

GENDER, TEXT, AND THE BODY IN MARTIAL'S *EPIGRAMS*

BY

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DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

The expression “body of work” has long been used to describe the creative output of an author or artist, and the Latin word *corpus* is traditionally used to signify the bulk of a textual work because it represents a whole being made of many parts. This dissertation explores Martial’s *Epigrams* to ask how the poet presents his own work as a whole, gendered entity within its generic context. This dissertation undertakes a close textual analysis of epigrams that prominently feature body imagery for the text and textual imagery applied to the body. The analysis reveals that the text of the epigrams is often figured as a phallic male, but that the text may be figured as a more vulnerable body (e.g., that of a woman, boy, or an emasculated man, “*gallus*”) to demonstrate moments when the text is most at risk of theft or alteration; this vulnerability is especially applicable to pre-published texts. The research suggests that the figuration of a body of text as a phallically aggressive man presents the text as authoritative and the genre as a worthy form of literature. In the first chapter, I focus on the representations of “wrong” bodies or bodies in need of correcting. In chapter 2, I define various terms in Latin and English and give a brief cultural background before I introduce the idea of the text as an altered male body; the poet employs this imagery to threaten poetic rivals and situate his own text in an authoritative position. In the third chapter, I argue that Book 3 of Martial’s *Epigrams* is presented as a “macro-epigrammatic” text: the book itself is structured as if it were a large-scale, bipartite epigram, and the joke contained within hinges on the identity of the book as a *vir* (“man”), not a *gallus* (“emasculated man”) as the book’s first poem suggests.

*Tibi lectori dulci*

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## INTRODUCTION

The expression “body of work” has long been used to describe the creative output of an author or artist. As often, we use the Latin word *corpus* in referring to the bulk of a textual work because it represents a whole being made of many parts. In one of the most famous poems of Martial’s *Epigrams*, the poet likens his text to the body of Priapus with a request to the reader to leave the body uncastrated (*Nec castrare velis meos libellos. / Gallo turpius est nihil Priapo*. “Don’t emasculate my little books. / Nothing is more shameful than a dickless Priapus,” Mart. 1.35.14–15).<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, I examine the representation of the epigrammatic text as a body and the body as an epigrammatic text. The body in epigram varies from that represented in other genres, such as elegy or epic, and the epigrammatic representation of the text sets itself up as literature worth reading, i.e. a body in competition with other bodies of text (e.g., high literary genres). The text is represented as a male citizen body after it is secured by publication, but the pre-publication vulnerability of the text is figured as a woman or a non-man (eunuch, boy). The general way that the *Epigrams* present masculinity and femininity marks the body as an editable text. The poet possesses the ability to edit and correct these bodies as texts by the same authority that he edits his own texts. Rival poets (including plagiarists) are not given the freedom to work with their own texts without criticism by the poet.

One of the methods of characterization comes from interactions between gendered physical human bodies in space. The text as a body may be interpreted as the body of the

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<sup>1</sup> All translations are my own. For the implications of an emasculated Priapus, see Spisak 2007: 32, “... in this poem Martial seems to be asking here how Priapus could do his job of protecting the garden: for to turn him into a Gallus—a priest of Cybele who had both of his testicles and penis removed—would render him weaponless.”

beloved (as in elegy), the body of the poet (Mart. 1.1), a child or slave of the poet (in moments of vulnerability). The text as a body in each of these relationships acts and responds according to a prescribed, complex set of social rules, most of which rely on gender. These relationships characterize how the text interacts with the author and the reader as well as how the author and the reader “interact” with each other.

This study focuses primarily on the body represented in the text of the poet Martial. Typically, the epigrammatic body is represented by the ithyphallic god Priapus, a being who is always prepared to be the penetrator.<sup>2</sup> When the text is represented as a body of a different type (female, youth/boy, emasculated man, etc.), the text is in a vulnerable state. In order to understand how the body works as a metaphor for the text in the genre of epigram, attention must be paid to the representation of “actual” bodies in the text of epigram.<sup>3</sup> Male bodies in Martial’s *Epigrams* conform to a hierarchical structure that is similar to the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity first proposed by Connell.<sup>4</sup> The main thrust of this theory is that the masculine gender contains varying degrees of masculinity. The highest masculinity in the hierarchy is the masculine ideal: in this context, the Roman *vir*. All other masculinity (and femininity) types are subordinate to the ideal type. Subordinate masculinities may be critiqued as such by different means of clothing, behaviors, sexual acts, and assumed or perceived bodily integrity.

Many of the people represented in epigram are constructs. Often the women represent the

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<sup>2</sup> Richlin 1992a.

<sup>3</sup> By the term “actual,” I refer to the description of bodies within the text, not a historical body that the text may be describing with any accuracy.

<sup>4</sup> Connell 1987: 183–187. Identity in general and self-identification in ancient Roman society was constructed in a different manner than identity is constructed in the modern world. Hierarchies of gender from Connell’s theory do not map directly onto the constructs of gender in the ancient world, but a similar system of hierarchy does begin to emerge in epigram.

elegiac genre as a foil and competitor to epigram as a genre, particularly in Martial's *Epigrams*.<sup>5</sup> What has been referred to as "images of women" criticism offers a framework for the discussion of fictionalized women in epigram that aligns with Martial's stated methodology of representation.<sup>6</sup> In contrast with elegy, the genre of epic is also traditionally gendered as masculine.<sup>7</sup> Martial's *Epigrams* upend this relationship to present the genre in contrast with both of these genres. Epigram, as a genre, is represented by the hyper-masculinized figure (Priapus), who is at the same time ridiculous and idealized. In order to understand the complex gendered roles and relationships that this poet presents, the overall cultural and literary context of the *Epigrams* shapes the presentation of the text as well as its interpretation. Considering both the influences on the *Epigrams* and the surviving texts influenced by them—as well as contemporary poems—will lend a framework for considering the intimate characterization of the text as a body and give a foundation to our discussion of the body as a text. In this introduction, we will look to the various corpora of the *glandes Perusinae*,<sup>8</sup> Catullus, the *Carmina Priapea*, Ausonius, and the *Anthologia Latina*.

More than once (including such prominent moments as the prose preface to Book 1)

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<sup>5</sup> The only elegiac mistress that will have an effect on Martial's poetry is the collective body of *Roma* (see chapter 3).

<sup>6</sup> The "images of women" criticism is outlined by Moi 2002. There is also theorizing on the intersections between femininity and speaking in a patriarchal context by French theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray; see Miller 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Keith 2000.

<sup>8</sup> These texts are relevant for a discussion of epigram because Martial quotes Caesar Augustus' obscene epigram against Fulvia (11.20), and there are examples of *glandes* directed toward both sides of the siege. For more discussion, see Williams 2010: 29, 220; Hallett 1977. For additional epigraphical details, see Cugusi 1996; Sullivan 1991; Courtney 2003, 1995; Milnor 2009.

Martial names Catullus along with others such as Gaetulicus and Pedo as predecessors and models in the genre he calls *epigramma*. Particularly influential to scopic epigram was Catullus' use of obscenity in his poetry. Catullus uses mixed language: high poetry and primary obscenities, which until recently has troubled scholars.<sup>9</sup> Catullus' representation of the text as "soft" (*mollis*) demonstrates his associations with elegy, but the sexually and phallically aggressive representation of the author responding to critics influences later depictions of the author in epigram.

With over 1500 poems, Martial has the largest single-author collection of Latin epigram that survives from antiquity, he only writes in this genre, and—perhaps even beginning in his lifetime—his poetic output has been profoundly influential on the history of this genre in the Western literary tradition. There are a number of additional important factors to consider with this poetic text. Unlike the case of Catullus, with Martial's poetry we can be confident that the division into 15 books, and the sequence of poems within each book, found in the manuscript tradition are the result of the poet's own artistry. Martial's poetry is, moreover, characterized by a high degree of poetological reflection and metapoetic techniques. I use the term poetological to refer in a general way to explicit reflections on poetry found in any kind of text, poetry or prose, and metapoetic to refer to a variety of (often implicit) self-referential techniques in a poetic text. This poetry is not simply about itself (i.e., metapoetic), but makes consistent reference to the content, meter, and diction of other genres of poetry.<sup>10</sup> Martial's text addresses the reader as

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the response to Catullus' obscenity in scholarship, see Fitzgerald 1995: 59–61, 257 n.5–7.

<sup>10</sup> A succinct definition of the term "poetology" in relation to "metapoetics" may be found in Asper 2008: 167, "... in this paper, 'poetology' means all poetry about poetry, explicit or implicit; 'meta-poetics' means implicit poetry on poetry..." Asper considers these terms as they

*lector* (either in the second or the third person) frequently, systematically, and memorably; and his poetry periodically thematizes questions of book structure, poem length, the materiality of the book itself (whether papyrus scroll or parchment codex), the poet's activity, and his readers' responses.<sup>11</sup> All of this makes Martial's oeuvre of central importance to this overall discussion. Martial addresses many different dedicatees suggesting specific readers and many occasions for his verse (real and imaginary). Martial's poems are often obscene and include obscenities in metaliterary descriptions of his own verse and poetological descriptions of the verse of rival poets.

The *Carmina Priapea* is a collection of 80 poems, which represents either the work of a single author or multiple authors brought together by a single theme.<sup>12</sup> This collection of poems is about the ithyphallic god Priapus with possible influence from or connection with Ovid. There are multiple personae presented in these poems, including the god himself, who is an aggressively phallic male who threatens to rape any thieves (of whatever age and gender) of the garden he is set up to protect. In many poems of the collection the statue of Priapus speaks to a variety of addressees; other poems are about him in the 3rd person or addressed to him in the 2nd person, and some even describe offerings to him. As in Martial, there is a high degree of self-referentiality in this body of poetry, and the use of obscenity is a fundamental characteristic. The possibility for metapoetic play is heightened by the frequent technique whereby the statue

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relate to the text at various narratological levels and limits his use of "poetology" to poetic texts.

<sup>11</sup> See Larash 2004, Roman 2001, and Citroni 1975.

<sup>12</sup> See Elomaa 2015: 13, Richlin 1992a: 141–3, and Goldberg 1992: 28–36 for a discussion on the problems of date and authorship. No attempt in this study will be made to put a precise date or author onto this body of work.

himself speaks in the first person. This may be interpreted as a variation on the characteristic epigrammatic motif of the “speaking object,” inviting us to see Priapus, in some instances, as a figure for the poet and simultaneously as the body of the text. And thanks to its very nature, this corpus has a sustained focus on gender and sexuality. Catullus also shares themes with the *Carmina Priapea*. Many themes in the *Carmina Priapea* can also be seen throughout Martial’s corpus (regardless of which collection came first).

Ausonius’ collection of epigrams from the fourth century CE is significantly smaller (121 epigrams) than Martial’s but appears to be operating in a similar way at times, especially in the use of gendered language, and its use of primary obscenities calls for comparison with Martial as well. It is also undeniably from a single author. There is an added development of incorporating both Greek and Latin into the same text.<sup>13</sup>

The *Anthologia Latina* is relevant to this discussion because there are a number of poems that make reference to the distinction between grammatical gender and biological sex.<sup>14</sup> This corpus is fundamentally different from Martial, Catullus, and even the *Carmina Priapea*. It is an anthology by a variety of poets on different subjects. In all likelihood, it was not assembled in antiquity. It includes some poems on Christian themes, but also a few which play with Roman language of gender and sexuality; of particular interest will be 97, 98 (both on eunuchs), and 100 (on the movements of a pantomimus).<sup>15</sup> All of these texts engage with the idea of the text as a

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion on bilingualism and intertextuality across languages, see Adams 2003 and Hutchinson 2013. This happens to a much lesser degree in Martial. For bilingual punning in Martial, see Mulligan 2013. See Kay 2001 for text, translation, and a helpful introduction to Ausonius’ epigrams.

<sup>14</sup> See discussion in Corbeill 2015: 144–145.

<sup>15</sup> See Kay 2006 for an overview of the collection’s origin, numbering, and related issues.

body much like elegy.

In recent discussions of elegy and gender there has been discussion of the way poet constructs gendered identities of the poet, the text, and the reader. Sharrock (2013) discusses the *nequitia* of the poet as a generic marker for Latin love elegy and argues that “can work either to undermine the holder’s virility or to proclaim it: on the one hand, the lover is thus addicted to behaviour in direct opposition to central tenets of Roman manliness, but on the other hand the display of sexual (and poetic) power therein expressed can also celebrate the poet-lover’s potency” (151). Greene (2012, 2010) discusses the representations of relationships in elegy revealing the status quo of male domination. Fear (2005) identifies *mollitia* with the elegist and his genre, which turns the idea of the traditional Roman man on its head. The poet is identified with the product of his art. Wyke (1987) argues for a textual Cynthia of Book 2, in which the poet constructs the beloved, and by doing so conflates text with girl. The poet fashions the *puella* at the same moment as the poetry; and “The Elegiac Man is now explicitly both lover and writer, the Elegiac Woman both beloved and narrative material.”<sup>16</sup> Hallett (1973) proposes a deliberate inversion of sex roles in elegiac poetry. In short, elegy and epigram have different generic strategies of self-representation and representation of the text as a gendered body: elegy representing the feminine in the abstract is “higher” in poetic art than epigram representing a hierarchy of masculinized gender-identity because of the presence of obscenity in the latter.<sup>17</sup>

Before proceeding, it will be crucial to our understanding of the epigrammatic text as a body to consider the ancient definition of epigram. Pliny defines his own hendecasyllables in

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<sup>16</sup> Wyke 1987: 48.

<sup>17</sup> Martial “is probably the last of the post-Augustan poets to remain ‘trash’” (Rimell 2008: 3).

terms that closely resemble the style and occasions for Catullus' and Martial's epigrams.<sup>18</sup> He describes them as having a variety of subjects, moods, and styles. Pliny himself is not as free with his language as Catullus (or Martial). Pliny directs his reader to consider the poems as separate units because the quality of the poems varies (some of them are unfinished), an idea that is somewhat reminiscent of Martial's poem 1.16: *Sunt bona, sunt quaedam mediocria, sunt mala plura / quae legis hic: aliter non fit, Avite, liber* ("The things you read here: some are good, some are ok, more are bad: not otherwise is a book made, Avitus."). In addition to *hendecasyllabi*, Pliny uses a number of terms to categorize the poems that he describes in this letter: *nugae*, *epigrammata*, *idyllia*, *eclogae*, and *poematia*. Martial seems to be responsible for standardizing the term *epigramma* as a one-word descriptor for this genre.

Many times throughout his corpus Martial employs self-referentiality and complicated poet-text relationships. Roman (2001) argues that within Martial's poems, the poet describes himself and his poetry in a self-denigrating manner, also arguing that this is a motif that is still consistent with the standards of the literary autonomy in first-person poetry. The poet represents his texts fragmented into disparate contexts of social use giving the (fictive) impression of using *libelli* for poem distribution before book-publishing, but the representation of the materiality of the book in this way give to the poet's work a concrete place in society and to the poet literary autonomy.

Obscenity, for Martial, is an essential quality of Latin epigram.<sup>19</sup> Recent discussions of

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<sup>18</sup> *Unum illud praedicendum videtur, cogitare me has meas nugas ita inscribere "hendecasyllabi," qui titulus sola metri lege constringitur. Proinde, sive epigrammata sive idyllia sive eclogas sive, ut multi, poematia seu quod aliud vocare malueris, licebit voces; ego tantum hendecasyllabos praesto.* (Plin. *Ep.* 4.14.8–9)

<sup>19</sup> Fitzgerald 2007: 72, 222 n. 14, 229 n. 47.

obscene texts have opened avenues for thinking critically about more implications in the poetry of Martial, Catullus, the *Carmina Priapea*, and Ausonius.<sup>20</sup> Catullus' obscene poetry has generally been read through the lens of masculinity and masculine sexuality.<sup>21</sup> Williams (2002a) examines the poet's relationship with his text. He notes that Martial personifies his text with terms that highlight male sexuality in particular. Williams argues that Martial represents the text in terms drawn from the Roman language of sexuality as a male who at some moments is penetrable and at others is phallically potent.<sup>22</sup> Fitzgerald discusses masculine sexuality in the context of Catullus' use of civilizing and imperial imagery to describe Lesbia and her relation to him and other men.<sup>23</sup> Wray interprets intense expression as a performative measure of a speaker's manhood.<sup>24</sup> Skinner discusses the tension inherent in the depiction of the sexuality of adolescent males: they are normatively represented as objects of men's sexual desire, but there are cultural ideals which discourage them from expressing pleasure in being penetrated.<sup>25</sup> In epigram, the masculinized text is more stable than the text gendered in other ways. The text-body is marked as being editable or not editable.

My intention for this project is to chart throughout Martial's *Epigrams* various complex

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<sup>20</sup> On obscenity in epigram, see Mulligan 2019. On obscenity in Martial, see Spizak 2007; Fitzgerald 2007; Rimell 2008; Sullivan 1991. On obscenity in Catullus, see Wray 2001; Fitzgerald 1995; Skinner 1992. On obscenity in the *Carmina Priapea*, see Parker 1988; Goldberg 1992. On obscenity in Ausonius, see Kay 2001.

<sup>21</sup> See Fitzgerald 1995; Skinner 1992; Wray 2001.

<sup>22</sup> We will consider the stages of vulnerability of the text before and after publication (chapter 2).

<sup>23</sup> Fitzgerald 1995: 180–2.

<sup>24</sup> Wray 2001: 145–7 uses Catullus 5–7 to illustrate this point.

<sup>25</sup> Skinner 1997: 135.

configurations using gendered and sexualized language. I propose a reading of Latin epigram using a range of gender identities. Where the text is least vulnerable, hegemonic masculinity reveals the security of the textual body. As the text is characterized to enhance its pre-published vulnerability, femininity and certain subordinate masculinities (e.g., boyhood) mark the textual body as needing the protection of the poet. Additionally, I consider the imagery of genital alteration (with emphasis on emasculation and castration) and eunuchs as a complex gendered status (included in the subordinate masculinities, but with the added distinction of “non-masculine,” and with the subcategory of intentional or unintentional). I build on this scholarly discussion but will also explore the implications of indirect or direct imagery of the poetry as emasculated/castrated.

One of my major concerns in this project is the epigrammatists’ manipulation of gendered language to communicate a gendered representation of the text in order to present its vulnerability or its constancy. The representation of male bodies becomes problematized with the introduction of de-sexed, masculine bodies, but the poet has advice for editing even these bodies to cause them to conform to a hierarchical gendered structure. One epigram of Martial’s demonstrates this:

Quid cum femineo tibi, Baetice Galle, barathro?  
haec debet medios lambere lingua viros.  
abscisa est quare Samia tibi mentula testa,  
si tibi tam gratus, Baetice, cunnus erat?  
castrandum caput est: nam sis licet inguine Gallus,  
sacra tamen Cybeles decipis: ore vir es. (Mart. 3.81)

What concern of yours is the abyss of a woman, *Gallus* Baeticus?  
This tongue of yours is fit to lick the middle of men.  
Why was your dick cut off with a Samian sherd,  
if a cunt was so pleasing to you, Baeticus?  
Your head should be emasculated: for although you’re a *Gallus* in your crotch,  
nevertheless you cheat the sacred rites of Cybele: you’re a man with your mouth.

The joke in this poem that Baeticus is still a man because he interacts with female bodies, even though the act of cunnilingus itself is considered degrading for a man to perform. The poet offers another edit for Baeticus' body: that he remove the offending part—his head—because he is not using it correctly, according to his gendered role as a *Gallus*. The term *Gallus* brings with it a sense of intentionality: Baeticus has chosen to be emasculated, or perhaps has even emasculated himself. Death is the only solution for the man who has chosen to voluntarily remove his phallic power, for the man who still tries to use his non-masculine body for penetrating. Removal of phallic (generative) power from a body negates self-control and the personhood of the body. The type of sexual violence representative of altering the epigrammatic text that we shall see in chapter 2 will not usually apply to the text represented by the female body (although in certain cases, specifically prior to publication, the text is figured as a vulnerable body, e.g., a woman or *puer*, who are figured as having less control over their bodies than men).

Since Martial's poetry has taken much from Ovid's poetic corpus,<sup>26</sup> we consider here an example of sexual violence as it represents the author and his work. The body as a gendered, editable text (especially representing the author) in tension with genre is on display in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the story of Procne and Philomela (Ov. *Met.* 6.412–674), which has, among other things, been interpreted as the poet responding to censure and criticism of his text.<sup>27</sup> This story puts on display the fundamental vulnerability of the female body. Philomela's safety should by all social conventions be assured while she visits her sister's family. She is, however, put into peril, not during her journey, but when she arrives by her sister's husband, a man who is

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<sup>26</sup> Hinds 2007. Williams 2002b.

<sup>27</sup> Natoli 2017. There has been a great deal of scholarship on the portrayal of rapes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; especially influential has been Richlin's "Reading Ovid's Rapes" (2014, 1992).



The tongue, indignant and continuously calling the name of her father  
and struggling to speak, grasped by pincers  
that man removed with his brutal blade.

The remaining part of the root of the tongue quivers,  
trembling it lies on the dark earth and murmurs,  
just like the tail of a maimed serpent is accustomed to spasm,  
the dying part pulses and seeks the footsteps of its mistress.  
After this deed it is also said—I scarcely dare to believe it—that  
he returned often to the mangled body with his own desire.

This description of added violence immediately follows Philomela's declaration to make a public accusation of rape against Tereus. Tereus responds with rage and fear to Philomela's threat with more physical violence against her body: he removes her tongue so that she will not be able to speak against him. Her disembodied tongue is endowed with human characteristics as it moves, makes sounds, and seeks to be reunited with Philomela (6.558–560); Philomela, on the other hand, is reduced to a "mangled body" (*lacerum... corpus*, 6.562) having lost the power of speech. This is a metaphorical emasculation because the tongue represents speech, which is a masculine power particularly in Rome.<sup>28</sup> The tongue is one of the most powerful organs a person can possess, but women misuse it. We see a similar event played out in Martial's epigrams with the power of speech being equated to the power of the *mentula* particularly with its associations with obscenity and obscene speech. Ovid figures the tongue as the organ of poetry, but Martial figures the penis as the organ of poetry. If the text is expurgated or bowdlerized, the poet is emasculated. When Tereus removes Philomela's tongue, he is rewriting (bowdlerizing) her body, making it into something that he prefers. Tereus tries to rewrite the narrative of his physical violence against Philomela by rewriting her body (i.e., cutting out her tongue), but she uses other means (weaving, a women's craft) in order to tell her story and the truth of the events. Both poets

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<sup>28</sup> Richlin 1993: 523–524.

reject—just as Philomela does—this fashioning by another of one’s own self and one’s own narrative. Ovid writes a character that tells her narrative any way that she is able: first, with her words, and when that ability is taken from, with her weaving. Martial fashions his own textual world<sup>29</sup> and populates it with people needing correction, like his text (1.3).<sup>30</sup> The poet acts as an educator, a *praeceptor omnium*. The poet is the ultimate authority of textual alteration,<sup>31</sup> and he may alter other bodies and texts, but may not be altered by others.

The story of Procne and Philomela demonstrates the power of the voice represented by the tongue as well as the power of the material object on which a narrative is represented. Philomela’s rape, exile, and mutilation is analogous to Ovid’s exile. Tereus attempts to remove every piece of power that she has, but nevertheless she persisted telling her story by any means available to her (weaving). So too Ovid uses his poetry in an attempt to mitigate his punishment. We shall see that Martial makes reference to Ovid’s exile and uses key themes of mutilation in Book 3 of his poetry to make a joke on censorship, Romaness, and obscenity (chapter 3).

In the surviving examples of inscribed bullets from the *glandes Perusinae*, text-object-body intersect among many examples of obscenely inscribed bullets.<sup>32</sup> Two examples of these bullets will suffice.

FVLVIAE / <L>ANDICAM / PET<O> / (image of a thunderbolt) (=CIL XI 6721.5)  
I seek the clitoris of Fulvia.

PET<O> / OCTAVIA / CVLVM (=CIL XI 6721.7)

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<sup>29</sup> Fitzgerald 2007.

<sup>30</sup> We will see the poet’s response to others’ attempts at altering his texts in the next chapter and when his text is a vulnerable body.

<sup>31</sup> Sutherland 2005: 53 on the writer being an authority for having produced a textual body.

<sup>32</sup> Williams 2010: 29, Hallett 1977.

I seek the asshole of Octavian.

The *glandes* are relevant to this discussion because they are texts that are phallically aggressive (in a metaphorical sense) and physically threatening in a literal sense. Both of these texts present themselves as a penetrator with the first-person verb (pet<o>) and the obscene description of the body part being sexually engaged (*landicam*, “clitoris” and *culum*, “asshole”). These two bullets come from opposing sides of the siege; one figuratively attacks Fulvia, the wife of Mark Antony, and the other insults Octavian, represented as effeminate with a feminine form of his name.<sup>33</sup> The physicality of these object-texts is felt more than most texts that are contained in a roll or codex.

Bodily interaction with the text as an object is also felt in Catullus, for example: *si qui forte mearum ineptiarum / lectores eritis manusque vestras / non horrebitis admovere nobis, ...* (“if by chance you who will be readers of my trifles and will not shudder to put your hands on us, ...” Catull. 14b).<sup>34</sup> This poem is considered fragmentary, but the *nobis* at the end indicates a conflating of text with author. When the *lectores* hold the book, they hold the author himself and interact with him. The poet-text-reader interaction becomes a sensual experience. The poet cautions against conflating himself with the text two poems later and threatens another type of bodily interaction in poem 16, demonstrating that while the poems are trifles, the poet is not one to be trifled with.

Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo,

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<sup>33</sup> Hallett 1977: 152 explains the grammatical form of *OCTAVIA*, and the use of this name by “Octavian’s enemies, who elsewhere deny his adoption by terming him ‘Octavius.’” Another possible interpretation for the letters is *OCTAVIANI* or *OCTAVI*, so the form need not be feminine. The sexual act alluded to (anal penetration) is already demasculinizing for Octavian.

<sup>34</sup> For a discussion on the word *ineptiae* in Catullus and Martial, see Swan 1994: 50–51.

Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi,  
 qui me ex versiculis meis putastis,  
 quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum.  
 nam castum esse decet pium poetam 5  
 ipsum, versiculos nihil necessest;  
 qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem,  
 si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici  
 et quod pruriat incitare possunt,  
 non dico pueris, sed his pilosis, 10  
 qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos.  
 vos, quod milia multa basiorum  
 legistis, male me marem putatis?  
 pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo. (Catull. 16)

I will buttfuck and facefuck you,  
 Aurelius the bottom and Furius the twink,  
 you who think me excessively immodest from my little verses,  
 which are small and soft.  
 For it's fitting for a pious poet to be chaste himself,  
 but it's not at all necessary for his little verses;  
 which precisely have wit and charm,  
 if they are soft and immodest and  
 if they are able to excite that which itches,  
 I'm not talking about boys,  
 but about those hairy men,  
 who can't move their inflexible loins.  
 You think that I'm a bad man because  
 you read about my many thousands of kisses?  
 I'll buttfuck and facefuck you.

