patronage is one of his most pervasive topics. Although a religious theme is not a common element of an epigram about patronage, the epigrams that do

[197] Sen. fr. 34-37 Haase = ap. August. *C.D*. 6.10 with Patzelt 2021: 103-109.
[198] Sen. *Ep*. 95.47 *vetemus salutationibus matutinis fungi et foribus adsidere templorum: humana ambitio istis officiis capitur, deum colit qui novit* (with Patzelt 2021: 101-102).

employ it can offer a unique insight into a client's strategies. One productive avenue in this regard is the place of prayer in patron-client relationships. Although I have shown that Martial is critical of traditional models of patronage since they place the client in a defenseless position, this was nevertheless the reality for many clients in Martial's social world. There are some examples of an expanded model of communication which gives clients some form of agency against bad patrons. This approach imposes a distinction between human and divine action, in which communication with the divine is achieved through prayer, and communication with mortal patrons is achieved through petitions. The clients first pray to the gods to enrich their patrons, after which they petition their patrons for material gain. As is common in Martial, however, many aspects of social relationships are best outlined at times when their failings are most visible. The fact that Martial is narrating a negative outcome should not distract from the expectation of proper social interactions underlying the poem.[199] A good example of a breakdown of a client's faith in their patron is epigram 1.99, which also includes prayer as a tool ideally used to secure a patron's favor. The subject of the epigram is the avarice of Calenus, a patron and legacy hunter who was generous while he was poor. He, however, became increasingly stingy after receiving large sums of money from inheritances, to the great disappointment of his clients, who now use their prayers against him. The pointed conclusion shows them paradoxically wishing for Calenus to get even richer, in hopes that his increased wealth, and the resulting increased stinginess, will prove fatal:

> non plenum modo vicies habebas,
> sed tam prodigus atque liberalis
> et tam lautus eras, Calene, ut omnes
> optarent tibi centies amici.
> audit vota deus precesque nostras
> atque intra, puto, septimas Kalendas
> mortes hoc tibi quattuor dederunt…

[199] Walter 1998: 224.

quid dignum meritis precemur istis?
optamus tibi milies, Calene.
hoc si contigerit, fame peribis. (Mart. 1.99.1-7, 16-18)

You used to have less than two million, Calenus, but you were so lavish and generous and elegant that your friends wished for ten million for you. A god heard our vows and prayers, and within about seven months you gained that sum from four deaths…
What should we pray for in return for such kindness? We wish you a hundred million, Calenus. If you get it, you will starve to death.

Avarice is the most prominent theme in this poem and has received the most attention from commentators.[200] It should also be noted that prayer plays an important role in characterizing the relationship the clients have with their patron. It is first employed as a way for the clients to express their gratitude, as well as their own self-interest, by wishing for Calenus to get even richer, expecting that he would host even more lavish dinners in return. In the larger scheme of the poem, prayer could have hypothetically been left out since it would not detract from the theme of avarice. The fact that Martial chose to include prayer shows that it was important to him to give the clients a form of agency that gives them some power over the patron. The characterization of the clients as *amici* and *sodales* shows that they viewed their act of prayer to be part of proper conduct in response to a patron who is performing his duties properly. They pray to the gods to make Calenus richer, thus becoming to an extent responsible for his increase in wealth. Since their expectations have not been met, they are able to retaliate by means of prayer. Even though the final prayer is part of the comic conclusion to an epigram about a negative example of patronage, we can still glimpse the existence of a system in which this prayer plays a role. Since the clients have done their part, the blame falls fully on the patron for not continuing to maintain the relationship. From

[200] For the avarice as the main theme of 1.99 see Citroni 1975: 300-301 and Howell 1980: 310-312.

this epigram we are able to discern a model of patron-client relationships in which clients have some form of agency in the relationship with their patrons.[201]

3.3 Prayer and imperial patronage

With this role of prayer within the patron-client relationship in mind, I will turn to the figure of the emperor as patron. By the Flavian period, the emperor was regarded as the most powerful benefactor and patron, and having access to him was a powerful asset. Poets like Martial and Statius, who were not influential members of the senatorial and equestrian elite, depended on imperial freedmen as intermediaries that could present their works to the emperor.[202] I have already discussed Martial's epigrams addressed to intermediaries such as Sextus and Parthenius in Book 5 and Crispinus in Book 7. My focus will now be on epigrams which seek help and support from the emperor, either through addressing him directly, or through the intercession of another deity. These epigrams reveal the difficulty of creating a neat category for Domitian within the ranks of humans and gods, leading to different approaches in different contexts. I begin by looking at a series of epigrams featuring requests to Domitian and prayers for his wellbeing. I will then move to prayers in which other deities are asked to communicate with the emperor on the supplicant's behalf. Finally, I will examine epigrams in which the narrator addresses Domitian and speaks about the problems of patronage and reciprocity in greater detail, as well as the emperor's potential to solve these issues.

I will first analyze an example of communication between the poet and emperor from Book 2 that resulted in a success and will therefore serve as a model for future interactions. In the epigram pair 2.91-92, Martial first asks for the privilege of *ius trium liberorum* and then thanks

[201] Cf. Mart. 10.37 for a similar analogy between gift-giving and sacrifice.
[202] Saller 1982: 59-61.

the emperor for granting him the request.[203] Domitian is addressed in grand terms in the first couplet as the savior of the world inextricably linked to the gods, before the narrator moves into the actual request:

> Rerum certa salus, terrarum gloria, Caesar,
> sospite quo magnos credimus esse deos,
> si festinatis totiens tibi lecta libellis
> detinuere oculos carmina nostra tuos,
> quod fortuna vetat fieri, permitte videri,
> natorum genitor credar ut esse trium.
> haec, si displicui, fuerint solacia nobis;
> haec fuerint nobis praemia, si placui. (Mart. 2.91)

> Caesar, true savior of the world and glory of the lands, through your safety we believe that the gods are great. If my poems, which you have so often read in hastily put together books, caught your eye, grant that which Fortune prevents from happening to appear real, that I be considered a father of three children. If I have displeased you, this will be my consolation; if I have pleased you, this will be my reward.

The first couplet provides a striking image of the interdependence between the emperor and Roman gods. Using the language of belief (*credimus*), Martial signals that he is engaging with contemporary religious discourse, as well as literary tradition regarding salvation and divine favor.[204] The idea that the wellbeing of the emperor and the greatness of the gods are mutually dependent may have been inspired by Roman prayer formulas. In the records of the Arval brethren from the Domitianic period, there was an innovation in the prayer which states that the emperor's safety is the source of the world's salvation.[205] Even if Martial was not directly influenced by this contemporary development, the idea of the emperor, or another leading figure, being a source of

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[203] The privilege appears to have initially been granted by Titus and renewed by Domitian (cf. Mart. 3.95 and 9.97). For the historical background see Daube 1976.
[204] Feeney 1998: 41-46.
[205] Act. Arv. 22. Jan. 86 (CIL 06, 2064; Scheid 1998: 143), l. 42-44: *Imperator Caesar…ex cuius incolumitate omnium salus constat*. See also Leberl 2004: 295 and Scheid 1990: 343 with notes.

salvation is found in Latin earlier literature and Hellenistic literature and philosophy.[206] The second couplet envisions the emperor's interaction with the book as something that happens frequently (*totiens*), which is an improvement from the less confident assumptions from the beginning of Book 1. The term *libellus* in line 3 is ambiguous, as it may refer to the poetry book, but also the technical term for written petition to the emperor, which would also be appropriate in this context.[207] It is possible that, from the narrator's perspective, the "domain" of the god-emperor could have been the political sphere, which would explain the language of the requests to the emperor and prayers to the gods.[208] In the response, Domitian is said to be the only one who was able to give this kind of compensation for Martial's poetry (2.92.3 *solus qui poterat*), which is suggested to be his divine prerogative in the final line (4 *domini…munus*). This reinforces the suggestion that the god-emperor's domain corresponds with that which falls under his political powers. Language similar to that of the first couplet in 2.91 was used when addressing Domitian in the first epigram of Book 5, which I have discussed in the previous chapter (5.1.7-8 *o rerum felix tutela salusque, / sospite quo gratum credimus esse Iovem*). Given that Martial is creating a longer, more drawn-out request in this book, it is possible that reusing this phrase might be a reminder to the emperor, but also an advertisement to the wider readership that he is read by Domitian and has already had some success in his requests.[209]

The gods, especially Jupiter, play an important role in petitions to the emperor. I have already discussed epigram 1.99, in which there appears to be a model according to which clients pray for the prosperity of their patrons, which ideally results in more prosperity for the clients.

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[206] Cf. Cic. *Marc*. 22; Ov. *Tr*. 5.2.47-48; Hor. *Carm*. 4.5.23-25. For a discussion of Domitian as a savior figure in Martial see Sauter 1934: 2-16. See also Hor. *Ep*. 1.16.25-29 with discussion in Doblhofer 1966: 52-66 for the development of this idea in the Hellenistic period.
[207] Williams 2004: 276 and Millar 1977: 240-241.
[208] Gradel 2004: 334.
[209] Williams 2004: 275.

Epigram 6.87 is a distich that illustrates how this model can be applied to the emperor: "May the gods and you yourself, Caesar, grant to you whatever you deserve; may the gods, and you, grant to me that which I wish, if I deserve it." (*di tibi dent et tu, Caesar, quaecumque mereris: / di mihi dent et tu, quae volo, si merui*). This couplet already reveals the complexity of the emperor's position between human and divine status. Both lines begin with the parallelism between Domitan and the gods (*di…et tu*), suggesting that he is equal to them, or so far removed from humans that he may well be approximated to a deity, at least from the perspective of the client-poet narrator. Whatever the hierarchical relationship between Domitian and the gods may be, it is certain that Martial stands beneath them and has to negotiate with them. The case of 2.91 has shown that Martial communicates with the emperor using the *libellus*, which is both a book of poetry and a formal petition, ad the success of his request depends on how well his poems are received.

This idea is laid out even more explicitly in epigram 7.60, in which the first-person speaker explains to Jupiter why he prays for the wellbeing of the emperor instead of the speaker's own wellbeing. He appears to present himself as someone whose mode of prayer might be seen as different from the norm and thus not be approved of by the god, which might result in punishment. He justifies his choice by claiming that prayers to gods and petitions to patrons each have their distinct roles in social relationships:

> Tarpeiae venerande rector aulae,
> quem salvo duce credimus Tonantem,
> cum votis sibi quisque te fatiget
> et poscat dare, quae dei potestis:
> nil pro me mihi, Iuppiter, petenti
> ne suscensueris velut superbo.
> te pro Caesare debeo rogare:
> pro me debeo Caesarem rogare. (Mart. 7.60)

> Venerable ruler of the Tarpeian court, whom we believe to be the Thunderer while our leader is safe, while each person tires you with prayers for themselves, asking for what you

> gods can give, do not be angry with me, Jupiter, or think me proud, for asking nothing for myself. I ought to pray to you for Caesar's sake; I ought to petition Caesar for my own sake.

The poem begins with an address to Jupiter as the ruler of the Capitoline temple. Calling a temple an *aula*, a word which more commonly refers to a court, is an innovation found in Martial and Statius.[210] Through this phrasing Martial creates an analogy between Domitian and Jupiter, and in the next line he reinforces the bond between the two, since the wellbeing of the emperor and the greatness of Jupiter are mutually dependent.[211] This expression may have been inspired by an innovation in the prayer of the Arval brethren to Jupiter from the Domitianic period, which states that the emperor's safety is the source of the world's salvation.[212] Jupiter played an important role in Domitian's imperial ideology and self-fashioning, and his attention to Jupiter in state cult was greater than during the rule of Vespasian and Titus.[213] Flavian poets often compared Domitian to Jupiter and depicted him as a god on earth, which also influences the way Martial incorporates the emperor into poetry about patronage.

The theme of prayer anticipates the speaker's own elaboration on his mode of prayer. The following two lines describe the way other people pray, which revolves around asking the gods incessantly for help for themselves (*sibi*). The speaker, on the other hand, does not pray for himself (*nil pro me*), which he is concerned will make him a target of divine rage. The mention of divine rage could be read comically if the case of Aethon in 12.77 is taken into account. Praying immoderately could result in a similar indiscretion which could bring embarrassment to the

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[210] Galán Vioque 2002: 352.
[211] Similar phrases: 2.91.1-2; 5.1.7-8 (with Canobbio 2011: 72-74).
[212] Act. Arv. 22. Jan. 86 (= CIL 06, 2064; Scheid 1998: 143), l. 42-44: *Imperator Caesar…ex cuius incolumitate omnium salus constat*. See also Leberl 2004: 295, Scheid 1990: 343 and Schwarte 1977: 229-232.
[213] For the importance of Domitian's contribution to the development of Jovian imperial ideology see Galimberti 2016: 99-101 and Fears 1981: 74-80. This kind of connection between Jupiter and Domitian also invokes the literary tradition of the strong dependence between a ruler's authority and Zeus/Jupiter which goes back to Homer and Hesiod (Galán Vioque 2002: 353).

supplicant. Roman prayer was often a public means of communication with the gods which carries many risks. Martial's "communication" with the emperor and the gods, although written, is still made public, which he presents as something that could potentially jeopardize his reputation. The final two lines offer an explanation which plainly states that there is a system of communication in which prayer plays an important role, but this role is not to pray for one's own prosperity, but for the prosperity of the individual who may grant the same to them, which is in this case a patron.[214] The two lines are almost similar, and this recalls the parallelism of 6.87, again showing the proximity of Domitian and Jupiter. The distinction, however, is that the spheres of influence between the two are clearly delineated. It can be assumed that the speaker prays for all those things which others want for themselves to be given to the emperor instead. Upon the success of this prayer, it can be expected that he will petition the emperor to receive a favor on account of his actions. In light of my discussion of 1.99, it is possible to discern that a similar kind of system is being employed here. The *amici* were praying for Calenus, expecting a sumptuous feast in return; the subject of 7.60 is praying to Jupiter for the emperor's sake, while expecting something in return from the emperor.

The poem discussed above also raises the question of what kind of prayers Martial would have directed to the gods, and the first epigram of Book 4 may reveal something about their content. This poem celebrates Domitian's birthday, and in some ways it stays in keeping with other birthday poems discussed in the beginning of this chapter. Martial does not explicitly invoke the *genius natalis* as Tibullus does, but rather the day itself:

> Caesaris alma dies et luce sacratior illa,
> conscia Dictaeum qua tulit Ida Iovem,
> longa, precor, Pylioque veni numerosior aevo
> semper et hoc voltu vel meliore nite.

