

## Intertextuality between Friends: Martial and Juvenal in *Epigram* 12.18

This paper reads Martial's late, enigmatic epigram to Juvenal (12.18) as a unique meditation on intertextuality and literary succession. In this poem, Martial imagines his younger friend's burdensome daily life as a client in Rome, then boasts of his own serene new life in the Spanish countryside. Although the epigram is a product of Martial's retirement years in Bilbilis (98-104[?] CE), we do not know exactly when it was composed or whether its addressee had started writing satire yet. These questions have significant stakes: not just a clearer picture of Juvenal's chronology and his relationship with Martial, whose work provided so much inspiration for the *Satires*, but a better understanding of what Martial is trying to say about his friend. I argue that the poem presents a singular opportunity to consider a case of "instant" intertextuality and response by the model poet.

Many scholars of different methodological stripes have taken Martial's portrait of *Juvenalis* playing the client as a (rare) testimonium on Juvenal's life before the *Satires*. They date the publication of Book 1 to three or more years after Martial's death (e.g., Duff 1970, Syme 1979, Braund 1996). But *Epigram* 12.18 itself constitutes the most significant evidence in favor of the alternative account: namely, that the two men's writing careers overlapped briefly, and Martial was able to see some of the early *Satires*. For the vignette of Juvenal sweating in his toga as he visits "the thresholds of the powerful" (lines 4-5) evokes the recurrent images of clients in *Satires* 1, 3, and 5 (Pasoli 1982: 183-94). Most recently, Uden (2015: 221-225) has argued that Martial is hailing the publication of *Satires* Book 1 (in 100 or 101).

The satiric clichés in the epigram's opening (like the rustic vignettes that follow) are indeed difficult to read as straight reportage. But if we accept that they echo Juvenal's poetry, we confront another intriguing fact. If Martial had seen the early *Satires* in some form, it is

impossible that he was not aware of their extensive intertextuality with the *Epigrams* (well-documented in Colton 1991; cf. Wilson 1898). There are striking correspondences in the two authors' "views of literature...the subjects they treat, the persons they mention, their language and expression, and their general tone" (Nettleship 1888). And every poem in *Satires* Book 1 develops jokes or ideas that can be found in Martial (about narcissistic poets, moralist-catamites, devious rich folk, even Domitian's piscine concerns). In fact, one of the most prominent recurrent motifs in both texts is client's difficult life, assigned to *Juvenalis* himself in *Epigram* 12.18. Related to this is the opposition of city and country life that is the foundation of *Satire* 3 and peppers the *Epigrams* as well – including this one.

What would this extensive imitation have meant to Martial, and what could *his* repackaging of Juvenal's (borrowed) poetic Rome mean to say? I point out that Martial exhibits a keen interest in poetic rivalry and intertextuality throughout his career, and that his late books thematize his move and retirement in many creative ways. (In Rimell's words [2008: 192], the books he wrote in his last years in Rome and Bilbilis "tak[e] us backwards and forwards in time and space, and hav[e] footholds in two or rather multiple worlds.") Meanwhile, Martial is watching his friend's poetic career begin. *Epigram* 12.18 accordingly reads at once like a generational transition and a brief literary *agon*. The opening lines not only draw attention to Juvenal's debt to Martial, but cast the satirist in an essentially competitive role (as both *Satires* and *Epigrams* portray the experience of client-hood). But Martial then distances himself from this scene of competition to lay out all the details of his new life: images of oddly unique furniture, clothing, woodpiles, and slaves that read like a collection of poetic ingredients no other author could possibly appropriate. It may remain open to debate which poet "owns" the gritty

and colorful poetic version of Rome, but the epigrammatist invents a small and eccentric store of poetic goods that he can go out hoarding.

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