The mistake of Aurelius and Furius is to equate the poet with his text too much: a phenomenon that later poets (including Martial) will generally encourage—though not in a monolithic way—because the description of later epigram changes.<sup>35</sup> In this poem, the poet becomes aggressively

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<sup>35</sup> This poem has received a great deal of attention on account of its intertwined dynamics of masculinity and poetological reflection (see for example Selden 1992, Wray 2001, Williams 2002b).

masculine whereas he allows for his text to be soft and pleasant. This description of the text conforms to the elegiac idea that the text stands in for the beloved (*puella, puer*), who ought to be tender, an idea that does not find a home in the later epigrammatists, namely Martial, the *Carmina Priapea*, and Ausonius. The text as a body becomes solidly masculinized after Catullus, with the emergence of the *CP* and Martial's epigrams. Martial's epigrams will be pleasing as well, but in the way that a husband's *mentula* ("dick") pleases his wife (1.35): a soft dick will not cut it. Catullus, conversely, describes his poems as "soft" (*mollis*) and contrasts this with his own life, which he calls modest and pious (*nam castum esse decet pium poetam / ipsum*, 16.5–6). In epigrammatic poetry, the text as a body loses its softness, and it becomes a stand-in for the poet or subject of the text: a phallically penetrative man. Martial himself does not use the language of *mollitia* ("softness") to describe his text.<sup>36</sup> The text is still playful (*lasciva*, Mart. 1.4.8).<sup>37</sup> The text representing a phallic man can be gleaned from Catullus' poetry when it represents the male body or the text as a defender of the poet or as a surrogate of the poet threatening the suitors of his beloved. In poem 37, the relationship between pictorial representation of the body and the text as a body coalesce.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Salax taberna vosque contubernales,    |    |
| a pilleatis nona fratribus pila,       |    |
| solis putatis esse mentulas vobis,     |    |
| solis licere, quidquid est puellarum,  |    |
| confutuere et putare ceteros hircos?   | 5  |
| an, continenter quod sedetis insulsi   |    |
| centum an ducenti, non putatis ausurum |    |
| me una ducentos irrumare sessores?     |    |
| atqui putate: namque totius vobis      |    |
| frontem tabernae sopionibus scribam.   | 10 |

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<sup>36</sup>See also my discussion on poem 11.90 in chapter 2.

<sup>37</sup> See Swann 1994: 40–42 for a discussion on the language used here.

puella nam mi, quae meo sinu fugit,  
 amata tantum quantum amabitur nulla,  
 pro qua mihi sunt magna bella pugnata,  
 consedit istic. hanc boni beatique  
 omnes amatis, et quidem, quod indignum est, 15  
 omnes pusilli et semitarii moechi;  
 tu praeter omnes une de capillatis,  
 cuniculosae Celtiberiae fili,  
 Egnati, opaca quem bonum facit barba  
 et dens Hibera defricatus urina. 20 (Catull. 37)

Lusty tavern and you frequenters,  
 nine doors down from the pillars of the brothers with hats,  
 you think that dicks are yours alone  
 and that only you are allowed to fuck whichever of the girls  
 and to think the rest of us are goats?  
 Or because you sit together awkwardly in a group of one or two hundred,  
 you don't think that I would dare  
 to facefuck two hundred of you sitters one-at-a-time?  
 But think it if you want:  
 for I will completely cover the front of the tavern with dicks.  
 For, my girl, who fled my lap,  
 one loved as much as no girl will ever be loved,  
 because of her I fought great battles,  
 she lays up in that shithole.  
 All you good and fortunate men  
 love her, and indeed, what's really harsh,  
 all the petty and wandering side-pieces<sup>38</sup> love her;  
 you beyond all one among the long-haired men,  
 son of rabbit-infested Celtiberia,  
 Egnatius, whom a thick beard  
 and a tooth brushed with Spanish piss makes into a good man.

Catullus has lost his girl (*puella... mi*, 37.11) to the brothel and other men pay to enjoy her company (perhaps an analogy for his text). Much like poem 16, the poet denounces his rivals/critics as men who would submit to his sexual aggression (*non putatis ausurum / me una*

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<sup>38</sup> A slang term for “paramour,” which may refer to a secret or open affair.

*ducentos irrumare sessoros?* 37.7–8). The poet’s boast of being able to penetrate orally 200 people sequentially (*una*, 37.8) makes his phallic aggression hyperbolic. Perhaps he means for his drawings of dicks or writings about dicks to assist him in the next lines (*namque totius vobis / frontem tabernae sopionibus scribam*, 37.9–10). With the phrase “scribble dicks all over the tavern,” by using a term that also appears in graffiti, the poet could be referring to insulting poetry that calls out his rivals by name using graphic illustrations, words, or perhaps a combination of words and drawings.<sup>39</sup> The verb *scribo* points to writing, specifically. At least one rival finds himself named in this poem: Egnatius. The graphic representation of the *sopiones* finds its home in later epigrammatic texts, like the *Carmina Priapea*.

In the *Carmina Priapea*, the text as a body most readily conforms to the shape of the god represented therein. The ithyphallic god, Priapus, is crude and obscene and so is the poetry, which does not shy away from obscenities. The god is described as being made from a block of wood, and the text may also be blocky in form (i.e., *codex*).<sup>40</sup> The text also plays with the concept of the body as a text and the text as a body with the following instructions on representing male genitalia with letters.

CD si scribas temonemque insuper addas,  
qui medium volt te scindere, pictus erit. (*Priap.* 54)

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<sup>39</sup> Godwin 1999: 156, “the meaning seems to be that the poet will scrawl drawings of the human penis on the front of the tavern. *sopio* occurs here and in graffiti.” Forsyth 1986: 231–232, “*sopionibus*: apparently ‘penises’ or ‘phalli’. *scribam*: the tendency of the ancients to mark walls with graphic drawings (especially of genitalia) is amply attested by many archaeological remains today; here the poet, by the magic of such drawings, will effect the punishment he threatens.” At Petr. *Sat.* 22, Quartilla’s slave-girl draws penises on the sleeping Ascylos’ lips and shoulders (reading *sopionibus pinxit*; see Schmeling 2011 ad loc.).

<sup>40</sup> A *codex* may refer to a tablet made of wood with leaves connected with leather for temporary writing. For *codex* as a book, see Cic. *Ver.* 2.1.119; Cic. *Clu.* 33.91; Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.28; also used of legal records (e.g., Cic. *Ver.* 2.1.92). For Priapus as a wooden statue or block (*lignus*), see *Priap.* 6.1–2, 43.1, 63.12, 83.17; *Appendix Vergiliana* 1.3.

If you should write “CD” and add a pole above it,  
What wants to cleave you in the middle, will be drawn.

This poem makes the relationship between body and text clear cut. The artistic verbs are significant in this poem; *scribo* and *pingo* refer to high modes of art: poetry and painting. The verb *scribo* also recalls the dicks written or drawn on the tavern wall by Catullus in poem 37, informing the level of aggression and sexual threat that the reader experiences. This distich becomes a miniature ekphrasis of a precisely priapic scene: bodily penetration by the ithyphallic god. The text describes what could simply be annotated, but is significantly not because once the annotation is in place, the characters “CD” cease to be letters and easily become a crude drawing.<sup>41</sup> The tension between literary ekphrasis and graphic representation brings the potential for the text to become a physical human body without actually achieving it. It invites the reader to interact with the text in a physical way: the readers themselves can draw onto the page (or other medium). This would create a type of in-book graffiti that physically responds to the poem. The text becomes a body and the body a text with the illustration of male genitalia. The power of the text over the reader is such that the mere suggestion of the form may bring it to the mind of the reader.

Another poem from the *CP* that displays linguistic play that also highlights the relationship between subtly obscene texts, the body, and manipulation of the reader is *CP* 67:

Penelopes primam **D**idonis prima sequatur  
et primam **C**admi syllaba prima **R**emi,

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<sup>41</sup> The *temo* (“pole”) in line 1 has been interpreted to be in various positions, especially with the adverb *insuper*. I have found three possibilities: a line between the letters (C—D), a horizontal shaft above the letters (---CD) and moving to the left in the opposite direction of the text (Goldberg 1992: 278), and a vertical line or shape in between the letters (C|D) extending upward beyond the letters.

quodque fit ex illis, tu mi deprensus in horto,  
fur, dabis: hac poena culpa luenda tua est. (*Priap.* 67)

Let the first syllable of “Dido” follow the first syllable of “Penelope”  
And let the first syllable of “Remus” follow the first syllable of “Cadmus,”  
And that which happens from those syllables, if you’ve been caught in my garden,  
You will give to me, thief: your crime must be absolved with this punishment.

This poem once again juxtaposes the priapic epigram with high art by employing mythological literary references to describe one of the usual, base punishments of a thief in the garden of Priapus: *pedicare* = “to anally penetrate.” Due to the nature of the Latin language, and the inflection of the parts of speech, the order of the Latin verse spells out the sexual act referred to (*PE-DI-CA-RE*). The sexual act pieced together by the first syllables of the names of grand figures from mythology brings the subject matter down to the level of the genre of epigram.<sup>42</sup> The joke is taken even further by the women represented in this poem because they are paragons of virtue. Penelope is the archetypal faithful wife and Dido would have been an *univira* had it not been for Venus compelling her to care for Aeneas.<sup>43</sup> Cadmus and Remus were both in foundation myths. Cadmus was founded and ruled Thebes. Remus was brother to Romulus, founder of

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<sup>42</sup> Young 2015: 269–271 gives an interpretation of this poem and sees a pun in the term *poena* (=poema). See in particular: “*Pedicare* has never looked so lovely, and its newfound artistic appeal heightens the shock of its crudity when we finally become aware of it” (Young 2015: 270), and: “Such an interpretation [of *poena/poema*] jolts us into further recognition that the poem has, in fact, already punished us through the violence of the pun included in its opening lines. We readers have been lured into what seemed to be a perfectly respectable poem, only to be made, unwittingly, to utter an obscenity. Moreover, this obscenity describes precisely our relation to the Priapic speaker: we ourselves ‘have been fucked over’ by Priapus’ pun. We have been bested by a poem that seamlessly interweaves obscenity and aestheticism in a coordinated attack” (Young 2015: 270–271).

<sup>43</sup> For another parodic reference to Penelope see also *CP* 68; for Dido as *univira* see, for example, *V. Aen.* 4.15–19.



miselle doctor, ·8· tibi sit obsceno,  
tuumque nomen ·Θ· sectilis signet. (Ausonius 83)<sup>46</sup>

Eunus the Syrian, a gourmand of groins,  
an ignorant teacher (as Phyllis teaches him)  
sees the woman's part as a four-cornered shape:  
with a three-cornered shape forced, he draws a *delta*.  
On either side of the valley of the thighs, equal creases  
and the middle path, by which cleft the divided part lies open,  
he says it is a *psi*: for the shape is three-forked.  
To which when he applied his own tongue, it is a *lambda*:  
and he knows the true mark in that place is *phi*.  
what do you think the *rho* is written there, dumb guy,  
where it is suitable to place a tall *iota*?  
poor little teacher, let there be an *ou* for a disgusting man like you,  
and let the divided letter *theta* mark your name.

In this poem by Ausonius, a woman's body is figured as a text. Her body is used to teach the Greek alphabet to Eunus, a bad schoolteacher, who is ridiculed for the way he engages in sexual intercourse and in his learning. Her body becomes a writing surface for some of the letters of the Greek alphabet. The *magister's* ineptitude is further demonstrated by the omission of most of the alphabet, but this works in the poet's favor because he can seem clever and mock the man while describing how the letters map onto the female body.

The first chapter of this dissertation will focus on representations of the body as a text that the poet may edit at will. This chapter will explore metaphors of the text and metaliterary references to the body as an object or text with the lens of suggestive gendering: masculine, non-masculine, and feminine, and with aspects of one or more of these genders in epigram with persistent consideration of the role of different bodies in the genre of elegy as well.

Chapter two will focus on the themes of the mutilated text and castration/emasculatation. I

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<sup>46</sup> See Kay 2001 ad loc. for a more detailed discussion.

evaluate explicit references to castrated or emasculated individuals in epigram. Mutilations of the text (including plagiarism) and the text personified as a castrated individual will also be assessed. This chapter will also deal with questions of Roman identity, especially as this concept relates to the socio-cultural gendered roles of the Roman man (*vir*). Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity will be crucial to the interpretation of material in this chapter and the following. This will lead to the final chapter.

The third chapter is a stand-alone reading of Martial book 3. The focus will be on the gendered status of the text of book 3 as it relates to the overall structure of the book, which many scholars have found to be novel, but not have not made the interpretive next step in the characterization of the book as a *gallus liber* or ithyphallic Priapus. A key term in this chapter will be *gallus* (meaning a variety of things, including "man from Gaul," but specifically important to this analysis will be the extended meaning of "castrated priest of the Mother Goddess").

The conclusion describes areas of interest for further study and includes representative examples of the reception of Latin epigram as it relates to specific gendered roles.

## CHAPTER 1: *LITURA CORPORIS*: THE BODY AS A TEXT IN NEED OF CORRECTING

Throughout the corpus of the poet, Martial, the epigrammatic text is characterized as a masculine body. This differs significantly from Catullus who in one much discussed poem claimed that his poetry was “soft” (*molliculi*, Catull. 16. 4, 8), but that his life was not, thus associating himself with the masculine ideal. Catullus 16 casts the entire discussion in blunt, physical terms of sexual penetration; the poet responds to the accusation that he is *male... marem* (“bad at being a man,” Catull. 16.13) by threatening to penetrate his accusers anally and orally (*pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo*, Catull. 16.1, 14). So too, Propertius characterized his erotic elegiac poetry as a *mollis liber* (“soft book,” 2.1). As for Martial, at the outset of the numbered books of epigrams, the poet conflates his own body with that of the text (*Hic est quem legis ille, quem requiris, / Toto notus in orbe Martialis*, 1.1.1–2), but a couple poems later, the poet hedges on that claim by saying that his life and poetry are different: his life is modest but his poetry is playful (*Lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba*, 1.4.8). That the poet dissociates himself from the text is noteworthy because he first conflates himself with the text. The hierarchy of knowledge will map onto the hierarchy of masculinity (in the Roman context, as represented by epigram). Masculine control over the epigrammatic text, both sexual and textual, is an important theme throughout the corpus. Following this, I will discuss the masculine text speaking (for itself and in defense of itself). Related to this discussion is the text speaking as poet and the poet speaking as text. Finally, discussed in this chapter is the text as female body and the female body as text. As we shall see in the examples below, in these cases this type of text is “unreadable” or upsetting “to read” (or

to listen to), for the poet at least, because epigram is a masculine space, and where women occupy the text, it is unsuccessful.

### **Men speaking**

The poetic persona in epigram is exclusively masculine and at times aggressively so.<sup>47</sup> When men speak or are characterized as speakers, they may be celebrated or mocked. Their bodies are less vulnerable than female bodies, but if made subject to another man, they become figuratively emasculated.

### **Hierarchy of knowledge (and masculinity)**

In the epigrammatic genre, descriptions of knowledge and learning are gendered in a way that favors men and masculine bodies. This differs significantly from the genre of elegy, with which epigram shares its primary meter (elegiac couplet). We shall see that the text becomes a body within epigram in a similar way to the *puella* embodying elegy. In elegy women are characterized as learned (*docta*), and this is a desirable trait for the men who have a romantic interest in them.<sup>48</sup> A major theme in this poetry is the characterization of women as dominant and eloquent. Below we shall note the subversiveness of elegy undone in Martial's epigram, and a reinforcement of the priority of men and masculinity in literature. Moreover, we will consider the implications of the published text as a penetrating male body, which will lead us into the discussion of the next chapter on altered bodies and altered texts.

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<sup>47</sup> It has sometimes been argued that Martial's persona is less than fully masculine; see Holzberg 2012: 109–121, who claims that the persona is a *mollis vir*.

<sup>48</sup> See Prop. 1.7.11–12: *me laudent doctae solum placuisse puellae, / Pontice, et iniustas saepe tulisse minas*; for Propertius' expressions of devotion to a *docta puella* see also Prop. 2.11.6, 2.13.11). See Greene 2010; Wyke 2007; Miller 2004; Keith 2008.

The hierarchy of knowledge and masculinity coincide more often than they deviate. In epigram, it is beneficial for men to be learned, but it is detrimental for women to be learned. When a man is not or when a woman is, they are by default an appropriate subject for ridicule. In the monodistich 7.9 Martial describes a man who has opened himself up to such ridicule:

Cum sexaginta numeret Cascellius annos,  
ingeniosus homo est: quando disertus erit? (Mart. 7.9)

Since Cascellius is sixty years old, he is clever:  
when will he be fluent/experienced/learned?

Cascellius should have the power of speaking eloquently, but he apparently does not. He is ridiculed in this poem because he does not exhibit the standard masculine trait of eloquence (*disertus*), especially in his line of work as a lawyer.<sup>49</sup> This poem confirms eloquence as a masculine trait to the reader by poking fun at Cascellius, who should be eloquent (or in possession of the quality expressed by *disertus*), because he is elderly (*sexaginta...annos*), a man, and clever (*ingeniosus*). The term *ingeniosus* suggests an innate quality, whereas the term *disertus* describes more of a practiced skill, giving an impression that the person described works hard to be a good speaker. Although he should be in possession of both qualities, Cascellius is only *ingeniosus* and not also *disertus*, and this marks him as anti-epigrammatic. Epigram is a genre requiring both innate talent and hard work.<sup>50</sup> The poetic persona situates Cascellius lower

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<sup>49</sup> Galán Vioque 2002: 91. Shackleton Bailey 1993. Catullus uses this word to describe Cicero: *Disertissime Romuli nepotum, / quot sunt quotque fuere, Marce Tulli...* (“Most eloquent of the descendants of Romulus, however many there are and however many have been, Marcus Tullius...” Catull. 49.1–2). This poem may be a jest at the man’s poetic ability. He also classifies the poet Calvus as *disertus* (Catull. 53.5).

<sup>50</sup> I discuss this more in chapter 2. For more on the terms *ingeniosus* and *disertus*, see Spisak 1992: 157–158, for whom (and for Martial) these are not the only qualities that often-read epigrams possess.

on the hierarchical scale of masculine behaviors than himself by insinuating that he is not yet *disertus*. This man is expected to be *disertus*, but in a later book when a woman exhibits this quality, it is a negative trait for the poet.

### Maintaining Control, sexual and textual

In poem 11.19, the poet dismisses a woman because she is *diserta*, and therefore anti-epigrammatic.

Quaeris, cur nolim te ducere, Galla? Diserta es.  
saepe soloecismum mentula nostra facit. (Mart. 11.19)

You ask why I wouldn't want to marry you, Galla? You are educated.  
My dick often makes a grammatical error.

Galla is often the butt of Martial's jokes.<sup>51</sup> In this poem, the persona says he will not marry Galla because she would ostensibly harp on him for his misuse of grammar, his physical body, his poetry, or all of these (as we have often seen the poet conflates himself with the text).<sup>52</sup> This poem is in the same vein to poem 7.9. Whereas in poem 7.9 it is desirable for Cascellius as a man to be *disertus*, which he is not, in poem 11.19, Galla being described as *diserta* is a flaw great enough to refuse considering marriage. Maintaining control over women by marriage whether a man marrying one or a father giving one to another man in marriage is a commonplace

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<sup>51</sup> There are sixteen poems in Martial's corpus with the feminine form of this name: 2.25, 2.34, 3.51, 3.54, 3.90, 4.38, 4.58, 5.84, 7.18, 7.58, 9.4, 9.37, 9.78, 10.75, 10.95, and 11.90. Many will be discussed in this chapter, or chapter 3.

<sup>52</sup> This motif—a male speaker's rejection or fear of a woman displaying grammatical learning, perhaps at his expense—also shows up in Juvenal's sixth satire (*soloecismum liceat fecisse marito*, 6.456). Watson and Watson 2015: 222–223 give the following interpretation for this line: “the implication is that she pounces on any such mistake on the husband's part: a debunking conclusion, suggesting that the Speaker fears humiliation by a woman (cf. 454), which does much to undermine the vitriol of the preceding lines.”

in ancient Rome.<sup>53</sup> Unlike the elegiac *docta puella*, Galla's linguistic prowess over the poet comes off as sexually and textually threatening rather than appealing. Textual and sexual control must be regained. The poetic persona exhibits control over his own sexual and poetic situation by joking about whether or not and who he would marry. This turns the *docta puella* of elegy on her head. Galla as a persona in the epigrams is never explicitly associated with the term *puella*.<sup>54</sup> She is not an elegiac persona but rather an epigrammatic foil to the idea of an elegiac *puella* both as a romanticized ideal of the female lover and as a poetic text. The poetic persona refuses to marry this woman for other reasons than are usually the case for not marrying the *docta puella*. The elegiac beloved should be educated and sexually engaged, but she is not marriageable from the ancient Roman male perspective. So too here, Galla demonstrates that she is educated and intelligent, which is unappealing for the *amator poeta* of epigram. Another important thing about this poem is that his *mentula*'s voice is more important to the poet than Galla's. The implication of the metaphorical phrase *soloecismum mentula nostra facit* ("my dick makes a grammatical error," Mart. 11.19.2) is a personification whereby the *mentula* can speak or have a voice.<sup>55</sup> The priority of a non-speaking part of a male body over a woman's criticism is not surprising. Whether the *mentula* indicated in this poem is representative of poetry itself or the body of the poet, Galla has no business critiquing it. This poem seems to undermine masculine control and authority over the self, but the poet keeps Galla in check by ultimately rejecting her. The elegiac beloved may dominate the elegiac lover, but in epigram, the man does not desire to be

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<sup>53</sup> There is a great deal of scholarship on Roman marriage; see discussions in Hersch 2010 and Treggiari 1991.

<sup>54</sup> As Larash 2008: 257 succinctly phrases this phenomenon: "There is no beloved in Martial's epigram, just a contest of masculine achievement."

<sup>55</sup> See Kay 1985: 109–110.

subjugated by the woman in any sense. A woman may read the epigrammatic text, but she has no other place in it, not as a writer, not as the text itself.

The next poem is also about a woman who is unmarriageable because she has multiple sexual partners, which could cast her in the role of a *docta puella*, but it is who she chooses for partners that makes her appealing to the poet.

Uxorem nolo Telesinam ducere: quare?  
moecha est. Sed pueris dat Telesina. Volo. (Mart. 2.49)

I don't want to marry Telesina: why? She's an adultress.  
But Telesina gives it to boys. I do want to.

The poet exhibits a desire for sexual control over his household, his wife, and his wife's alleged lovers. Women may not be completely controllable, but their desires—if perceived—can be controlled by a husband who pays attention and is ready to take advantage of the situation. The poetic persona desires sexual control not over the woman, but over the woman's lovers, once he learns that they are *pueri*.<sup>56</sup> Uncontrollable women are only desirable if they can be used for the sexual pleasure that they bring to the man.

A wife is not needed for a poet who has achieved the *ius trium liberorum* like Martial has. In poem 2.92, the poet expresses his gratitude to the emperor for recognizing the poet's mastery.

Natorum mihi ius trium roganti  
Musarum pretium dedit mearum  
solus qui poterat. Valebis, uxor.  
non debet domini perire munus. (Mart. 2.92)

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<sup>56</sup> Williams 2004: 176 discusses the *supplicium puerile* custom to give this poem context: “if a husband caught his wife in flagrante delicto, he had the right to take his revenge on her partner by anally penetrating him.” Additionally, “The epigram thus has a strong element of macho boasting: the speaker has the power to decide what kind of wife he wants and makes his decisions based on the amount of sexual pleasure he might obtain from her and others.”

The only one who was able gave the law of three children  
as a prize for my Muses to me asking for it.  
Goodbye, wife.  
The gift of the master ought not perish.

The poetic persona dismisses his wife in the same breath that he celebrates his own poetic achievements and the recognition gained from his poetry.<sup>57</sup> By dismissing his wife, the poet exhibits sexual control, but the poem adds the element of textual control by mastery in the form of the *ius trium liberorum* as well. With the *ius trium liberorum* comes the freedom to dismiss his wife because the poet's legacy has been secured by literary prowess rather than sexual prowess in the form of legitimate offspring. Whether or not the historical person, Martial, was married is not a major point that need be discussed here. That the poet is joking about marriage in the context of creative literary output demonstrates the social importance of the institution and the personal and public importance of the emperor granting him the honor of the *ius trium liberorum*.

### **The (masculine) text speaking**

#### **Authority, textual and masculine**

Martial often allows his poetry to speak for him and he speaks in defense of, and on behalf of his poetry. The poet demonstrates his textual and masculine authority.

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,         5  
    illa fronte precor carmina nostra legas.

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<sup>57</sup> On the marital status of the poet, see Watson and Watson 2003; Sullivan 1991: 25, 185–210.

innocuos censura potest permittere lusus:  
lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba. (Mart. 1.4)

If you take up by chance our little books, Caesar,  
set aside the brow as master of lands.  
Your triumphs are also accustomed to suffer jokes,  
and it is not shameful for a leader to be the subject for jokes.  
With the same countenance you watch Thymele and hilarious Latinus,  
I ask that you read our poems.  
The censor is able to allow harmless play:  
my page is mischievous, my life approvable.

This poem is an early justification for the content of his poetry.<sup>58</sup> This poem is often compared to Catullus 16 as the poet's defense of his poetry and that it is not a reflection of his life. Martial does not use the term *mollis* to describe his poetry. In fact, in poem 2.86 he explicitly rejects "soft verse" (*mollem galliambon*, 2.86.5).<sup>59</sup> Catullus 16 admits that his poetry may be soft, but he himself is not (Catull. 16.5–6). The poet's description of his own work as *mollis* is not unprompted, but it is part of a response to the criticism of his poetry. The lines in Ovid that this poem is said to refer to are also taking a defensive stance (*vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea*, "my life is modest, my Muse is hilarious" Ov. *Trist.* 2.1.354). Martial's poem is not responding to specific criticism from specific critics, but it is an advanced buffer for the sake of the emperor and any critique that he may have. In all of these cases, the poet is controlling the narrative and reception of his text. Martial has learned from the examples of Catullus and Ovid to present himself and his poetry as distinct early on, but between the prose preface of this book, which contains a similar sentiment, and this poem is 1.1 in which the poet identifies himself explicitly with his text.

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<sup>58</sup> See also the prose preface of Book 1.

<sup>59</sup> See also 12.43.



reader with similar ideas:

Hoc tibi quidquid id est longinquis mittit ab oris  
Gallia Romanae nomine dicta togae.  
hunc legis et laudas librum fortasse priorem:  
illa vel haec mea sunt, quae meliora putas.  
plus sane placeat domina qui natus in urbe est:  
debet enim Gallum vincere verna liber. (Mart. 3.1)

This—whatever it is for you—the Gaul  
named for the Roman toga sends from far-off shores.  
You read this one and perhaps you praise the previous book:  
those are mine or these, the ones which you consider better.  
It's good if the book born in the mistress-city is more pleasing to you:  
for the homegrown book ought to surpass the Gallic one.

Poem 3.1 mirrors poem 1.1 but also undercuts it; the poet is not equated with his poetry but is lord and master over it, which sets up the relationship of control over text as men have control in Roman society the time of publication and distribution of this book.<sup>62</sup> We will return to this poem in chapter 3.

### **When women attempt**

Women represented in the text are notable because of the effect that elegy has had by using the *puella* as a metapoetic trope. In the world of Martial's *Epigrams*, the elegiac *puella* becomes distorted and unidealized. She is too smart, she says no too often (or not enough), she talks too much (or too little), her body makes sounds. The body of the *puella* is subject to the same

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edition. See Citroni's and Howell's commentaries on 1.1 for further discussion of the claim *toto notus in orbe*.