[214] For an overview of Domitian as an imperial patron in Martial see Nauta 2002: 336-341.

hic colat Albano Tritonida multus in auro
perque manus tantas plurima quercus eat;
hic colat ingenti redeuntia saecula lustro
et quae Romuleus sacra Tarentos habet.
magna quidem, superi, petimus, sed debita terris:
pro tanto quae sunt improba vota deo? (Mart. 4.1)

O Caesar's birthday, day more sacred than that dawn on which mount Ida knowingly brought forth Dictaean Jupiter, come, I pray, for a long time in a number greater than Nestor's years and always shine with a bright countenance or a better one. May he worship the Tritonian goddess many times in Alban gold and may many oak-wreaths pass through such great hands; may he worship the returning centuries with great recurring festivals and the rituals held in Roman Tarentum. Gods above, we certainly ask for things that are great, but also due to the earth; what prayers are improper for such a god?

The panegyric of Domitian is elevated already in the first couplet as the emperor is made to outweigh Jupiter by the greatness of his birthday.[215] From Book 4 onward, Martial will become more explicit in drawing parallels between Domitian and Jupiter, and referring to Domitian as a deity. Throughout the poem, the emperor's greatness and authority is accentuated through his superhuman proportions (*tantas manus*, *tanto…deo*).[216] One prominent topos in birthday poetry is the wish for longevity, which is articulated as the desire for the birthday to continuously return in lines 3-4.[217] Lines 5-8 switch the focus to Domitian himself, praying for him to continue worshiping the gods through his celebrations of the Alban and Capitoline games, as well as the Secular Games, in perpetuity. These two couplets also begin with an anaphora of *hic colat*, reinforcing the solemn tone of the poem through hymnic repetition. Not only is Domitian like a god, he maintains worship of the gods through public and private cultic activity. Domitian founded the Alban games in honor of Minerva, which were held at his Alban estate, and the Capitoline

[215] Cf. Mart. 9.39. For the term *lux sacra* cf. Tib. 2.1.5.
[216] Cf. Mart. 4.8.10.
[217] Cf. Tib. 1.7.63-64 *at tu, Natalis multos celebrande per annos, | candidior semper candidiorque veni* with Cairns 1972: 167-169.

games, referenced through the oak wreath (*quercus*) were founded in honor of Jupiter and held in Rome. Both festivals featured poetic and oratorical competitions; most notably, the Capitoline games featured contests in declamations on the theme of Jupiter, and the popularity of the games is believed to have also influenced the trend in Martial and Statius to assimilate Domitian with Jupiter.[218] Furthermore, the Secular games suggest renewal and a new beginning, which echoes the dawn of the birthday in the first couplet and the beginning of the book. Besides illustrating the emperor's dedication to state cult, these examples also show his patronage of the arts and appreciation of literature. Thanks to this connection, Martial is again able to draw out the intersection of social and religious ritual, which will play a major role in many of his interactions with the emperor as a potential patron.[219] The final couplet addresses the gods, arguing that the prayers are not extravagant or improper since they ask for what is due and appropriate. The gods are urged not to view these prayers for Domitian as hubristic (*improba*), but as a way to give the people what is owed to them. This anticipates the sentiment from 7.60 that Martial must pray to Jupiter for the emperor (*te pro Caesare debeo rogare*) and shares a similar anxiety about excessive prayer.

The role of prayer can sometimes be more complex than 4.1 and 7.60 make it seem, however. In 4.1, there is an analogy between the emperor and Jupiter, and the speaker's treatment of the emperor as a deity (*pro tanto…deo*) raises the concern that considering Domitian to be a god might be considered hubristic. Nevertheless, there is a distinct line between prayers to gods and petitions to patrons. On the other hand, there are epigrams which urge the gods to intercede on the speaker's behalf, with the true addressee being Domitian himself. One example of this takes the form of a prayer to Apollo, but I would argue that its true intention is to communicate with the

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[218] Coleman 1986: 3095-3111.
[219] For a discussion of Martial and the patronage of poets see Saller 1983.

emperor in an indirect way. This poem offers a better look into the duality of the emperor as the most powerful patron and political figure in Rome on one hand, and a divinity on the other. The request is for Apollo to arrange a consulship for Arruntius Stella, one of Martial's most prominent patrons:

> Campis dives Apollo sic Myrinis,
> sic semper senibus fruare cycnis,
> doctae sic tibi serviant sorores,
> nec Delphis tua mentiatur ulli,
> sic Palatia te colant amentque:
> bis senos cito te rogante fasces
> det Stellae bonus adnuatque Caesar.
> felix tunc ego debitorque voti
> casurum tibi rusticas ad aras
> ducam cornibus aureis iuvencum.
> nata est hostia, Phoebe; quid moraris? (Mart. 9.42)

> Apollo, so may you always enjoy the rich fields of Myrina and aged swans, so may the learned sisters serve you and your Pythia tell lies to no one, so may the Palatine worship and love you. May the good emperor at your request quickly give the twelve fasces to Stella with an approving nod. Then, owing my vow, I will happily lead a steer with gilded horns to fall for you at the rustic altar. The victim is born, Phoebus; what are you waiting for?

The first five lines are written in a hymnic style honoring Apollo. The beginning mentions Apollo's cult in Grynium, referenced by the neighboring Myrina.[220] The swans and Muses (*doctae…sorores*) allude to Apollo's role as the god of poetry, which is appropriate since Stella was himself a poet. In the final two lines of the invocation, Apollo moves westward, over Delphi, to the Palatine hill, on which there is both his temple and the imperial residence. There is a movement from Apollo's domain over poetry, which is fitting because Stella was himself a poet, to the presence of Apollo on the Palatine, which activates his political connection to imperial

[220] The only other references to Apollo's cult in Grynium in extant Latin literature are in Vergil (*E*. 6.72 and *A*. 4.345). The reference in *Eclogue* 6 is connected to the elegiac poet Cornelius Gallus, so it is possible that Martial is flattering his patron by comparing him to Gallus through an elaborate allusion to Vergil.

propaganda. The word *Palatia* could mean simply the Palatine, but it could also refer to a specific building on the hill, and a case could be made both for either structure. It has been assumed that in this poem it refers to the temple of Apollo on the basis that *Palatia* has been used to denote the temples of Apollo ("where the Palatine temple stands, sacred to Naval Apollo" Prop. 4.1.3 *ubi Navali stant sacra Palatia Phoebo*) and Mater Magna ("the secret Palatine temple of the imported Mother" Juv. 9.23 *advectae secreta Palatia matris*).[221] On the other hand, early uses of the word in Augustan poetry point to the idea of cohabitation between Augustus and Apollo ("the Palatine residence, which now shines under Phoebus and the leaders" Ov. *Ars* 3.119 *quae nunc sub Phoebo ducibusque Palatia fulgent*; *Fast*. 4.949-954), and almost every use of *Palatia* in Martial signifies the imperial residence.[222] One notable example in Martial in which *Palatia* is similarly personified is the wish for the Palatine residence to praise his patron Fuscus (7.28.5 *sic te Palatia laudent*), and in this sense the word could instead denote the emperor and his household.[223] The similarity of the phrasing with line 5 (*te colant amentque*) suggests that Martial is referring to the emperor and his dutiful worship of Apollo. The use of both *colere* and *amare* perhaps implies a more intimate devotion to the god on Domitian's part, which could be expected of an emperor who sought to emulate Augustus.[224] This establishes the emperor's piety and an already existing reciprocity and sense of reciprocity between him and Apollo. It might seem strange that Apollo is expected to act in an almost deferential manner towards Domitian, although this complicated relationship can perhaps be clarified through another epigram. In 9.3, Martial humorously claims that Domitian has greatly indebted the gods through the many temples which he as built and

[221] Citroni 2019: 133-134.
[222] For the cohabitation of Augustus with other gods on the Palatine see Miller 2009: 214.
[223] Henriksén 2012: 185.
[224] Cf. Mart. 9.29.6 *quae turba Sarapin amat* with Henriksén 2012: 131. *TLL* 1.0.1952.76 s.v. *amo* places the use of these two instances in Martial under the heading "favere alicui."

rebuilt.[225] It is possible that a similar logic is at play here regarding Apollo's potential obligation to the emperor.

The phrase *colant amentque* also activates the discourse of patronage, which is the underlying theme of the poem. The request to grant Stella a consulship is not expected to be fulfilled by Apollo directly, but through entreaties to the emperor (*te rogante*), who would have had the executive power to make this request a reality. Domitian is the main agent in this poem, yet Martial does not direct the petition at him, seeking an intermediary instead. His final incentive is the promise of a sacrifice to Apollo upon the successful fulfilment of the vow (*debitorque voti*). The sacrifice in question is a steer with gilded horns, something quite different from a more modest sacrifice which might be expected in Martial's epigrams, like a lamb or incense. The extravagant nature of the prayer is contrasted with the rustic altars, presumably part of Martial's country estate. In order to further convince the god and create a sense of urgency, he states that the victim has been born (*nata est hostia*) which implicitly places a time constraint on the god.[226] Since the sacrificial animal has just been born, there is a limited time frame during which the bull will be a *iuvencus*, the appropriate age for the sacrifice, which would also explain the humorous rhetorical question in the end (*quid moraris?*).[227] Promising a sacrifice that is above the poet's perceived means also corresponds with other authors who prefer depicting grand expressions of gratitude to the gods, such as sacrifices and votive offerings, rather than gratulatory prayer.[228] The fact that Apollo is asking Domitian implies that he is someone who has a place in the divine hierarchy and

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[225] There is no sufficient material evidence to establish whether or not Domitian renovated the temple of Palatine Apollo as it does not appear to have suffered any damage (Darwall-Smith 1996: 136-137).
[226] I am here using the manuscript reading *nata est hostia* instead of Shackleton Bailey's emendation *lecta*. For the defense of the manuscript reading see Henriksén 1999.
[227] Unfortunately, the prayer would not be fulfilled in time, since Stella became consul in 101/102, about seven years after Book 9 was published. Martial will send his twelfth book from Spain to Stella, calling him "his consul" (12.2.10 *consulis…mei*).
[228] For similar gratulatory practices in Livy see Hickson Hahn 2004.

that the two were at least considered to be equals. Furthermore, since Domitian is often analogous with Jupiter, it is possible that he is imagined even as being above Apollo. A similar dynamic is present in *Tristia* 5.3, in which Ovid asks Bacchus to help him by reminding him that gods engage in dealings amongst themselves and that he could attempt to bend Caesar's will in order to bring Ovid back from exile (45-46 *sunt dis inter se commercia. flectere tempta / Caesareum numen numine, Bacche, tuo*).[229] In Martial's case, Apollo is expected to negotiate a political deal that would be beneficial to Stella. As in the previous poems, Martial is praying for the wellbeing of his patron, hoping that the advance in his political career will bring him more wealth and renown, which could in turn benefit his clients.

Domitian's role in bestowing consulships is made even more explicit in 8.66, a similar intercessional epigram. This time the addressees are the Muses and they are asked to make offerings of incense and victims to Domitian in order to assure that Lucius Silius Decianus, a son of Silius Italicus, is granted a consulship in order to increase the family glory, since Silius was himself a consul ("Camenae, offer pious incense and victims to Augustus on behalf of your Silius" 1-2 *Augusto pia tura victimasque / pro vestro date Silio, Camenae*). Decianus was indeed suffect consul for 94, the same year in which Book 8 was published. The Muses do not receive the same elaborate hymnic treatment as Apollo, and their lower status in the divine hierarchy is denoted by the fact that they are expected to make offerings to Domitian. The choice of the Muses is most likely motivated by the fact that Silius was a poet since he is later called a *vates* and his house is modified with the adjective *Castalia*. The emperor is referred to as the first and only source of salvation for the world (6 *rerum prima salus et una Caesar*) in a trope similar to that found in 7.60 and other poems where the emperor's safety is directly tied to Jupiter's power. This serves to

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[229] See discussion in Miller 2019.

reinforce the idea that the emperor's own safety is directly tied to the safety of the entire Roman state. Prayer is again used to indirectly ask Domitian, the earthly emperor, to bestow benefits upon one of Martial's patrons, this time by increasing the honor of Silius' family. Both 9.24 and 8.66 bring out the ambiguity of the emperor's nature as both human and divine through the mixing of inter-divine communication and the political power of the emperor over the senatorial elite. When compared to epigrams about non-imperial patrons, the examples above show that the system which seems to underly Martial's poetry on social relations is not as clear-cut as initially proposed. The emperor is a figure that transcends the limits imposed on non-imperial patrons and appears to be more like a god, all while still being a powerful patron. This means that communicating with the emperor might be a difficult hurdle, which Martial manages to overcome through the mediation of Apollo, who is contacted through a prayer and asked to deliver the petition to Domitian.

3.4 Strategies of negotiation

I will now turn to instances of direct communication between Martial and Domitian, which is best exemplified in Books 5 and 8. I have already discussed the use of religious language in the programmatic statements of these books in the previous chapter, and this section will focus on analyzing the vocabulary of religion and patronage in passages related to the emperor. These examples reveal a different side of the conversation about the emperor's role in patronage, as the emperor is asked to intervene and repair the system by becoming a patron of poets.

The first epigrams in the introduction of Book 5 establish Domitian as a deity and his palace as a temple. The rest of the sequence is a mixture of praise for the emperor and other patrons, as well as more typical humorous and invective epigrams. Notably, 5.7 praises Domitian for

rebuilding Rome after the fires of 69 and 80 CE by using Augustan intertextuality.[230] The following epigram is the first of a cycle that praises the *lex Julia theatralis*, an Augustan law regarding seating in the theater which was passed again under Domitian. This pair of epigrams exemplifies Domitian's dedication to reviving the Augustan age. In fact, in 5.15 Domitian is addressed as Augustus, and Martial claims that his books of light verse have never harmed anyone (1-2 *quintus nostrorum liber est, Auguste, iocorum, et queritur laesus carmine nemo meo*). Augustan allusions continue in the next poem, whose theme is the plight of the poor client-poet. Martial claims that his light verse has granted him popularity, but little material gain, which he could have obtained from any other profession. He says that his book is merely a dinner guest, and his poetry is only appreciated without compensation (5.16.9-10 *at nunc conviva est comissatorque libellus, | et tantum gratis pagina nostra placet*). The fact that this line is followed by the statement that his poetry has not brought him material gain suggests that this strategy was not as successful as it was in Book 2. He then proceeds to say that older poets were not satisfied with just praise, but also received gifts from their patrons, such as Vergil receiving the slave boy Alexis from Maecenas (11-12 *sed non et veteres contenti laude fuerunt, | cum minimum vati munus Alexis erat*). The example of Vergil and Alexis is used to demonstrate the scarcity of contemporary poetic patronage in contrast with the Augustan period, which becomes a sort of "golden age" of patronage for Martial.

