

Refilling Martial's Tenth Book

Here I argue that we may be able to identify a greater number than previously thought of epigrams which belong to the second edition of Martial's tenth book, and that their nature may shed light on the poet's tenuous situation in Rome and his departure therefrom. In poem 10.2, the epigrammatist tells us that the greater part of the edition is new material. Sullivan (1991) assumes that epigrams praising or involving the assassinated Domitian would have to be replaced, and that these would likely be twenty-five to thirty in number, if this book followed trends from previous books. This leaves at least twenty-three unaccounted for, to make up the majority of the 104-poem book. Damschen and Heil (2004) assert that attempts to go farther are doomed to failure from the start. But I have noticed clusters of poems near those which certainly belong to the second edition – particularly addressing Trajan – which themselves trade in related ideas. Preceding 10.72, which expresses relief about the return of free speech and considers what it is to be a Roman poet, 10.63, 65, and 68 all likewise explore national identity and speech – and seem to be using Horace's *Odes* as an intertext to do so. It seems plausible that Martial, in a precarious position following the downfall of a regime with which he was publicly connected, would make recourse to that poet with the most visible and successful relationship with a *princeps*, Horace. Elsewhere in the book, preceding another address of Trajan in 10.34, Martial in 10.33 implores a reader not to trust that his verses would be tinged with *aerugine*, verbiage derived from Horace's programmatic satire 1.4. I propose that Horatian intertext may prove a useful shibboleth for identifying material that belongs to the second edition.

Merli (2006a) has already identified a strong relationship between Horace, particularly his satires, and Martial's Book 10. She shows that Martial's dichotomy of city and countryside

therein is framed in Horatian terms. This is all the more charged for a book that dates after Martial's decision to return to Spain – but the questions of what motivated that decision and when it happened remain. Sullivan and Shackleton Bailey (1993) appear confident in the notion that the assassination and political climate were behind the choice to leave, but the scene they imagine, reasonable though it is, rests on little evidence. Howell (1998) challenges this, recalling Syme (1958) and rejecting as unlikely the possibility that Martial would have found himself unwelcome in Rome: Martial tells us that he was unhappy with urban life, and we need not dig further. But I argue that we should not trust the playful and proud epigrammatist on that count: the clusters of second edition epigrams that see him negotiating with power and identity in Horatian terms promote the possibility that the epigrams treating city and countryside in similar terms likewise belong to the second edition. This increases the number of poems which we can assign to the second edition by roughly 75% at this time (more intertexts may yet be discovered), but from this, the result of Martial wallowing in Horace, we also may conclude that the epigrammatist did not consider leaving Rome until after the assassination. I speculate that Martial turned to Horace in a time of crisis to review a model poet-*princeps* relationship, and was either inspired to return home by Horace's idealized rural life or found a dignified way to cover his exit.

Bibliography

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