<sup>62</sup> Garthwaite 2006: 405 notes the connection between poem 3.1 and 1.3, "The opening of book 3 also reflects the beginning of book 1, particularly 1.3 in which Martial had portrayed his volume as a runaway, escaping the safety of its master's home to risk its fate at the hands of an unpredictable Roman public. This imagery had relied in turn on Horace's depiction of his own book as a fugitive slave, rashly bent on winning the city's affections (*Epist.* 1.20), and also on Ovid's portrayal of his vulnerable little book, despatched timidly to Rome by its exiled author (*Trist.* 1.1) (6)."

mockery as all the other scopic/reproachable types found in the *Epigrams*. She therefore cannot be a representation of this genre in the way that Martial is configuring it, but when her body is discussed as if it were a text, it reveals a deception. Her body seems too perfect for the genre, but it always proves to be flawed in a way that is laughable but that cannot represent the humorous genre itself.

### The problematic female body

Women's bodies as texts often need correction in the *Epigrams*. This is most evident in poem 7.18, in which the poet critiques Galla's body not for how it looks, but for the sounds it produces.

Cum tibi sit facies de qua nec femina possit  
dicere, cum corpus nulla litura notet,  
cur te tam rarus cupiat repetatque fututor  
miraris? Vitium est non leve, Galla, tibi:  
accessi quotiens ad opus mixtisque movemur           5  
inguinibus, cunnus non tacet, ipsa taces.  
di facerent, ut tu loquereris et ille taceret:  
offendor cunni garrulitate tui.  
pedere te mallem: namque hoc nec inutile dicit  
Symmachus et risum res movet ista simul:           10  
quis ridere potest fatui poppysmata cunni?  
cum sonat hic, cui non mentula mensque cadit?  
dic aliquid saltem clamosoque obstrepe cunno  
et, si adeo muta es, disce vel inde loqui. (Mart. 7.18)

Since your face is the sort that even a woman can't talk shit about,  
Since no blemish marks your body,  
Why are you surprised that so rarely a fucker wants you and comes back?  
Your fault is not a light one, Galla:  
Whenever I undertake the deed and we move with aroused junk,  
Your cunt won't shut up, you don't speak.  
If only the gods would make it so that you speak and he (*cunnus*) is silent:  
I'm struck with the babbling of your cunt.  
I prefer you to fart: because it's not without use says  
Symmachus and that thing causes laughter at the same time:

Who is able to laugh at the smacking of a stupid cunt?  
When it cries out, whose dick and mind doesn't get slack?  
Say something at least and impede your shrieking cunt,  
And if at that time you can't speak, at least learn to speak from there.

This poem begins as if it will be a poem flattering a woman by describing her physical beauty, but deviates from this in the third line. In the second line of this poem the term *litura* is used to denote the visual flawlessness of Galla's body. In the previous poem of this book, the term is used to describe a textual erasure (7.17.8). The term can mean an erasure or smudge, but the poet applies the term here to the (specifically female) body. This seems to be the only type of this use in surviving Latin literature.<sup>63</sup> When the term is used in elegiac literature, it is used of women writers making smudges (*liturae*) with their tears falling onto the writing surface.<sup>64</sup> Propertius and Ovid both use the word *litura* to conjure the imagery of tears smudged on a page. Both Propertius and Ovid are talking about tears smudging the writing on a page in the context of women's writing. In the context of Ovid, the woman is the poet Sappho.<sup>65</sup> So the text bears the bodily marks of the weeper,<sup>66</sup> whereas in poem 7.18, Galla's body bears a mark worse than that

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<sup>63</sup> A similar hapax can be seen in Martial's use of *plagiarius* (1.52.9; see Citroni and Howell ad loc.).

<sup>64</sup> See Prop. 4.3.4; Ov. *Her.* 3.3, 11.1, 15.98. Strikingly, Ovid uses this motif to refer to his own tears in the exile poetry (*Trist.* 1.1.13, 3.1.15). For other uses of *litura* see Mart. 1.3, which is about the book wanting to go out and sell itself in the market. In poem 4.10, the vulnerable book seeks help from Faustinus, and *litura* seems to mean either that Faustinus can choose to erase his own name and not function as the book's protector, or as Larash 2004: 34 argues to erase the whole book. See also, Horace *Ars Poetica* 293, which is about poetry that has been corrected many times.

<sup>65</sup> Sappho was influential for Catullus (e.g., Catull. 51), so one may say that Sappho has influenced Martial and that he has inherited her poetic legacy, which problematizes Martial's relationship to Catullus.

<sup>66</sup> Larash 2004: 33–34, 48 gives a discussion on the marks representing the poet's body in absentia: Ovid's tears mark the page with "blots" (*liturae*).

of a text—one in need of correction. With the use of this usually textual term, Galla’s physical body becomes like a body of epigrams, but the reader soon discovers that Galla’s body has an unbearable flaw: the wrong kind of sound comes out from the wrong place (*poppysmata cunni*, line 11).<sup>67</sup> Unlike Martial’s poetry, once a person experiences Galla’s body, they do not return (*Cur te tam rarus cupiat repetatque fututor, / Miraris?*, lines 3–4). The poet gives examples of other types of sounds that would be easier to deal with. It would be better if Galla spoke regularly (... *tu loquereris*..., line 7). The *cunnus* is grammatically masculine and is therefore referred to by the pronoun *ille* (“he,” line 7). The phrase *ille taceret* in isolation would give the impression that the pronoun refers to a man. An obvious joke is that the poet prefers that Galla speak and a man be silent. However, since the grammatically masculine pronoun refers to the woman’s body, and a part that precisely marks her body as female, the poet prefers that the part of the body—being penetrated at the same time as being too loud—be silent. The poet would prefer if she were to fart (*Pedere te malle*, line 9) because even though it is not socially acceptable, he could still laugh about it (*risum res movet ista*, line 10).<sup>68</sup> In line 11, the poet describes the *cunnus* (“cunt”) as *fatuus* (“stupid”) insinuating that the female genitalia (particularly Galla’s) are not intellectual in the same way that male genitalia are. This is highlighted by the association of *mentula* with *mens*. A loud *cunnus* is, in fact, a foil to the *mentula* (“dick,” line 12). Both the poet’s *mentula* (“dick”) and his *mens* (“mind”) are affected

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<sup>67</sup> For another problematic female (Lesbia’s) body described in corrective textual terms, see poem 11.99, which we will discuss in a later chapter. See also Richlin 1992a: 32–56 on the erotic ideal and female genitalia intentionally neglected by erotic literature because genitals were regularly characterized with *digressus*; and, Richlin 1992a: 67, “... the female genitalia have no part in the ideal of beauty and... Latin erotic literature leaves a blank in the middle of the women it describes.”

<sup>68</sup> On the humor and social severity of crepitation, see 12.77.

by the sound erupting (*clamoso...*, line 13) from Galla's genitalia. The similarity in the sounds of the two words suggests an association.<sup>69</sup> The *mentula* again takes precedent over the woman and her body: her body and her speech. The non-speaking body part is described in terms of the ability to speak (much like Mart. 11.19): if Galla is not able to convince her body to be silent, she could at least learn how to speak through her vagina (*disce vel inde loqui*, line 14) for the amusement of the poet. In this poem, the poet does not outright sexually reject Galla. But he is quick to critique her body, point out flaws, and offer suggestions for how it should function.

### Women saying "no"

In this section we discuss poems in which the woman's body is sexually restricted to the poet or other men because of the woman rejecting the man in some way. In elegy this manifests primarily in the context of the *paraclausithyron*. In epigram, we are given the impression women directly rejecting men. In all of the examples of Galla saying no, she is not given direct speech by the poet.<sup>70</sup> He instead recounts in simple (elegiac) language Galla's speech and actions. By this, the poet characterizes Galla as a speaker which gives the impression of a conversation without actually representing one. The form of rejection by the woman is either that she does not say "yes," or her explicit, stated refusal: she says "no" (often indicated by the verb *negare*). The

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<sup>69</sup> The stem of *mens* (*ment-*) could be related to the word *mentula* (perhaps a diminutive, cf. the phonetic connection between the stem of *menta* ("mint") and the word *mentula* at Cic. *ad fam.* 9.22.3, Adams 1982: 1). On the possible connection between *mens* and *mentula*, see Chantraine 1968–80: 693, cited in Adams 1982: 10.

<sup>70</sup> In the sixteen poems that mention this name, Galla only speaks directly in one poem (3.51), in which she makes critically suggestive remarks about her own body, but the poet turns the joke toward his own body (*Cum faciem laudo, cum miror crura manusque, / dicere, Galla, soles 'nuda placebo magis,' / et semper vitas communia balnea nobis. / numquid, Galla, times, ne tibi non placeam?*). It is telling that the only time Galla speaks directly, she does so to criticize the part of herself that is desirable to the poet.

poet's response to the woman refusing him—or if he is giving advice to the men being rejected—is a re-writing of the women's speech, behavior, and even bodies. The poet offers corrective suggestions of wooing men instead of wholesale rejecting them. Interestingly, many of these poems are addressed to Galla, who is a foil when she is *diserta* (11.19.2, discussed above) and when her body becomes a foil to the sexual gratification of the poet (7.18).<sup>71</sup> The first poem that features Galla rejecting the poet is 2.25.

Das numquam, semper promittis, Galla, roganti.  
si semper fallis, iam rogo, Galla, nega. (Mart. 2.25)

You give never, always promise to the one asking, Galla.  
If you always lie, as I ask, Galla, just say no.

In this brief, imagined interaction between the poet and Galla, we see the poet as the speaker offering corrective advice to the potential beloved. Rather than try to convince her to give him what he wants thereby resulting in elegiac satisfaction, the poet neatly inserts an *aprosdoketon* of epigrammatic rejection. When the poet next invokes Galla to have her say no, he manipulates the relationship and re-writes her responses to him: regardless of what Galla says, the poet corrects her.

Cum dare non possim quod poscis, Galla, rogantem,  
multo simplicius, Galla, negare potes. (Mart. 3.54)

Since I'm not able to give that which you beg the one asking, Galla,  
More easily, Galla, you could say no.

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<sup>71</sup> “Galla” reappears in our discussion in chapter 3 on Book 3 in which the term *gallus* and the names Gallus/a are important to the understanding of the structure of the book. “Why Galla?” elsewhere in this oeuvre may be a fruitful question to consider, but it may not be answerable. The metrical quantity of Galla allows it to fit nicely into a variety of meters; it most often appears in elegiac couplets. We will also see a continued use of the masculine form *gallus*/Gallus in chapter 3.

Again, Galla must be told how she can get out of the poet's request. The poet is now unwilling to give to Galla, who in 2.25 would not grant the poet's request. Galla could say no (*negare potes*) instead of begging (*poscis*) the poet for something he is unable to give her (*dare non possim*). In the next poem on this tortured and confused relationship, Galla's desires are so mixed up, that she is characterized as desiring the poet and rejecting him at the same time.

Volt, non volt dare Galla mihi, nec dicere possum,  
quod volt et non volt, quid sibi Galla velit. (Mart. 3.90)

Galla wants and does not want to give it to me,  
but because she does and does not want to, I can't tell what it is Galla wants.

Galla does not speak her desires in this poem (or in any of these poems), but the poet is able to interpret or discern (to an extent) Galla's desires. He knows that she simultaneously wants him and rejects him.<sup>72</sup> The final poem in which the poet instructs Galla on how she should react and interact with him is poem 4.38:

Galla, nega: satiatur amor nisi gaudia torquent:  
sed noli nimium, Galla, negare diu. (Mart. 4.38)

Galla, say no: love is overdone unless joys torment:  
but don't say no for a very long time, Galla.

The poem begins with an address to Galla instructing her to just say no. Here Galla is characterized as being too available to the poet. Love is overworked. But she should not say no

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<sup>72</sup> Moreno Soldevila 2006: 290 on the theme of amatory reluctance, "... Martial's epigram is clearly parodic: in the first line, the poet impersonates both the *magister amoris*, who teaches how to seduce, and the lover, who grants his partner the right to say no for a while. The wording is reminiscent of amatory poetry, especially Ovidian, but at the same time the aphoristic content is extremely conventional. The accumulation of sentimental amatory terms may evoke the poet's apparent mimicking of his lover's own words. In the pentameter, the *magister amoris* continues to defend a balance, but the familiar tone and the impatient repetition of the vocative expose the macho voice, annoyed with his lover's coy pose."

forever.

Women who say no (in the wrong way) in the *Epigrams* are corrected into “texts” that the poet has created. When women speak in the *Epigrams*, they are held to confusing standards. This is evident in the poems that describe women saying no. There are a number of different reactions to the many situations in which women have said, ought to, or should not say no.

Quaero diu totam, Safroni Rufe, per urbem,  
si qua puella neget: nulla puella negat.  
tamquam fas non sit, tamquam sit turpe negare,  
tamquam non liceat: nulla puella negat.  
Casta igitur nulla est? Sunt castae mille. Quid ergo 5  
casta facit? Non dat, non tamen illa negat. (Mart. 4.71)

I asked a while ago throughout the entire city, Safronius Rufus,  
if any girl should say no: no girl says no.  
Just as it would not be right, just as saying no would be shameful,  
just as it would not be permitted: no girl would say no.  
Therefore is no one chaste? One thousand are chaste.  
What therefore does a chaste woman do?  
She does not give, nevertheless she doesn't say no.

The poetic persona introduces this poem as an address to another man about the speech patterns of women. The joke appears to be that no *puella* will outright refuse the poet, but none of them will have sex with him either. This poem may be considered to be about sexual control. The fact that the poet is discussing this behavior of refusal to reject and refusal to accept a man with another man gives the impression of the poet figuring out a code and sharing it with someone who would also be confused by the behavior of the women. Another poem in which a woman says no excessively follows this one in Book 4.

Epigramma nostrum cum Fabulla legisset  
negare nullam quo queror puellarum,  
semel rogata bisque terque neglexit  
preces amantis. Iam, Fabulla, promitte:  
negare iussi, pernegare non iussi. (Mart. 4.81)





throughout, which has special poignancy in the last line. People are supposed to laugh at Martial's poems, but this woman should never laugh, even as she is imagined as an addressee of the poem and would therefore be reading the text. The text seems to focus on the visual horror of this woman's teeth, but her laughter is associated with the spectacle as well. It may simply draw attention to her grotesque teeth, but perhaps the sound of her laughter is also noxious.

## Conclusions

By way of concluding this discussion and transitioning into the next chapter, we consider here a poem with the infamous Galla juxtaposed with and seeking to marry effeminate men.

Iam sex aut septem nupsisti, Galla, cinaedis,  
dum coma te nimium pexaque barba iuvat.  
deinde experta latus madidoque simillima loro  
inguina nec lassa stare coacta manu,  
deseris inbelles thalamos mollemque maritum; 5  
rursus et in similes decidis usque toros.  
Quaere aliquem Curios semper Fabiosque loquentem,  
hirsutum et dura rusticitate trucem:  
invenies: sed habet tristis quoque turba cinaedos.  
difficile est vero nubere, Galla, viro. (Mart. 7.58) 10

You've already married six or seven *cinaedi*, Galla,  
While groomed hair and beards please you too much.  
after their flanks and loins have been tested just like a wet strap  
and won't stand having been forced by a tired hand,  
when you give up on the unwarlike bedrooms and your soft husband;  
you trip continuously even right back into similar beds.  
Find yourself a man who always talks about the Curii and the Fabii,  
a man hairy and rough with harsh rusticity:  
you will find him: but the severe crowd also has *cinaedi*.  
It's a difficult thing, Galla, to marry a real man.

Here the reader is met with a Galla who goes too far and becomes borderline obsessed with marriage to the wrong kind of man. The poet instructs her on how to find the right kind of man

but ends with a joke that encapsulates the notion of appearances being deceptive. That Galla, whose body the poet corrected like a text earlier in this book (7.18) would marry a series of emasculated men is of no surprise to the poet. She has problems and makes problematic choices. He takes care to define a “real man” (*vero... viro*, 7.58.10) with a pun and to describe this man as hairy and rustic, who talks about famous examples of Roman manhood. Galla is also characteristically unelegiac in the description of “unwarlike bedrooms and soft husband” (*inbelles thalamos mollemque maritum*, 7.58.5). The men are criticized through their relationships with Galla: they enjoy a woman who has been set up as an epigrammatic foil, and they are subject to the same epigrammatic critique.

## CHAPTER 2: UNMAKING MEN: THE SOCIAL, HISTORICAL, AND LITERARY CONTEXT OF EMASCULATION IN THE *EPIGRAMS*

This chapter explores instances of the text losing control of itself and its masculinized identity at the hands of its readers. Part of the argument here concerns questions of identity, belonging, and possession (especially by the poet) of the text as a body. This chapter is divided into two main sections. First, terminology will be explored as it relates to masculine identity and the use of masculine terms useful for interpreting epigrammatic texts. Next, there will follow an assessment of the application of such terms in metaliterary moments depicting physical alterations by others that lead to loss of control or identity of the text, as in the case of Fidentinus the plagiarist, and by the poet that reinforces the identity of the text.

Physical alteration of male bodies may be in the consciousness of the literary texts at this time because of the legal context. As we will discuss below, Domitian reinstated legislation forbidding castration while in possession of a eunuch slave. Superficially, there is no contradiction involved in this, since Earinus had been previously castrated. Also, given the long history of acceptance of the practice of castrating male slaves, and the long visibility of such slaves, it is no surprise that Martial and other poets of the time, including Statius, celebrate Earinus in poetry.

What I hope to show is that throughout a significant part of the surviving epigrammatic corpus, poets play with the idea of metaliterary gendering (similar to what happens in elegy). The gendering of epigram is primarily masculine especially when eliciting desire from others or conflating the poet's body with the body of the text,<sup>74</sup> but as the text leaves the poet's possession

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<sup>74</sup> See Williams 2002a.

and is held, read, recited, and altered by others, the gender becomes fluid. Many poems call out or predict the change that will occur or has occurred already for previously circulated books (discussed in the second half of this chapter). This ultimately demonstrates an anxiety of the poet about the fluid or uncontrollable identity of his text and by proxy himself.

The first step of considering metaliterary identification of texts is to examine terminology. The gendering of texts coincides with the gendered description of people. We see this readily in Latin love elegy, in which the love interest of the poet and his poetic corpus are conflated at key moments. In the elegiac genre, we find a representative example in the poetry of Propertius: “Cynthia” is beloved and text, the object of affection and the poetry about her.<sup>75</sup> Book 1 of Propertius’ elegies is called *Cynthia* and opens with this as the first word of poem 1 (*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis*, “Cynthia first caught wretched me with her eyes,” Prop. 1.1). Book 2 opens with the *puella* as inspiration for love poetry:

Quaeritis, unde mihi totiens scribantur amores,  
unde meus veniat mollis in ora liber.  
non haec Calliope, non haec mihi cantat Apollo:  
ingenium nobis ipsa puella facit. (Prop. 2.1.1–4)

You ask whence so often love poems are written by me,  
whence my book comes softly into mouths.  
Calliope does not sing these to me, nor does Apollo:  
the girl herself makes inspiration for me.

The *puella* engenders (and genders) poetry for the poet: she is the inspiration and the verse itself. In epigram, a similar gendered marking of the text may be observed. The difference being that epigram is gendered as within a hierarchy of masculinity, in which it is often characterized as

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Prop. 2.24.1–2: *tu loqueris, cum sis iam noto fabla libro / et tua sit toto Cynthia lecta foro?* Martial too uses “Cynthia” this way: *Cynthia, facundi carmen iuvenale Properti*, Mart. 14.189.2. See also Butrica 1996.

penetrative, as opposed to feminine and soft.<sup>76</sup> In Martial's first book, his poetry is described as enjoyable by virtue of the fact that it has a *mentula* ("dick") and fulfills the penetrative role of sexual intercourse as it does in the relationship between husband and wife (more specifically, Martial's speaker asserts that the *mentula* is the only way husbands can "please" their wives: *tamquam coniugibus suis mariti, / non possunt sine mentula placere*). There are a number of assumptions wrapped up in this assertion, but two are worth noting here: that the *mentula* gives pleasure, and that it is necessary.<sup>77</sup> Alternatively, epigrammatic and other poetry can be figured as a young slave prostituting himself to the readership.<sup>78</sup> A significant part of my argument here is that the gender of the text is more fluid (in the sense that the text may represent a spectrum of masculinities) in epigram than it is in other genres, namely elegy (where the text as a feminine body is non-hegemonic<sup>79</sup>), and that when the poet is found dabbling in this practice, the reader is able to construct a particular gender for the text and this necessarily impacts the interpretation by the reader—whether the reader is aware of this impact or not. The reader interacts with the words of the poem, and the associations and ideas that certain words conjure affect a gendered interpretation of the text. Each reading projects a masculinity from this spectrum onto the text with prompts from within the text itself. In many ways the poem anticipates readings and responds to these readings, which will also be discussed.

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<sup>76</sup> This is explored by Williams 2002a, who concludes that the epigrammatic text is presented as a male body—sometimes penetrating and other times penetrable—by allusion to previous poetic corpora (e.g. Catullus and Horace). For a reading of the text as gendered in elegy see: Wyke 2007, 1987.

<sup>77</sup> See Mart. 1.35.3–5: *...hi libelli, / Tamquam coniugibus suis mariti, / Non possunt sine mentula placere*.

<sup>78</sup> For an overview of these motifs, see Williams 2002a.

<sup>79</sup> See Connell 1987.

The language and imagery of castration and emasculation of the text and book plays an important role in my discussion. First, a look at the nuances of the English terms used to refer to body modification or mutilation involving male genitalia will be useful to situate this argument. When we speak of castration and emasculation, these technical terms have nuanced meanings (figurative and literal) that must be considered. Modern attitudes toward genital modification and mutilation are widely varied: the motivation for genital alteration may be cultural, religious, personal, or coercive. Two contemporary examples are female and male circumcision: with regard to the former, even when its practitioners motivate the practice by an appeal to religious traditions, the practice is often called “female genital mutilation,” but the latter is rarely called “mutilation” even when it is not motivated by an appeal to religion; that very imbalance itself suggests that the whole topic is contested.<sup>80</sup> Ancient attitudes toward body modification and mutilation—particularly as it relates to genital alteration—may be gleaned from texts, but this knowledge is incomplete. In order to contextualize the significance of genital alteration for ancient Roman culture, we must consider an external response as well. Self-identification will be considered as much as possible, but this is notoriously difficult because when persons with altered bodies are given a voice, it is exclusively through that of an intermediary (such as Catullus representing Attis’ speech in poem 63).

This chapter will consider situations of both modification and mutilation. The distinction between these two terms is a matter of voluntary or involuntary alteration.<sup>81</sup> The term

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<sup>80</sup> For more information on penis aesthetics in Ancient Greece, see Hodges 2001. For a brief history of circumcision, see Aggleton 2007. For modern opposition to circumcision, see Hammond 2018.

<sup>81</sup> The terms become more complicated depending on whether significant injury is sustained by a voluntary act of modification, in which case the term is either self-mutilation or non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) (Favazza 2011).

“modification” suggests a voluntary or self-initiated alteration of the body, while the term “mutilation” suggests involuntary alteration of the body, or one enacted by an external agent. The alteration of physical human bodies and ancient attitudes toward these acts are crucial for a discussion of the metaliterary representation of the text as a physical (human male) body, especially in the genre of epigram which is frequently passed around, performed, excerpted, and altered by people who are not the poet.<sup>82</sup> Since the poet of epigram frequently conflates self with text—physical person with figurative corpus, the alteration of the text may be construed as a mutilation of sorts. The genre of epigram being a hypermasculinized genre, this mutilation may be interpreted as a severing or removal of male body parts: a figurative emasculation or castration.

In Latin, the terminology for body alteration concerning male genitalia is fairly extensive and varied and borrows heavily from Greek. The terms may still fall into the same categorical distinctions of voluntary and involuntary, but ancients would not necessarily agree with the modern distinction between “modification” and “mutilation.” The more neutral term of “alteration” will be of use in discussions that span the ideas of both voluntary and involuntary changes made to the physical body. In a general sense we may understand from the literature that Romans considered most forms of (male) genital alteration to be self-mutilation or a form of involuntary mutilation imposed upon a person. For example, we may consider Roman attitudes toward circumcision and the prevailing cultural environment of Romans, in which male circumcision was not practiced.<sup>83</sup> Additionally, when the act is described as voluntary, the person

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<sup>82</sup> See, for example, the cycle of poems on Fidentinus in Book 1 (Mart. 1.29, 1.38, 1.53, 1.72) and poem 2.8 in which the poet tells the reader to blame the copyist if any fault is found within the poems. See below for a discussion on the poet correcting his own text.

<sup>83</sup> Roman references to the practice by such non-Roman peoples as Jews and Egyptians implicitly or implicitly describe it as a strange act of “mutilation”—in the general sense of that

who voluntarily commits the act is usually represented as imbalanced, insane, or under the influence of divine possession (e.g. Attis). In short, our modern terms are not completely mappable onto ancient ideas, but since the agents of their own body modification are not among the authors in which we find these attitudes and they are frequently Othered in these texts, the modern terms of “modification” and “mutilation” will suffice for this discussion with the distinction being strictly between voluntary and involuntary alteration.

Considering the terms associated with altered bodies and their semantic range helps categorize a social hierarchy of gender. Terms in Latin literature for male bodies that have been altered in some way that changes their socially ascribed identity from man to non-man will be considered in this chapter.<sup>84</sup>

Many of the terms discussed in this chapter begin with the idea that a fully realized form has been altered—that of the adult male human.<sup>85</sup> A subsequent gendering of this altered body occurs. Occasionally the form is altered before being fully realized (i.e. as a boy so that he stays boyish and does not become a man).<sup>86</sup> The difference between the alteration of a free adult’s

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term, but also “mutilation” in the sense of the term used here because male circumcision was more or less compulsory (non-voluntary) in those societies. See Tac. *Hist.* 5.5.1; Strab. 17.2.5; Suet. *Dom.* 12.2. For Jewish circumcision in the context of ancient Greece and Rome, see Isaac 2004: 440–491. See Aggleton 2007 for a brief history of circumcision.

<sup>84</sup> Gardner 1998 more clearly defines gender spectrum.

<sup>85</sup> The androcentric and anthropocentric view of the adult human male’s body as the most “perfect” and/or “more perfect” than the bodies of female humans, of human boys, and of non-human animals characterizes some influential ancient medical models: see e.g. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* 727b–728e or Galen, *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body* 14.6. For Aristotle, see Mayhew 2004. Animals are also important to Martial in this regard, it seems, but will not be discussed here.

<sup>86</sup> See Sen. *Controversiae* 10.4.17 and *Ep.* 122.7; Suetonius’ narrative of Sporus (Suet. *VC Nero.* 46–48); Plin. *NH* 11.37; Mart. 9.7. On men taking on the role of women, especially in the context of Nero’s marriages to Sporus (in which Nero was the groom and Sporus the bride) and Doryphoros (in which Nero was the bride), see Williams 2010: 284, and 424, n. 25: “Nero erased

body and a child's or slave's body is the autonomy that an adult male citizen has over his body. A full-grown citizen is perceived as having control over his body. What constitutes a man in the Roman imagination is also important to this analysis, and this question will be addressed first here.

In Latin literature, there are many words with a semantic range for identifying men, women, and people who fall between these categories that suggest identifying traits of behavior or physical form. Our concern here is the altered male body and terms that situate individuals and groups on a hierarchical spectrum of gender denoted by specific terms. Bodies that may have been at the top of this hierarchy (or had a greater potential to be) but are now qualified or marked in a linguistic way are important to this argument and will assist in situating the metaliterary representation of the text as a physical body in the latter half of this chapter. These terms for human bodies will inform our interpretation of the altered text: when the poet's text is altered by his own hand ("modification") it is represented as being acceptable, whereas when it is altered by the hand of another ("mutilation") the act is denounced by the text itself. When the text is passed to the reader, it inevitably becomes something different altogether. Its identity is fundamental changed.