The introductory sequence culminates in 5.19, the last epigram in the book that directly addresses Domitian. The first three couplets praise the greatness of Rome under Domitian's rule, including his military achievements, liberty and building projects, a theme which goes back to the rebuilding of Rome in 5.7. There is, however, one blemish on this great age that the poet identifies,

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[230] See discussion in Closs 2021.

namely that the poor client must cultivate unprofitable relationships with their patrons (7-8 *est tamen hoc vitium, sed non leve, sit licet unum, / quod colit ingratas pauper amicitias*). The vocabulary in line 8 is notable in light of the discussion of Martial's vocabulary of patronage in the first half of this chapter. The verb that denotes the cultivation of a patron-client relationship is *colit*, which evokes the ancient etymology of *cliens* being derived from *colere*, and *cliens* is used by Martial when he criticizes patronage. Although the word used here is *amicitias*, which usually denotes the positive ideal of patronage, its modifier *ingratas* undermines this ideal by revealing that the client does not receive adequate compensation from his patron.[231] The following lines complain about inadequate Saturnalian gifts which arrogant patrons dare to give to their clients (13 *tumidique vocant haec munera reges*). The noun *rex* is also used by Martial to indicate bad patrons, continuing the trend of negative vocabulary from earlier. The concluding two couplets are a call to Domitian to become a patron himself, but the request is met with a laugh from the emperor:

> quatenus hi non sunt, esto tu, Caesar, amicus:
> nulla ducis virtus dulcior esse potest.
> iam dudum tacito rides, Germanice, naso,
> utile quod nobis do tibi consilium. (Mart. 5.19.15-18)

> Since they are not willing, then you, Caesar, should become a friend; no other virtue of a leader can be sweeter. For some time now you have been laughing, Germanicus, with quiet derision, because I have been giving you advice which is advantageous to me.

The word *amicus* suggests that the emperor is expected to be closer to the ideal of patronage, or at least better than the *tumidi reges* exemplified by Martial's many other patrons. Domitian, however, appears to laugh at this proposal, wrinkling his nose. The nose is often used metaphorically in Latin poetry as the organ of judgement, and it remains ambiguous if this is meant to be mockery on Domitian's part, or simply laughter.[232] A possible positive interpretation is that Domitian is

[231] *TLL* 7.1.1561.46 s.v. *ingratus*. For a similar use of *ingratus* see Mart. 4.67.
[232] For the nose in Martial see Canobbio 2011: 250.

laughing at Martial's poetry because he finds it funny, and this is the intended effect of the collection. Domitian's persona as an emperor with a sense of humor has already been established in the epigram pair 1.4-5, in which he was presented as someone capable of producing a witty response. In a similar way to that pair, Domitian might be ignoring Martial's main point, the advice which benefits him (*utile…nobis…consilium*). It remains dubious if Domitian's ignorance and laughter are scornful or just joking.[233] After this epigram, Domitian will not be addressed and the imperial theme will not resurface.

Assuming the persona of a poor client-poet complaining about the sorry state of patronage appears not to have played out in Martial's favor since there is no response other than Domitian's mysterious laughter. In the beginning of the next book, the poet will address the topic of rejection by offering a different approach which recalls some points from my discussion of the role of prayer in imperial epigrams from the previous section. Epigram 6.10 begins with Martial saying that he prayed to Jupiter for money, but Jupiter told him: "the one who built temples for me will provide it" (2 *'ille dabit' dixit 'qui mihi templa dedit'*), pointing to Domitian. This introduction is similar to 7.60, in which Martial prays to Jupiter for Domitian's prosperity, not his own, concluding that he ought to turn to the emperor for such requests. It appears, however, as Book 5 demonstrates, that these requests are also not fruitful. This happens in spite of the poet's impression that the emperor always receives his entreaties with a kindly demeanor (6 *quam placido nostras legerat ore preces*).[234] Martial characterizes his poetry as prayer (*preces*), which blurs the line between Domitian and the gods. At the end of the poem, he asks Minerva for assistance, since she is closely associated with the emperor. In an earlier epigram, Minerva is also said to be the richest of the

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[233] For differing interpretations of Domitian's laughter see Julhe 2015, Garthwaite 1998: 170 and Howell 1995: 99.
[234] Cf. Mart. 7.12.

gods and their "treasurer" because she is a patroness of oratory, a very lucrative profession.[235] This would provide a further reason to ask the goddess a question about financial matters. Her response is that Martial, fool that he is, does not understand that just because something has not yet been granted to him does not mean that it has been denied (12 *quae nondum data sunt, stulte, negata putas?*). The response suggests that compensation has been promised and will be delivered in due time, although no epigrams which thank Domitian, such as 2.92, will surface later within the collection.

At the beginning of 6.10, Jupiter appears to delegate the job of fulfilling Martial's request to Domitian, implying that the divine domain of the god-emperor is fulfilling the daily requests of his subjects. Already in 2.92, the poet said that the emperor was the only one who could have fulfilled this request (*solus qui poterat*). In Book 8, Martial will expand this line of thinking, as well as transform his role to fit into the new Augustan theme which he is creating. The imperial epigrams in this book focus on Domitian's return from the war, although the book culminates in the poet directly asking the emperor in the final epigram. There are, however, some prior epigrams which anticipate this topic. Because the imperial palace is explicitly compared to a temple in the preface of the book, the religious analogy will be extended to the emperor as Jupiter and requests as prayers. In 8.24, Martial addresses the emperor's duty to make himself available to his subjects and listen to their entreaties, no matter how small, using Jupiter's attitude towards prayer as a comparison:

> Si quid forte petam timido gracilique libello,
> improba non fuerit si mea charta, dato.
> et si non dederis, Caesar, permitte rogari:
> offendunt numquam tura precesque Iovem.
> qui fingit sacros auro vel marmore vultus,
> non facit ille deos: qui rogat, ille facit. (Mart. 8.24)

[235] Mart. 1.76.5-6 *nummos habet arca Minervae; / haec sapit, haec omnes fenerat una deos*, with Howell 1980: 277.

> If I perhaps make some petition with my timid, slender little book, if my poems are not shameless, grant it. Even if you do not give, Caesar, allow yourself to be asked; incense and prayers never offended Jupiter. The one who makes holy images out of gold and marble does not create gods, it is the one who asks that creates them.

The first couplet draws a parallel between an official petition to the emperor and poetry for patrons. As the request in 2.92 demonstrates, *libellus* was used to denote not only books of poetry, but also petitions and pamphlets.[236] The depiction of the book as timid and slender as it faces the emperor was also present in Book 5 (5.6.7 *timidam brevemque chartam*). Martial's use of *improba* to characterize his poems brings back the discussion of the moral uprightness of his poetry and its presentation to the emperor in the previous chapter. The following couplet raises the importance of the emperor giving audience to all of his subjects, regardless of the content or size of their questions.[237] Martial's *libellus*, whether a poem or a petition, is compared to a worshiper's modest offering of incense and prayers, which is described as something that Jupiter would never refuse.[238] The small offering is compared to monumental offerings made of expensive materials, but the lesser offerings of prayers and poems are presented as having a crucial advantage.[239] They are able to "create" gods, a concept that evokes the divinization of deceased rulers through a senatorial decree.[240] Perhaps more important here is the trope that poetry can bestow immortality upon the emperor, such as the example found in Ovid's exile poetry ("If it is right to say, gods are also created through songs and such majesty requires a singer's mouth" Ov. *Pont*. 4.8.55-56 *di quoque carminibus, si fas est dicere, fiunt / tantaque maiestas ore canentis eget*).[241] Although this poem is about gaining favor from Germanicus, it is important to address the role of Augustus in exile

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[236] Millar 1977: 240-241.
[237] Nauta 2002: 338-339.
[238] Cf. Prop. 2.10.24.
[239] For the religious economy of big and small offerings see Auffarth 2008.
[240] For the status of the deified emperor see Gradel 2004: 321-324.
[241] For a discussion of this poem see Myers 2014 and Rosati 1979: 125-127. Cf. Ov. *Tr*. 2.21-22.

poetry. The comparison between Augustus and Jupiter is not often advantageous as it evokes the anger of the god, whose rage and thunderbolt must be placated through prayer. On the other hand, Martial is free to create positive associations between Domitian and Jupiter, and prayer thus becomes another way to discuss requests to the emperor.[242] As I have already established in my discussion of epigrams about non-imperial patronage, individual clients can use the skills and experiences available to them to effectively communicate with their patrons. In Martial's case, this means offering gifts of poetry, whose value must be found in its power to bring immortal fame to the addressee. When petitioning the emperor, Martial equates petition and prayer in order to make himself closer to the imperial addressee. The poet-speaker, in the role of a supplicant, can therefore claim to have an active role in the creation of a deity through his poetic petitions.

It must be noted, however, that the epigram discussed above still leaves room for ambiguity regarding the nature of the emperor. The second couplet creates a mirroring effect, as line 3 refers to the emperor while line 4 refers to Jupiter. The first three lines are about requests being made to the human Domitian, with an emphasis on materiality (*libello*, *charta*), while the latter three lines emphasize offerings that have little to no physical substance (*tura precesque*), even dismissing more expensive offerings. There is a duality between emperor as a man, namely a high-ranking government official with a pedigree, and the god-emperor, a living deity whose divine domain overlaps with the political powers of the human emperor. The Domitian being constructed by this epigram is an ambiguous figure containing both human and divine qualities because his earthly, official duties are emphasized and compared with Jupiter's divine authority. The final epigram of the book, 8.82, continues the duality of Domitian as both Jupiter and emperor, a supreme deity that is also busy with paperwork. It is also the culmination of Book 8, in which Martial asks for support,

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[242] Pitcher 1998: 65-67.

although the logic he uses is different than Book 5. In 5.19, he relied on the logic that imperial patronage would be a direct result of Domitian's emulation of the Augustan age. In this epigram, the emperor is instead approached as someone who was himself once a poet, and his salvation of poetry is phrased in more political terms:

> dante tibi turba querulos, Auguste, libellos,
> nos quoque quod domino carmina parva damus,
> posse deum rebus pariter Musisque vacare
> scimus, et haec etiam serta placere tibi.
> fer vates, Auguste, tuos: nos gloria dulcis,
> nos tua cura prior deliciaeque sumus.
> non quercus te sola decet nec laurea Phoebi:
> fiat et ex hedera civica nostra tibi.

> As the crowd is giving you plaintive petitions, Augustus, since I also send some little poems to the master, I know that a god can make equal time for state affairs and art, and that you will like this collection. Support your poets, Augustus; we are your sweet glory, your previous care and joy. Not only is an oak or laurel wreath fitting for you; may our civic crown be made for you out of ivy.

Although *libelli* could mean both petitions and poetry books as in 8.24, here it seems to denote petitions in opposition to a collection of poetry (*carmina*, *serta*). The poet is presented as having an advantage over a regular petitioner because of the special connection which he can claim to have with the emperor. The claim that a statesman can also make time for poetry is also found in some other epigrams, although the difference is that those were sent within the context of the Saturnalia, a time during which the hierarchy of genres is suspended and serious individuals did not have to read serious poetry. In the case of Domitian, the emperor's own short-lived career as an epic poet before assuming the throne is brought up as a connection (*cura prior*). Although there seems to be a discrepancy between Domitian's epic and Martial's epigrams, a look back at 5.5 reveals that the two poets are not so different. In that poem, Martial asks that his book be placed next to Catullus, while Domitian's epic about the civil war of 69 is to be placed next to Vergil. By

flattering the emperor, he also flatters himself, as they are both compared to the greatest authors in their respective genres. The previously mentioned *Ex Ponto* 4.8 is also important for understanding this poem, since the specific link between Germanicus and Domitian is more pertinent here. Domitian himself adopted the title Germanicus on account of his military achievements, but Germanicus also wrote poetry, which gave Martial an opportunity to also talk about Domitian as a poet.

In the actual request, Martial calls himself *vates*, a seer-poet, which is highly unusual since he does not claim any elevated status of poet as religious figure anywhere outside of Book 8.[243] In a poem to the boy Instantius, Martial claims that he would have lasting poetic fame if he had a lover such as the ones Ovid and Vergil had ("Neither the Paeliginians nor Mantua would reject me as a poet if I had my own Corinna or Alexis" 8.73.9-10 *non me Paeligni nec spernet Mantua vatem, / si qua Corinna mihi, si quis Alexis erit*). This is also reminiscent of Martial's account of how he imagines Maecenas offered riches to Vergil in order to make him the greatest poet (8.55.11 *vatum maximus*), as well as one of his slave boys named Alexis. These poems suggest a connection between poetic inspiration and material support exemplified in the figure of Vergil, the greatest poet who also enjoyed the most favor with Maecenas and Augustus. This language can also be explained by his anticipation of closeness to Domitian and the conflation of petition and prayer in 8.24. A similar figure of poet as *vates* in prayer can be found in Propertius 4.6.[244] In this poem, the poet is praying before the temple of Palatine Apollo, while Martial is before the imperial palace, which is a new temple. Given that Domitian was equated to Apollo in Book 5, it is possible that

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[243] Outside of Book 8, Martial refers to himself as *vates* in 2.22.1-2 (*quid mihi vobiscum est, o Phoebe novemque sorores? / ecce nocet vati Musa iocosa suo*). In this epigram, he complains about getting an unpleasant treatment from a friend and comically exaggerates his suffering through a series of references to Tristia 2 and other exile poems (discussed in Williams 2004: 94-96).

[244] Cf. Hor. *Carm*. 1.31 and Ov. *Tr*. 3.1. For a discussion of Prop. 4.6 see Miller 2009: 226-234.

the strong association of Domitian with laurel is reactivating this imagery. As I have already discussed, the book has been "purified" in the preface, which means that obscene language has been banished because it might not be favorable to the emperor. Martial also sends a garland (*serta*), which is not only a poetic emblem but also a part of the officiant's instruments in Propertius. The distribution of religious imagery associated with Augustan poetry throughout the book culminates in one final prayer to Domitian in which Martial may finally feel justified in presenting himself as someone close to an Augustan *vates*.

The final couplet also has strong Augustan imagery. The *quercus* refers to the *corona civica*, an oak crown awarded to Augustus on behalf of saving the state. It was originally awarded to Roman soldiers who saved the life of a fellow citizen. The laurel can be interpreted as both the crown of the triumph, which is associated with Jupiter, and the crown of the poet, associated with Apollo. This duality further leans into the emperor's many talents and achievements.[245] A further Augustan connection between oak and laurel are the two laurel trees which decorated Augustus' house. The first epigram of Book 8 also refers to the laurel-crowned palace (*laurigeros…penates*), and the plant imagery in the final poem circles back to the beginning. Finally, Martial promises a special award for Domitian for his anticipated role as savior of poetry: a *corona civica* made of ivy, a refashioning of the oak crown made by poets (*nostra*). The switch to ivy, a plant associated with Dionysus, can be explained through the plant's association with lower genres, in opposition to the laurel which is associated with Domitian's triumphs and epic poetry.[246] Unlike in 5.19, the emperor is not asked to become a patron of the poets (*amicus*) and a new Maecenas, but their savior who will be rewarded in the same manner as Augustus. The things for which Martial "prays"

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[245] See also Schöffel 2001: 691, who sees the supremacy of Jupiter in this passage.
[246] Cf. Hor. *Carm*. 1.1.29-30, Prop. 4.1.61-62 and Verg. *E*. 7.25; see also Miller 2009: 311-312.

have the same goal as a regular petition, but his privileged status as a poet is expected to give him some priority.

