

O Post Nullos Memorande:

Martial's Inversions of Ovidian Exile Poetry in the Epigrams to Julius Martialis

The extent of Martial's engagement with and allusion to Ovid's texts have been a commonplace of scholarship for some time (i.e. Siedschlag 1972, and going back to Zingerle 1877), while more recent scholarship has worked to uncover the extent of the epigrammatist's creative dialogue with his predecessor (important examples including Janka 2006 and Hinds 2007). The *Tristia* and the figure of the exiled Ovid in particular have drawn critical attention for their role in Martial's *oeuvre* (among which are Roman 2001 and Casali 2005), where Stephen Hinds observed that the abjection of Ovid's exile in the *Tristia* provides a model in Martial for the abjection of poetic clientship in the epigrams (2007, 131). In this paper, I will offer a reading of the first two epigrams Martial wrote to his friend Julius Martialis (1.15 and 3.5) that will further illustrate the diversity and sophistication of the epigrammatist's manipulation of Ovidian poetics by uncovering a strategy in Martial that contrasts with previous readings of the relationship between Martial and Ovid's texts.

Martial's first published epigram to Julius Martialis, 1.15, opens with a nearly-complete quotation from Ovid's *Tristia* 1.5.1: *O mihi post nullos, Iuli, memorande sodalis*. While no commentator has failed to recognize the phrase's origins, there is a subtle game at work here. *Tr.* 1.5 is a poem in which Ovid's friends all go unnamed, their *nomina* withheld for reasons that have provoked much fruitful discussion in criticism of that poem. So it is significant that the one change Martial has made to Ovid's phrase in epigram 1.15 is to insert his own friend's name, Julius, into the context of a poem where the names of Ovid's friends are studiously avoided. With this observation as a starting point, I will

discuss how Martial's allusions to the *Tristia* are used to elevate and idealize the intimate relationship Martial constructs with Martialis in these poems. Epigrams 1.15 and 3.5 both quote Ovidian lines that ultimately evoke the exiled Ovid's anxieties and uncertainties around his old friendships and social status as a Roman poet that recur throughout book one of the *Tristia*, but in both cases the poem that unfolds beyond the Ovidian quotation principally emphasizes the affection and loyalty that characterizes the relationship between epigrammatist and addressee. Through an analysis of the poetic and rhetorical strategies at play in these two poems, I will argue that Martial deliberately invokes the social context of Ovid's famous lines and the instability of his former relationships at Rome as a cynical foil in order to construct an idealized and exemplary status for the unimpeachable relationship between Martial and Martialis. The contrast between this intertextual strategy and the Ovidian relationships uncovered by other scholars elsewhere in the epigrams will demonstrate further the rich and playful variety of Martial's creative dialogue with his poetic predecessors.

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