The unmarked term is *vir*, and a number of terms used to suggest altered bodies incorporate this word specifically or its opposite (*femina*), so this will be our starting point. Next, we will discuss terms involving physical procedure or operation. Finally, general terms that explicitly point to alteration and change of an entire body or behaviors.

The term *vir* is the standard word for the ideal type of "man" in the Roman consciousness. From it comes *virtus* and *virilitas*, an important Roman virtue representing

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Sporos' masculinity." It is unclear when exactly Sporus was castrated.

nobility and strength. Not every male body could possess *virtus* or *virilitas*, but some women were able to possess these traits.<sup>87</sup> Terms that suggest a partial manhood may also indicate an imperfect *virilitas*. Pliny the Elder makes a distinction between *semiviri* (who are impotent due to a crushing accident) and *spadones* and *hermaphroditi* (11.263). Pliny seems to be elaborating on confusing and interchangeable terms with this new categorization. He defines *semivir* as one who is impotent due to accidental crushing of the testicles, whereas *spado* and *hermaphroditus* are in separate categories. Pliny does not define *spado* and *hermaphroditus* in this section. Pliny's use of the words *spadonia* and *spadonina* ("seedless," 15.51, 130), in reference to laurels and apples respectively, gives the impression that *spado* used elsewhere refers to a natural impotence. Pliny gives more information on the word *hermaphroditus* in 11.262. He describes certain women who have something resembling a penis that *hermaphroditi* of either sex also possess (*contra mulierum paucis prodigiosa adsimilatio, sicut hermaphroditis utriusque sexus...*). an external organ that resembles a penis but does not necessarily have the same reproductive function (women can also possess them). Therefore, according to Pliny, *hermaphroditi* can belong to either sex and are defined by an external organ that resembles a penis, which does not necessarily have the same reproductive function as the genitalia of a *vir*: female bodies can also possess them. As a general point about the Latin vocabulary, *semivir* ("half-man") and *semimas* ("half-male") both have a sense of incompleteness or division from a whole. In Ovid *semivir* and *semimas* is used to describe hybrids (both regarding gender—

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<sup>87</sup> Some female bodies were able to possess this trait, but she would generally be the exception that proves the rule. Lucretia is said to have had a manly spirit (*animi matrona virilis*, Ovid *Fasti* 2.847); Valerius Maximus *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* 6.1.1–2. See argument and discussion of dominion and control in Williams 2010 (ch 4). For the image of the manly woman see Williams 2012. Book-length discussions of the terms *vir* and *virtus* include Santoro L'Hoir 1992 and McDonnell 2006.

man/woman: priests of Cybele, *Fasti* 5.380, and in regard to human/non-human creatures: Minotaur, *Ars Amatoria* 2.24). The term *semimas* follows the same logic of *semivir*, but this term is less common. Varro and Columella use this term to define *capones* (plural)—i.e., castrated roosters—as *castrati* (Varro *Res Rusticae* 3.9.3.3; Columella *De Re Rustica* 8.2.3.2). Ovid uses the term in the context of the festival of the Magna Mater to identify her priests (Ovid *Fasti* 4.183). The term *vir sterilis* indicates a man who is not able to procreate independently of whether or not there has been genital alteration,<sup>88</sup> but the contexts in which this word is found generally point to an alteration of the body. Catullus uses this term in his *Attis* poem while *Attis* is lamenting his newly altered body (Catull. 63.69). Martial follows this use and describes priests of Cybele as *viri steriles* in poem 3.91 (discussed in the next chapter) and uses the phrase in praise castration laws in poem 9.7 (discussed below). All of these terms have primarily figurative meanings focused on an altered or partially-*male* body.<sup>89</sup>

Words that indicate a physical change or alteration in body are crucial for this discussion. *Spado* is a general term for a man whose testicles do not fit precisely into the description of a normal male human. Ulpian's digest defines *spado* broadly and uses this word to designate different types of eunuchs, namely natural and man-made: *Spadonum generalis appellatio est: quo nomine tam hi, qui natura spadones sunt, item thlibiae thlasiae, sed et si quod aliud genus spadonum est, continentur* ("The nomenclature of this type of *spadones* is: by which name such

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<sup>88</sup> Catull. 67.26: ... *iners sterili semine natus erat*.

<sup>89</sup> The term *effeminatus* focuses on a feminized male body or feminized behaviors of a male body: "Imitating a woman in the appearance or behaviour, effeminate" (*OLD*). *Muliebris* seems to focus on a woman's body (with the exception of when it describes a man): "1 of, or belonging to, or used by, a woman or women ... d portraying or in the likeness of a woman... 2 b (applied to the actions, appearance, etc., of a man) effeminate..." (*OLD*). See also Williams 2010: 139–40.

as these, who are *spadones* by nature, also ‘compressed’ and ‘crushed’, but even if there is any other kind of *spadones*, they are classified together” 50.16.128). *Thlibiae* refers to males whose testicles have been removed by squeezing or tying (from *θλιβω*, “to compress”), and *thlasiae* refers to males whose testicles have been removed by crushing (from *θλάω*, “to crush”).<sup>90</sup> The semantic range in Latin of the term *eunuchus* is almost as broad as that of *spado*.<sup>91</sup> The term is used to describe alteration of the male genitalia, whereas *spado* may indicate unaltered, non-normative genitalia (i.e., *qui natura spadones sunt*). The procedure of alteration is not particular. Finally, Pliny the Elder discusses *galli* and their body modification practices (11.261–262).<sup>92</sup> This term is generally reserved for the emasculated priests of Cybele, but the term begins to be used to refer to men with altered bodies, who have nothing to do with the goddess, by Martial (full discussion in the next chapter).

### **Voluntary and Involuntary Removal of Phallic Power**

The ancient legal descriptions of men who may or may not be inhibited from marriage or adoption because of the physical state of their body (*spadones* vs. other types of eunuchs) provide an interesting cultural touchstone against which we may test the descriptions and literary allusions in the genre of epigram. In this section we consider the intentional process for

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<sup>90</sup> See Crawford 2018: 42 for a discussion of allowances for *spadones* in Roman law and the changing definition of this term over time. At D.15.16.128, Ulpian raises the possibility of further categories (besides the preceding three: *natura*, *thlibiae*, *thlasiae*), Ulpian may have a particular type in mind, or he may be writing as a jurist who is in principle emphasizing careful distinctions.

<sup>91</sup> E.g., Terence, *Eunuchus*; *Bellum Alexandrinum* 4.1.6; Julius Caesar, *Bellum Civile* 3.108.1.2; Cicero, *Orator* 232.11–12, *De Natura Deorum* 3.72.3; Quint. *Inst. Or.* 9.3.16.1; Apul. *Met.* 10.20.4.

<sup>92</sup> E.g., Catull. 63; Petronius, *Sat.* 55.6.4.

castration and emasculation, the success of such processes, and representation of the process and outcome in literature.

### Voluntary alteration

A poignant and representative example of Martial's use of the term *gallus* up to this point is poem 2.45.

Quae tibi non stabat praecisa est mentula, Glypte.  
demens, cum ferro quid tibi? gallus eras. (Mart. 2.45)

Glyptus, your dick that wasn't standing has been cut.  
Mad man, why did you need a blade? You were a *gallus*.

In these two lines, Martial uses the term to refer to a man who had control over the situation of removing his own *mentula* ("dick"). In this context, he defines the term as a man whose *mentula*, for whatever reason, is no longer considered effective. Without a functional *mentula*, Glyptus is already *gallus*.<sup>93</sup> The man did not need to remove his penis. The word *gallus* ("emasculated priest of Cybele") in this context suggests that the man did not have functional genitalia. Of the seven words with *gall-* as their stem, the only reference that overtly refers to the meaning "emasculated" in Book 2 is poem 45, in which we read about Glyptus, who is called *gallus* because (1) he was impotent and (2) his *mentula* has been voluntarily removed.

This example from Book 2 can function as a source of definition concerning the term for the readership. The monodistich sums up the poet's attitude toward Glyptus as an individual and for castrated men more generally. This defining epigram gives context to the term *gallus*. For the poet, *gallus* refers primarily to impotence in the sense of not having male power and control. The

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<sup>93</sup> For the implications of Glyptus' name, see Williams 2004: 166 and Shackleton Bailey, vol. 1 1993: 167.

term does not simply refer to emasculation or castration. Glyptus did not need to have his penis removed (*praecisa est mentula*, 2.45.1). Because it was not becoming erect (*quae tibi non stabat*, 2.45.1), he was already a *gallus* (*gallus eras*, 2.45.2). According to this poem, Glyptus not being able to achieve an erection is what made him a *gallus*. Glyptus had already lost his penetrative power before the removal of his penis. With this loss of power, Glyptus is set outside of (and possibly against) the masculine sphere. The text indicates that Glyptus was already impotent. In that regard, he was already a *gallus*. Therein lies the joke: a male being without a functioning *mentula* may as well be a eunuch.

### **Castration in Flavian Rome**

In order to fully interpret Martial's mockery of demasculinized bodies, we must consider his social and political position as well as his relationship with the emperor in power at the time of writing. At the time of the publication of his first books of epigram, the emperor was Titus, and there are no references to altered humans.<sup>94</sup> For Books 1–11 (86–96 AD), Martial was writing with the emperor Domitian as his primary (certainly the wealthiest and most powerful) patron. This was a dubious situation for the poet who boasts of his ability to speak *Latine* because of Domitian's position as the censor in perpetuity; the poet did, however, write two books of poetry (5 and 8) with no obscenities in them dedicated to Domitian.<sup>95</sup> The second edition of Book 10 was published after Domitian's death in 96. Book 12 was published sometime during the reign of

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<sup>94</sup> There are, however, references to animals, some of which will be discussed in chapter 3.

<sup>95</sup> Sullivan 1991: 21 notes that Domitian had been the censor for a year when Book 1 was published, and that Martial's explanation of the need for obscenity in this book account for the emperor being in this post and the nature of the post to protect the public morality. Mulligan 2019: 120 also notes the date of the publication of Book 1 with the emperor's censorship, and concludes: "It is no surprise, then, that Martial often exploits obscenity in traditional criticisms of deviancy;" and also remarks on the obscenity-free Book 5 and 8 both dedicated to Domitian.

Trajan possibly after the poet's death (102–104 AD). A discussion of the characterization and mockery in Martial's verse focuses on the reign of Domitian for three reasons: most of Martial's literary output was generated during this time, Domitian was a domineering force and was also concerned with poetic output during his reign, even in light verse such as Martial's, and Martial comments on the legislation of Domitian more than that of the other emperors, especially of note to this discussion are Domitian's laws prohibiting castration.

Domitian's reign and legislation are generally important for this discussion because the poet responded in his poetry directly to situations and events that occurred during Domitian's reign and to specific deeds that the emperor accomplished. Martial and Statius wrote flattering poetry during the Flavian period, specifically about Domitian and his accomplishments.<sup>96</sup>

Domitian ruled the Roman Empire between Titus and Nerva, and so he was the last of the Flavian Emperors. His reign began after the death of Titus in 81, and he was assassinated in the year 96 AD by a number of people (including Parthenius and Entellus).<sup>97</sup> We can see from Martial's poetry that Domitian was generally well-disposed toward the poet, at least enough to keep him around as a court poet.

In a number of poems, Martial mentions the laws banning castration: the *lex Iulia* and the *lex Scantinia*. The earliest appearance in Martial's oeuvre of Domitian's legislation on castration is 2.60.<sup>98</sup> However, even throughout book 2, Martial describes castrated/emasculated men with a

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<sup>96</sup> Jones 1992; Shackleton Bailey 1993: 3.

<sup>97</sup> Sullivan 1991: 33, 42.

<sup>98</sup> See Garthwaite 1990: 14: "The law against castration, however, dates from 81 or 82," and Garthwaite gives the publication date for Book 2 as 85 or 86. The first explicit reference to the legislation is found in poem 2.60. Henriksen 1997: 284 with n. 5 gives the publication date for Book 2 as 86 or 87, and therefore dates the castration legislation to about the same time at the latest.

pejorative tone and equates the more general condition of impotence with permanent, physical alteration of the male genitals (e.g., 2.45, discussed above). As early as Book 1, Martial makes explicit mention of castration as shameful in the context of equating his obscene book of poems with a male body that pleases (i.e. 1.35), and in poem 13.63 the poet jokes about a rooster being castrated for his sake.<sup>99</sup> Many scholars focus on his Earinus poems as far as Domitian's legislation reform is concerned because Earinus seems to be a walking contradiction in Domitian's court,<sup>100</sup> but he makes mention of other altered male bodies in poems before the Earinus cycle of Book 9. In Book 9, Martial again brings up the castration legislation reform when he praises Domitian for protecting young boys and infants from being castrated by slave-dealers or sold by their own mothers:

Tibi, summe Rheni domitor et parens orbis,  
 pudice princeps, gratias agunt urbes:  
 populos habebunt; parere iam scelus non est.  
 non puer avari sectus arte mangonis  
 virilitatis damna maeret ereptae,  
 nec quam superbus computet stipem leno,  
 dat prostituto misera mater infanti.  
 Qui nec cubili fuerat ante te quondam,  
 pudor esse per te coepit et lupanari. (Mart. 9.5)

To you, highest conqueror of the Rhine and parent of the world,  
 modest and foremost, the cities show gratitude:  
 they will contain multitudes; to give birth is no longer heinous.  
 no boy cut by the craft of a greedy slave-monger  
 mourns the lost objects of his manhood, which were taken,  
 nor does a wretched mother give to her prostituted boy  
 a small coin which the arrogant pimp pockets.  
 Modesty which was not in the private bed at a time before you,

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<sup>99</sup> 13.63 refers to the practice of castrating a rooster young (= “capon”) so that the meat remains tender, a culinary delicacy still practiced in many cultures. This and the following poem (13.64) have word play with the term *gallus*, which has a variety of meanings and will be the focus of the discussion in the next chapter.

<sup>100</sup> Johnson 1997 argues that Martial downplays Earinus' sexual role by focusing on a description of his name as *tener* and that Domitian is regarded in terms similar to Jupiter as *pater*.

because of you has entered even into the brothel.

The two relationships in this poem are illuminating when we consider them in the context of the author's description of the relationship between himself and his own poetry. First, the relationship between the slave-dealers (*mangones*) and their slaves (*pueri* in this poem) is reminiscent of the poet-text relationship outlined in earlier books of the *Epigrams*. Poem 1.3 with its suggestive topic of allowing the book to escape the poet's shelves, erasures, and pen (*scrinia nostra*, 1.3.2; *domini... lituras*, 1.3.9; *tristis harundo*, 1.3.10) in favor of the crowds of Rome (*dominae... Romae*, 1.3.3; *Martia turba*, 1.3.4).<sup>101</sup> Martial categorizes his relationship with his book of poetry as a master-slave relationship in this poem, and the pre-published book itself is eager to be presented in the bookseller's shop (*Argiletanas mavis habitare tabernas*, 1.3.1). In this poem, the poet thinks the book is not yet ready to meet with a reading public: he still wants to maintain control over the text, but the text wants to be finished. Next, the relationship between the wretched mother who gives her young child money (*dat protituto misera mater infanti*, 9.5.7), presumably to protect the child from a pimp (*leno*, 9.5.6) recalls the poet-text relationship—especially before publication—outlined in poem 1.66 (*quas novit unus scrinioque signatas / custodit ipse virginis pater chartae*, 1.66.6–7).<sup>102</sup> Poem 1.66 is addressed to a plagiarist of Martial's poetry (... *meorum fur avare librorum*, 1.66.1). The poet may consider himself the *virginis pater chartae* as he protects his pre-published text from a thief who would sell it as his own. Luckily for both actual human boys and perhaps the poet's text, in poem 9.5, Domitian protects the *puer* and the *infans* from being mistreated, mutilated, and sold into

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<sup>101</sup> See Williams 2002a for a discussion of the references to prostitution and the poet as a *dominus* of his text in poem 1.3 and elsewhere.

<sup>102</sup> Johnson 1997 discusses the role of Domitian in poem 9.5 as the *parens orbis* (line 1).

prostitution. Poem 9.7 also describes an end to the unjust treatment of male bodies as a result of Domitian's legislation. The pimp reappears to steal infants from their mother's breast (*ab ubere raptus*, 9.7.3). Domitian also reappears (*Ausonius... pater*, 9.7.6; *Caesar*, 9.7.10) to save the infants just like he saved boys, youths, and old men in the past (*pueri iuvenesque senesque*, 9.7.9).

The really important thing about Domitian in a discussion on emasculation/castration in the cultural consciousness of early Imperial Rome is that he reinstated legislation restricting all castration while in possession of a slave who was also a eunuch: Earinus, who was praised in poetry by both Martial and Statius. Domitian's slave Earinus is said to have been castrated before the *lex Julia* was enacted.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, according to Statius, Earinus was castrated by Asclepius himself without pain with Venus in attendance. While this is no doubt an embellishment, Earinus has divine approval, not only from the emperor Domitian, but also from the gods of the pantheon, particularly Venus, who is considered to be the progenitor of the Roman people (cf. Lucr. *DRN* 1.1, *Aeneadam genetrix*). Venus is also significant because of her obvious associations with genitalia.<sup>104</sup>

### **Lack of Phallic Power**

The genre of epigram presents the intentional removal of phallic power as being equal to natural impotence indicating that epigram defines a man of this type as a non-man. This idea opens an

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<sup>103</sup> See Johnson 1997 for a discussion of the timeline. Garthwaite 1984 and 1993 have conflicting accounts.

<sup>104</sup> See Mart. 1.46.2 (*languet / protinus et cessat debilitata Venus*, suggesting the speaker's loss of an erection) and 1.90.8 (*mentiturque uirum prodigiosa Venus*, referring to Bassa playing the role of "fututor" with another woman) with Howell and Citroni; also relevant is that the phrase *res veneriae* signifies sexual acts, i.e. acts which stimulate the genitals.

avenue to consider castration and emasculation as a metaphor applied to the power of speech and literature in its various forms: spoken/recited, read/published.

Legal definitions of men considered by Roman law and society as “incomplete” are discussed here. The legal context is only one of many discourses—of course, not every Latin speaker always used these terms the way the jurists defined them; but it can be a helpful way to start. The general distinction seems to be that if a man is unable to produce children for whatever reason he would fall into the category of “incomplete,” thereby defining him as non-masculine. The most significant term used to describe a person who has male characteristics but is physically unable to produce children is the term *spado*. This term is commonly translated as “eunuch” because of the Greek term whence the Latin comes, but *spado* in a Roman context is broader than this simple translation suggests. The jurist Gaius defines *spado* in an early section of the *Digest* on adoption rights for married men unable to procreate (*Illud utriusque adoptionis commune est, quod et hi qui generare non possunt, quales sunt spadones, adoptare possunt*, 1.7.2.1). Marriage was often part of the definition of a “complete man” due to the importance that society placed on the legitimacy of offspring: whether or not a man could be a *paterfamilias* was of utmost importance.

The *paterfamilias* was responsible for perpetuating his family’s legacy and therefore must fit into the standard ideal for man and citizen. Any deviation from this obligation would challenge a man’s social and moral status. If a man’s social and moral status was brought into question, he would not seem to be a fit member of society. Being a member of society presupposed having control over oneself and his household. If a man lost control over his body, such as in the context of castration, he would lose the status that accompanied that control. However, if he was unable to produce children by some accident, he would not be considered to

have lost control over himself. The *Digest* gives the following statement on this concept: *Si spadoni mulier nupserit, distinguendum arbitror, castratus fuerit necne, ut in castrato dicas dotem non esse: in eo qui castratus non est, quia est matrimonium, et dos et dotis actio est* (D. 23.3.39.1). Crawford states:

“A spado could marry and engage in inheritance and property transactions because his disability was the result of accident or illness, rather than the calculated act of castration. **Implicitly, intention mattered: deliberate unmanning indicated that a castrate had been forcibly subject to the power of another man.** A spado had not, and thus, was still a man, even if he had been damaged in a way that might seem to undermine his claims within the *familia* structure.”<sup>105</sup>

The forcible subjection of one man by another man (my emphasis in bold) negates the innate power and control-over-self of the first man, lessens his manhood, and diminishes his worthiness of citizenship. Wherever the subjugated man has the ability to reverse this removal of power by his own action, he regains his social status. This is evident by the various punishments for adultery: forced castration (if the adulterer was an adult) and the *supplicium puerile* (if the adulterer was an adolescent).<sup>106</sup> Both of these punishments favor the husband retaking power over his wife and household and wrests the masculine power of the adulterer.

The term *spado* corresponds to the general idea of losing the ability to produce legitimate heirs, and this has a place in the literary metaphor of epigrammatic potency. Martial uses *spado* to refer to a variety of sexual inability, which also demonstrates the range (or elasticity) of this word. However, while the later definitions broaden the term to include men who are able to produce children, Martial’s *spadones* are never able to and they never have control over their

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<sup>105</sup> Crawford 2018: 44.

<sup>106</sup> Williams 2002a: 176 discusses Martial’s use of the term: “if a husband caught his wife in flagrante delicto, he had the right to take his revenge on her partner by anally penetrating him.”

bodies or their household. Ultimately, they can be compared to people who have a desire for creative output but are incapable of successful literary production (e.g. plagiarists). In the following examples, the poet chides men for being incapable of producing offspring by any means (even by deception), and these examples may also be interpreted by the reader in the context of literary production because similar critiques are used of would-be poets who have either a natural inability to produce texts or are forced to restrict their textual production in some way.

Martial juxtaposes the ideas of natural impotence with intentional removal of phallic power (i.e. emasculation) in poem 10.91.

Omnes eunuchos habet Almo nec arrigit ipse:  
et queritur pariat quod sua Polla nihil. (Mart. 10.91)

Almo has all eunuchs and he himself doesn't get erect:  
and he laments the fact that his Polla does not bear any children.

Within the narrative of the poem, the only person to blame for Polla not producing children is the *paterfamilias*, Almo. He is incapable of producing children, and he has apparently not made other arrangements with his household to perpetuate his family line.<sup>107</sup> Children in the ancient world were thought of as commodities to a certain extent. That Almo and Polla have an unproductive household puts Almo's status as a man into question financially as well as sexually. Almo's virile impotency is not limited, but seeps into every area of his life. He is not able to use a surreptitious method of surrogacy with his household slaves because they are all eunuchs (*omnes eunuchos*). An analogy may be drawn between Almo's unproductivity and the unproductivity of the *plagiarius*, who is incapable of literary production and so uses the work of

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<sup>107</sup> It is a running joke for families to have children who do not look like the *paterfamilias*: 1.81.



was born to you from your concubine Lygdus:  
smash<sup>108</sup> your son if you want to: it's not a crime.  
But this boy with the pointed head and long ears,  
which move just as a those of donkeys do,  
who denies that he is the son of the fool Cyrta?  
Two daughters, that one dark and this one ruddy,  
are of Crotus the flute-player and Carpus the steward.  
already your herd would be as full as Niobe's  
if Coresus and Dindymus weren't eunuchs.

The father of this household has many children, all described in detail in this poem for the sake of mocking the father by revealing the true sires of his children. The children all bear notable markers of other men being their fathers, which reveals Cinna to be an unproductive man. He is capable neither of siring children nor controlling his wife. Just like poems that are known to be from a certain poet and cannot be claimed by plagiarists, the children cannot be claimed by Cinna.

The pair of poems 1.52 and 1.53 are generally recognized as part of a set in scholarship. The theme of this pair and the others of the set is intellectual ownership. In 1.52 the poet equates the text to a slave with language of freedom and re-enslavement (*servitio gravi, dominum, esse meos manusque missos, plagiaro*). Poem 1.53 also uses terms suggesting ownership (*nostris, tua, domini*), but whereas the previous poem took advantage of the language of slavery, this poem shows a closer relationship between poet and poem.<sup>109</sup> The poetry is stamped with the likeness of the poet (*sed certa domini signata figura*, line 2). This phrase could mean a number of different things. Shackleton Bailey in his Loeb edition of this text suggests in a footnote the

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<sup>108</sup> A slang term that means to have sex. See Adams 1982: 145–149 for *percidere* (146) and other verbs suggesting “banging” or “striking.”

<sup>109</sup> See Seo 2009: 585 for a discussion on poem 1.53 and the commodified book.

inclusion of a portrait in the text, which is a literal interpretation of the line. The poet often makes use of text with double meaning. The language of the statement can also suggest a familial resemblance between the author and the text. In either case, the poet could lay claim to the book of poetry. Literally, this would be silly, but figuratively, the text is a product of the author in a way similar to a child being the product of their parents.<sup>110</sup> A mother of a child and the author of a text both endure a type of labor, but significantly, the relationship between poet and text is more closely elided with that of a father and child. The book being marked with a *domini figura* could be used to prove lineage or pedigree. Two later poems provide an interesting reading of this poem: 1.81 and 9.74. Poem 1.81 occurs later in the same book and overlaps in theme with poems 1.52 and 1.53.

A servo scis te genitum blandeque fateris,  
cum dicis dominum, Sosibiane, patrem. (Mart. 1.81)

You know that you were born from a slave and you agreeably admit it  
when you say, “master,” to your father, Sosinianus.

It is apparently clear that the addressee is not his father’s son because the son probably does not look like his father. The joke, of course, is that he also calls him “*dominus*,”<sup>111</sup> and therefore admits that he is the son of one of the household slaves. Poem 9.74 shows an example of a relationship between a father and son who are parted some distance for an undisclosed reason.

Effigiem tantum pueri pictura Camoni  
servat et infantis parva figura manet.

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<sup>110</sup> “The activity of engaging in sexual intercourse so as to produce a child is analogous to engaging in an act of poetic composition so as to produce a text” (Williams 2002a: 168).

<sup>111</sup> At this time, the term seems to be shifting in meaning from a “master of household” to a more general “sir.” See Dickey 2007: 85–86. Suet. *Aug.* 53.1 suggests that the standard form of address for fathers by the man’s children or grandchildren was *pater domine*, which Augustus rejected.

florentes nulla signavit imagine vultus,  
dum timet ora pius muta videre pater. (Mart. 9.74)

The portrait preserves such a resemblance of Camonius  
as a boy and the small likeness of the baby remains.  
His devoted father marked his blooming countenance with no image,  
while he was afraid to see a silent mouth.

In addition to using every possible synonym for “portrait,” Martial describes a loving father-son relationship in which the father cannot bear to see a lifeless—and significantly, speechless—image of his son, while his son (ostensibly) still lives. The portrait language here is the same as the portrait language of poem 1.53.2: *figura* and *signare* (9.74.2, 3).<sup>112</sup> The fact that the viewer of the portrait is the father may contain depths of interpretation beyond the scope of the argument here. Significantly, the *pius pater* has a physical likeness of his son at all even though the father decided not to commemorate his full-grown son’s face with a portrait while he is away from home. He has a tangible, material object to hold and be reminded of his relationship. This is not unlike the portrait of the poet in his book of poems reminding the audience whose poetry it is, and the relationship of that poetry to the poet: a relationship between producer and product, like father and son.

Elsewhere the poet makes declarative statements about the text being a kind of child needing protection,<sup>113</sup> and he suggests that his poetry has earned him the *ius trium liberorum*.<sup>114</sup> Martial awarded the *ius trium liberorum* means that his literary output becomes his physical (borderline biological) legacy. He does not require legitimate children to benefit from the law as

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<sup>112</sup> Howell’s commentary of Book 1 notes a theory (Crusius’) that a portrait of the poet may have originally accompanied the first poem of the book (1980: 101–102).