From his initial success in Book 2, Martial had to continuously balance between depicting Domitian as a living god and a human emperor. He would not encounter the same success, however. The repeated denial of imperial patronage forced Martial to continuously adapt his strategy; the notion that the emperor's ears were always open and the lasting promise of recompense would have given him an opportunity to keep negotiating. In some epigrams, such as 9.42, the framing was changed to include the intercession of another deity which would ask on Martial's behalf, which could be seen as elevating the status of the emperor even higher in the divine hierarchy. Books 5 and 8 offer what is perhaps the most ambitious negotiation strategy, as Martial attempts to turn epigram into a medium suitable for imperial praise and something comparable to Augustan poetry. In Book 5, Domitian in his role as the new Augustus is urged to become the patron of poets who will set things tight again, but his request is met with laughter. In Book 8, Martial goes beyond simply comparing Domitian to Augustus by attempting to take on the persona of an Augustan *vates*. Ultimately, despite the claim that being a *vates* would give him an advantage in communicating with the god-emperor, Martial was caught up in the same crowd from which he sought to distance himself. The emperor's domains of divine agency were just a cover for his earthly administrative duties, and no amount of embellishment could stop Martial's *libellus* from ending up as just another document in a pile of paperwork.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Martial uses, or avoids using, the theme of divine worship in his epigrams on patronage. In the case of non-imperial patrons, there is a tendency to avoid

creating any kind of parallel between patrons and gods. For example, birthday epigrams would have presented an ideal opportunity for Martial to praise his patrons by celebrating their *genius natalis*, although he never does this. For example, in 10.87 the birthday of Restitutus begins with a call for ritual silence, as in other birthday poems, but the solemn atmosphere is followed by a scene of gift-giving stripped of any religious pretentions. The case of Lucan's birthday is different because he is deceased, so the birthday ritual becomes a way for Martial to praise the devotion of Lucan's widow. Prayer is used when criticizing problems with patronage. Epigram 1.99 shows how prayers can be used as part of proper conduct for a client. The clients pray for the patron's prosperity, expecting generosity in return, but are met with less benefits than before. The place of prayer in patronage is to offer a semblance of agency to the client in a situation in which they are otherwise powerless. This model is carried on into epigrams about imperial patronage. Martial fashioned Domitian into a godlike emperor who rules the world, an image which would influence his strategies of communication. After an initial success in Book 2 he secured himself *ius trium liberorum*, but he would struggle to achieve the same success in later books. Some epigrams feature prayers to the gods to make Domitian prosperous so that he can grant favors to Martial, or for gods to act as intermediaries and influence Domitian on Martial's behalf. On the other hand, there are epigrams that feature the poet's direct communication with Domitian. In these epigrams prayer and offerings may be used as an analogy for poetic petitions, although the focus is on presenting the emperor as an idealized human patron. Even when imagined as a god, Domitian's divine domains are the same as those of his earthly rule and his powers are the political powers of an emperor. Martial's claims of proximity with Domitian because of the emperor's short-lived poetic career and because poets can bestow immortality were not enough to grant him any kind of

support. In spite of his many varied strategies, Martial was unable to secure any special treatment for himself as a poet and found himself lost in the crowd with all the other clients.

4. Chapter 3: Invective, Pollution and Sacred Architecture

This chapter examines the role of religious architecture and the vocabulary of pollution in Martial's invectives. The first section will be about the juxtaposition of temples and targets of mocking epigrams, while the second will be about the language of pollution in scoptic epigrams. This is a subgenre of epigram that mocks individuals because of their appearance or practices which were perceived to go against social norms. In Martial, scoptic epigrams are usually aimed at a person's physical characteristics and perceived sexual deviancy. The theme of space also connects the two halves of the chapter, as the first deals with imperial architecture and the second deals, in part, with bathhouses. As sites that monumentalize imperial ideology, temples provide a backdrop through which Martial can tackle issues of opposition and subversion. On the other hand, bathhouses are spaces in which physical cleansing intersects with sexual activities, which gives him an opportunity to target individuals who are considered both physically and morally polluting. I will first give an overview of scholarship on Martial's Rome, and then move to a discussion of more recent scholarship on the interplay between religion, pollution, and propriety.

Temples are woven into the fabric of the Roman landscape and present backdrops for everyday activities. As Martial increases the number of epigrams about Domitian, his architectural projects, including temples, will become more prominent, but disconnected from the city itself. On the other hand, the language of pollution is used to denote activities which are physically and morally transgressive, both in moral and sexual conduct. Here I will first give an overview of the vocabulary of pollution in Martial and of the way it is used within the context of improper behavior. Later I will explore how Martial uses the language of pollution in epigrams about *os impurum*, an unclean mouth. In these epigrams, he is drawing on the imagery of water and washing, which

suggests the awareness of a ritual framework with the goal of producing a punchline. His use of pollution is thus similar to his use of urban space for singling out his targets. Although sacred spaces and baths are drastically different, in both cases Martial uses religion as a lens through which he provides commentary on society and morality.

4.1 Preliminaries

Martial has always been known as the poet of Rome, and the urban aspect of his poetry has been in focus for the past two decades. Richard Prior's dissertation on Martial and Roman topography and his subsequent article on itinerant epigrams were foundational for later research. He suggested that the very quantity of references to places in Rome was in itself another strategy for making his epigrams more Roman. More importantly, he suggested two main types of epigrams which feature multiple spatial markers: synoptic and itinerant. The former only provides a list of places that do not greatly influence the structure of the epigram, while the latter features a linear trajectory, and topographical progression is a major element of its structure.[247] Finally, he shows how Martial is able to manipulate the reader's perception of a space by emphasizing some of its elements while downplaying others. Some spaces may have a designated function, but Martial shows that individuals can use a space for more than its intended purpose. Movement through the city as a key for understanding Martial's representation of Rome is also a key component in the scholarship of Ray Laurence and Luke Roman.[248] Not only do buildings serve as a backdrop for scenes from everyday life, but their juxtaposition with certain individuals also gives them an additional layer of meaning. The city is therefore constructed as a text similar to the epigrams

[247] For itinerant epigrams see Laurence 2011 and Prior 1994: 21-23.
[248] Laurence 2011, Roman 2010.

themselves, as Victoria Rimell claims.[249] A sequential reading of epigrams can reveal connections and provide interpretations that would not be evident otherwise, since epigrams tend to reach across their neat barriers. Similarly, reading a sequence of buildings brought together by a trajectory of one individual can tell a story of how they are perceived and used.

While these scholarly discussions do feature temples, they do not examine their religious dimension. On the other hand, more recent scholars have begun taking an interest in temples in Martial as a part of Domitian's building projects. The goal of their studies is to explore how Martial provides literary commentary to Domitianic architecture. Jean Michel Hulls has shown that Domitian acts as a sort of author in his own right as he inscribes himself into the streets of Rome, and Flavian poets in turn respond to these changes.[250] Virginia Closs has shown on the example of epigram 5.7 that Martial's commentary on urban change also features intertextual engagement with Augustan poetry in a way that negotiates the relationship between poet and emperor.[251] This chapter will continue within this trend, although it will focus on Martial's earlier books. Scholars like Hulls and Laurence tend to focus on Books 8 and 9, which have the highest concentration of imperial praise epigrams. These books were published after Domitian's return from military campaigns in 93, and the emperor's increased physical presence in Rome is reflected by an increase in epigrams which reference him and his accomplishments. Spatial markers therefore become almost exclusively associated with Domitian's architectural projects, leaving little space for scenes from everyday life. In the earlier books, however, imperial monuments are not abstracted from their environment and therefore demonstrate how Martial responds to the way Domitian leaves his stamp on Roman space.

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[249] Rimell 2008.
[250] Hulls 2019.
[251] Closs 2021.

My research in this chapter is also informed by recent developments in the study of urban religion and the discourse of pollution in Rome. The study of urban religion, as defined by Jörg Rüpke, explores the continuous process of reciprocal interaction between religion and the urban environment, focusing on the impact of cities on religion.[252] Two studies of Augustan poetry show that religion can be used as a lens through which poets can discuss urban morality and ways of life. Rüpke's study of Propertius 4 demonstrates that religious spaces are anchored in Roman topography, which means that the urban population can imbue them with additional meanings.[253] Religion thus becomes a lens through which poets can discuss morality in a constantly changing urban environment. This observation resonates with the previously mentioned scholarship on movement through the city and the way it can generate further interpretations of urban space, as well as Martial's literary commentary on architectural change. Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser's study of Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles* provides many useful insights into the ways religion features in lower genres of poetry.[254] Unlike the *Odes*, which are largely concerned with major gods and state cult, these works tend to mention religious activity on a much smaller scale and as part of everyday life. This makes the *Satires* and *Epistles* more valuable as witnesses to the development and integration of religion within an urban context. Her image of Horace's Rome as a city in which sacred and profane constantly cross paths is also applicable to Martial.[255] These claims resonate with Rimell's observations that the permeability of epigrams is mirrored in Martial's depiction of the city as a place of constant transgression.[256] There is, however, an important distinction between Martial's Rome and the Rome of Horace's *Satires*. Horace employs far fewer topographical

[252] For a theoretical introduction to urban religion see Rüpke 2020b.
[253] Rüpke 2020c.
[254] Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2020.
[255] Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2020: 316.
[256] Rimell 2008: 19-50.

references, choosing to create a more general image of Rome as a big city, whereas Martial fills his poems with more specific spatial markers. As a result, Martial creates a more vibrant experience of Rome as a city, which also makes it conducive to examination through the lens of urban religion.[257]

Another strand of scholarship is interested in pollution and propriety. Contributions in Mark Bradley's edited volume bring out the fact that Rome was itself a city full of filth, and the management of physical waste often had resonances with moral and political discourse.[258] The role of pollution in Roman religion has been further reexamined by Jack Lennon, who demonstrates that it held an important place in the Roman imaginary.[259] His case study of Cicero's speech *De domo sua* shows that his Roman audience would have been at least familiar with notions of purity and pollution, which would explain his use of such language in his speeches. The final section of this chapter will explore how Martial is relying on his audience's familiarity with these same notions in scoptic epigrams. It must be acknowledged, however, that Martial is not writing complex deliberative prose whose argumentation hinges on the audience's understanding of the contemporary religious discourse. Although he may not necessarily be engaging with pollution as a religious category, I still believe that he is drawing on the notion that pollution is something that threatens social order, and purification is thus a means of setting things right. His use of water imagery might not be a direct reference to purification rituals, but it is nevertheless possible that he is counting on the audience's awareness of a religious framework in order to create an effective punchline.

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[257] Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2020: 314; Tschäpe 2015: 5-7; Dyson and Prior 1995: 254-256. Horace's reticence on Roman topography remains a matter of speculation. It has been suggested that it was part of his poetic persona, which preferred the countryside, or an aversion to discussing the social and political shifts brought on by Augustus, which were also reflected in the monuments that surrounded him (Dyson and Prior 1995: 262-263).
[258] For the Republican period see Davies 2012.
[259] Lennon 2014.

A definition of pollution in the Roman world is difficult to pin down since there is no straightforward vocabulary to denote it, like *miasma* in Greek.[260] My assumptions about pollution will be based on the work of Jack Lennon and Elaine Fantham.[261] Lennon provides a synoptic view of concepts of pollution in Rome, including a systematization of the Latin vocabulary used to describe it.[262] Fantham's contribution to the study of Roman purification rites shows that in many instances Romans were primarily concerned with pollution as a state of being physically dirty and being purified was therefore often associated with actual washing. Given the propensity of scoptic epigram to target people's physical features, I will focus on the instances where pollution and purification are used to denote literal dirt and washing. Scoptic epigrams are also interested in imposing order on those who deviate from the norm, and purification can also be seen as setting straight that which is believed to be out of place. Martial adopts the idea that polluted things, such as the *os impurum*, are disordered, and the punchline in epigrams which target these individuals is that they need to cleanse themselves using water.

4.2 Sacred Architecture and Epigrams about Patronage

Before beginning the main discussion of this section, I will elaborate on the relationship between topography and scoptic epigram more broadly. As previous chapters have shown, when Martial wishes to present himself as being closer to Domitian, he has to deviate from his poetic program which is based on festivals of license and freedom of transgression. Books 5 and 8 are especially exemplary of the shift in attitude demonstrated by Martial when he tries to present epigram as a genre suitable for imperial praise. Even though Martial discarded obscene language

[260] The foundational study about the concept of *miasma* is Parker 1983.
[261] Lennon 2014, Fantham 2012.
[262] The overview can be found in Lennon 2014: 30-44.

as he moved closer to the emperor, all of his books featured scoptic epigrams that contained puns and innuendos and attacked social and sexual deviants. A good example of the intersection of poetics and architecture is found in Book 5, which already contains references to the imperial palace (5 and 6) and Domitian's architectural program (7 and 19). Epigram 5.22 has patronage as its theme, specifically the trouble of performing the morning *salutatio*. It is an itinerant epigram that describes Martial's arduous journey from his home on the Quirinal to the home of his patron Paulus on the Esquiline, only for him to find out that Paulus is not home. The emperor is still indirectly present in this epigram because of a reference to Jupiter. Martial's residence on the Quirinal is described as being near the place "where rustic Flora sees the ancient Jupiter" (4 *qua videt anticum rustica Flora Iovem*).[263] The names of the gods are used metonymically for their temples, namely the temple of Flora and the Capitolium Vetus, a shrine dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva. They were located on the north-east side of the Quirinal and presumably connected by a slope.[264] The Capitolium Vetus was at a higher elevation than Flora's temple, and Martal's association with the goddess places them both in an inferior position, since Martial's patrons also reside in elevated homes. The idea that gods reside in temples and could even be seen as Martial's "neighbors" is relevant here, as temples are ideally placed in an area which contains something related to the deity's domain.[265] The location of Martial's home between the goddess whose rites are emblematic of his poetry and the supreme god of Rome may be indicative of the new position of his poetry between distancing itself from obscenity and embracing imperial praise. The phrase *rustica Flora* could be read poetically, since this adjective is elsewhere used to denote "lower"

[263] Cf. Mart. 6.27. For Martial's residence in Rome see Sullivan 1991: 26-27 with bibliography.
[264] Cf. Var. *L.* 5.158 and discussion in *LTUR* 2.254 s.v. "Flora, templum (in Colle)" (F. Coarelli). This temple is not to be confused with Flora's temple on the Aventine.
[265] Jenkyns 2013: 26-27. See also Vitr. 1.7.1.

genres, such as pastoral.[266] It is also indicative of Flora's status as a lesser deity and is used to modify nymphs and Priapus.[267]

This topographical reference also reflects Martial's tendency to situate epigram critical of patronage within an urban setting. A similar example is 7.73, an epigram addressed to one Maximus, another patron whom Martial cannot seem to find anywhere, although he owns many houses in Rome:

> Esquiliis domus est, domus est tibi colle Dianae,
>   et tua patricius culmina vicus habet;
> hinc viduae Cybeles, illinc sacraria Vestae,
>   inde novum, veterem prospicis inde Iovem. (7.73.1-4)

> You have a home on the Esquiline, a home on Diana's hill, and the Clivus Patricius holds a house of yours. From one place you see Cybele's temple, from the other Vesta's, and from elsewhere the new and the old Jupiter.