<sup>113</sup> Mart. 1.66.

<sup>114</sup> Mart. 2.91, 3.95.

a direct result of his literary achievements. The poet makes a closer connection between the two types of legitimacy in Book 10.

Martial equates fatherhood with his poetry in multiple poems in Book 10. Poem 10.102 is a short poem about two men: one is a “father” and one is a “poet.”<sup>115</sup>

Qua factus ratione sit requiris,  
qui numquam futuit, pater Philinus?  
Gaditanus, Avite, dicat istud,  
qui scribit nihil et tamen poeta est. (Mart. 10.102)

You want to know by what reason Philinus,  
who never fucks a woman, became a father?  
Avitus, let Gaditanus speak to that,  
who writes nothing and nevertheless is a poet.

It is a bold claim made by the poet that Philinus is a father even though he has not had vaginal intercourse before. The poet also explicitly states that Gaditanus has not written anything before, thus implying that he purchases his poems.<sup>116</sup> The poet reveals knowledge that would not be public but states it as a fact for humorous effect. In poem 10.104, a propempticon and an address to the book, Martial refers to himself as “your father” (*tuum patrem*, 10.104.15). The relationship between a poet and his work is juxtaposed to the relationship between a father and child. From the perspective of a casual observer, a poem may appear to be closely related to the poet in a similar way that a father and child are related, but there is a persistent, latent anxiety that the child/poem will be the legitimate claim of someone else, and this revelation will reveal the father/poet unmanned.

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<sup>115</sup> Williams 2002a: 168. McGill 2012.

<sup>116</sup> This poem also fits into the series of accusations of plagiarism in Martial’s corpus (discussed in the section “Plagiarism as Involuntary Emasculation”) because Gaditanus has purchased either the poems or the silence regarding their creation.

## **Castration/emasculatation as literary metaphor**

The poetic persona and how he describes his relation to the text is important to a consideration of metaliterary representations of the text. The poet often conflates his own body with that of the text (of most concern to this analysis), and he sets the text up as an extension of himself,<sup>117</sup> and the text functions as a simple means of communication between the poet and other people (including patrons). This discussion is touching on a widespread phenomenon in literature in general, whereby author and text become in some sense fused or interdependent. One small but not insignificant sign of the phenomenon is the common metonymy whereby we use e.g. the personal name “Shakespeare” or “Beyoncé” to signify texts whose author bears that name. Here, we are interested in exploring some implications of this phenomenon on the point of gendered identity and genital alteration in Latin epigrammatic poetry, with a particular focus on Martial's epigrams (as we say, using that same metonymy, “in Martial”). Characterizing himself by and through the text, the poetic persona is mediated to the audience. However, when the text is altered by another, it becomes something different, something other than that which the author intended. The authorship is put into question. Texts that respond to this idea of uncertain authorship with a claim to textual authority inform readers of the possibility of textual theft and demand deeper strategies of interpretation. The text needs the reader to determine authorship. When the text leaves the hand of the author it is invariably thrown into a state of flux. We see in

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<sup>117</sup> Hinds 1985: 14 briefly correlates the exilic and mental state of the author (Ovid) with the (described) appearance of the book (*Tristia*). This idea is expanded by Williams 1992: 182, 188 with a focus on the physical book mirroring its contents. That Ovid sends his *Tristia* to Rome in his place with form and content representing the author's physical and emotional state acting as a stand-in for him shows the book to be an extension of the poet. My analysis of Martial's text uses this idea of text as an extension of poet.

the larger genre of epigram (and Martial specifically) a response to such instances of textual flux: the poet or poetic persona responding to a misuse or incorrect criticism of his poetry. An example of this is Catullus 16 in which the poet responds to criticism of his poetry, and by proxy himself and his identity.

Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo,  
Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi,  
qui me ex versiculis meis putastis,  
quod sunt molliculi, parum pudicum.  
nam castum esse decet pium poetam  
ipsum, versiculos nihil necessest;  
qui tum denique habent salem ac leporem,  
si sunt molliculi ac parum pudici  
et quod pruriat incitare possunt,  
non dico pueris, sed his pilosis,  
qui duros nequeunt movere lumbos.  
vos, quod milia multa basiorum  
legistis, male me marem putatis?  
pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo.

I will buttfuck and facefuck you,  
Aurelius the bottom and Furius the twink,  
you who think me excessively immodest from my little verses,  
which are small and soft.  
For it's fitting for a pious poet to be chaste himself,  
but it's not at all necessary for his little verses;  
which precisely have wit and charm,  
if they are soft and immodest and  
if they are able to excite that which itches,  
I'm not talking about boys,  
but about those hairy men,  
who can't move their inflexible loins.  
You think that I'm a bad man because  
you read about my many thousands of kisses?  
I'll buttfuck and facefuck you.

Catullus' critics mis-represent the man because they over-associate him with his poetry. The conflation of poet/text in this case is inaccurate because the association that Furius and Aurelius make is that since the poetry is soft (*mollis*), the man must be soft as well. In the following poem, Martial tells Ligurra that he is not worth the poet's time and that he should bother a lesser poet.

Versus et breve vividumque carmen  
 in te ne faciam times, Ligurra,  
 et dignus cupis hoc metu videri.  
 sed frustra metuis cupisque frustra.  
 In tauros Libyci ruunt leones, 5  
 non sunt papilionibus molesti.  
 Quaeras censeo, si legi laboras,  
 nigri fornicis ebrium poetam,  
 qui carbone rudi putrique creta  
 scribit carmina quae legunt cacantes. 10  
 Frons haec stigmatē non meo notanda est. (Mart. 12.61)

Poetic lines and a short but vivid poem  
 you're afraid that I'll write against you, Ligurra,  
 and you want to seem worthy of this fear.  
 But in vain you fear and you want in vain.  
 Libyan lions attack bulls,  
 they don't bother butterflies.  
 If you're striving to be read, I propose, you seek  
 a drunk poet of a dusky archway,  
 who writes poems with crude charcoal and soft chalk,  
 which people read while shitting.  
 This brow won't be notable because of my brand.

Martial says that he will not write against Ligurra (while ironically doing that very thing). The poem is concerned with Ligurra riding on the poet's coattails in order to become famous. The poet will not misuse his "brand" (*stigmatē... meo*, Mart. 12.61.11) so that Ligurra will "be read" (*legi*, Mart. 12.61.7). The main verb in the same line gives the impression that Ligurra is working (*laboras*, Mart. 12.61.7) to earn a reputation that he wants to seem worthy of (*Et dignus cupis hoc metu videri*, Mart. 12.61.7), but the poet is the one hard at work, indicated by the use of *meo* in the last line. Ligurra is only able to manipulate his way into this poetry because the poet wants to reject him outright and take control of both his poetry and Ligurra's reputation. The poet lets it be known that Ligurra deserves to be immortalized in a dark alleyway by a hack poet, only to be read by people relieving themselves. The poem is itself the punishment for the man who would

get fame from prodding the poet to include him in his verse.<sup>118</sup> Epigram as a genre is at risk for being in this state of flux because of its brevity, digestibility, and recitability. The text is at risk from external changes by others who either criticize poetry, desire to be read, or lay claim to it in another way. The text is solidified and controlled by the poet. The poet expresses this risk at all stages before and after publication. Taking away a man's literary or verbal power is tantamount to mutilating his body in the Roman imagination. The subject of the poem is lampooned rather than praised by the poet.

### **Epigram as *Gallus Priapus***

A distinctive feature of epigrammatic poetry in the first century is obscenity. The poet makes an apology for his use of obscenity in the prose preface to Book 1, and as we have seen elsewhere in his text, he claims that his poetry does not reflect his life. The term *Latine loqui* (Mart. 1.praef. 13) refers to the poet's use of obscenity in his book of poems.<sup>119</sup> It is, therefore, notable when epigrammatic texts do not contain obscenity. Non-obscene epigrammatic texts are marked by indicators that point to the avoidance of normative generic conventions. The term *gallus* as a meta-literary term can be understood as a comment on authorial self-censorship. When Martial makes use of the term in poem 1.35, he is telling the reader neither to emasculate his poetry, nor to make the poet do it to himself.

Versus scribere me parum severos  
nec quos praelegat in schola magister,

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<sup>118</sup> Cf. Catull. 40.

<sup>119</sup> Compare Citroni and Howell ad loc. The phrase *Latine loqui* does not always refer to offensive speech (Adams 1982: 12) and sometimes simply, "plain Latin" (Adams 1982: 80; cf. CP 3.9–10; Quint. 8.1.2). Cf. also Mart. 11.20.10 (*Romana simplicitate loqui*, referring to Augustus' use of obscenity in an epigram) and Adams 1982: 123.



diction and meter.

Carmina nulla probas molli quae limite currunt,  
sed quae per salebras altaque saxa cadunt,  
et tibi Maeonio quoque carmine maius habetur  
‘Lucili columella hic situ Metrophanes;’  
attonitusque legis ‘terrai frugiferae,’ 5  
Accius et quidquid Pacuviusque vomunt.  
Vis imiter veteres, Chrestille, tuosque poetas?  
dispeream ni scis mentula quid sapiat. (Mart. 11.90)

You are satisfied with no poems which run on a smooth course,  
But those which fall on account of dips and high rocks,  
And also the thing held to be greater than the Maeonian’s poetry by you  
“Here in this place Metrophanes is the pillar of Lucilius;”  
and stunned, you read “of the fruit-bearing earth,”  
and whatever Accius and Pacuvius puke.  
Do you want me to counterfeit your old poets?  
I’ll be damned if you don’t know what dick tastes like.

Martial reveals much in the joke of this poem. The poet chides Chrestillus for not enjoying smooth poetry, which may be a comment on the meter of archaic poetry. The poet does not speak directly about his own poetry, and so the term *mollis* is not directly referring to his poetry (see introduction). He mocks the appreciation of archaizing style but includes direct quotes from archaic poets in this poem. This is no doubt a display of his poetic talent. However, he also mocks Chrestillus as a consumer of these texts, saying that he considers archaic Roman poets to be greater than Homer (*Et tibi Maeonio res carmine maior habetur*, Mart. 11.90.3) and using the possessive adjective and the vocative form of his name within the phrase (*veteres, Chrestille, tuosque poetas*, Mart. 11.90.7) to refer to these poets in relation to Chrestillus. The punchline of this poem is that the masculine consumer of manly texts must enjoy male genitalia, specifically

in the context of oral sex. The meaning of such a line is not straightforward.<sup>120</sup> However, if we consider that the poet situates his text into the hierarchy of literary masculinity, it follows that this poem suggests that perhaps Chrestillus should give Martial's poetry a try. Since Martial's poetry contains *mentulae*, Chrestillus may enjoy it too.

### Plagiarism as involuntary emasculation

Plagiarism is a threat to the poet's identity.<sup>121</sup> If we consider the plagiarism poems in the context of corporeal alteration and the text acting as a surrogate for the body of the author (precedent is poem 1.2), the text gives the reader a clearer view of the violation that takes place when an act of plagiarism is perpetrated. The act of plagiarism becomes an act of violence against the poet and his reputation. Some errors may occur during the copying process. The text is subject to the hand of another during the process of publication. The scribe may commit an accidental violence against the text by changing it. Martial notes this in poem 2.8.<sup>122</sup> To prevent such errors before and during publication, the poet's original, handwritten page must be guarded like an unwed girl: *custodit ipse virginis pater chartae* ("that man as father guards the virgin page," 1.66.6).<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> See Kay 1985: 250–253, particularly relevant is the commentary on line 8: "**mentula quid sapiat**: ambiguous: one meaning is that Chrestillus is a fellator... appropriate in that men who strongly approve of aspects of old Rome are regularly assumed by M. to be sexually abnormal—their tastes are a cover for their morals... But these words also maintain the theme of the archaising style: M. asks Chrestillus if he wants him to imitate his beloved antique poets, and adds 'I'll be damned if you don't know the virile flavour of their verse.'"

<sup>121</sup> Seo 2009 and McGill 2012. For a discussion on Martial's claims of plagiarism in the broad scope of pseudepigrapha, see Peirano 2015: 47–48.

<sup>122</sup> Fitzgerald 2007: 186. Martial is the first extant writer to use the noun *plagiarius*—signifying someone who sells off a free person as if they were a slave, or more generally a "kidnapper" or "plunderer" (Lewis-Short)—in connection with literary theft; see Williams 2004 ad loc., and n. 123 below.

<sup>123</sup> Seo 2009: 581.

While we consider the following poems from Martial's corpus, we will focus on the aspects of the poems in which the physicality of a human body (likely the author's) may be substituted for the body of the text. Disassociating a man from his poetry—at least for an epigrammatist—is like saying that he does not have a *mentula*. Stealing a poet's work or claiming as one's own is akin to unmanning him; by labeling the thief as a *plagiarius* of poetry, the poet reclaims his poetry, takes back his reputation, and unmans the *plagiarius* in turn.

There are two categories of plagiarism that reflect the attitudes of Romans toward bodies: claiming a text or claiming the author's identity. Martial addresses both of these concerns throughout his corpus. Both are damaging in respective ways. Plagiarism is emasculating for the author in a figurative sense: it diminishes his control over the text and therefore his authority, but when applied to the text, an extraction, excision, or addition of pieces, it can be applied more literally. When pieces of the textual corpus are removed, the book becomes like a dismembered or maimed body. When the poetic corpus is added to, the book becomes like a disfigured or polymelious body. Neither of these situations is acceptable for the textual corpus of the author in the same way that neither would be agreeable within a human body in ancient Rome.

### **Vulnerability of the unpublished text**

The poems of Horace and Martial about their poetry selling itself on the streets of Rome could be a metaphor for the uncontrollability of the pre-published text. It may be more than a representation of a realistic relationship between the text and the poet and the reader. The poetry is personified and expresses a desire to run off, but nowhere in the poem does it explicitly achieve this goal. The last line is true for any poetry (or any text) published or unpublished. Additionally, Martial gives to his poetry the means or at least instruction for a legitimate publication not some back-alley deal. Martial gives a glimpse of a possible—but, according to

claims made in poem 1.1, unlikely—negative reception of the text, and he tells the text to flee. Presumably, the text represented by this poem together with the whole book has been securely published. So the implicit joke of poem 1.3 is that these epigrams could potentially be (sexually) vulnerable, but they have been secured by publication and are therefore the penetrating male body.<sup>124</sup>

The threat of plagiarism lessens after the text is published, whether it is published in an informal setting: passed to friends and patrons as a *libellus*, or it is published in its final format: the book for popular consumption. The friend is able to protect a poem after reading it in a *libellus* and the general public would recognize a poem from one of the numbered collections. The author relinquishes interpretive control by publishing, but the text gains a certain level authority or canonization. The text is no longer as vulnerable or malleable. If anything is changed from what the author wrote and published, the readership will no doubt recognize a discrepancy. Inserting a poem into one of the books is also a matter of concern for the poet.

In 1.52, published poetry is being treated as unpublished poetry. A plagiarist steals poems that have already been published and tries to claim that they are his own.<sup>125</sup> By entrusting the text to a friend (an informal kind of publication), Martial's poetry is safeguarded from would-be plagiarists. In poem 12.63, the poet also calls out a reciter of his poems that have been published (indicated by *meos libellos*, 12.63.7). The poet makes a request to Corduba that his poet (*vestro... poetae*, 12.63.6) refrain from reciting work that does not belong to him. He couches

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<sup>124</sup> A similar anxiety is at work in poem 3.1, which is a pre-publication conversation between the poet and his text.

<sup>125</sup> Claiming another's published work as one's own could result in litigation. See Williams 2002a: 160 (especially note 44) for a discussion of the legal processes referenced in this poem. See Seo 2009: 572 for an overview of the laws regarding *plagium*, and Martial's appropriation of the term *plagiarius*.



This reference to the poem as a dancing girl appears to be the only reference in Martial's poetry to the published text as penetrable or feminine. The interesting thing about this reference is that the text, just like the dancing girl, exhibits sexual control over the reader. The world of the Saturnalia is topsy-turvy, so this may explain the gender-bending of the published work. The published/unpublished distinction is for the most part about gender. But, even when the gender deviates from the norm—as in the dancing girl simile—the relationship between the published text and the reader is about sexual control and manipulation.

Upon publication, the text acquires a level of sexual control over the reader. The text, just as in the analogy of the dancing girl in poem 11.16, has the ability to arouse its audience, causing them to lose control of their bodies' physiological responses (*o quotiens rigida pulsabis pallia vena*, "oh how often you will beat your clothes with your stiff shaft," 11.16.5; *tu quoque nequitias nostri lususque libelli / uda, puella, leges, sis Patavina licet*, "you too, girl, will read the shenanigans and jokes of my little book, will get wet, even if you are Paduan," 11.16.7–8) and giving them a desire to keep reading despite social expectations (*erubuit posuitque meum Lucretia librum, / sed coram Bruto; Brute, recede: leget*, "Lucretia blushed and set down my book, but she was with Brutus, leave, Brutus, she'll read it," 11.16.9–10. Cf. 3.68, 3.86).<sup>127</sup> The control that the published book of poems has over men and women compels them to keep reading because the book sexually stimulates them. The book pre-publication is personified as

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<sup>127</sup> Lucretia's blush and performative gesture of setting the book down with Brutus as her audience is reminiscent of Cato's demonstrative quick entrance and exit at the Floralia as narrated in the preface to Book 1, and of poem 11.104 in which the poetic persona chides his wife for her modest behavior and dress, reminding both his wife and the reader that women are preferred and expected to act differently in public and private spaces. Especially poignant is the final couplet: *Si te delectat gravitas, Lucretia toto / sis licet usque die, Laida nocte volo* ("If severity is alluring for you, be a Lucretia in the streets, I want a Lais in the sheets," Mart. 11.104.21–22).

having this same desire (1.3), but it is described in vulnerable terms.

### **Plagiarism by insertion or interloping poems**

There is a tension that exists in the published epigrams that talk about pre-publication: the epigrams that were once insecure are now ordered neatly in the published book alongside other poems of Martial. But there is also an anxiety that the completed and published book will be added to with another's work, impostors among originals: insertion plagiarism.<sup>128</sup> These poems are found primarily in Book 10.

Book 10 opens with an exhortation to the reader in poem 10.1 to make what they will of the book itself: to edit it as they read by stopping whenever they feel like they have had enough. This poem is not about skipping around, but rather it is about the reader stopping when they want to. This poem suggests a choose-your-own-adventure type of reading, telling the reader that they have the opportunity to editorialize (to an extent) their own copy of Martial's text: this book and even the previous books. Poem 10.2 claims that the author does have power over the text once it has left his hand. This undermines the suggestion of 1.3 that the text can get out from under the poet's eraser and pen, but the text does take on a life of its own, and if the reader respects the poet enough to abide by his suggestions for textual consumption, then the poet ultimately holds authority over the text. Rome gives Martial his readership. The last two lines are of particular importance to the solidity of the post-publication text: *at chartis nec furta nocent et saecula prosunt, / solaque non norunt haec monumenta mori* ("but thefts don't harm sheets and ages are

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<sup>128</sup> Seo discusses "three major strands of literary falsification: plagiarism, forgery, and defamation through misattribution" (2009: 569). Seo discusses plagiarism in the context of poetic identity, and my discussion runs parallel by incorporating the conflation of poet and text as well as viewing the text as a gendered/hyper-masculinized manifestation of the poet.

advantageous, and these monuments alone don't know how to die," 10.2.11–12). These lines, uttered by Rome in the poem, seem to assuage any previous anxiety about plagiarism expressed by the poet and his reputation fading into obscurity. The very next poem, however, has the poet describing a similar anxiety: one that will change his reputation, rather than make him be forgotten.

Vernaculorum dicta, sordidum dentem,  
et foeda linguae probra circulatricis,  
quae sulphurato nolit empta ramento  
Vatiniorum proxeneta fractorum,  
poeta quidam clancularius spargit                   5  
et volt videri nostra. Credis hoc, Prisce?  
voce ut loquatur psittacus coturnicis  
et concupiscat esse Canus ascaules?  
Procul a libellis nigra sit meis fama,  
quos rumor alba gemmeus vehit pinna:           10  
cur ego laborem notus esse tam prave,  
constare gratis cum silentium possit? (Mart. 10.3)

Words of common folk, a dirty tooth,  
and the filthy insults of a grifter's tongue,  
the sort of things bought that a broker  
of shattered drinking cups rejects for a sulfurous match,  
a certain anonymous poet peppers them in  
and wants them to appear to be mine. Do you believe this, Priscus?  
So that a parrot speaks with the voice of a quail  
and Canus strives to be a bagpiper?  
May a bleak judgment be far off from my little books,  
which glittering reputation tows with a bright wing:  
why would I work to be so distortedly known,  
when it's possible for silence to be settled for free?

Martial begins poem 10.3 with a word whose stem has been used to describe his work before: *vernacula*. In contexts of self-deprecation, this word refers to his own work as a native of Rome (*verna*, 3.1.6, discussed in the next chapter). There may be an intertext with Ovid in the

juxtaposition of the parrot (*psittacus*, 10.3.7) with the quail (*coturnicis*, 10.3.7).<sup>129</sup> The poet talks about *fama* as negative and *rumor* as positive. In the end of the poem, Martial makes two significant claims. The first is that he works hard (*laborem*, 10.3.11). The poet expresses here that work (not divine or any other type of inspiration) is what makes his poetry excellent and brings about his “glittering reputation” (*rumor... gemmeus*, 10.3.10).<sup>130</sup> The poet insinuates that poetic mastery does not come from innate genius or external inspiration, but from within himself. And perhaps this is why he equates his own body with the body of his text so readily. So too, the comparison of the poet’s text with children as a prolongation-of-self and as monetary investment becomes clear. The poet works hard and therefore deserves both notoriety and payment for his intellectual efforts. Another poem in which we see the poet demand his due for his creative efforts is poem 11.108.

Quamvis tam longo possis satur esse libello,  
 lector, adhuc a me disticha pauca petis.  
 sed Lupus usuram puerique diaria poscunt.  
 Lector, solve. Taces dissimulasque? Vale. (Mart. 11.108)

Although you’re able to be satisfied with such a long book,  
 Reader, up till now you seek few distichs from me.  
 But Lupus begs for the enjoyment and the daily allowance of a boy.

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<sup>129</sup> See *Ov. Am.* 2.6.27: *ecce, coturnices inter sua proelia vivunt* (“behold the quails pass their time in fights among themselves”), in which quails are too busy fighting to develop speech and use it like the parrot. See also Jenkins 1982: 16, “The quail was not one of the talking birds and the comparison between the two birds accurately reflects Martial’s view of the relationship between himself and his traducer.”

<sup>130</sup> See poem 10.9. See also Seo 2009: 576–578: e.g., “Poetry very easily stands apart from economic valuation because of its special claims: poetic genius and originality cannot be quantified, and the benefits it purports to bestow are incorporeal, like eternal fame. It is precisely poetry’s claims to transcendence of the material world that allow it to preserve the symbolic language of an archaic economic system.” Seo also notes an epistle of Pliny (*Ep.* 3.21.6) in which he describes Martial’s poetry as not being eternal even though the poet wrote them as if they would last eternally. See also Roman 2001 for a discussion of the monetary value of poetry as a commodity.

Reader, make good. You are silent and pretend? Goodbye.

The poet says goodbye to the reader who will not purchase his poems in the same manner that he said goodbye to his wife (*vale, uxor*, Mart. 2.92.3). This is an important concern for people who work in the realm of monetized creativity: people think that if something miraculously comes out of an artist's or author's mind, it must not cost very much to produce. Martial sets the record straight within his own text.

The second claim in 10.3 is that silence is free for someone who does not want to work for a good reputation (*constare gratis cum silentium possit*, 10.3.12),<sup>131</sup> whereas elsewhere silence is to be bought by the plagiarist, who also does not work for a good reputation. Martial makes a point in his poetry to not insult real people (see 1.praef.), but when poems are added to his collection by an anonymous poet (*poeta... clancularius*, 10.3.5), he no longer has control over the text on which he worked so hard. That this poet peppers (*spargit*, 10.3.5) into the text his own poem(s) shows that he has not written as many poems as Martial, and therefore has not worked as hard, thus aligning a view of this fraud with that of the plagiarist. But the previous poem claims that the thefts of (in all likelihood) the plagiarist will not ruin the lasting reputation of the poet. The act that dangers the permanent reputation of the poet is inserting a poem into the collection that does not align with the values of Martial's poetry that were laid out in the prose preface to Book 1. If we apply the analogy of the poet's body conflated with his text to this anxiety—and perhaps real-world experience—, we get a distorted vision of the book as a man with something that does not quite fit, an extra limb perhaps. Since the reader is warned of this potential phenomenon by the poet himself, they/we can be on the look-out for such an

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<sup>131</sup> See also poem 10.18(17).

occurrence, and question whether a poem should be in the corpus if it oversteps pre-determined boundaries. This is obviously more important for a first-century audience, but since the poet has recently claimed that centuries do the body of the text good, modern readers should also be wary of interloping poems or insertion plagiarism.

Poem 10.5 follows upon the same theme as poem 10.3. It is written as a curse for the person who wrote the offensive poem(s) that made their way in among Martial's poetry and would be responsible for destroying his reputation. Throughout 10.5, the guilty/cursed man is shown to suffer in life and death until at last, he confesses that he wrote the poem (*Scripsi*, 10.5.19). His crimes are described in physical terms (*laesit*, 10.5.2). As a result, he suffers punishments of the body: *erret per urbem pontis exul et clivi... oret caninas panis improbi buccas*, 10.5.3, 5. In the lines following, the poet asks that he be tormented by a cold winter, and when he finally dies, that dogs and birds torment him (perhaps to eat his corpse? A very heroic-epic image). In the final lines, a scene of the Underworld is described focusing on one of the judges and the tormented souls in Tartarus, who are each there because of crimes committed against the body. Fittingly, each of these punishments come from poets (*delasset omnis fabulas poetarum*, 10.5.17). Aeacus is a judge of the Underworld, who wields a whip (*loris*, 10.5.14), and uses it against the insulting poet. Sisyphus was punished for being deceitful and cheating death. Tantalus because of a physical crime: feeding his son Pelops to the gods. The Furies, who finally convince the insulting poet to confess, torment primarily those who have killed a family member, most often their father.

Poem 10.33 continues the theme of the "insulting poet" who inserts his work into Martial's text. The poet calls on Munatius Gallus to defend his poetry as a friend and advocate. The poet describes how to tell a counterfeit poem: if the verses are green with envy or malice,

they do not belong in Martial's corpus (... *si viridi tinctos aerugine versus / forte malus livor dixerit esse meos*, 10.33.5–6)<sup>132</sup> because his verses know to refrain from talking about specific people but talk about vices instead (*Hunc servare modum nostri novere libelli, / parcere personis, dicere de vitiis*, 10.33.9–10). The poet provides to the reader a striking image of physical corruption and decay with malice being likened to rust with the term *aerugo*. The materiality of the text here acts as a corrupting force. To prevent destroying the reputation of the addressee of the poem, the poet, and the text itself, the only defense is taking legal action (or mock-legal action) in the form of a friend as an advocate for the poet and his text. Munatius Gallus is as much a friend to the text of Martial as he is to the poet himself.

The poet suggests at times that the reader will see the poetry of others interspersed within his own and will recognize that poem as an interloper, a body out of place.

Quid, stulte, nostris versibus tuos misces?  
 cum litigante quid tibi, miser, libro?  
 quid congregare cum leonibus volpes  
 aquilisque similes facere noctuas quaeris?  
 habeas licebit alterum pedem Ladae,           5  
 inepte, frustra crure ligneo cures. (Mart. 10.100)

Why, dumb guy, are you mixing yours with our verses?  
 What is a disputing book to you?  
 Why seek to assemble foxes with lions  
 and make night-owls similar to eagles?  
 Although you have one foot of Ladas,  
 idiot, you run in vain with a wooden leg.

Poem 10.100 has a lot of imagery that we have seen before. The phrase *nostris versibus*

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<sup>132</sup> See also 2.61.5, and the commentary for this line in Williams 2004: 205 for a discussion on the rust-colored maliciousness. Cf. Lewis and Short s.v. *aerugo*: “Envy, jealousy, ill-will (which seek to consume the possessions of a neighbor, as rust corrodes metals).”

(10.100.1) calls back to poem 1.72, in the Fidentinus cycle. The image of mixing verses together like wine is in the same line. This imagery calls back to a number of Martial's previous poems: mixing good wine with bad wine, which suggests to the reader mixing of good verse with bad verse. But it is not only the quality of the verses that Martial takes issue with—though, that is of general concern to the poet (e.g., Mart. 1.16, 7.81). But the fact that this man is once again mixing things that do not go together and if seen together would cause confusion. It would also cause the text to have an internal strife. The legal context suggested by the term *litigante* (“to disputed” or even “to sue”) looks back to poem 10.33. The second couplet makes explicit that certain things do not go together, in this case, animals: foxes do not mix with lions, and owls do not mix with eagles. In the final couplet, the leg of a famous runner is paired with a wooden leg, giving the impression that Martial's poetry is represented by Ladas the runner, and the interloper's verses are a clunky prosthetic, which continues the imagery of bodily alteration seen throughout Martial's corpus thus far. The interloping poem unsuccessfully mixes itself into this “wine” mixture because it is a different thing altogether—like a fox among lions or an owl among eagles. The poems look out of place. So when Martial talks about poems mixing together like wine, he means poems that come from one author: his own poems.

### **Authorial self-censorship and self-emasculation**

Obscenity is a means of making the text a male body. The author incorporates coarse language to establish the text as priapic. The poet claims that the text is pleasurable for the reader because it has a mentula. He points out when other epigrammatists do not use obscenities (3.69). But what happens when Martial's text lacks obscenities or is altered in some other way by the author himself? In the next chapter, I focus on the play of using obscenities to identify the text in this gendered way as it applies to the structure of an entire book of poems.

In this section, I investigate the—usually cheeky—way that the poet uses methods of textual alteration that he otherwise and elsewhere disparages. These methods include: lack of obscenity, erasures, corrections, and anthologizations. When the poet directly describes methods of textual alteration performed by his own hand, we should not take him completely seriously. By taking into account the general metapoetic play of epigram, we can use a combination of poems to develop our understanding of how the poet presents even the altered text as an extension of his body or dissociates his physical (and moral) person from the text. Where the text is described as altered or lacking in some way, it gestures to the moments of meta-literary self-assurance that is more familiar in the text.

In the previous section, I made the argument that the poet works hard for his poetry: it is not inspired. The role of the Muses is not to sing through the poet. The text comes about as the result of strenuous mental (and implied physical) effort. This effort is associated with the control that the poet has over his own body, and throughout the text the poet states that he maintains a similar level of control over the text. The poet exhibits bodily control typical of a Roman *vir*. The tension between authorial skill and authorial self-censorship in its various forms, including corrections, is evident in other epigrammatic (or priapic) textual corpora. The *Carmina Priapea* contains a variety of poems, but two that inform my analysis: CP 79–80. Poem 79 has the poet boasting his physical (and perhaps textual) prowess in comparison to Priapus himself, while 80 has the poet calling on Priapus for help with his physical (and perhaps textual) impotence. This juxtaposition of self-confidence and self-deprecation is characteristic of epigram and can easily be interpreted as a joke against the poet's body or the textual corpus, both of which are at times celebrated and insulted in Martial's text.

### Lack of Obscenity

There are multiple books in Martial's textual corpus that are free of obscenities, but elsewhere the poet mocks poetry that does not have obscenities.<sup>133</sup> Since the books without explicit obscenity belong to the same poet, and would also be contained in the same volume, the overall collection is considered obscene. In the case of Martial, a smaller percentage of his overall corpus is obscene when compared to smaller corpora (Catullus, *CP*, Ausonius) because his output was greater in scale.<sup>134</sup> Therefore he need not be considered an obscene poet. In fact, Books 5 and 8 do not have obscenities. These books, however, are still contained in the same general corpus of the poet: if one poem is obscene, then the whole book is obscene, and if one book is obscene, then the entire collection of poetry is obscene.

### Erasures & Corrections

We have already seen that when a person other than the poet edits or changes the text, the poetic corpus decreases in value (at least from the poet's perspective). As well, we have seen the poet correcting external human (female) bodies. Authorial erasures and corrections, however, make the text more valuable and also bring fame to the poet. The poet has the authority to edit the text, but he knows that there comes a point when one should stop editing the book. The book itself does not want to be corrected forever (Mart. 1.3). The poet is capable of overworking an individual poem and the book of poems, a situation that he puts into the perspective of the personified text.

When the subject of making edits to his text comes up, *emendare* is one of the verbs that

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<sup>133</sup> See the next chapter for a detailed discussion on mocking poetry without obscenities.

<sup>134</sup> Mulligan 2019; Roberts 2015.



touched (*tangi... timet*, 4.10.2), which is suggestive of descriptions of chaste individuals or those who are not yet sexually active: primarily unwed girls. The boy in line 3, who is charged with delivering the book gestures back to the description of Book 1 as a boy (Mart. 1.3), especially evocative is the simple imperative *i* (“go”) at line 4.10.3 and 1.3.12. The Punic sponge (*Punica... spongea*, 4.10.4–5) accompanying the book will allow Faustinus to make erasures, which is indicative of the level of friendship between the poet and Faustinus. The poet, however, cautions against making many corrections if Faustinus finds the book disagreeable (*non possunt nostros multae... liturae / emendare iocos*, 4.10.7–8), and suggests instead that he make one (*Emendare iocos: una litura potest*, 4.10.8): Faustinus erasing his own name from this dedicatory epigram.<sup>136</sup> The poet sanctions this potential edit by his dear friend. He clearly trusts Faustinus with the pre-published text. The poet is neither as trusting nor as friendly to others who attempts to correct his text without his permission.

In poem 6.64, the poet lobs a barrage of insults against some nameless, bad poet who tries to change Martial’s poetry. The poem opens with a list of traits that cause unmanliness contrasted with the Fabian and Curian clans (6.64.1–2). This man’s parents perform disgraceful acts: his father uses a mirror to cut his hair, and his mother wears a toga (*patris ad speculum tonsi matrisque togatae filius*, 6.64.4–5). The man himself is married, but more feminine than his wife: she could call him “wife” (*possit sponsam te sponsa vocare*, 6.64.5). The next two lines have the reason for this lambast: *emendare meos, quos novit fama, libellos / et tibi permittis felicitis carpere nugas* (“you permit yourself to edit my little books, which are famous (lit., “fame

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<sup>136</sup> Larash 2004: 43 takes this to mean erasing the entire book. One other poem in this book is addressed to Faustinus (4.57), but this poem is not a dedicatory epigram, so even if Faustinus had erased his own name from poem 10, the reader would likely not be able to make the connection between Faustinus in the later poem and the blank space in the dedicatory poem.

knows”), to consume my productive trifles,” Mart. 6.64.6–7). These lines are full of descriptions of the text that involves change, consumption, and productivity. The first problem for the poet is someone editing (*emendare*) his poems without his permission. He has given himself permission (*tibi permittis*), but the poet has not allowed it. This nameless man does not have the privilege that Faustinus has in poem 4.10. The second problem is the taking or consuming (*carpere*) the poet’s hard work, represented by the somewhat oxymoronic phrase *felicis... nugae* (“productive trifles”). The next lines contain the accolades of the poet’s hard work (6.64.8–15). The poet insults his rival (6.64.16–21), and accosts him for making an ineffective poetic attack against him (*audes praeterea, quos nullus noverit, in me / scribere versiculos miseras et perdere chartas*. “Moreover, you dare to write little verses, which no one will know, against me and to ruin wretched pages,” 6.64.22–23). The threatening imagery of a bear (*ursi*, line 28; *ursus*, line 31) that the poet uses against this pretender at the end of the poem recalls the violent animal imagery of a lion attacking a bear but leaving a butterfly alone from poem 12.61. Another similarity between these poems is the poet’s *stigmata* (“brands,” 6.64.26 and *stigmatate* at 12.61.11). When the poet brands his rivals, the mark is permanent, not even Cinnamus can remove the mark (*stigmata nec vafra delebit Cinnamus arte*, 6.64.26). The rival who would change Martial’s poems should take head, but so too the fan who would ask too much of the poet.

In poem 7.11, Pudens makes Martial correct his book so that he can have a one-of-a-kind edition.

Cogis me calamo manumque nostra  
 emendare meos, Pudens, libellos.  
 o quam me nimium probas amasque  
 qui vis archetypas habere nugas! (Mart. 7.11)

You force me to edit my little books

with my own pen and hand, Pudens.  
Oh, how excessively you approve of and love me,  
You who want to possess one-of-a-kind trifles!

This poem highlights the tension between the poet's ownership and the reader's ownership as a consumer with the use of first-person pronouns and adjectives (*me, nostra, meos, me*, lines 1–3) and second-person verbs (*probas amasque, vis*, lines 3–4). The poem also sets the monetary and cultural value of the text into a tension with the words *archetypas* and *nugas* (line 4). The adjective *archetypus* suggests something special, whereas the noun *nugae* suggests something playful and frivolous. Martial follows his predecessor, Catullus, in the use of this word.<sup>137</sup> The word *libellos* also suggests an object with little monetary value, but perhaps a high sentimental value.

The name Pudens may be subtly suggestive of the meaning of the adjective *pudens*: modest, coming from the verb *pudeo*: influenced or restrained by shame or respect for something, which is not necessarily negative in connotation.<sup>138</sup>

### **Anthologization**

Anthologies contain a specifically curated selection of the poems that an anonymous editor chooses, and it may be this practice that the poet is guarding against when he outlines reading practices for his poetry.<sup>139</sup> When the poet suggests the reader pick and choose poems to read, he

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<sup>137</sup> Cf. Catull. 1.4 with Fordyce ad loc., Mart. 1.113.6 with Citroni and Howell ad loc., 2.1.6 with Williams ad loc.

<sup>138</sup> Names in Martial are often suggestive. See Mulligan 2019. Other poems with the name Pudens: 1.31, 4.29, 1.49, 4.13, 5.48, 6.58, 7.97, and 13.69.

<sup>139</sup> Hinds 2007: 114, "... anthologization itself constitutes the defining act of interpretation—a point by no means lost on Martial himself, who more than once affects to turn over to his individual readers the job of editing his books down to an appropriate size." Cf. 10.1 and 4.82, which I discuss in this section as an indication of the description of reading practices as opposed



removing material—an act that would create a whole new book. While the reader has the freedom to read however they like, if they begin removing pages or altering the book in a permanent way—akin to castrating the poet’s male body—, they become the dread *plagiarius*. The *plagiarius* wrests masculine power from the poet-text by removing or adding, cutting and pasting among their own poems. The *plagiarius* becomes a danger to the text and author/poet where the reader is a boon. The author/poet has not given permission for the “reading” practices of the *plagiarius* and therefore loses control of the text (over his *own body*?). Indeed, he explicitly tells the *plagiarius* that his behavior is incorrect in a play/move to regain his authority over the text. This poem demonstrates that the poet has a strong desire to keep his book of epigrams a whole entity. He may be responding to the general concept of anthologizing short-form poems. The poet codes anthologizing as a bad reading practice because removal and rearrangement of poems permanently alters the text and brings it outside of the control of the poet. Poem 4.82.7 uses the word *plico* = “fold up,” not (significantly) a word that means “tear out,” “remove,” or “cut (out).” Poem 10.1 claims that many pages end with the end of a poem and that the proposed option for the reader is to stop reading at that point (*legito pauca*, line 2).<sup>140</sup> The language of neither poem suggests physically altering the text, removing anything, or otherwise dislocating parts of the text. It does suggest non-invasive reading practices. And so comparing the reading practices outlined by the poet to anthologizing does not completely work. They should engage with the text by using their eyes and hands to skip or hide poems—physically interacting with the text in its entirety, not physically altering (specifically cutting) the text or manipulating it in some way to change its arrangement by the poet for publication. The poet sets reading parameters around his text but does not give permission for the text to be

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<sup>140</sup> See discussion on the early poems of Book 10 above.

physically altered.

## **Conclusions**

In this chapter, we have explored terms associated with demasculinization and their cultural context. We then investigated how these terms are applied to textual situations. Martial criticizes rival poets with diction that is meant to characterize them as demasculinized. His own text is constantly at risk of emasculation. Before publication, the text is vulnerable in a manner similar to vulnerable human bodies (women, children, and slaves). After publication, the text is decidedly less vulnerable; it is figured as a Roman *vir*. However, the text is still at risk of becoming overpowered and losing its *vir*-status. The poet defends his own poetry from *plagiarii* before and after publication. When his post-publication, well-known text is stolen, he is able to call on his friends and associates to come to the defense of the text as if they were defending a person in a courtroom. We have seen that the poet grants access to his pre-published text to trusted friends, who will not, in fact, alter the text of the poet. The relationship between the poet and his text is characterized as filial, in which the text is the poet's legacy and by which his reputation will persist.

### CHAPTER 3: *SCRIPTA MENTULA*: CASTRATION/EMASCULATION AS A METALITERARY REFERENCE TO THE BOOK

Martial characterizes his third numbered book as a physical body. From the beginning of the book to the end, terms and suggestive descriptions from its own pages personify the book. Such techniques of personification (not infrequently using the language of gender and sexuality) are found throughout Martial's oeuvre, but Book 3 stands out in several ways: (1) the fact that the structure of the book as a whole is delineated by strongly gendered and sexualized language of metapoetry at key points in the sequence of poems; (2) the complex imagery introduced by the phrase *Gallus liber* in the first poem and, as I will show, recurring throughout the book in significant ways; (3) the way in which the language of *gallus* interacts with that of *mentula* (itself a characteristic item in Martial's metapoetic vocabulary). In this chapter, I show that a reading of Book 3 that combines the uses of *gallus* and *mentula* provides the reader with the means to interpret the structure of the book as a cohesive collection of poems. In the first part of this chapter, I focus on the characteristic bipartite structure of Martial's scoptic, or mocking, epigrams. In the second part, I discuss the main parts of the bipartite macro-epigrammatic structure of Book 3. And finally, I conclude with a discussion on how the poet expresses the priapic nature of epigram as compared with other genres in the macro-epigrammatic structure of Book 3. I will also show that Martial's poetry in Book 3 engages with multiple other poetic genres, including elegy and epic, and texts by other poets with the result that Book 3 expresses in a particularly striking way a theme found elsewhere in Martial's poetry: a concern for self-censored textual corpora and epigrammatic competition with other genres.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> As we will see, in addition to *gallus* and *mentula*, key terms in my analysis include terms that

First, some background on the overall organization of Martial's books. Scholars have explored the interpretive possibilities of reading a book of epigrams both in linear fashion (with attention, for example, to juxtapositions or sequences) and in other ways (for example: "cycles" of frequently nonadjacent poems).<sup>142</sup> Many scholars have noted the meticulous form of Martial's poetry—both in the individual compositions and in their arrangement into books. Unlike the case of Catullus (who almost certainly was not responsible for the arrangement of his poems as handed down to us in the manuscript tradition), Martial arranged the poems into the books, particularly books 1–12, as we have them today with the probable exception of the *Liber Spectaculorum*.<sup>143</sup> As a result, Martial himself prompts readers of his epigrams to choose their own adventure while reading making the book as long as possible or as short as the reader prefers. The reader is encouraged to help shape the form that the book will take in each individual's experience, as evidenced by poem 10.1:

Si nimius videor seraque coronide longus  
 esse liber, legito pauca: libellus ero.  
 terque quaterque mihi finitur carmine parvo  
 pagina: fac tibi me quam cupis ipse brevem. (Mart. 10.1)<sup>144</sup>

One of the major issues in a discussion on the arrangement of Martial's epigrams is the original composition of the poems. Martial may have published clusters or groups of poems that were previously written or may have been written precisely to fit into a sequence. The concept of

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encapsulate the idea of a sexual relationship: *Priapus*, *cinaedus*, *eunuchus*, *semivir*, *sterilis*, etc.; and metaliterary terms: *castus*, *sanctus*, *mollis*, *luxuria*, *nequitia*, etc. Descriptions of an absence of sexuality as in the case of "chaste maidens" and "the virgin page" are also important to such an analysis.

<sup>142</sup> For more on juxtaposition, see Fitzgerald 2007. For more on cycles, see Lorenz 2004.

<sup>143</sup> Rimell 2008: 5.

<sup>144</sup> Other examples include: 1.118; 2.1; 4.82; 6.65.

publishing could take a number of forms, here meaning any distribution of text to one or more people. Scholars are divided as to whether Martial distributed the poems in smaller groups before publishing them into a book or not. White argues that the poems of Martial were first distributed in small collections (*libelli*) or individually as solitary missives that the poet then rearranged without regard to their original context and published in the books as they have been passed down in the manuscript tradition.<sup>145</sup> According to this theory, each addressee that is interpreted as a patron has received the poem that names them before publication, and that isolated presentation is more important for social relationships than the context of the individual poem as it functions in the book. The context of poetic presentation for White is, therefore, concrete. In rebuttal, Fowler maintains that “the poems are not logs of social relations, but texts which simulate and construct a social world.”<sup>146</sup> According to Fowler, Martial fashions his world, he does not reflect it. The poet builds fictionalized contexts in which the poems operate within the book. This poetic play is important for the general readership, less-so for patrons. That Martial, who boasts in the very first poem of Book 1 that he is read all throughout the world, is more concerned with success among specific patrons than success among his general readership is short-sighted. White also states that publication of the poems into book-form was the least important context for the poems in securing poet-patron relations and that it cannot be assumed that the patron would benefit from publication,<sup>147</sup> but a natural byproduct of patronage is the act of being celebrated publicly with poetry. The structure of the published books is another part of the social and fiscal contract between patron, poet, and general reader.

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<sup>145</sup> White 1974: 44.

<sup>146</sup> Fowler 1995: 219.

<sup>147</sup> White 1974: 48.

The implications for an interpretation of the structure of Martial's books have been explored in relation to styles of reading. Sequential reading has found favor over anthologizing (or its reverse in the case of the *libellus* theory) in recent years. Merli proposes a sequential reading of a book, which allows the reader to pick up on recurrent themes within a text.<sup>148</sup> Multiple themes occurring in the same book are possible and celebrated by readers who are able to understand many subtleties at once. Being able to see the poems in context, among their neighboring poems creates for the reader a cohesive literary experience. Fitzgerald advocates a sequential reading for juxtaposition, which allows for the observation of connections between and among poems that may not seem related at first.<sup>149</sup> Juxtaposition puts agency onto the reader: the reader interprets what they are confronted with.

### **Bipartite Structure of the Sceptic Epigram**

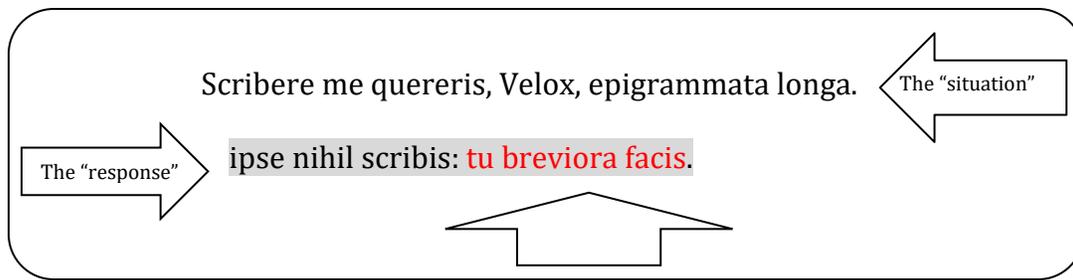
Now we turn to consider some characteristic features of the structure of Martial's individual poems. Individual epigrams have patterns that defy a universally valid description. Many of Martial's sceptic epigrams possess a bipartite structure. In essence, the first part sets up for the reader or audience a mundane or inconsequential event (usually termed "the situation"), the second part of the poem (the "response") plays off of the first part, and the final part of the poem consists of a witty remark that is frequently insulting in tone (the "point").<sup>150</sup> An example of an epigram with a clearly detectable bipartite structure is 1.110 (Fig. 1).

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<sup>148</sup> Merli 1998.

<sup>149</sup> Fitzgerald 2007.

<sup>150</sup> Williams 2004: 10 and Watson and Watson 2003: 29–31.



**Fig. 1. Example of a bipartite epigram (Mart. 1.110)**

("You complain that I write long epigrams, Velox. You yourself write none: you make shorter ones"). In this epigram, the situation sets up the focus of the epigram as Martial's poetry, but it shifts in line 2 to Velox not being a poet, and ends with the point that since Velox's poems do not exist, and he therefore writes shorter poems that he may appreciate more than Martial's own. The insinuation is ultimately that Velox will enjoy reading no poetry more than any of Martial's. In what follows, I aim to show that this bipartite structure characteristic of so many of Martial's individual epigrams applies to the structure of Book 3 as a whole. This is the only book in which a bipartite structure can be seen. Therefore, we see in Book 3 an example of Martial's experimentation in form.

### **The macro-epigrammatic structure of book 3**

The structure of book 3 is comparable to a structure characteristic of Martial's individual epigrams themselves. I suggest that book 3 is arranged like a large-scale epigram (I propose the term "macro-epigrammatic"), and I will point to ways in which Martial guides the reader through the book, with attention to his metaliterary vocabulary. As stated above two terms of concern to this analysis are *gallus* and *mentula*. The interplay of these two words gives the book its macro-epigrammatic structure. Additionally, the structure is bolstered by diction that is suggestive of male (human and non-human) bodies being altered. This interpretation of the architecture of the

book invites a linear reading (or even re-reading) of the text. In his commentary on Book 3, Alessandro Fusi briefly notes the division of the book into two parts and refers to the overall structure of book 3 as an isolated experiment.<sup>151</sup> In what follows, I offer a sustained, detailed reading of the book with attention to the vocabulary of gender and sexuality.

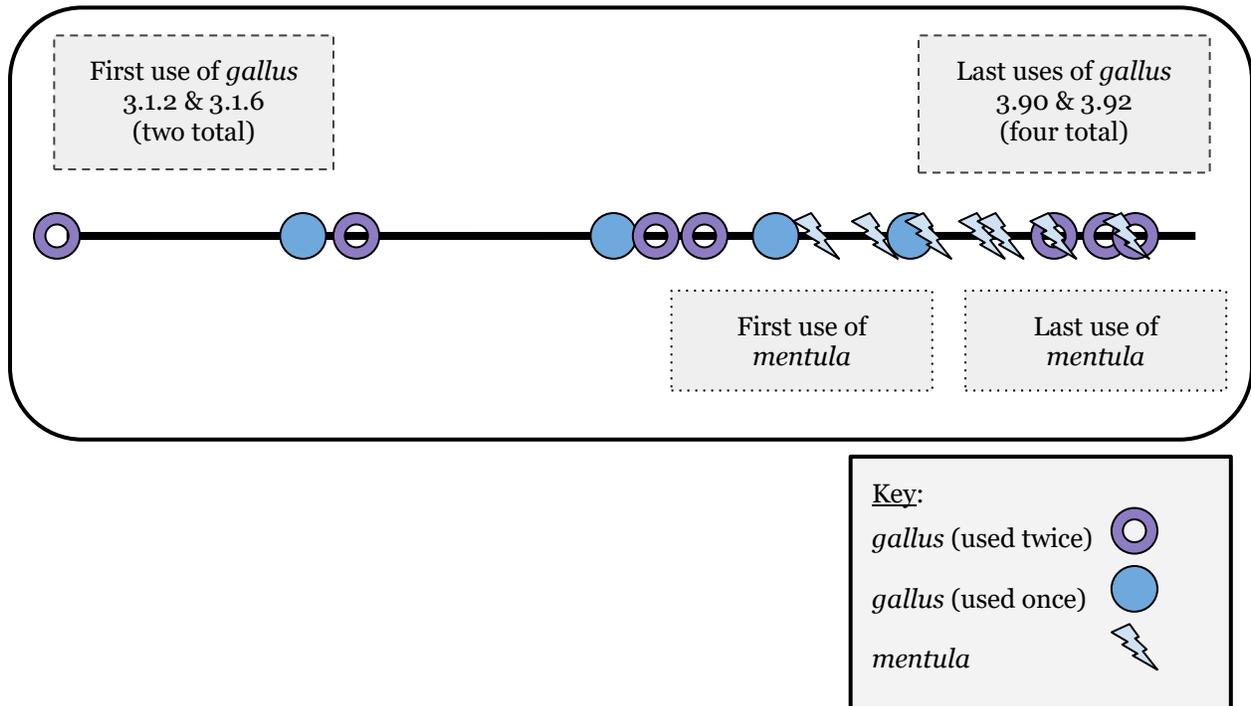
The interplay between the many uses of the Latin noun *gallus* and the few uses of the word *mentula* in Book 3 map out the macro-epigrammatic structure for the reader. *Gallus* has a wide range of senses, including: rooster, person from Gaul, a Roman personal name, and an emasculated priest of Cybele. *Mentula*, on the other hand, has one: it is a primary obscenity meaning “dick.”<sup>152</sup> Book 3 contains the highest frequency of the word *gallus*. When compared to the frequency of the term in other books, *gallus* begins to hold greater significance. *Gallus* and its variants occur eighteen times in eleven poems throughout Book 3 (Fig. 2). This number is more than double that of the next highest use of the term: seven times in Books 2, 4, 8, and 10.

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<sup>151</sup> “Il libro terzo presenta una struttura peculiare: gli epigr. 1–67 sono dedicati ad argomenti di vario genere, mentre l’ultima parte del libro (epigr. 68–100), introdotta da un nuovo proemio (68), contiene epigrammi dedicati quasi esclusivamente al sesso e caratterizzati da un linguaggio esplicito” (Fusi 2006: 63). See Mulligan 2013 for puns and structural play within Book 3. See also Watson and Watson 2003: 29–31, on structure in general and specifically: “The unusual structure of book 3 is particularly interesting. It falls into two clearly marked sections of unequal length, the first 68 poems containing no explicitly sexual language, whereas an abnormally large number of obscene words is used in the remaining 32 epigrams. The change is signaled in poem 69 (discussed earlier), where *matronae* are advised to discontinue reading. Martial then includes obscenities in virtually every poem thereafter, as if to underline the linguistic difference between this and the earlier part of the book. The difference is underscored even more strikingly by the strategic placing of poems on related topics in the two sections: themes treated in veiled or metaphorical language in the first part of the book are repeated in the second, but with the addition of obscenity, affording a notable contrast with the verbal purity of the corresponding epigrams in the first section” (30–31).

<sup>152</sup> Adams 1982: 1. Adams notes that obscenities such as *mentula* “have no other, primary, sense to soften their impact” and “are unusable in polite conversation [and] most genres of literature.” Adams identifies a small number of them in Latin (*mentula*, *cunnus*, *futuere*, *pedicare*, and *irrumare*).