These houses are on the Esquiline, Aventine (*colle Dianae*), and the Vicus Patricius, one of the oldest streets in Rome, situated between the Viminal and northern Esquiline hills. The middle of the poem describes the various temples which he is able to see from his homes, namely a temple of Cybele, the temple of Vesta in the Forum, as well as the "new and old Jupiter," which are believed to be the Capitoline temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, restored by Domitian, and the Capitolium Vetus from 5.22.[268] The topography of this poem remains contested since not all of the temples mentioned in the second couplet were visible from the places where the three homes were located, especially when following the poem's order. For example, the temple of Cybele would not have been visible from the Esquiline, but it may have been from the Aventine; it is also

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[266] Cf. Verg. *E.* 3.84 *Pollio amat nostram, quamvis est rustica, Musam*; Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.55 *admirabilis in suo genere Theocritus, sed musa illa rustica et pastoralis…*
[267] Mart. 9.61.14; *Priap.* 80.9; Ov. *Met.* 1.192.
[268] Galán Vioque 2001: 418. It is also possible that the "new" Jupiter is the shrine to Jupiter Custos built by Domitian on the Capitol.

uncertain if the house on the Vicus Patricius would have been at some elevation. The fact that the word for roof (*culmina*) is used metonymically for the entire house might point to it being at a higher vantage point. Several propositions have been made to solve the issue, although my interest in this epigram is not the precise locations, but the atmosphere being created through the simultaneous associations of the homes of gods and patrons with elevated areas.[269]

The patron's name, Maximus, also resonates with the topography of the poem since it is contrasted with Jupiter Optimus Maximus. The poem ends in a couplet loaded with satirical *indignatio* and epigrammatic wit, as the client-speaker wonders where to find his patron, concluding that a man who lives everywhere in fact lives nowhere. Criticizing a negligent patron while pointing out that he observes (4 *prospicis*) the gods from his elevated abodes may also be a warning that the gods, and the emperor, are watching. Gods that serve an important role in guarding the state, such as Jupiter, have temples in elevated places so that they can watch over the people, including Maximus. In the previous chapter, the discussion of the stingy patron Calenus in 1.99 has shown that prayer can be used to call out and punish the shortcomings of patronage, and Martial can use topography for the same purpose. In 7.73, the elevated position of the Capitoline temple evokes the Tarpeian rock as a place for punishing dissenters.[270] The overbearing presence of temples which directly evoke the emperor, or those closely connected with imperial ideology, such as Cybele and Vesta, hints at the way a scoptic epigram can use urban space to create an atmosphere of order.

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[269] For an overview of the discussion see Galán Vioque 2001: 416-417. Proposed solutions include that the temples are listed from the perspective of Martial as he is making his way to each house (Friedrich 1909: 106-107), that the list of temples is inverted and pointing to a different temple of Cybele (van Haeperen 1999), or that Maximus had seven houses (Sposi 1998).
[270] Bradley 2012b.

4.3 Scoptic Epigram and Imperial Ideology: The Case of 4.53

The narrator in Martial's scoptic epigrams acts as a central controlling figure, and it has been argued that deviant behavior is sometimes framed as spatial transgression which is followed by a reestablishment of order.[271] Although this claim originally pertains to programmatic and obscene epigrams, I believe that it can also be applied to epigrams about Roman topography. Martial's depiction of the way Domitian transforms and manipulates space is a good starting point for demonstrating how transgression is followed by order. Although Martial's Rome is fragmented and full of transgression and incongruence, the poet must impose boundaries, just as Domitian imposes order upon the city. In 7.61, the emperor is praised for his edict from 92 CE which forbids businesses from expanding into the streets because none of the vendors were within the limits given to them (2 *inque suo nullum limine limen erat*). After the edict, everyone is shown obeying the imposed boundaries (9 *sua limina servant*). Another example that is not quite related to topography, but is still spatial, is the epigram cycle on Domitian's revival of the *lex theatralis* in Book 5, which reserved a number of front rows for members of the equestrian class.[272] In these epigrams, Martial's mockery is targeted at intruders that are subverting the newly (re)imposed social order by pretending to be of equestrian rank. The return to order is enforced by Domitian, whose "bouncers" make sure that the intruders are removed from the theater.

The convergence of the poetic narrator who calls out disorderly behavior and the emperor whose power reinforces order can also be found in epigrams about Roman topography. The following three examples demonstrate that potentially subversive individuals can be marginalized, or at least threatened, by using architecture. The spatial markers in these epigrams are located in the Campus Martius, an area which was greatly devastated in the fire of 80 CE along with the

[271] O'Connor 1998.
[272] For the *lex theatralis* see Rawson 1987 and for Martial's treatment of it see Canobbio 2002.

Capitoline.[273] Domitian was responsible for rebuilding this area, which made it one of the main clusters of his architectural projects.[274] Coincidentally, the many temples, porticos and baths make the area a suitable backdrop for Martial's epigrams about life in Rome. Martial's numbered books began to be published in 86, which makes it possible that his epigrams also comment on Domitianic architectural influence.

The first example is 2.14, an itinerant epigram in which the parasite Selius is making rounds through the Campus Martius looking for a dinner invitation, but his targets keep evading and frustrating him.[275] Selius' trajectory begins and ends at the portico of Europa, and in the center of his wanderings is the temple of Isis, who is recognizable as being from Memphis (7 *Memphitica templa*) and a cow (8 *maesta iuvenca*). This connects the temple to the mural of Europa and the bull in the initial portico. After the porticoes, he heads to the baths, where he again has no luck because a god does not will it (14 *renuente deo*). Commentators have noted that this does not refer to any specific god and might simply mean Fortuna, although it gains and additional meaning in light of the mock-prayer to Jupiter in the final couplet: "In the name of you and your girl, naughty mount, I ask that you invite Selius to dinner" (17-18 *per te perque tuam, vector lascive, puellam, / ad cenam Selium tu, rogo, taure, voca*). The prayerful repetition of *per* and the high register of *vector* are mixed with *lascivus*, an adjective often used by Martial to describe his poetry, and a comical request to put Selius out of his misery.[276] Although a prayer for Selius' death seems harsh, there are further parallels in which being a dinner-guest of Jupiter is equated with dying.[277] Furthermore, my discussion of Aethon's fate in 12.77 from the previous chapter shows that Jupiter

[273] For the ancient account of the extent of the fire see Cass. Dio 66.24.
[274] Darwall-Smith 1996: 250-251.
[275] This epigram is part of a cycle on Selius (2.11, 14, 27, 69). For a full discussion see Prior 1996.
[276] Williams 2004: 74-75; Watson and Watson 2003: 162-163.
[277] Cf. *conviva Tonantis* in 8.39.5 and 9.91.5.

is not a stranger to punishing clients severely for much smaller indiscretions. Movement through the city is a key feature of an epigram like 2.14 since the itineraries give new meanings to buildings as they are placed in a sequence and juxtaposed with one another. Satirical epigrams that mock desperate parasites are a common theme in Martial, although the satire gains an additional edge due to its physical setting. Luke Roman sees Selius as a figure whose selfish parasitic pursuits attempt to subvert Domitian's image of moral austerity and the grandeur of his project of rebuilding Rome. These efforts are thwarted, however, by Martial's topographical maneuvering which ultimately isolates Selius and demonstrates the futility of opposing imperial ideology.[278] One example is the temple of Isis, which is mentioned in Martial only indirectly as part of the urban background; the evening prayer by the worshipers of the goddess is used to designate the eighth hour and her temple is a place often frequented by lovers.[279] There is also an important connection to Domitian, who rebuilt the temple after the fire of 80, and the Flavian dynasty is known to have had a connection with Egypt.[280]

The second is 9.59, an epigram about how Mamurra spends the whole day wandering the Saepta Iulia while pretending to be rich and distinguished, but in the end only buys two cheap cups. The Saepta was the former voting precinct from the Republican period which was monumentalized by Agrippa under Augustus. By Martial's time, it became a place for leisure and a marketplace for luxury goods.[281] It is a place "where golden Rome wastes its wealth" (2 *ubi Roma suas aurea vexat opes*). The phrase *Roma aurea* evokes Ovid's similar praise of Augustan Rome as a place that used to be unrefined but is now covered in gold and possesses vast wealth

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[278] Roman 2010: 99-101.

[279] Dyson & Prior 1995: 254; references to Isis include 2.14, 8.81, 10.48 and 11.47. The priests of Isis performed prayers two times a day (Tib. 1.3.31-32), once in the morning (Apul. *Met*. 11.20) and once in the afternoon (Mart. 10.48).

[280] For the temple of Isis and Serapis and an assessment of Domitian's interest in Egypt see Darwall-Smith 1996: 139-153. For a discussion of Egypt and the Flavians see Henrichs 1968.

[281] Cf. Stat. Silv. 4.5.2; Mart. 2.14.5, 57.2; 10.80; Juv. 6.153.

from conquered lands.[282] Domitian is also praised not only through the comparison of his Rome with Augustan Rome, but also because he rebuilt the Saepta after the fire, making him a contributor to the expansion of Rome and its wealth. In Martial, the phrase *aurea Roma* also comes to mean "the wealthy Romans," a layer of society to which Mamurra does not belong, although he wants to seem like he is one of them.[283] Similar to Selius, Mamurra's greedy and deceitful nature is enclosed by a monument associated with Domitian and is kept separate from the emperor.[284]

The third example is 5.49, a satirical epigram mocking Labienus' baldness and greed. Due to his large bald spot, it appeared as if he only had hair on the sides of his head, which Martial comically exaggerates into an image of a man with three different heads.[285] This three-headedness came in handy, however, since he was able to obtain three baskets of handouts from the emperor during the Saturnalia. This exploitation of imperial generosity (9 *prandia misit Imperator*) is not expected to go unpunished, however. In the conclusion of the epigram, Labienus is compared to the three-bodied Geryon in an even further exaggeration. He is warned to stay away from the portico of Philip, lest he perish at the hands of Hercules. This portico might be of interest to Labienus because of its proximity to wig sellers, but it also surrounded the temple of Hercules Musarum, which was associated with the imperial family in the Augustan period.[286] Since Martial tends to present Hercules as the inferior when comparing him with Domitian, it is possible to see Hercules, and his temple, as a watchful guardian who is meant to punish anyone who attempts to disrupt social order, or as an extension of the emperor himself.[287] This temple was also possibly

[282] Ov. *Ars* 3.113-114 *simplicitas rudis ante fuit: nunc aurea Roma est, | et domiti magnas possidet orbis opes*.
[283] Henriksén 2012: 249.
[284] Roman 2010: 115-116.
[285] This conclusion is comparable with another epigram mocking a man whose beard is trimmed, shaved and plucked in different parts, leaving the narrator to wonder if the person has only one head (8.47.2 *unum quis putat esse caput?*)
[286] Cf. Ov. *Ars* 3.165-168, see also Rodríguez Almeida 1986.
[287] For Domitian and Hercules in poetry and material evidence see Moorman & Stocks 2021.

rebuilt by Domitian and Martial had praised the "resurrection" of Rome from the ashes of the fire earlier in the beginning of Book 5, noting that through these renovations the city has taken on the features of its ruler (5.7.4 *et sumpsit vultus praesidis ipsa sui*).[288] What Selius, Mamurra and Labienus have in common is their potential to subvert the image of orderly, imperial Rome that Domitian is establishing with their own interpretations of certain locations as venues for parasites and deceivers. The satirical narrator of these epigrams uses references to architecture to reimpose the dominant ideology while mocking those who attempt to oppose it.

Epigram 4.53, which demonstrates the same tendencies as the epigrams which I have discussed above, calls for a more extensive treatment. The invective against a Cynic is one of the many vignettes set on the streets of Rome found in Martial's poems, but it is also a testimony to the increasing presence of Domitian which Martial is constantly renegotiating. The Cynic is not only an object of derision due to his physical appearance, but also a symbol of ideological opposition to the Flavian dynasty which Martial seeks to neutralize by placing him within imperial architecture. Before I offer a reading of the poem, I will situate it within the context of Book 4. My argument seeks to show that the references to religious architecture were chosen so as to reinforce Domitian's presence in Rome. Moreover, the Cynic could suggest an anti-imperial sentiment which the juxtaposition with imperial architecture is meant to diminish.

Book 4 was published around the Saturnalia of 88 CE or early in the following year.[289] From 86 to early 89, Domitian remained in Rome between military campaigns, and it is possible that the emperor's extended presence in Rome resulted in the increase of imperial epigrams in this book.[290] Something similar happens in Books 8 and 9, which have the greatest number of epigrams

[288] According to Richardson 1977, this portico was also possibly damaged in the fire of 80 and rebuilt by Domitian. For a reading of 5.7 in light of Domitian's renewal of Rome see Closs 2021.
[289] Moreno Soldevila 2006: 1-2.
[290] Jones 1992: 141-143.

about Domitian and were also published between his return from military campaigns in 93 and his death.[291] The first eight epigrams form an introductory sequence which asserts the emperor's status as a divine and authoritative figure.[292] At the book's very start, Domitian is established not only as a deity but also as a new Augustus, since he is presented as a patron of the arts, and he conforms to the Augustan calculation of the Secular games.[293] This is followed by an epigram (4.2) which suggests that the emperor is capable of using his divine powers to stifle dissent. During a spectacle in the arena, Horatius was the only individual wearing a black toga, even though the "hallowed leader" Domitian (4 *sancto…duce*) had made it mandatory to wear only white togas at public events. Next there was a sudden snowfall, which resulted in Horatius' toga becoming white.[294] These kinds of miraculous acts are depicted by Martial as a result of the emperor's divine influence and are usually reserved for the spectacles in the arena.[295] In this example, however, Domitian brings the spectacle into the audience and takes the role of the controlling figure that imposes order on those who wish to stand out. Just as in the *lex theatralis* cycle in Book 5, a venue for public entertainment becomes an analogy for social order and urban space becomes a site in which order is enforced by the emperor.