As for *mentula*, the term is used seven times in as many poems throughout the book. Book 3 (equal with Book 9) has the second highest count of the term *mentula*.<sup>153</sup> Not only is the frequency of terms interesting, but the spatial interaction between *gallus* and *mentula* in book 3 suggest greater subtextual meaning is at play.



**Fig. 2. The relationship between poems with *gallus* and *mentula* in book 3**

As we will see in the following section, Martial uses key terminology at the beginning of Book 3—particularly poem 1—in order to set up a threefold expectation: this book is different from the previous book(s), this book is not “Roman,” and an expectation perhaps only created on a second reading: this book will not contain obscenities. These expectations are undermined after two-thirds of the poems in the book at poem 3.69, which thus marks the transition from the first

<sup>153</sup> Book 11 has the highest count of the term *mentula*, which is understandable because it boasts itself to be the Saturnalian book (11.2.5). See Kay’s commentary on Book 11 (1985) for a discussion on Saturnalian license and Martial’s defense of his poetry in that book.



Stone,<sup>156</sup> who suggest that here *gallus* may refer to the emasculated priests of Cybele. I argue that the text is indeed suggestive of this double meaning, and that this has greater significance in the macro-epigrammatic structure of Book 3. Within this poem, Martial characterizes the book with the adjective *gallus*. I suggest that Martial is making a joke by using the term to mean “self-emasculated” in a colloquial manner to make a comment on the use of obscenity in Latin epigram.

There are two major reasons for rejecting the interpretation of *gallus* in poem 1 as an emasculated entity: (1) the word *gallus* refers to the region in which Martial wrote the book, but this does not preclude the simultaneous interpretation of the term as referring to an emasculated person, and (2) when the word refers to emasculated people, scholars interpret it as referring specifically to the priests of Cybele, who have not yet made an appearance in this book, but this is certainly not always the case in Martial (e.g. 2.45).

The term *gallus* is, as we have seen, markedly polysemous, with a wide range of senses. Here, in the opening epigram of the book, at the very least, Martial is using the term in a metapoetic way. In Book 3, whenever the poet deploys the term *gallus*, he is recalling the opening poem of the book.

The poem opens on a characteristically (and perhaps ironically) self-deprecating note, at the same time emphasizing the materiality of the book which readers are holding in their hands.<sup>157</sup> The first word begins to identify the object in the hand of the reader as an object: *hoc* (“this thing”). The objectness of the book is reinforced throughout the rest of the line and the poem. With the second word, the one holding and reading the book is directly addressed in the

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<sup>156</sup> Paley and Stone 1896: 74, “There may be a joke on the unmanly *Galli*.”

<sup>157</sup> Roman 2001 investigates the materiality of the book as it appears in Martial’s *Epigrams*.

second person: *tibi* (“for you”). The remaining half of the first line and the following line describe the origin of the book: *longinquis mittit ab oris / Gallia Romanae nomine dicta togae* (“Gaul named for the Roman toga sends from far-off shores”).

The opening word of the book is *hoc*, which refers to the book itself, is suggestive of a dedicatory context, and is reminiscent of book 1 of Martial’s epigrams,<sup>158</sup> but is also suggestive of the genre of epic in that the opening word characterizes the main theme of the narrative. If the *Iliad* begins with Achilles’ anger (*menin*), the *Odyssey* with Odysseus himself (*andra*), the *Aeneid* with warfare and a man (*arma virumque*), this book of Martial’s poetry begins with itself and its readership (*hoc tibi*). While many scholars see a connection between Martial’s Book 3 and Ovid’s exile poetry,<sup>159</sup> not much has been said about the intertextual connection to epic.<sup>160</sup> The book opens with a journey: Book 3, unlike Books 1 and 2, seeks the city Rome from a distant land. The first line of poem 3.1 contains a Virgilian intertext—specifically line 1 of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. A closer look at the opening lines of the *Aeneid* will shed light on the intertextual references in Book 3 of the epigrams.

Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris  
Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit  
litora, multum ille et terris iactatus et alto  
vi superum, saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram,  
multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem  
inferretque deos Latio; genus unde Latinum  
Albanique patres atque altae moenia Romae. (Verg. *Aen.* 1.1–7)

I sing of arms and the man, who as a fugitive

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<sup>158</sup> Fusi 2006: 106.

<sup>159</sup> Roman 2010; Hinds 2007; Holzberg 2004.

<sup>160</sup> “Martial takes special pains to separate himself from the writers of epic” Swann 1994: 43. But Swann also shows how frequently Martial refers specifically to Vergil (1994: 45–46).

by fate first came from the shores of Troy  
to Italy and Lavinian beaches,  
he having been tossed about much on land and sea  
by the will of the gods, on account of the vindictive wrath of Juno,  
having suffered many things and also war, when he founded the city  
and brought his gods to Latium; whence came the Latin race  
and the Alban fathers and the walls of high Rome.

The lines are metrically identical with a caesura in the third foot:

(- u u / - u u / - // - / - - / - u u / - -).

The similarities between the lines continue but are ultimately subverted. The Martialian line focuses on the objectness of the book and the reader's relationship to it. The Virgilian line focuses on the content of the poem and the agency of the poet: the verb *cano* emphasizes the action of the poet without explicitly taking into account the position of the audience. Rome is explicitly mentioned in both passages. The phrase *ab oris* ("from shores") is in the same metrical position in both texts. These shores are not named in the epigram until the second line:

*longinquis*, which begins in the same metrical position as *Troiae*, could be describing Troy until the reader gets to the second line and finds out that the "far-off shores" are in Cisalpine Gaul, which is much closer. This can be interpreted as a comment on both the content of the earlier text and as a reference to the metrical similarities between hexameter epic and elegiac couplets—the primary meter of Martial's epigram. The metrics, the phrase, and the journey to the city of Rome working as a trifecta of intertextuality puts this book of poetry into competition with one of the most celebrated poets of Rome, especially during the Flavian Period. The Virgilian line was clearly well known to readers being among the most often quoted lines of Virgil in graffiti from around this period from Pompeii. Kristina Milnor explores different modes of writing and

reading in the context of graffiti playing on scattered lines of Virgil's *Aeneid*.<sup>161</sup> The use of similar diction to the epic would suggest a journey for the book in a similar vein to the journey of the titular character of Virgil's epic, Aeneas. The book's identity is decidedly un-Roman, but the association with the story of Aeneas as the founder of Rome told by Virgil, who is hailed as bringing the heroic epic into the canonical genres of Latin poetry may gesture to the reader that Martial is establishing his role similarly for legitimizing the genre of epigram. The journey that the book will make from Gaul to Rome is legitimized in a characteristically epic fashion. In a poem that is self-deprecatory in an epigrammatic way, the use of such lofty epic allusion gives the poem a tongue-in-cheek distinction that sets the tone for the rest of the epigrams in the book. The book may also be read as a *profugus* returning to Rome: not as an epic hero, but as an epigrammatic hero.<sup>162</sup> Aeneas is *fato profugus* and destined to lead the remnants of his people to a new home and found a new city. By contrast, Martial's book is not an exile "by fate," not about to undertake a journey in fulfillment of destiny or divine will, but instead comes to the city as a (Gallic) slave. This can be inferred from language used to describe the relationship between poet and book in 3.1, 1.3, and it is reinforced in the point (3.91) of the macro-epigram (i.e. the book), which will be discussed below.

The third line is dominated by the second book and its reception: *hunc legis et laudas*

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<sup>161</sup> Milnor 2009, 2014. Milnor states that most of the quotations are from the opening of books 1 and 2 of the *Aeneid*. She also argues for analyzing the quotes "in their own terms, as evidence of a mode of reading and writing particular to this most canonical of Latin texts in this least canonical of ancient written forms" (2014: 237). Graffiti writers of Pompeii were using the *Aeneid* in contexts where readers would have varying degrees of literacy. While their technique evidently was to quote just the opening words of a book, that very act can evoke the entire line certainly for readers with a higher degree of literacy.

<sup>162</sup> See also the example of the exiled hero with the phrase *ab oris* in Statius (*Theb.* 1.312) and Silius Italicus (*Pun.* 2.701–702) (*vagus exul* as a synonym for *profugus*).

*librum fortasse priorem* (“You read this one and perhaps you praise the previous book”). This *hunc legis* also looks back to the *hic* in poem 1.1: *hic est quem legis ille, quem requiris* (“Here he is the very one whom you read, the one whom you ask for”). As we saw in the previous chapter, in the earlier book, the poet’s persona is conflated with the text, however in this book, the introductory poem allows the book to stand on its own. The poet is not a *gallus*, but the opening poem claims that the book is.

In the final line of 3.1, Martial orders the words such that the adjective-noun pair referring to the Roman Book 2 are next to each other and are given a prominent place as the final words of the poem. The adjective referring to Book 3 (*Gallum*) stands alone, in the middle of the line—given its own kind of prominence because it is the final word of the first half of the pentameter, located just before the diaeresis. This is further emphasized by the alliterative pairing *vincere verna*, which comes right after the diaeresis. That a book is referred to in terms that characterize it as a household slave is not surprising because the poet uses similar language to refer to his poetry elsewhere, which will be discussed below.

This opening poem constructs its reader in pointed terms: *Hunc legis et laudas librum fortasse priorem* (“You read this one and perhaps you praise the previous book,” 3.1.3). Here too we can make a connection with the opening poem of Book 1: *...cui, lector studiose, quod dedisti / Viventi decus atque sentienti...* (“...the honor that you have given him while he’s alive and perceives it...” 1.1.4–5). The first poem of Book 3 similarly appeals to a careful reader who reacts and responds to (*laudas*) what he or she has just read. Since the *lector studiosus* is signalled immediately at the start of book 3, as readers, we can expect that the book will contain some clever structural cues. In line 2 when it is revealed that Martial is sending the book from Gaul, the adjective *Gallum* in line 6 seems innocuous in a first reading. But these early uses will

act as a signpost to the reader as the term appears in the text of book 3 again and again. The familiar reader will already understand that they must reread the book to pick up on subtle clues throughout. As the reader moves through the text, they will no doubt pick up on the aggressive repetition of *gallus* within the book.

### Elegiac City-Mistress

The poem's identification of the book personified as a *gallus* sent to Rome is suggestive of epic as stated above, but also suggestive of a subordinate relationship that appears in the genre of elegy. Rome is personified not only as female, but as a *domina*. This is significant because the *domina* is connected to descriptions of the beloved in elegiac poetry and holds power over the lover-poet. The word *domina* appears only once before this in Martial's corpus. In poem 1.3, as Martial tells his book that it would be safer at home unpublished, he tells it that *domina Roma* is a harsh critic:<sup>163</sup>

Argiletanas mavis habitare tabernas,  
cum tibi, parve liber, scrinia nostra vacant.  
nescis, heu, nescis dominae fastidia Romae:  
crede mihi, nimium Martia turba sapit.  
maiores nusquam rhonchi: iuvenesque senesque  
et pueri nasum rhinocerotis habent.  
audieris cum grande sophos, dum basia iactas,  
ibis ab excusso missus in astra sago.  
sed tu ne totiens domini patiare lituras  
neve notet lusus tristis harundo tuos,  
aetherias, lascive, cupis volitare per auras:  
i, fuge; sed poteris tutior esse domi. (Mart. 1.3)

You prefer to dwell in Argiletum bookstores,

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<sup>163</sup> The only other appearance of the word in Book 3 is at poem 3.31, in which the word describes Rufinus' lockbox's relationship to debtors: *Et servit dominae numerosus debitor arcae* (3.31.3). Fusi suggests that the *arca* is a symbol of wealth, the high number of debtors adds to this symbolism; *servit* suggests an idea of slavery. The use of *domina* casts the debtor in a role of subordination to the money-chest. The theme of slavery is picked up again with Achilles, who flees his master, in poem 3.91. The other instances of masculine *dominus* are 3.21.2, 3.82.17.

little book, when our book boxes have time for you.  
 You don't know, really, you don't know the disdain of Mistress Rome:  
 believe me, the crowd of Mars is too clever.  
 Nowhere are there more sneers: young men, old men,  
 and boys have the nose of of a rhinoceros.  
 When you hear a great "bravo," while you blow kisses,  
 you will go to the stars sent from a shaken blanket.  
 But so often you don't allow the erasures of the master  
 nor does my serious pen mark your jokes,  
 frisky book, you want to fly through the upper air:  
 go then, flee; but you were safer in your master's house.

In the poem, the text is personified as a young slave, who is eager to flee his master and leave the safety of the master's house. Rome is characterized as *domina*, mistress of the house, of slaves, and of poets. The term can refer simply to the woman of the household or to the intricate sexual relationship between a poet and his beloved. The poet as lover and the text as beloved (e.g. Cynthia, Corinna, etc.) is a concern in elegiac poetry. This trope is subverted in this poem: as soon as the book leaves the safety of the poet's house, it will be subject to the entire city of Rome. The poet figures his poetry as the elegiac lover who is tormented by the beloved, and she is a harsh critic. The interaction between the personified book figured as a slave and its poet as *dominus/a*<sup>164</sup> informs a reading of poem 3.1 in the context of its book. Not only will the book be subjected to the harsh dominance of Rome, but the book is not a homegrown slave (*verna liber*, 3.1.6).

I suggest that in poem 3.1 underneath the obvious overlay of meaning that the word *gallus* can and seems to take, referring to the physical location where Martial penned his book, is a nuanced subtext that personifies Book 3 in a different way that aligns closely with the secondary meaning of the word *gallus*: an emasculated priest, distinctly marked as non-Roman.

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<sup>164</sup> See Williams 2002a, and Hor. *Epist.* 1.20. For more discussion on Horace 1.20 and general literary themes of slavery and the commodification of the book (specifically in Martial 1.52), see Seo 2009, Oliensis 1998 & 1995, Citroni 1986, Hinds 1985.

The next occurrence of *gallus* in Book 3 is in poem 24, about a Tuscan soothsayer who is performing a ritual with a goat as a victim.

Vite nocens rosa stabat moriturus ad aras  
hircus, Bacche, tuis victima grata focus.  
quem Tuscus mactare deo cum vellet haruspex,  
dixerat agresti forte rudique viro,  
ut cito testiculos et acuta falce secaret,  
taeter ut immundae carnis abiret odor.  
ipse super virides aras luctantia pronus  
dum resecat cultro colla premitque manu,  
ingens iratis apparuit hirnea sacris.  
occupat hanc ferro rusticus atque secat,  
hoc ratus antiquos sacrorum poscere ritus  
talibus et fibris numina prisca coli.  
Sic, modo qui Tuscus fueras, nunc Gallus haruspex,  
dum iugulas hircum, factus es ipse caper. (Mart. 3.24)

A he-goat about to die at the altar for harming a rose vine was standing as a willing victim at your hearth, Bacchus. When a Tuscan priest wanted to offer him to the god, he told a rustic, country man by chance, that he should quickly and with a sharp sickle remove the testicles, so that the foul odor of the impure flesh would go away. Bending forward over the green altar when the man himself is about to cut the struggling throat with a blade and presses it with his hand, a huge hernia popped out with the violent rights. The rustic man grabbed this and cut it with the blade, thinking that the ancient rites of sacrifice ask for this and the old gods are worshipped with such body parts. Thus, you who were once a Tuscan priest are now a Gallic priest, while slaughtering a he-goat, you made yourself a (castrated) he-goat.<sup>165</sup>

He asks a country man to castrate the goat during the sacrifice so that the flesh does not smell strongly.<sup>166</sup> While the priest is slaughtering the goat, a hernia appears on his groin and the country man sees this and thinks that he should castrate the priest, which he does. The priest is

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<sup>165</sup> Fusi 2006: 236, on the nuanced meaning of *caper*: “che, oltre che ‘capro,’ significa ‘castrato.’”

<sup>166</sup> “Il comando dell’aruspice è motivato dalla volontà di allontanare il proverbiale cattivo odore emanato dal capro, particolarmente intenso durante il periodo di calore” (Fusi 2006: 239).

the one who told this man to perform the act and can therefore be considered responsible for his own castration. Martial makes a joke at the end about the formerly Tuscan priest now being a Gaul (*gallus*). This joke about the castrated priest and the meaning of the term *gallus* looks back to the first poem of the book and now conjures the multiple meanings of *gallus* in the mind of the reader. The focus of the reader is now firmly on the various nuanced meanings of the term *gallus* and the play in meaning that the poet can achieve. The next overt use of *gallus* to mean emasculated is poem 3.58, but there are four poems between 3.24 and 3.58 that have the name Gallus or a related modifier that bear discussing.

Poem 3.27 is a complaint by the poet against Gallus who often comes to dinner at the poet's invitation but fails to reciprocate. The poem highlights an important social interaction (and anxiety) between the poet and Gallus. Poem 3.47 has a reference to the goddess Cybele (*Phrygiumque Matris Almo qua lavat ferrum*, "where the Almo washes the Phrygian steel of the Mother (i.e. Cybele)," 3.47.2) and uses the modifier Gallicus to describe hunting dogs (*Gallici canis*, 3.47.11). These two lines are not likely related, but they are both describing rustic locations and activities, which is picked up later in poem 3.58. Additionally, poem 3.58 is set up by the address to Faustinus about Bassus and his produce because poem 3.58 is also about rustic matters and the address is switched. These names are only found together in these poems. Poems 3.51 and 3.54 are both addressed to Galla. Poem 3.51 is a self-deprecating appeal to Galla, but the poet makes light of Galla's offer to show the poet her nude body after he compliments her: he suggests that perhaps the reason she never goes to the public baths with him is that she does not want to see him in the nude. This is one of many poems in which Galla's stated intentions and actions do not align. A similar exchange can be found in poems 3.54 and 3.90. The monodistich 3.54 shows Galla demanding too high a price for, presumably, sexual interaction. The poet

suggests that it would be simpler if Galla just refused, a similar sentiment of confusion because of Galla is described in poem 3.90 discussed below.<sup>167</sup>

Two poems later, a pair of monodistichs (3.56 and 3.57) mock the poor quality of wine in Ravenna. This location holds some significance in Book 3: it is mentioned four times throughout the book, and elsewhere Ravenna is associated with Faustinus.<sup>168</sup> Ravenna is also in *Gallia Cisalpina*, the significance of which will be discussed below.<sup>169</sup> Directly following this pair of monodistichs is a poem that describes Faustinus' country villa to Bassus, poem 3.58—the longest poem in Martial's entire body of work at 51 lines long. This shows that Martial is experimenting with book structure as well as poem length.

Throughout the description of this farm, the poet passes over many farm animals including roosters (*galli*): *Rhodias superbi feminas premunt galli* ("proud roosters press down their Rhodian women (i.e. hens)," 3.58.17). The use of *gallus* in poem 3.58—along with other gestures toward the term *gallus*—will bring back to the mind of the reader the first use of *gallus* from 3.1 and the multivalence of the term. The work ethic of a *eunuchus* is described: *Et delicatus opere fruitur eunuchus* ("and the tender eunuch revels in work," 3.58.32).<sup>170</sup> Castrated roosters (*capones*) are marked with an emphasis on their sexual inability (... *coactos non amare capones*, "capons forced not to have sex," 3.58.38). The word *capo* is used twice in Martial's entire corpus: in poem 3.58 and in poem 13.63.<sup>171</sup> Since this poem fits into the bipartite structure

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<sup>167</sup> See chapter 1 for a fuller discussion on Galla.

<sup>168</sup> Mart. 10.51.

<sup>169</sup> Sullivan 1991: 31 notes the geographical connection.

<sup>170</sup> The only other poem with *eunuchus* in Book 3 is 3.82.

<sup>171</sup> Poem 13.64 is also noteworthy because it is also about *capones*, and explicitly mentions Cybele: *Succumbit sterili frustra gallina marito. / hunc matris Cybeles esse decebat avem*

of epigrams, the tone of the poem changes, and the reader now gets a glimpse into Bassus' close-to-town villa. Priapus is at home in his role as garden-overseer: *furem Priapo non timente securus* ("safe with a Priapus that does not fear a thief," 3.58.47) This Priapus is not afraid of a thief because the garden does not grow much making the duty of the guardian obsolete. This is the only Priapus in Book 3, and he is ineffective in this role, perhaps revealing that this book makes for a more effective—and even entertaining—Priapus. The joke of this poem is that Bassus must transport produce to his out-of-town home, which is not usually the case for villas.

### The Situational *matrona* 3.68

Poem 3.68 has been called a new proem to the final third of Book 3. This poem introduces a new section of the book that focuses on obscene themes, but the poem itself does not contain obscenities.<sup>172</sup>

Huc est usque tibi scriptus, matrona, libellus.  
 Cui sint scripta, rogas, interiora? mihi.  
 gymnasium, thermae, stadium est hac parte: recede.  
 exuimur: nudos parce videre viros.  
 hinc iam deposito post vina rosasque pudore,  
 quid dicat, nescit saucia Terpsichore:  
 schemate nec dubio, sed aperte nominat illam,  
 quam recipit sexto mense superba Venus,  
 custodem medio statuit quam vilicus horto,  
 opposita spectat quam proba virgo manu.  
 si bene te novi, longum iam lassa libellum  
 ponebas, totum nunc studiosa leges. (Mart. 3.68)

Until now, this book has been written for you, *matrona*.

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(13.64).

<sup>172</sup> The structure of Book 3 has been noted by other scholars (Mulligan 2019, 2014; Fusi 2006), especially in reference to the total absence of obscenity in the book's first two thirds, and the transition to obscenity which is marked by the figure of the *matrona* (Fusi 2006; Watson 2005; Larash 2004; Williams 2002a; Richlin 1992a: 11–12).

For whom have the inner things been written? Me.  
 The gym, the baths, the track are in the following part; adjourn.  
 We're disrobing; spare yourself from seeing naked men.  
 With modestly put aside after wine and roses,  
 Now Terpsichore is already drunk and doesn't know what she says:  
 But with no double entendre, she clearly names *that part*,  
 Which proud Venus receives in the sixth month,  
 Which the caretaker stations as guardian in the middle of the garden,  
 Which a virtuous unmarried girl regards with hand opposed.  
 If I know you well, you were tired and were already setting down  
 the lengthy book, but now you're reading all of it eagerly.

Throughout book 3 there are seven uses of the word *mentula*. The first use of the term *mentula* occurs two-thirds of the way into the book. This position is significant because this is the first obscenity of this book and because it comes after eleven uses of the word *gallus* and its cognates in seven different poems.

The turning point in the book thus comes with this address to the *matrona*, a quintessentially Roman figure, who is told to quit reading because there will be *nudi viri* (3.68.4). At the suggestion of not only “nude men” but in particular their penis (evoked by a series of periphrases), however, her reading practices change: “if I know you well, you were tired and were already setting down the lengthy book, but now you're reading all of it eagerly” (*si bene te novi, longum iam lassa libellum / ponebas, totum nunc studiosa legis*, 3.68.11–12).<sup>173</sup> This phrasing connects the *matrona* to the *lector studiosus* imagined in Book 1 and alluded to in poem 3.1. The adjective *studiosus* appears three times in Martial's corpus: here, 1.1 (discussed above), and 14.185. It should come as no surprise to the avid reader of Martial's epigrams that poem 14.185 contains a reference to Virgil's *Aeneid*: *Accipe facundi Culicem, studiose, Maronis*,

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<sup>173</sup> See also poem 11.16 for a representation of secretive reading habits of women as described in Martial's poetry.

*/ ne nucibus positis arma virumque legas* (“Take up the *Culex* of eloquent Virgil, eager one, lest you read ‘arms and the man’ with nuts set aside”). Martial’s metrical play with this phrase from the *Aeneid* is striking.<sup>174</sup> The context in which the phrase occurs is also important for a discussion on the characterization of readers. The poet points to the reading habits of a fan (*studiose*) of Virgil and suggests that this fan has more than just the *Aeneid* to read. The imagined reader of Virgil would also read his other works. That the imagined *matrona* will now read the text through to the end shows that she is expected by the text to be a fan (*studiosa*).<sup>175</sup> The *matrona* is not the only female being depicted in this poem. Terpsichore, Muse of the dance, and Venus, goddess of love (and mother of Aeneas), appear. These two goddesses exhibit opposite character traits from the ideal *matrona* but are still revered in society. The description of the goddesses confirms this. Terpsichore is described as drunk or tipsy, and Venus is proud. The goddesses are welcome in the realm of poetic obscenities. Neither of these traits apply to the *matrona* who is described as *casta* later in the book.

Martial would seem to suggest that the chaste *matrona* should not read poems with a *mentula*, but that she wants to do so, and in fact does. As we will see shortly, traditionally *matronae* would fall into the readership of Cosconius along with *pueri* and *virgines*, but by leaving her out of this list and by addressing her reading habits here in this poem, at a turning point in the book’s structure (and, as we will see, he returns to the theme of a *casta* and her reading habits in 3.86), Martial implies that his poetry is for her.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> The phrase *arma virumque* is twice used in Martial’s corpus: here and at 8.55.19, which is also has a mention of Virgil’s *Culex* in context. For a treatment on the metrics of the opening phrase of the *Aeneid*, see Weber 1987.

<sup>175</sup> Larash 2004: 27.

<sup>176</sup> See Watson 2005: 78–80.

Since Martial uses the phrase “*Latine loqui*” to mean “to speak bluntly, openly, and with obscenity,” presents this as a characteristic feature of his poetry (as discussed in chapter 1), and poses this phrase in near textual proximity to *lector studiosus*, the opening declaration that book 3 will be a “*gallus liber*” may also suggest a geographical/cultural contrast—the implication being that book 3, not a *Latinus* but a *Gallus liber*, will not be using obscenity, and indeed it does not until exactly two-thirds of the way through the book when the word *mentula* is first deployed, and the structural moment and interplay with the term *gallus* signals the book’s epigrammatic legitimacy, which was called into question in poem 3.1. In other words, poem 3.69 is responding to poem 3.1.

### **The “Response” 3.69–3.89**

Coming about two-thirds of the way through this book of 100 epigrams, poem 3.69 begins the “response” of the macro-epigrammatic structure. It initiates a “response” to the “situation” first set up in poem 3.1 and implicitly continued up until this point.

In poem 3.69, the poet mocks Cosconius for not using obscenities in his epigrams, a point underscored by the notable periphrases for the penis in the preceding poem, which precisely by avoiding use of the blunt obscenity *mentula* arguably draw attention to its absence. Things quickly change in the first couplet of poem 69.

Omnia quod scribis castis epigrammata verbis  
inque tuis nulla est mentula carminibus,  
admiror, laudo; nihil est te sanctius uno:  
at mea luxuria pagina nulla vacat.  
Haec igitur nequam iuvenes facilesque puellae,  
haec senior, sed quem torquet amica, legat.  
at tua, Cosconi, venerandaque sanctaque verba  
a pueris debent virginibusque legi. (Mart. 3.69)

Because you write epigrams with chaste words,  
and there is no dick in your poems,

I'm amazed, I praise; there is nothing more pious than you alone.  
But no page of mine is without luxury.  
Therefore, let mischievous youths and easy girls  
read these and an older man, but one who is tortured by his girlfriend.  
But your honorable and pious words, Cosconius,  
ought to be read by boys and unmarried girls.