According to Ray Laurence, Book 4 brings a change in perspective since we see the city through the eyes of Martial's patron Julius Martialis. From his villa on the Janiculum he is able to gaze all of Rome and beyond, a view quite different from the first three books, which are more concerned with specific locations throughout the city.[296] It must be acknowledged, however, that there are still references to spatial markers in Book 4, most notably those connected with the

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[291] Laurence 2011: 91-92. Book 10 was originally published while Domitian was alive, but it was subsequently revised and republished under Trajan. The Domitianic epigrams have been expunged from this book.
[292] For a full analysis of the introductory sequence of Book 4 see Merli 1993: 241-245.
[293] Moreno Soldevila 2006: 101-102.
[294] For the thematic cycle of black and white in Book 4 see Lorenz 2004.
[295] A notable example is the epigram cycle about the lion and the hare in Book 1, for which see Garthwaite 2001.
[296] Laurence 2011: 89.

imperial Palatine. In 4.5, Fabianus, an upright man, is told by the jaded Roman narrator that it is impossible for him to live an honest life in Rome. One of the things he is incapable of doing is selling smoke around the imperial palace (7 *vendere nec vanos circa Palatia fumos*), referring to the various flatterers that are pretending to be influential in order to gain favors from imperial freedmen. One of these flatterers is Afer, who in 4.78 is ridiculed by Martial for still being one in his old age. Like Selius in 2.14, he is running around through the whole city looking for patrons, and he even makes his way up and down the Sacra Via ten times on his way to the Palatine (4.78.7 *et sacro repetis decies Palatia clivo*) calling on Sigerus and Parthenius, Domitian's freedmen.[297] Again like Selius, Afer achieves nothing, and his intrigue and deceit are kept separate from the freedmen and the emperor. Another clue about how the topography of the Palatine can be found in 1.70, a poem which traces the journey of one of Martial's books from a shop in the Argiletum to the home of a patron named Proculus who resides there. Besides the Campus Martius, this area held another cluster of Domitianic architectural projects.[298] The similarity of the path to Proculus and the palace gave Martial an opportunity to reference various landmarks that were built or rebuilt by Domitian.[299] In the line in which the book is told to go up the Sacra Via and seek the palace (5 *inde sacro veneranda petes Palatia clivo*) the placement the words of *sacro, Palatia* and *clivo* is almost identical to 4.78.7, which suggests that the path taken by Afer and the book is the same. The implied presence of Domitian's influence over the Palatine thwarts any attempt to subvert the order of imperial Rome, just as the epigrams about the Campus Martius have demonstrated.

[297] Parthenius is also modified with the epithet *Palatinus* in 4.45.2, which further demonstrates his affiliation with the imperial court. Furthermore, in 9.79 Martial states that the *familia Caesaris* is of the same mind as the emperor whom they serve.
[298] For Domitian and the Palatine see Darwall-Smith 1996: 179-215.
[299] For a discussion of the topography of 1.70 see Laurence 2011: 85-86, Geyssen 1999: 722-728 and Rodríguez-Almeida 1982-1983.

Epigram 4.53 contributes to the atmosphere of Domitianic influence within Rome which the previously discussed epigrams have been establishing. The first two lines set up a geographical location, while the rest of the epigram describes and mocks the Cynic. It has been studied mainly for its structure and intertext, and scholars tend to view the catalog of physical characteristics of the Cynic and *cumulatio* as the defining features of the poem.[300] Additionally, formal analysis emphasizes its dependence on a similar invective by the 1st century CE epigrammatist Lucillius (*AP* 11.153), since they both have a similar pointed conclusion in which the Cynic is compared to a dog.[301] This epigram shares the theme of exposing individuals that falsely present themselves as philosophers and preach about morality but do not practice it. The philosophical schools which they follow are not explicitly stated, only generic markers which make them appear to be followers of Stoicism or Cynicism.[302] 4.53 stands out in this regard, as it is the only epigram from this group that explicitly attacks a Cynic:

> Hunc, quem saepe vides intra penetralia nostrae
> 	Pallados et templi limina, Cosme, novi
> cum baculo peraque senem, cui cana putrisque
> 	stat coma et in pectus sordida barba cadit,
> cerea quem nudi tegit uxor abolla grabati,
> 	cui dat latratos obvia turba cibos,
> esse putas Cynicum deceptus imagine ficta:
> 	non est hic Cynicus, Cosme: quid ergo? Canis. (Mart. 4.53)

> That old man, whom you always see, Cosmus, in the sanctuary of our Pallas and the threshold of the New Temple, the one with the staff and pouch, whose hoary and stinking hair stands up and his filthy beard falls to his chest, covered by a wax-yellow cloak, the spouse to his bare pallet, to whom the incoming crowd gives the food for which he barks. Deceived by his false appearance, you think he is a Cynic. He is no Cynic, Cosmus. What is he then? Just a dog.

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[300] Salemme 1976: 77-80; for the priamel and catalog as literary strategies in Martial see La Penna 1992 and for *cumulatio* in satirical epigram see Mindt 2019.

[301] For discussions of Mart. 4.53 and *AP* 11.153 see Floridi 2014: 292-293; Burnikel 1980: 43-48 and Prinz 1911: 31-32.

[302] For Martial's epigrams about philosophers see Adamik 1975. An overview of scoptic epigrams against philosophers can be found in Floridi 2014: 540-542 and Henriksén 2012: 115-116, 242.

The epigram is addressed to Cosmus, who is possibly the same character as the perfumer Cosmus known from a number of other epigrams.[303] Although the architectural markers are not explicitly described, the poem can still be said to rely on a contrast between the principles of order which the sacred architecture embodies and the chaos of the disheveled Cynic. Furthermore, the addressee's name makes for an effective bilingual pun (Κόσμος) and his identification with the perfumer even more attractive. This contrast between order and chaos is established already in the first couplet when the target is placed between two imperial monuments, a shrine to Minerva (*penetralia nostrae Pallados*) and the temple of deified Augustus (*templi limina…novi*). Rosario Moreno Soldevila claims that these allusions to Domitian's building policy must be understood as "a sign of adherence to the established regime,"[304] which is a notion I would like to elaborate on below. The fact that these buildings are both pieces of religious architecture has not been examined beyond the observation that Domitian had a special reverence for Minerva, which does not account for the placement of the Cynic at these two specific buildings.[305]

Temples are an integral part of the fabric of Martial's Rome, but they are not usually notable for religious activity, rather for what everyday Romans associated with them. Martial gives temples the potential to gain new meaning based on individuals with which they are juxtaposed. One example is the temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum Augustum, which stands as a backdrop for legal proceedings (8.44) and recitations of Martial's own poetry by Pompeius Auctus (7.51-52). Provincial governors set out on their tour of duty from this forum, and it was a major site in the cult of Mars, thus evoking a connection between the religious and political center of Rome and its

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[303] For Cosmus see Moreno Soldevila 2019: 163-164 and Moreno Soldevila 2006: 376.
[304] Moreno Soldevila 2006: 373.
[305] For Domitian's relationship to Minerva see Darwall-Smith 1996: 115-129; Girard 1981 and Sauter 1934: 90-96.

provinces.[306] By placing a living mouthpiece of his poetry near this temple Martial is able to establish Rome as the poetic center and articulate the circulation of his poetry in the city and beyond.[307] Another example is the temple of Isis by which Selius passes in 2.14. As I have previously mentioned, Selius' attempt to reinterpret the spaces on the Campus Martius is thwarted as he is isolated in Domitianic architecture, and temples were also a part of the rebuilding program. The case of 4.53 is similar because the Cynic is positioned in a way that challenges imperial authority but is ultimately neutralized.

The two spatial markers found in 4.53 are the *penetralia nostrae Pallados* and the *templi limina…novi*. The *templum novum* is the temple of the deified Augustus, whose construction was started under Tiberius and finished under Caligula. The more common name is *templum (divi) Augusti*, while *templum novum* is not as well attested and supposedly originated as a means of differentiating it from the older *sacrarium Augusti* on the Palatine.[308] Its exact location remains speculative, since it is believed to lie between the Palatine and Capitoline hills, south of the Basilica Julia between the *vicus Tuscus* and the *vicus Iugarius*, an area which has never been excavated.[309] Its exact layout is unknown, although it is believed to be modeled after the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.[310] It is possible that the word *limina* is not referring to the actual threshold of the temple, but a quadriportico or an open square around or in front of it.[311] The *penetralia* of Minerva has also been an object of scholarly speculation. The most widely accepted proposition is that this phrase refers to a shrine with a statue of Minerva which was attached to the library of

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[306] For the functions of the Forum Augustum see Anderson 1984: 88-97.
[307] See discussion in Roman 2010: 107-109. For centers and peripheries in Flavian literature see Pogorzelski 2016.
[308] *templum (divi) Augusti*: Plin. *Nat*. 34.43; Suet. *Tib*. 40.1; *Cal*. 21.1, 22.4; *templum novum*: Mart. 12.2.7; Suet. *Tib*. 74. See also Coarelli 2012: 90-102.
[309] *LTUR* 1.139-140, s.v. "Augustus, divus, templum" (Torelli); Goldman-Petri 2021: 37; Coarelli 2012: 101-102, 472-474; Moreno Soldevila 2006: 375; Lugli 1941.
[310] Fishwick 1992.
[311] Rodríguez Almeida 1985-1986: 117.

the temple of Augustus.[312] The statue of Minerva would have been added to the library after it was reconstructed by Domitian. The second mention of the *templum novum* is in Book 12 as a destination for the book which Martial is sending to Rome from Spain. The book is instructed to "seek the venerable threshold of the new temple, where the home has been returned to the Pierian chorus" (12.2.7-8 *veneranda novi pete limina templi, | reddita Pierio sunt ubi tecta choro*). Just as in 4.53, the *limina templi* are placed close to the library, which is this time denoted as a rebuilt (*reddita*) structure associated with the Muses, an appropriate location for Martial's book.[313]

Although the temple is believed to have been rebuilt by Domitian, it is unclear in which fire it was damaged. Pliny the Elder says that the temple was destroyed in a fire but does not seem to have been rebuilt at the time when he was writing (Plin. *Nat*. 12.94), which could refer to the fire of 64, the lightning strike of 68 (Suet. *Galb*. 1) or some other incident. Cassius Dio's account of the fire of 80 mentions that the buildings of Augustus were destroyed along with their books (66.24.2), which might suggest the temple of Augustus and its library. The full extent of the fire is unknown, and it is uncertain if the Forum and Palatine were damaged.[314] Suetonius informs us that Domitian took great care to restore the libraries destroyed by fires (*Dom*. 20), without mentioning the exact libraries and in which fires they were destroyed. The dedication of the temple and the precinct is believed to have occurred between 88 and 90 based on the new formula found in military diplomas around this time. Originals of military diplomas under Domitian began to be located on a wall in the vicinity of the temple of Augustus, possibly next to a statue of Minerva (*in muro post templum divi Augusti ad Minervam*), which is believed to be the same location as the

[312] *LTUR* 3.251-252, s.v. "Minerva" (Aronen), Tucci 2013: 289-290. Other possibilities include that a shrine to Minerva was attached to the temple of Castor during reconstruction (Darwall-Smith 1996: 126-127; Girard 1981: 236) or that it was part of the Domitianic monumental complex adjacent to the temple of Augustus (Coarelli 2012: 467-474; see also Sommaini 2022).

[313] For a discussion of this couplet see Bowie 1988: 39-41.

[314] See also Sablayrolles 1996: 794, who claims that the Palatine was damaged based on Stat. *Silv*. 1.35 (I thank Virginia Closs for pointing me to this reference).

sanctuary discussed above.[315] Due to the scarcity of archaeological evidence, the debate about the *templum novum* and the *penetralia Pallados* will have to remain speculative. The assumption under which I will be operating is that in 88/89, around the time when Book 4 was written and published, Domitian was rebuilding the temple of the deified Augustus and the surrounding complex, which included the temple library with a new statue of Minerva. Whatever the exact location and nature of these structures was, it is important to note that Martial selected as the setting for this epigram two locations connected to Domitian's efforts to perpetuate imperial ideology and project his personal religiosity.

Domitian's engagement with Augustan architecture has been interpreted as a process of revising and erasing the physical memory of the imperial cult in the previous ruling dynasty. There is even a possibility that the rebuilt temple of Augustus was modeled after Vespasian's temple of Peace, since Domitian is believed to have used that temple as a blueprint for his temple projects.[316] Rebuilding this temple would at least send a message that Domitian is perpetuating Augustan values, as he is often depicted by Martial (e.g. 5.19 and 8.80). The library may have been another avenue for Domitian to revise the legacy of the Julio-Claudians. Tiberius placed the colossal statue of Apollo Temenites from Syracuse in the library (Suet. *Tib*. 74), probably because of Augustus' strong affiliation with this deity. If the statue was damaged in the fire, this would have been an opportunity for Domitian to replace it with one of Minerva, which would not only be a fitting statue for a library, but also reflect his devotion to the goddess. The shrine to Minerva also highlights the important connection between libraries and sacred spaces in Rome.[317] The contents

[315] *CIL* 16.36. For further examples see Roxan 1978.
[316] Goldman-Petri 2021.
[317] For this connection see Neudecker 2013.

of a library have been argued to be under the protection of a deity, and the presence of Minerva, as well as Augustus, suggests that Domitian's influence could be felt throughout the complex.

With the stage now set, I will move to the Cynic himself and propose what kind of effect this juxtaposition may have invoked. The representatives of Cynic philosophy are best known for the practical application of their teachings, having little to no interest in theoretical speculation.[318] Their doctrine called for an austere lifestyle and exposure to hardships, which led them to the ostentatious and exhibitionist behavior which had made them so notorious throughout antiquity. In literary sources from the Imperial period, there was a distinction between the "true" Cynics of old, such as Diogenes of Sinope, and the contemporary "false" Cynics which do not adopt their actual philosophical teachings but simply take on their outward appearance. Martial hints at this distinction through the phrase *deceptus imagine ficta*. Their strong association with the urban environment and their branding as individuals whose very existence challenges authority made anecdotes about Cynics conducive to being used as a negative example for the purpose of enforcing normative societal values.[319] Scoptic epigrams against philosophers from Book 11 of the Palatine Anthology also rely on this discrepancy and they show that criticism of the Cynics was primarily directed at their austere lifestyle, not their way of thinking.[320] Martial's epigram also picks up on these themes, but its urban setting suggests that contrasting the Cynic's behavior with architectural order serves a further goal of reinforcing imperial ideology. Furthermore, although the bilingual pun in the final line may not be as effective in Latin (*Cynicus* – *canis*; κυνικός – κύων), it nevertheless suggests Martial's familiarity with the tropes found in his Greek models.

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[318] For a history of Cynic philosophy see Dudley 1937; for the Roman period in particular see Trapp 2007, Griffin 1996 and Goulet-Cazé 1990.
[319] Krueger 1996.
[320] Cf. *AP* 11.153-158. For Greek epigrams about philosophers see Romero 2019, for Cynics see Follet 1993.