Poem 3.69 is generally read in conjunction with the preceding epigram 3.68, which contains a number of suggestive periphrases for *mentula*, the blunt obscenity for the penis. Since poem 3.68 does not contain a primary obscenity, it still belongs to the “situation” portion of the macro-epigram, discussed above. Martial says that Cosconius’ poems lack a *mentula* (3.69.2), thus beginning the trend of primary obscenity that continues throughout the rest of this book. The word *mentula* appears elsewhere in Martial’s poetry (e.g. 1.35) as an emblem of epigrammatic obscenity and arguably as a piece of metapoetic code for his own book.<sup>177</sup> Martial describes Cosconius’ poems with the terms *epigrammata*, *verba*, and *carmina*—all terms that the poet uses in descriptions of his own poetry. The primary obscenity is a bit shocking for a reader, who up to this point in the present book of poetry has not seen a *mentula* and may have expected not to see one for the rest of Book 3. Poem 3.68 has signaled that from this point on in the book, there will be “nude men.” Therefore, the physical imagery of a male body is not surprising in itself. Since 3.68 has used its elaborate periphrases to describe the penis, the image of the phallus is itself also not new. What is new, however, is the use of the primary obscenity. Adams notes that obscenities such as *mentula* “have no other, primary, sense to soften their impact” and “are unusable in polite conversation, most genres of literature.”<sup>178</sup> There is a comparable sequence in Book 1, in which the first primary obscenity in the book (*futui*) comes as a surprise as the final

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<sup>177</sup> See Mulligan 2019; Williams 2002a; O’Connor 1998; Hallett 1996; Richlin 1992a; Citroni 1975.

<sup>178</sup> Adams 1982: 1.

word of 1.34, and then 1.35 responds with a comparison of the poem to husbands who are not able to please their wives without a *mentula*. The second of this pair of poems in book 1 ends with the notable line: *Gallo turpius est nihil Priapo* (“nothing is more shameful than a dickless Priapus,” 1.35.15). Priapus here is a reference to the genre of epigram. A collection of poems without a *mentula* should not be considered a collection of epigrams.<sup>179</sup>

To return to book 3 and its macro-epigrammatic structure: the first and last instance of *mentula* are of particular interest because the first *mentula* is the first obscenity in the book and the last, while not the last obscenity, is located in the “point” of poem 3.91, which I argue is the “point” of the macro-epigrammatic structure as well. Many scholars discuss the first *mentula* in this book at length, but do not spend a lot of time on the remaining *mentulae*.

As we have seen, Martial distinguishes the anticipated audiences of both himself and Cosconius. Readers of Martial’s verse include *iuvenes*, *puellae*, and a *senior*. All of these terms are qualified with pejorative modifiers (*nequam*, *faciles*, and *sed quem torquet amica*). The negative connotation of these terms suggests familiarity on the part of the readers with the social contexts of (specifically sexual) relationships. Using language that is familiar in the context of sexual relationships—especially as described in elegy,<sup>180</sup> Martial makes a bold claim as to his expected audience. In line 8, Martial declares that an acceptable audience for Cosconius’ poems would be boys and maidens (*pueris* and *virginibus*). The lexical cluster of *nequam* and *faciles*

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<sup>179</sup> Mulligan 2019: 121.

<sup>180</sup> For *nequitia* and related forms, see Prop. 1.6, 1.15, 2.5, 2.6, 2.23, 3.10, 3.19; Ov. *Am.* 2.1, 3.1, 3.4, 3.11b, 3.14; Ov. *Ars* 2. For *facilis* and related forms, see Prop. 1.9, 1.14, 2.21, 2.23; Ov. *Am.* 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.16, 2.19; Ov. *Ars* 1, 2, 3; Tib. 2.4. For *torqueo* and related forms, see Prop. 3.6, 3.17; Ov. *Am.* 2.4, 2.19; Tib. 1.4, 2.6. Synonyms for *nequam* in Martial’s text are *improbis* (3.86.4) and *lascivus* (Mart. 1.3, 3.86).

and *torquet amica* opens up the possibility of intertextual and specifically intergeneric play.<sup>181</sup>

The terms are unembellished much like Cosconius' poetry as the readers of this poem understand it. Martial pointedly incorporates into neither group the *matrona*-reader who he addresses in the preceding poem and whom he expects to be reading the entire book.<sup>182</sup> The general reader of epigram is expected to their interactions with the male body and the masculinized text.

Between the beginning of the response and the beginning of the point, there are two poems that contain the term *gallus*: 3.73 and 3.81—both contain sexual behavior that a Roman man (as voiced by the poet) would take issue with. The addressees in Poem 3.73 are Gallus and Phoebus.<sup>183</sup> Whoever the addressee is, Gallus or Phoebus, the poem highlights their sexual deviance.

Dormis cum pueris mutuniatis,  
et non stat tibi, Galle, quod stat illis.  
quid vis me, rogo, Phoebus, suspicari?  
mollem credere te virum volebam,  
sed rumor negat esse te cinaedum. (3.73)

You sleep with well-endowed boys,  
and it doesn't stand for you, Gallus, that which stands for them.  
I ask: Phoebus, what do you want me to suspect?  
I was wanting to believe you a soft man,  
but rumor denies that you're a bottom.

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<sup>181</sup> Compare Horace, *Odes* 3.1.2–4 (*carmina non prius / audita musarum sacerdos / virginibus puerisque canto*).

<sup>182</sup> Noted by Watson 2005: 78. Additionally, Watson notes that *matronae* are included in a list (5.2.1–2) of appropriate readers for Book 5, which is free of obscenities.

<sup>183</sup> It is unclear whether either or both names are original because there is a problem in the manuscript tradition. The archetype *B*<sup>A</sup> and its manuscript family ( $\beta$ ) reads *Phoebus* in line 2, while the archetype *C*<sup>A</sup> and its manuscript family ( $\gamma$ ) reads *Galle* in line 2. This poem may therefore be an insult to Phoebus alone. I have preserved the reading in *C*<sup>A</sup> for the simple reason that the oldest extant manuscript (Codex Edinburgensis, ninth century) gives the name Gallus in line 2.

The first line sets up the general situation by stating a fact, but the expectations surrounding this fact are subverted quickly in the next line. Gallus sleeps with *mutuniati* boys, and in the next line he is described as being impotent. The poet then asks Phoebus what he is supposed to expect. The final two lines of the poem delivers explicitly the real problem with Gallus—not only that he is taking on a passive role but also that he is taking part in the *most* passive role. The suggestion is that he is performing oral sex on the *pueri mutuniati*.

The next poem that uses the term *gallus* is 3.81.

Quid cum femineo tibi, Baetice Galle, barathro?  
 haec debet medios lambere lingua viros.  
 abscisa est quare Samia tibi mentula testa,  
 si tibi tam gratus, Baetice, cunnus erat?  
 castrandum caput est: nam sis licet inguine Gallus,  
 sacra tamen Cybeles decipis: ore vir es.

What could you want with a woman's hole, Baeticus the *Gallus*?  
 This tongue ought to lick men in the middle.  
 Why cut off your dick with a Samian sherd,  
 if you were so into cunt, Baeticus?  
 Your head should be cut off: for even though you're a *Gallus* with your groin,  
 but you still cheat the rites of Cybele: with your mouth you're a man.

In this poem, Baeticus is described as *Gallus*, and explicit references to his priestly role in the cult of Cybele are made. This poem itself sets up expectations in the reader of the sexual preferences of a self-emasculated priest of Cybele and overturns that expectation. The poet describes the role that he ought to be participating in, which is performing oral sex on men. However, Baeticus is described as a cunnilingus in the poem. The punchline of the poem is that he is a man with his mouth (*ore vir es*, 3.81.6).<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> See also poem 6.26 for a similar joke about behavior that may put oneself at risk. The poem is about a man who *periclitatur capite* (a legal phrase meaning “at risk of losing his citizen rights”), and the joke is based on a pun: his head is at risk because, since he can no longer have erections, he now performs oral sex. See Grewing 1997 ad loc.

In the last line of the poem, the name of the goddess Cybele is used explicitly thus framing the poem (*galle* in the first line, *Cybeles* in the last) and structuring its final couplet (*gallus* as the last word of the hexameter, “*Cybeles*” as the last word of the first half of the pentameter). Poem 3.81 is one of two poems in book 3 that names this goddess and associates her with the term *gallus*, whether directly or indirectly.<sup>185</sup> This poem associates the name Cybele with the term *gallus* directly in that it uses *gallus* twice to modify Baeticus and describe his associations with the goddess and, ostensibly, describe his sexual preferences with the first *gallus* only to undercut them with the second *gallus* in the poem.

While it has been universally observed that the *casta* from the first and third lines in poem 3.86 is the same person as the *matrona* in poem 3.68, the parallel structure of these poems provide a point of reference for the gendering of the text and reader.

Ne legeres partem lascivi, casta, libelli,  
 praedixi et monui: tu tamen, ecce, legis.  
 sed si Panniculum spectas et, casta, Latinum,—  
 non sunt haec mimis improbiora—lege. (Mart. 3.86)

Don't read this part of the frisky book, chaste lady,  
 I proclaimed and I warned: but look here, you read it nevertheless.  
 But if you watch Panniculus and Latinus, chaste lady,—  
 these are not excessively outrageous—read on.

The word *casta* appears in the first line in 3.86 and in the same metrical position in the line as the *matrona* of 3.68.1. The word is also repeated once more in 3.86 (line 3) and again occupies the same metrical space as above. The first *casta* is juxtaposed to the word *libellus* denoting an intimate connection between reader and book. The complementary even lines of the couplets end in the action that the *casta* (*matrona*) is doing (line 2) and encouraged to do (line 4), which is to continue reading Martial's book. In between the action that the *matrona* carries out and the

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<sup>185</sup> The other is 3.91 discussed below.

descriptions of both the book and herself, is couched the idea that the act of reading epigram (and specifically Martial's) is better than watching a mime performance. So too line 4 makes clear that epigram is not the lowest form of entertainment in Rome: *non sunt haec mimis improbiora* ("these are not excessively outrageous," 3.86.4). The adjective *improbis* is synonymous with *nequam* ("naughty"), discussed below. That these epigrams are a little frisky, but not overly so, is key to understanding the book's relationship to its poet, readership, and Rome. Martial is making the point that the epigrammatic genre is better for a *matrona* to engage with materially because Martial's Book 3 is more Roman than he would first have readers believe.

This means that Martial not only encourages *matronae* to read his obscene poems but expects it. In the context of Book 3 and the analysis above, I propose that this poetry is for the Roman matron not simply because she is familiar with sexuality or because Martial puts the decision to continue reading his book in her hands,<sup>186</sup> but because the book is a Roman entity specifically meant to be enjoyed and appreciated by Roman people. The dubious identity of the book from poem 3.1 comes back to mind. When Martial described his book of poems as *gallus* in 3.1, he categorizes the book as non-Roman, but I suggest that this is part of the joke comprising the entire book. Only when readers reach certain stages within book 3 do they realize that Martial identifies the book as that which it should be: a collection of Roman epigrams.

When next we see the name Cybele, she appears in a poem without the term *gallus*. It however is surrounded by other characteristic descriptions of her eunuchs in general and associated with her cult. In this poem the priests of Cybele are described with modified or qualified versions of the term *vir*. Even though poem 3.91 does not use the term *gallus*, Martial

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<sup>186</sup> For Martial protecting himself by transferring blame from himself to the *matrona*, see Watson 2005: 79.

uses a familiar structuring tactic to signal the association of the term with Cybele and the unique quality of self-emasulation that marked her priests. The poems before and after this poem are monodistichs that bookmark the priests of Cybele poem each with two uses of the name *gallus*.

### The “Point” 3.90–100

The “point” begins at poems 3.90–3.92. The final uses of the stem *Gall-* in Book 3 occur in poems 90 and 92, and in the intervening poem 91 we encounter *mentula* for the last time in this book; and the interplay between these two words seals the macro-epigrammatic structure of this book. There are more obscenities after this poem, but of greatest concern to this analysis is the word *mentula* because of the direct association with emasculation that is expressed by the use of *gallus* throughout the book. The interplay of these two words gives the book its macro-epigrammatic structure. While poem 3.91 does not explicitly use the term *gallus* to describe the priests of Cybele, the poem is bookended by two others that have seemingly innocuous uses of the term in the forms of the proper names Gallus and Galla. Now let’s consider the text of 3.90–92. These three poems operate as a triptych and are therefore quoted together here.

Volt, non volt dare Galla mihi, nec dicere possum,  
quod volt et non volt, quid sibi Galla velit.

Cum peteret patriae missicius arva Ravennae,  
semiviro Cybeles cum grege iunxit iter.  
huic comes haerebat domini fugitivus Achilles  
insignis forma nequitiaque puer.  
Hoc steriles sensere viri: qua parte cubaret  
quaerunt. Sed tacitos sensit et ille dolos:  
mentitur, credunt. Somni post vina petuntur:  
continuo ferrum noxia turba rapit  
exciduntque senem, spondae qui parte iacebat;  
namque puer pluteo vindice tutus erat.  
Subpositam quondam fama est pro virgine cervam,  
at nunc pro cervo mentula subposita est.

Vt patiar moechum rogat uxor, Galle, sed unum.  
Huic ego non oculos eruo, Galle, duos? (Mart. 3.90–92)

Galla wants and does not want to give it to me,  
but because she does and does not want to, I can't tell what it is Galla wants.

When heading for the fields of Ravenna, his fatherland,  
a man discharged from military service  
met up with a half-man crowd of Cybele on his way.  
A companion was close by his side:  
the boy Achilles, fleeing his master  
and known for his beauty and lewdness.  
The sterile men saw him and asked which part of the bed he slept on.  
But he saw their silent tricks.  
He lies to them, and they believe him.  
Sleep was sought after drinking.  
Immediately the violent crowd take up a blade  
and hew down (i.e. emasculate) the old man,  
who was lying on that part of the bed;  
for the boy was safe on the back of the bed for protection.  
Once there was a doe substituted for a maiden,  
but now a dick has been substituted for a buck.

My wife asks that I allow an adulterer, Gallus, but one alone.  
Do I not tear out his two eyes, Gallus?

Poems 3.90 and 3.92 look back to all previous *galli*. I suggest that these names will recall the theme of emasculation recurring throughout book 3. When the reader comes to poem 3.91, they will be ready for a continuation of the metaliterary references of the book involving the terms *gallus* and *mentula*. The use of the obscene word *mentula* strategically placed throughout book 3 prompts the reader to view the narrative of poem 3.91 with the metaliterary description of the epigrams as a male human body. Readers aware of these dynamics will see the interplay between these terms in their many contexts thus far within this narrative.

The poem itself describes the priests of Cybele in familiar terms at lines 2 and 5: *semiviro Cybeles cum grege* (“with a half-man crowd of Cybele,” line 2); *hoc steriles sensere viri...*

(“when the sterile men perceived this,” line 5).<sup>187</sup> In this poem the priests of Cybele are described with modified or qualified versions of the term *vir*. They are identified as non-male and as non-Roman. The epigram that contains these priests is in some important ways more masculine, more Roman than they are. By the time we get to the end of Book 3, the poet’s *gallus liber* announced in 3.1 is no longer as un-Roman and emasculated as that opening poem would have readers believe.

The *lector studiosus* invoked in the first poem of the book will see the interplay between this narrative and the genres of poetry in competition at this time: epic and epigram, especially now that we have connected the epic journey of poem 3.1. The epic journey is echoed in poem 3.91 with the soldier returning to his fatherland (i.e. *nostos*), and the reader gets another nod to Ravenna, but the homeward journey is in the opposite direction to the traditional epic hero. This former soldier travels into *Gallia Cisalpina* travelling away from instead of toward Rome. That the old soldier is also rendered emasculate by a band of Cybele’s priests (i.e. *galli*) suggests continued play on the name of the region, specifically the word *Gallia*. I interpret the old soldier as the genre of epic, whereas the clever youth—ironically named Achilles—represents the genre of epigram. The description of Achilles has subtle nods to the poet’s description of his text. The youth is characterized with *nequitia* (line 4). The term is used elsewhere by the poet to describe his poetry and those attracted to it.<sup>188</sup> As has been noted earlier in this chapter, the personified book in Martial’s poetry is often figured as a slave who desires to flee his master. Rome as *domina* in 3.1 connects Book 3’s travels to 1.3, in which the poet as *dominus* tells the book to

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<sup>187</sup> For a discussion of terms synonymous to *gallus*, see the previous chapter. Parallels include: Catull. 63.69; Mart. 9.7.8, 13.64.1.

<sup>188</sup> See discussion above on *nequam* at 3.69.5.

flee the safety of the poet's house if it must. This imagery is echoed in poem 3.91 with Achilles as *domini fugitivus* (line 3). Possibly the most idealized state of Martial's epigrams is the poems being recited in public without their form changed (textual alteration discussed in previous chapter). In poem 3.91, epic (described as a discharged old soldier) is emasculated and therefore loses its potency, epigram however, preserves its *mentula* and its power as a genre.<sup>189</sup> The youth's clever preservation of his *mentula* in the poem does not go unnoticed. The youth is a stand-in for the genre of epigram.<sup>190</sup> The scene of unexpected emasculation also is reminiscent of the earlier poem 3.24.<sup>191</sup>

Poems 3.24 and 3.91 have a lot in common as far as general themes and specific content.<sup>192</sup> Notably, both poems include the physical act of emasculation/castration with a knife under dubious circumstances in connection with themes of mistaken identity. In poem 3.24, a country bumpkin castrates a Tuscan priest during an animal sacrifice. In poem 3.91, the priests of Cybele try to emasculate the beautiful, clever youth, Achilles, perhaps so that he will join their group, but instead are tricked into castrating the retired soldier he is travelling with. In both poems the person being castrated is caught unawares and is, no doubt, surprised by the act, as

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<sup>189</sup> Mart. 11.90 is also about an effeminate man, who enjoys serious poetry.

<sup>190</sup> The name is ironic because Achilles is close in spelling to Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad*. Martial's own name—"of Mars," referring to the month in which he was born—is suggestive of heroic epic, which often prominently features war (*Iliad*, *Aeneid* 7–12, as well as Flavian epic). Martial points to this etymology in a poem on the occasion of his birthday (12.60).

<sup>191</sup> "Una vicenda che si conclude con una castrazione è narrata in questo libro anche nell'epigr. 91, dove la vittima è un soldato congedato di Ravenna, che, imbattutosi nel viaggio in un gruppo di sacerdoti di Cibele, si unisce a loro e viene castrato nel sonno. In entrambi i casi la scelta di un provinciale quale vittima è volta a compiacere il pubblico romano, agli occhi del quale questi rappresentava il prototipo dello sprovveduto, bersaglio ideale per una burla" (Fusi 2006: 236).

<sup>192</sup> Fusi 2006: 70, 517.

just described. Finally, both poems have a reference to animals. The once Tuscan—now “Gallic”—priest is compared to a *caper* (“he-goat,” here with the sense of “gelded he-goat”), and the soldier (or his penis) is compared to a *cervus* (“stag”). Both have at least cursory references to the cult of Cybele: 3.24 describes the Tuscan priest as having become a *gallus* while 3.91 skirts the term in favor of periphrasis for describing the priests of Cybele and is instead set off by poems containing the proper names Gallus and Galla. Both poems contain ritualistic contexts or descriptions in the Tuscan priest’s sacrifice of the goat that was caught chewing a vine (3.24), and the references to the priests of Cybele but also the description of the substitution of a deer for the sacrifice of Iphigenia (3.91).

## Conclusions

The poet expects the reader to be familiar with his work: not only the structure of individual epigrams, but also, the structure of entire books. However, even greater expectations than these are set out, Book 3 anticipates that the reader will have a familiarity with specific terms that are used to define epigram or that the reader will interact with the book multiple times to gain such knowledge. Within the book itself, the poet is using metapoetic references demonstrating that he expects the reader to anticipate certain moves that the text makes. The text looks both forward and backward. Looking back, the text makes reference to previous epigrams from earlier books, as noted in the discussion on poem 2.45 from the previous chapter. As Sapsford notes, reading and rereading epigrams allows the model reader to reflect on the meanings of earlier poems and how they fit into the sequence of the epigrams, “both within and between books.”<sup>193</sup> The structure of Book 3 of the epigrams demands this type of (re)reading and requires the reader to

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<sup>193</sup> Sapsford 2012: 11.

(re)consider the use of diction and understand multiple meanings of words at the same time. The text also conditions the reader to recognize the clever ways that poets (like Martial) can deploy words.

Book 3 is a pointed (but cleverly disguised) joke about Martial's work in competition with his own work (books 1 & 2) and the works of others (Cosconius) in the same genre, as well as the other genres (poetological engagement with epic and elegy). Poem 3.91 brings the relationship between *gallus* and *mentula* together as it wraps up the linguistic and metaliterary play of these two words.

The text presents one reading: the book is a *gallus* (from Gaul), but then later in the book, it subverts that reading with another possibility: the book is an emasculated version of Martial—a name for the content the book (3.24 and 3.81). The second understanding of the term creates a context that subverts the initial understanding of the first context by deploying a word that simultaneously belongs to the relationship of the first context and to a new context (*gallus* used to describe a place of origin, and *gallus* used to describe an emasculated priest). The text then introduces a third context in which the second context is completely incorrect (deploying the term *mentula* and specifically calling out poets who do not use the term or other obscenities) and confirms this reading by explicit references to emasculation/castration and *gallus* (e.g., 3.81). It concludes with signposting throughout the rest of the book (contexts specifically referring to emasculation marked by uses of the name Gallus or Galla around the poem of interest, e.g., 3.90–92).

## CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, we have examined a range of ways in which the genre of Latin epigram engages with the text as a body and with the body as a text, focusing primarily on Martial. The gendered text presented in epigram plays a crucial role for the identity of the text and, by proxy, the author. We have seen a nuanced presentation of the epigrammatic body before publication and after publication throughout Martial's corpus. The body of the text is figured as a phallic male after publication, but the pre-published body of the text is generally figured as a vulnerable body: as a woman, a boy, or even a child of the poet. The post-publication body of the text may also be a child of the poet, but only insofar as the book represents the legacy of the poet, which does not need his protection anymore.

In the introduction, we considered a distinction between the genres of epigram and elegy. I also presented the story of Procne and Philomela from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is a narrative about a vulnerable person surviving sexual violence and mutilation. The violence described here is explicitly gendered: male violence against a female body, which includes mutilation of her body as a way of silencing her and controlling her. This episode is also paradigmatic because it portrays two acts of violence: first penetrative sexual violence (rape), and then the violent act of cutting out her tongue with a sword, which could also be interpreted as symbolically gendered or even sexual when we consider that speech is generally considered to be inherently male and phallic in the Roman context. Also in the introduction, we examined how other epigrammatists figure their texts as phallic or, by contrast, *mollis*, that is: "soft." I see an important shift from Catullus' description of his poetry as "soft" and Martial not using this language in the direction of his own poetry. The corpora of the *Carmina Priapea*, Ausonius'

epigrams, and the *glandes Perusinae* contain crucial, representative examples, which evoke phallic and sexual imagery to describe the text's relationship with its recipient.

In the first chapter, there is a focus on the representations of “wrong” bodies or bodies in need of correcting. We see corrective language used in the context of these bodies, many of which are female, as if the bodies were texts. The poet “corrects” women who say no incorrectly. In doing this, the poet addresses women directly or addresses men to complain that women do not follow these instructions. Not only is women's speech corrected, but their bodies are corrected too, particularly the sounds that they make. I focus on one example: in poem 7.18 a character, Galla, is corrected when her body disgusts the poet during sexual intercourse. The corrective terms used to describe the solutions to these problematic bodies are otherwise exclusively applied to editing texts, and are only applied to the bodies of women.

In chapter 2, we considered various terms in Latin and English and briefly discussed the cultural background before examining the idea of the text being represented as an altered male body and the use of this imagery by the poet to threaten poetic rivals or situate his own text within a discourse between himself and the reader. By rejecting this imagery for his own text, he declares its legitimacy and attempts to control its reception as impenetrable or unalterable. In short, he defines it as a Roman *vir*. The poet equates emasculation and natural impotence and effectively declares both to be in the category of “non-man.” I look at legal definitions for men in order to situate the importance of the gender status of a man, especially as this relates to his ability to reproduce or whether he would be legally allowed to adopt children. Multiple times the poet associates reproductive power with poetic power. He flaunts his acquisition of the *ius trium liberorum* as a direct result of his poetic prowess. He juxtaposes plagiarists with fathers: one recites poetry that he has not written and the other raises children who he has not begotten (e.g.,

Mart. 10.102). The chapter moves to a discussion of castration and emasculation as a literary metaphor. I discuss various types of plagiarism that present risk to the text and the poet by proxy. The text is at a greater risk of being stolen pre-publication, or if the poet does not have friends that he can rely on to make accusations against plagiarists on his behalf. In the only poem that I found in which the published text is figured as a woman (11.16), the text maintains sexual control over the reader (both men and women), and so I consider this to be the exception that proves the rule. A second type of plagiarism occurs primarily in Book 10. I call this phenomenon “insertion plagiarism,” that is: a published book is altered by poems being added to it, instead of poems taken from it; imposters appear alongside originals. The poet also loses control over his text—I make an analogy with the text-as-body possessing extra limbs. With insertion plagiarism, the poet’s reputation is at stake. Poems 10.2 and 10.3 clearly demonstrate the potential for poetic immortality, but also the anxiety of the poet’s reputation being tarnished by insertion plagiarism. In the final section of this chapter, I explore authorial self-censorship as a form of self-emasculation. The poet alters his own text to conform to the demands of his readership. I divide this section into three subsections. In the first I consider the lack of obscenity briefly noting that not all of Martial’s books contain obscenities and these are dedicated to the emperor Domitian. The second subsection discusses erasures and corrections; here the poet shares his text with friends, whom he allows to make edits knowing well that the text will not be changed. He also responds to others asking him for edited copies. In the last subsection on anthologization, I make that argument that the poet makes suggestions for reading practices but is generally opposed to the idea of the reader physically altering the book as an object, which includes dislocating poems for use in anthologies or other types of corpora.

In the third chapter, the arrangement of the book becomes essential for a reader’s

understanding of Martial's poetry. I argue that Book 3 of Martial's *Epigrams* is presented as a macro-epigrammatic text. The book itself is structured as if it were a large-scale, bipartite epigram. I determine this through the use of vocabulary throughout the book. The most obvious special use of diction consists of obscenities, which the first two-thirds of the book lacks, but which are found in abundance during the final third of the book. Figuring prominently among the obscenities used is the term *mentula*, which means "dick." *Mentula* in particular seems to be used by Martial as something of an emblem for his epigrammatic poetry. The next special use vocabulary consists of the word *gallus*, which can mean so many things, and I demonstrate that the poet is aware of this, by the way he uses this word in previous books. In the first poem of the book, the poet calls the book *Gallus* and sends it from Gaul, but he plays with the other meanings of the word, particularly "emasculated priest of Cybele." I argue that the poet sets up the book as emasculated because the word *gallus* and its variants occur so frequently in this book, and obscenities seem rare or non-existent on a first reading.

There is still more room for further study that this dissertation has barely touched upon. There are yet further epigrams in Martial's massive corpus of approximately 1500 poems which deserve discussion, and there is more to be said about Catullus and the *Carmina Priapea* as well. A larger project may consider Pasquinades as literal textual bodies: these were anonymously written satirical poems beginning in the sixteenth century, often directed at the pope or other authorities and affixed to the base of statues for public consumption and engagement. Further avenues include: a diachronic study of scopic humor against women in Latin epigram (Catullus, Martial, the *Carmina Priapea*, and Ausonius). Much more could also be said about Galla in Martial's corpus and the other epigrammatic corpora. Also deserving of detailed discussion is the commodification of the body in multiple contexts (e.g., sex, slavery, and the conceptualization of

offspring as investments, as well as intersections of these) compared with the commodification of the text.

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