The epigram continues with a description of the Cynic's appearance and way of life. In the second couplet, the target is identifiable as a Cynic even before it is explicitly stated.[321] The first signs are the stick and leather pouch (*cum baculo peraque*), two items commonly associated with the followers of this school, and the beard, albeit dirty, is a more general marker of a philosopher.[322] The third couplet describes his living conditions, which suggests the Cynic tendency of performing in public those things which are normally done in private. The first line includes the curious expression that his cloak is the "wife" of his bed. It has been suggested that this phrase refers to the Cynic attitude of dismissing love and sex in favor of masturbating in public.[323] The second line suggests his mendicancy, since the crowd is giving him food, and the canine imagery (*latratos*) anticipates the pointed conclusion.[324] The final couplet reveals that the epigram is about a false Cynic since the individual in question is concluded to be only a dog, as opposed to the false image which has deceived Cosmus. The fact that the perfumer Cosmus sees the Cynic often (*saepe vides*) has led to the proposition that he had a store in the vicinity of the temple.[325] Other instances of Cosmus in the corpus are mainly about praising his products and reveal little about his personality, which makes it difficult to tell if being deceived by appearances would be a part of his character. Perhaps Cosmus is meant to be a member of the *obvia turba*, the crowd of people frequenting the temple, and therefore one of the many observers who are fooled, at least according to the narrator.

This epigram may also be contributing to the view of Cynics as anti-imperial. Before the Principate, Cynics were content with theoretical reflections on politics and the ideal state. While

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[321] For the influence of ecphrasis and ancient sculpture on the description in 4.53 see Gallego-Cebollada 2020.
[322] *TLL* 10.1.1170.24-38, s.v. *pera*. Cf. also Mart. 14.81. For a full account of the Cynic's inventory see Goulet-Cazé 1990: 2738-2746.
[323] Moreno Soldevila 2006: 378.
[324] For canine imagery in Martial see Canobbio 2020.
[325] Rodríguez Almeida 1985-1986.

earlier Cynic views on statesmanship revolved around utopias, it is notable that they had no issue with monarchy as such but were against tyranny and called for practicing outspokenness.[326] Under Caligula and Nero, first reports begin to appear of Cynics challenging imperial power, most notably Demetrius of Corinth. He was exiled under Vespasian in 71 along with other philosophers. There are no testimonia of Cynics being expelled under Domitian, although it is possible that they were included in the expulsions of 89 and 94.[327] Cynics are also known for their criticism of traditional religion, with their own beliefs being described on a spectrum ranging from agnosticism to monotheism. Speculation about the gods does not appear to have been their priority, although some sources claim that their austere lifestyle was in accordance with divine wisdom.[328] This would mean that, regardless of their religious beliefs, they did not believe that they had to answer to any earthly authority, such as magistrates or the emperor. This tension with traditional religion could also be felt in the epigrammatic tradition, since the mock-dedicatory epigrams of Leonidas of Tarentum (3rd century BCE) suggest that Cynics were viewed as negative models due to their lack of traditional piety and their lifestyle, which went against Greek popular morality.[329] Dio Chrysostom, a contemporary of Martial, says in his oration to the people of Alexandria that Cynics gather in places such as alleys and temple gates and through jokes promote derision of philosophers and general insolence among the public (*Or.* 32.9). This image could also be applied to Martial's Cynic, since he is near a temple (*templi…novi*) and engaging with a crowd (*obvia turba*), although

[326] Kindstrand 1980: 95; see also Höistad 1948.
[327] Goulet-Cazé 1990: 2752-2759; for Domitian's expulsions see Jones 1991: 119-125. For Demetrius of Corinth see Kindstrand 1980 and Billerbeck 1979.
[328] For religious views of the Cynics in the imperial period see Bosman 2008; Kindstrand 1980: 90-92; Goulet-Cazé 1990: 2781-2788 and Attridge 1978: 56-66.
[329] *AP* 6.293, 298. For Martial and Leonidas see Autore 1937: 85-88. For Leonidas and Cynicism see Solitario 2015. Although Laurens 1965 argues that Martial was not significantly influenced by Hellenistic epigram from before the 1st century BCE, such as Leonidas, more recent scholarship, such as Cowan 2014 and Neger 2014, suggest that there was a deeper engagement with early Hellenistic epigram.

other than his beggarly "barking," he does not have a voice. While he is silent, his subversive potential is depicted through his presence at two religious monuments associated with Domitian.

The challenge to imperial authority which the Cynic poses can also be framed as part of a wider competition for attention between religious and philosophical groups. From Augustus onward, the emperor and his family effectively had monopoly over building temples within Rome, which meant that competition with the dominant forms of religious expression and imperial ideology had to be taken to the streets.[330] An instructive example of this is Horace's *Satires* 2.3, where the proximity of street philosophers to religious spaces can be seen as a sign of competition for attention in the "religious marketplace" of Rome.[331] The Stoic Damasippus says that he was saved by the street preacher Stertinius near a bridge close to Tiber Island. Stertinius' claim to provide "spiritual healing" could be seen as competing with the cult of the healing god Aesculapius, who had a temple on the island.[332] Similarly, the elderly Cynic may have been placed in epigram 4.53 as a proponent of anti-tyrannical sentiments in order to compete with Domitian's perpetuation of imperial ideology through religious architecture. In Martial's account, the force of epigrammatic mockery renders the Cynic as nothing more than a dog, while topographical markers serve to diminish those who attempt to superimpose themselves and their views over the imperial landscape. Looking at the discussion of the epigrams in this entire section, it can be said that the allusions to buildings renewed by Domitian combined with invectives against unsavory individuals demonstrate Martial's ability to use even mockery in service of imperial praise.

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[330] Rüpke 2018: 196-200.
[331] Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2020: 319-320. For the "marketplace" model of Roman religion see Bendlin 2000.
[332] Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2020: 327-330.

4.4 The Language of Pollution and Notions of Propriety

I begin this section with an epigram that demonstrates the intersection of pollution and poetics. It is a short epigram from the *Apophoreta*, also known as Book 14, one of Martial's two early collections that feature descriptions of Saturnalian gifts in elegiac couplets. One of these is about a figure of Priapus made out of pastry and it features a joke at the expense of the consumer/reader.[333] The transmitted title is *Priapus siligineus*: "If you want to be full, you can eat our Priapus. Even though you gnaw on the very genitals, you will remain pure." (14.70[69] *si vis esse satur, nostrum potes esse Priapum; ipsa licet rodas inguina, purus eris*). Although obscenity was not a prominent feature of Martial's early Saturnalian poetry, it is worth noting how this epigram anticipates the theme of literary *apologia* which I have discussed in Chapter 1. The consumption of "inappropriate" poetry is both literal and metaphorical, and the ithyphallic god will remain a symbol of obscene verse in the numbered books. The final line also introduces a notion of purity (*purus eris*), which does not have to be necessarily religious. In Martial, the adjective *purus* is often used to denote lack of violation through oral sex, which makes its use appropriate in the context of teasing a reader.[334] It is possible that this epigram may have a religious valence if it is viewed within the context of other metapoetic epigrams that engage with religious discourse, even if only to make a joke. My reading of 1.5 proposed that Martial's punchline is that his status as *malus poeta* and the obscenity of his poetry may lead to his book being thrown into the water, nodding to the "purification" of the book. Later, in a more solemn tone, he "purifies" Book 8 by removing obscene language before offering it to the god-emperor (8.pr.16-17 *meminerit non nisi religiosa purificatione lustratos accedere ad templa debere*). Across Martial's corpus, the

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[333] For similar examples of pastries in the form of genitals see Petr. 60.4 and Mart. 9.2.2.

[334] Cf. Mart. 3.75; 6.66; 9.63, 67; 11.61. See also Lennon 2014: 41-42 and Adams 1982: 198-199.

vocabulary of pollution and purity can be found in various contexts, most commonly used for comedic effects.

The following examples show how Martial employs this vocabulary when talking about "matter out of place" in a broader sense of people or objects being in a place where they do not belong. I will be drawing on Lennon's analysis of the Roman vocabulary of pollution and Gabriele Thome's observations on the vocabulary of crime and punishment.[335] Thome makes an important observation that Romans are concerned with actions and think about things in a concrete and practical way rather than through metaphors and symbols. Earlier in this chapter I mentioned epigram 5.8, in which a man named Phasis celebrates Domitian's revival of the *lex theatralis* which reserves the front rows for the equestrian class. The seats in the theater are now described as being clear of any impostors (*puros…ordines*) and Phasis says that the knights are no longer defiled by having to be pressed up against the common crowd (*turba non premimur nec inquinamur*). The joke is that Phasis is himself an impostor and is swiftly removed from the theater. This epigram reveals that pollution (*inquinamur*) was often imagined as contagion being transmitted through touch or physical proximity.[336] Although 5.8 uses the vocabulary of pollution in a comic manner, it still shows how pollution can be associated with transgression of social order, which the emperor's power sets straight. A different case is 10.66, about a boy named Theopompus who is, according to the narrator, too beautiful to be a cook, and should be a cupbearer instead. The presence of the boy in a kitchen is shown in hyperbolic terms of his face being violated by the black kitchen (3 *faciem nigra violare culina*) and his hair being defiled by the grease and flame (4 *uncto polluit igne comas*). The verb *violare* usually refers to any kind of violent attack, mostly

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[335] Lennon 2014: 29-44; Thome 1992.
[336] Rimell 2008: 22-23.

sexual assault, although its proximity with *polluit* may also activate its religious valence.[337] The presence of Theopompus in the kitchen is comically exaggerated into a transgressive act whose severity is denoted using the language of pollution. The final couplet of the poem reinforces the point by introducing the paradox of Jupiter employing Ganymede to be his cook instead of a cupbearer. Although these examples are not tied to actual religious pollution, they demonstrate how this vocabulary can be tied to phenomena that in more or less serious ways threaten social order.

The language of purity and pollution, especially *os impurum*, can also be tied to the criticism of the economy and patronage. Epigram 6.66 demonstrates how contagion from an unclean mouth can alter the perception of the stained individual. The auctioneer Gellianus wished to prove that a slave girl was pure, or not practicing oral sex, by kissing her (5 *dum puram cupit approbare cunctis*). This resulted in no one wanting to buy her even for the lowest price. The point is that Gellianus has *os impurum*, and the girl is now contaminated by him regardless of her own status.[338] Paradoxically, contact with stained individuals can also increase one's wealth in the proper context. In 6.50, Telesinus is someone who was poor while he cultivated pure patrons (1 *cum coleret puros…amicos*). Although *amicus* is a neutral term for a patron, the use of *colere* signals a critical attitude towards patronage due to the ancient association of this verb with *cliens*. After Telesinus started associating himself with passive homosexuals, however, he immediately became rich (3 *obscenos…coepit curare cinaedos*).[339] In the conclusion, the narrator states there is nothing to be gained from pure kisses (6 *nil tibi…basia pura dabunt*). Just as the language of

[337] Lennon 2014: 35.
[338] For a discussion of contamination in a sexual context see Obermayer 1998: 218-219 and Richlin 1992: 28-29.
[339] The verb *curare* can also mean be an attendant (cf. the clients of the attorney Regulus in Plin. *Ep*. 1.5.15 *curatur a multis*). The adjective *obscenus* is rarely used by Martial (4.48, 11.61). Its religious valence is uncertain and it does not seem to be connected with pollution, but with bad omens (Var. *L*. 7.96,).

pollution in the examples above, the adjective *purus* is used as part of a discussion about what the narrator deems to be "disordered" within the system of patronage. It is in keeping with the general theme of epigrams critical of patrons and clients that the "pure" way to be a client would lead to less material gain, while those who are "impure" are making more profit, albeit in a less honorable way.

4.4 The Language of Pollution and Scoptic Epigram: The Case of *os impurum*

In this section, I will focus on epigrams which target individuals with *os impurum* and use bathing and water as a purifying punchline. It is important, however, to distinguish these epigrams from the reality of religious purification connected with sexual intercourse. Although sex was kept separate from religion in Rome, Martial is not interested in any specific religious concerns. Nevertheless, the language of impurity was widely used outside of a religious context when talking about sexual offenses, and thus presents a reflection on morality in satirical authors.[340] Romans normally performed purification using running water or water associated with a temple precinct, which would make the water from the baths unsuitable for any actual ritual usage.[341] Nevertheless, these epigrams will show that no such specificity was necessary for the audience to understand that the idea of pollution was the basis for the joke. Furthermore, purification after sex was usually achieved through a period of abstinence and is usually associated with foreign cults, such as Isis, or festivals associated with fertility, such as the Cerialia.[342] Purification through abstinence and other means was also mocked in elegy and satire. Propertius comically exaggerates Cynthia's fumigation and washing of the house after his illicit sexual affair (4.8), while the narrator of

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[340] Lennon 2014: 55-56; Richlin 1992: 26-27.
[341] Lennon 2014: 46-47; Bruun 1997: 366.
[342] Cerialia: Ov. *Am*. 3.10.1-18; *Fast*. 4.393-620; Ambarvalia: Tib. 2.1; Isis: Tib. 1.3; Prop. 1.33.

Juvenal's sixth satire finds the strictness of such religious observances debatable (6.50-51).[343] These examples also demonstrate that the ancient audience would be able to recognize when an author makes a connection between sex and purification.

Many such scoptic epigrams are also notable because they are situated in bathhouses. The intersection between pollution, oral sex and the baths is not incidental since pollution and morality had a close connection in Roman thinking.[344] Furthermore, baths were an ideal setting for these kinds of epigrams, since they were paradoxical places in which people could clean themselves and also get dirty, while having potential for both vice and philosophical self-improvement.[345] In the Augustan period, Vitruvius asserted that the baths were a poetic space with the potential to cultivate both mind and body. Against such an idealized image, later satirical poets would show how the baths became corrupted and unbalanced in the Imperial period. Martial is one such author and he contributes to this trend by presenting the baths as a place whose potential to physically cleanse is at odds with the fact that it is populated with physically and morally polluted individuals.

As an epigrammatic space, baths also tend to be transgressive. In fact, Martial offers important literary evidence for bathing which is not segregated by gender in the Imperial period.[346] Due to his satirical posturing, however, scholars remain split on how accurately Martial's accounts of bathing with women reflect the reality of Roman baths.[347] Whether or not these accounts are universally applicable, they do present plenty of choices between bathing establishments which could accommodate the preferences of various individuals. Furthermore, mixed bathing as a

[343] Lennon 2014: 61-63.
[344] Bradley 2012.
[345] Rimell 2015: 163.
[346] Yegül 2010: 32-34. In the Roman Republic, bathers were physically segregated by gender, while in the Imperial period bathhouses had a single set of bathing facilities, so men and women presumably bathed during different hours of the day.
[347] Yegül 2010: 29-31 and Fagan 1991: 24-29. Examples can be found across Martial's corpus, including: 2.53, 3.72, 6.93, 7.35, 11.47.

phenomenon is never satirized in these epigrams, it instead serves as a backdrop for the point of the epigram. The controversy regarding the status of Martial's women in the baths as prostitutes could also be tied to the underlying discourse of purity. Prostitutes were considered to be unclean and thus almost entirely excluded from religious life. The most notable exception to this exclusion was the Floralia festival, whose goal was believed to be a means of incorporating the "impure" elements of society into religious life.[348] Given the importance of the Floralia in Martial's poetic program, it would be reasonable to assume that in his poetic practice the first-person narrator of his epigrams would freely interact with prostitutes in a transgressive space.

Beyond associations with purificatory practices, washing with water was commonly practiced by women after intercourse, and poets will sometimes allude to sex by stating that a woman has used water.[349] A further negative association between prostitutes and water is found in the figure of the *aquari(ol)i*, slaves who provided water to prostitutes and were considered notorious and unclean.[350] The dirtiness of prostitutes is also associated with *os impurum*, an unclean mouth as a result of oral sex.[351] H. P. Obermayer has argued that Martial's invective is exclusively aimed at men, while women are not degraded by this activity.[352] While it is true that men who perform oral sex (on both men and women) are always mocked, the situation with women is more nuanced. Fellatio was acceptable for a married couple (9.40), which would be in keeping with Martial's poetic practice of depicting married women as sexually active. The distinction between married and unmarried women is evident in the example of Bassa and her daughter in 6.69. The narrator is not surprised that Catullus' wife Bassa is drinking water but is surprised that

[348] Lennon 2014: 76-81.
[349] Cf. Cic. *Cael*. 34; *Priap*. 30; Ov. *Am*. 3.7.83; *Ars* 3.96, 620. See also Butrica 1999.
[350] Cf. Juv. 6.332 and Fest. p. 20 (Lindsay). See also Butrica 1999b and Grewing 1997: 448.
[351] For an overview of *os impurum* in Martial and the literary tradition see Obermayer 1998: 214-231.
[352] Obermayer 1998: 214, Hallett 1977.

her daughter is, which implies that she is in an incestuous relationship with her (step)father Catullus.[353] In Martial, drinking and washing with water is generally used to imply oral sex, to the extent that in most epigrams he only has to use the phrase *aquam potare* or *sumere*. One example is Lesbia, who is said to be doing the right thing when she drinks water because that is the part of her body that needs water the most (2.50.2 *qua tibi parte opus est, Lesbia, sumis aquam*). Explicit references to drinking water can also be substituted with bathing, as in the case of Chione in 3.78. Chione is rumored to be pure because she has never had intercourse, although the narrator says that "you wash yourself, however, not covering the body part which you ought to; if you have any shame, move your loincloth to your face (3.78.3-4 *tecta tamen non hac, qua debes, parte lavaris: si pudor est, transfer subligar in faciem*). The pointed conclusion counters Chione's claim by implying that she performs fellatio, which would make her impure.[354]

Epigrams targeting men with *os impurum* are more damning and contain more punchlines related to washing. The majority of examples will be from Book 2 since this book has the most epigrams on this theme. The first example is Zoilus in 2.42, a man who is ruining the public baths by washing his anus (1 *subluto podice*), although the joke is that he could make the water even dirtier by submerging his head (2 *spurcius ut fiat, Zoile, merge caput*). The adjective *spurcus* is of interest here since it is usually used to describe the foul smell of prostitutes, a trope also found in Catullus. It is also generally connected with bodily pollution, especially unclean saliva and spitting.[355] 6.81 is a similar case, although it involves genitals, making the connection to *os*

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[353] The name Catullus is believed to be generic, although it is possible that there is a thematic connection with some incestuous invectives by the poet Catullus (e.g. 59, 74, 88). Besides physical pollution implied by *os impurum*, Romans also regarded incest as polluting because it destabilized social order and threatened the proper relationship with the gods (Lennon 2014: 72-76).

[354] A similar example is 1.83, in which a dog is said to enjoy licking Manneia's mouth and lips (*os et labra*) because they smell like excrement. Hallett 1977 believes that *os et labra* refers to genitalia instead, and this interchangeability between mouth and genitalia could be similar to Chione's case.

[355] Mart. 1.34.8 *abscondunt spurcas et monumenta lupas*; 4.4.9 *spurcae moriens lucerna Ledae*; Cat. 99.10 *commictae spurca saliva lupae*. The only other use of *spurcus* in Martial is used to describe a legacy hunter (4.56.3

impurum more explicit. Charidemus is washing his groin in the baths, and then his head, although Martial wishes that he had not done the latter (*et caput, ecce, lavas: inguina malo laves*).[356] Both of these examples show that the head could be more polluting than other body part generally considered more unclean. More importantly, there is a different attitude towards water than what we have seen in epigrams about women. The water in the baths is not so much a cleaning agent as much as it is an element that is itself in danger of becoming polluted and therefore unusable for other people. Due to bathhouses being major centers of social activity, the idea of pollution as a threat to social order also comes into play. Charidemus is described as if he were angry with the people (*iratus tamquam populo*), demonstrating the negative effect his perceived deviant behavior has on the community.[357] The futility of avoiding filth in the baths is again the theme in 2.70, as Cotilus wishes to use the tub first in order to wash himself in water that has not been contaminated by a penis (*undis…irrumatis*). The conclusion points out that, although he bathes first (*primus te licet abluas*) his genitals and head will still come into contact with the water, suggesting that he is also a *fellator* and will ruin the water for everyone else. The use of the verb *abluere* is ironic here, since it denotes not only washing but also the sending of the dirt away to a different place, which was not necessarily the case in the baths.[358]

The final example is not directly connected to washing, although it has connections with the moralizing and poetic dimensions of pollution. Epigram 2.61 follows the life of an anonymous man who used to perform fellatio in his youth but had gained such notoriety that he earned disdain

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nihil est te spurcius uno), which shows that when it is used in a moralizing way it can still have connotations of a potential threat to social order. See Lennon 2014: 34-35 for further discussion of the word and its derivations.

[356] A similar sentiment is also expressed in 11.95, where kissing a *fellator* is compared to submerging one's head in a bathtub.

[357] The name Charidemus is also a bilingual pun within the context of the poem, since the Greek words the name is derived from (χάρις and δῆμος) are in contrast with his description as *iratus…populo*. The name is also often used by Martial for characters that are sexual deviants (Moreno Soldevila 2019: 134-135; Vallat 2008: 556-557).

[358] Lennon 2014: 35.

from both corpse-carriers (*fastidia vispillonum*) and executioners (*taedia carnificis*). These two professions were notorious in Roman society because of their extensive dealings with death and dead bodies, which were believed to be a source of pollution. Similar to the targets of Martial's bathhouse epigrams, in some jurisdictions they were forbidden from bathing at the same time and place as everyone else, possibly out of the fear that they would contaminate the water.[359] In the latter half of the epigram, as the man became older, he started using his tongue in more malicious ways, namely slandering whichever name he was given (*adlatras nomen quod tibi cumque datur*). In the conclusion, the narrator claims that his tongue is more harmful now and that, paradoxically, it was purer when it was fellating (*nam cum fellaret, purior illa fuit*). The fact that by the end of the poem slander becomes more "impure" than fellatio, and thus more detrimental for society, may also have implications for Martial's poetics. In 11.30, Zoilus claims that lawyers and poets have bad breath, but the narrator responds that *fellatores* have worse breath (*os male causidicis et dicis olere poetis. | sed fellatori, Zoile, peius olet*). Commentators have not been able to find a satisfactory answer for the conclusion, other than that the narrator is swinging the insult back at Zoilus.[360] The ending of 2.61 might be able to offer an additional insight into what Zoilus meant when he said that poets have bad breath.[361] The anonymous addressee was made more impure by attacking and slandering others, and Zoilus might be pointing out something similar, suggesting that a satirical poet like Martial is likewise "impure" because of his invectives. The name Zoilus can be found across Martial's corpus and is given to a particular type of target. He is usually a vulgar *nouveau riche* or has *os impurum*.[362] It would be logical that one such "Zoilus" would

[359] For a discussion of how pollution impacted people who handled dead bodies see Lennon 2014: 146-155, esp. 149-150. For a recent reexamination of the Roman concept of "death pollution" see Emmerson 2020.
[360] See discussion in Kay 1985: 137.
[361] Zoilus' claim against lawyers may be an extension of the earlier epigram 11.12, in which Martial mocks Zoilus' inability to secure the *ius trium liberorum* for himself (Kay 1985: 92-94).
[362] The name is especially prominent in Books 2 and 11. For a discussion see Moreno Soldevila 2019: 620-622 and Vallat 2008: 222-224.

accuse Martial of having a different kind of impure, slanderous mouth. The perceived impurity of Martial's poetry, namely its obscenity and potential to bring a bad reputation upon its targets through staining, was something he had to reckon with from the beginning of Book 1. To this claim, the narrator responds, in a subtly self-deprecating way, that his poetry might be bad, but being a *fellator* is worse.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter shows how religious themes can be employed in invective epigrams. In the first half, I have looked at imperial architecture in Rome and how it can be used to intensify mockery. Even though Martial drew largely from his Greek predecessors when it came to themes and jokes in scoptic epigram, he provided a personal stamp by using Rome as his backdrop. The specific spatial setting also allowed an added layer of social commentary in the satirical vein, mocking ostentatious upstarts and greedy parasites. In these epigrams, shrines and temples are in the background and serve as another reminder of Domitian's presence in the city. Martial's architectural references mostly include places on the Palatine and Campus Martius which were built or rebuilt by Domitian in order to praise the emperor's efforts to revive Rome after disastrous fires in 69 and 80. My focus on 4.53, the invective against a Cynic, shows that Martial's use of topography can go beyond criticizing parasites and potentially engage with opposition to imperial ideology. By placing a potentially subversive individual in the proximity of buildings that perpetuate imperial ideology, Martial is able to elevate a simple scoptic epigram into a medium of imperial praise. On the other hand, invective epigrams that engage with the discourse of purity and pollution are used in instances when Martial is mocking people and phenomena he believes to be disordered. This mirrors Roman notions of pollution as matter out of place that has the potential

to disrupt social order. This vocabulary is not used in a religious context, but in scoptic epigrams as a means of creating a punchline. Space plays an important role in these epigrams as well because many of them are set in bathhouses. The language of pollution and purification relies on water imagery, which is integrated into this spatial setting. As places where one can get physically clean and morally enlightened, the baths were an ideal setting for mockery of individuals with *os impurum*.

5. Conclusion

As a conclusion, I will bring together the threads from the three chapters and show how they approach the same texts from different angles. Chapters 1 and 3 demonstrate the place of religion in the theory and practice of writing obscene and invective epigrams. In the programmatic statements of Book 1, the Floralia festival and the nudity of prostitutes play an important role. Although the nudity itself was probably not religious in nature, it was sanctioned by being part of the theatrical performances during the festival. The space of the stage offered a kind of safety on which Martial could rely. In actual obscene epigrams, the satirical narrator also has space in mind when addressing prostitutes. Some of these epigrams are set in bathhouses, a space in which Martial could let his narrator mingle freely with men and women of various social standing. The poet is thus able to maintain a connection between his programmatic statements and poetic practice. Another connection is the theme of pollution and purification. In Chapter 1, I discussed epigrams 1.5 and 9.58, which offer a self-deprecating view of Martial's own books as something that is "dirty" and needs to be cleansed by water and thus destroyed. The language of purification is something that is also found in epigrams about bathhouses and *os impurum*, although without an actual religious connotation. These epigrams are also an example of how religious language can be used to produce a punchline.

Chapters 1 and 2 both discuss different aspects of Books 5 and 8. These two books are notable because they showcase the potential for epigrams to engage in imperial praise and emphasize proper communication with the emperor, all the while using religion as a point of reference. The shift from rituals of license and transgressiveness to purification rituals and dedicatory language creates an atmosphere of divine worship which is more appropriate for addressing Domitian, an emperor who imagined himself to be godlike. This new model of

communication explains Martial's decision to forgo obscene language, which would have been considered unusual otherwise. An analysis of the introductory sequences in Chapter 1 has shown that the palace is like a temple, and Chapter 2 has shown that petitions to the emperor can be analogous to prayers. Book 5 introduces the idea that Domitian is a deity through the use of hymnic elements in the first epigram. The book is then presented to the emperor at the palace, and this direct dedication necessitates a change in tone. Later in the book, Domitian is addressed directly and the poet makes his case clear: in the absence of generous and honest patrons, the emperor should step in and support the unfortunate client. These requests, however, do not carry over the allusions to the emperor's divinity from the earlier epigrams. Book 8 was more ambitious in its aspirations of forging an Augustan identity for itself: not only is Domitian a new Augustus, but Martial is also a poet worthy of a Maecenas. In line with an increased emphasis on the client as a poet, the emperor now also becomes more godlike. Ovid's exile poetry addressing Augustus and Germanicus plays an important blueprint for Martial's poetic reorientation in these more imperial books.

Chapters 2 and 3 both have social commentary as a theme. In Chapter 2, prayer and worship are used to problematize patron-client relationships, while in Chapter 3 sacred architecture is used as a backdrop for satirical epigrams about pretentious parasites. The role of space in epigrams about patronage is to intensify the client's struggle. For example, in 5.22 Martial's itinerary is meant to convey the long and fruitless journey a client has to take on a daily basis as they risk their wellbeing on the streets of Rome. A greater constant is Domitian because he is presented as a figure that has the power to set things right. In Book 5, he appears to be able to fix the sorry state of patronage by becoming Martial's generous and honest patron, even if he refuses. In other books, whether or not he grants Martial's requests, his political power and social influence is not disputed.

On the other hand, in epigrams such as 2.14 and 5.49 Domitian is not present himself, but his power is reflected through the stamp he left on Roman topography. The temples which he reconstructed and the deities with which he associated himself were present throughout the city and could be used by Martial as a setting for satirical epigrams. Even though the emperor is not an active contributor to the satire, his presence in the background can be seen as a supporting force. Parasites that attempt to use space in a way that disrupts social order are exposed to ridicule by the narrator with the help of Domitian and the other gods that watch over Rome.

Finally, I suggest that there are further avenues of research beyond the scope of this dissertation. One of these is time and the calendar. In his article on Martial and Ovidian intertextuality, Stephen Hinds suggested the possibility of reading "Martial's *Fasti*," namely his references to calendrical time.[363] Martial's epigrams are not only embedded in Roman space, but also in Roman time, and the best example of this is the Saturnalia, a festival that also reflects the nature of Martial's poetry. I believe that there is more to be said about Martial's engagement with the imperial calendar and his intertextuality with Ovid's *Fasti*, which has so far been limited to verbal parallels.[364] A part of the examination of the imperial calendar would also be the representation of Domitian in Books 10-12, which were published after his death. My research has focused on Books 1-9, which were written while Domitian was alive. After his assassination he suffered a *damnatio memoriae*, with his name and image being erased from the public record, and Martial's epigrams also seem to have participated in this erasure. Furthermore, in the later books there are glimpses of religion beyond the city of Rome. In Book 10, ritual is used as a closural device that signals Martial's return to Spain.[365] Religious activity is moved into Martial's estate in

[363] Hinds 2007. See also Williams 2006.
[364] Zingerle 1877, Siedschlag 1972.
[365] Keith 2023.

the Roman countryside and there is anticipation of his return to taking part in the local rites of his hometown of Bilbilis. There is also more to explore with regards to what kind of Rome he leaves behind. Given the centrality of religion in Martial's poetics, it can be assumed that religious themes would follow him to Spain, leaving Rome even emptier.

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