

more accessible Horace and Juvenal. Yet where these were read he was never entirely neglected, as, for example, in neo-classical England and during the Enlightenment. It is not surprising that he was one of Kant's favorite authors; but it is somewhat odder to find Goethe praising him for having concealed bitter discontent in Sibylline gnomes and expressed his despair in somber hexameters. Whether the obscurity and intellectualism of some contemporary poetic modes will win him many new readers may be doubted.

2. JUVENAL

LIFE AND EVIDENCE

On Juvenal's life the information we have is scarce and unreliable, derived from the rare autobiographical references in his satires and from some epigrams addressed to him by his friend Martial. The many extant *vitae*, the most ancient of which goes back to the fourth century, are of little worth. Decimus Junius Juvenal was probably born at Aquinum, in southern Latium, between A.D. 50 and 60 (though some put his birth in 67). His family must have been prosperous, since he had a good rhetorical education, though he showed little interest in philosophy. He seems to have practiced law, but without earning the rewards he expected, and to have devoted himself to the declamations then in vogue. He probably came to write poetry at a mature age, after the death of Domitian (96), and he continued to compose into the reign of Hadrian. Like his oldest friend Martial, he lived in the shadow of the great, in the difficult position of a client, a man without economic independence. We know nothing of his death, which was certainly later than A.D. 127, the latest chronological reference in his verses. The ancient tradition that says he left Rome for Egypt, where he was sent at the age of eighty (so the story goes), under pretext of a military command, on account of certain verses that gave offense to a favorite of the emperor, is scarcely reliable.

WORKS

His poetic works consist of sixteen satires, in hexameters, subdivided into five books perhaps by the author himself (book 1: satires 1-5; book 2: 6; book 3: 7-9; book 4: 10-12; book 5: 13-16, a total of 3,869 verses); a fragment of 36 verses, regarded by most as authentic and belonging to the sixth satire, was discovered in 1899. The very few chronological indications there are lie between A.D. 100 and 127, and the publication of the satires, or at least their composition, must take place during this period.

Summary of the Satires

In satire 1, which is prefatory and programmatic, Juvenal polemicizes against the fashionable declamations and their fatuousness and declares his disgust at the widespread moral corruption that compels him to become a satiric poet (*difficile est saturam non scribere* [v. 30]). But in order not to bring hatred and revenge upon himself, he will not attack the present generation, only past ones. Satire 2 attacks the hypocrisy of those who cloak the foulest vice beneath the appearance of virtue; the poet's principal target is homosexuality. The third describes the poet's old friend Umbricius's abandoning Rome, the chaotic metropolis where life has

become dangerous for honest men. In the fourth satire he tells of the council called by Domitian to deliberate upon a grave question: how to cook the gigantic turbot presented to the emperor as a gift. Satire 5 describes the dinner given by the rich Virro and the humiliating situation of the clients invited. The sixth and longest satire is the famous tirade against the immorality and the vices of women. Satire 7 deplores the general decline in study and the wretched condition in which the writers of the day are forced to live; by contrast, it pines for the patronage that nourished Augustan literature. Satire 8 contrasts the false nobility of birth with the true nobility that derives from talent and feeling. The ninth recounts, in the form of a dialogue, the protests of Naevolus, a homosexual ill-rewarded for his difficult services. Satire 10 focuses on the folly of human desires. In satire 11 the poet contrasts the ostentatious luxury of rich men's banquets with the modest dinner offered him by a friend. In 12 he attacks legacy hunters; in 13, cheats and swindlers. In 14 Juvenal discusses the upbringing of children and the need to accompany precept with example. Satire 15 describes an episode of cannibalism that took place in Egypt (which the poet claims to know [v. 45]) and was provoked by religious fanaticism. The last satire, which is incomplete, lists the advantages offered by the military life.

Indignant Satire

*The poetics of
indignatio*

The literature of the day, with its foolish delight in hackneyed mythological stories, is, according to Juvenal, absurdly far removed from the corrupt moral climate and the deep degradation of Roman society at the end of the first century and in the first decades of the second, the very years that to others seemed to herald a new glorious era following the grim period of Domitian. In the face of the unhalting spread of vice (*quando uberior vitiorum copia?* [1.87]), indignation will be the poet's muse (*si natura negat, facit indignatio versum* [1.79]), and satire will be the required genre, the kind of poetry most suitable for conveying the fury of his disgust. Juvenal thus, in the first satire, announces the reasons behind his poetics and the central place occupied by *indignatio*, marking thereby a perceptible departure from the Latin satiric tradition. Unlike Horace and even Persius, who, though fascinated by the representation of vice, did not refuse to propose a remedy (one based upon stern philosophical precepts), Juvenal does not believe that his poetry can influence the behavior of men, whom he regards as irremediably prey to corruption. His satire will limit itself to denouncing, to shouting out his rancorous protest, without cherishing any illusions of redemption.

*The rejection of
Roman moral
thought*

Juvenal refuses to conform, in other words, to the earlier rationalistic and reflective tradition of satire, but his rejection of that tradition is more general: it attacks the very forms of moral reasoning and judgment, the categories and structures of Roman moral thought. This last, as is well known, takes shape when a large number of *topoi* from Cynic-Stoic diatribe are adapted to Roman society, and it shapes in turn, in the most varied ways, Roman thinking about problems of personal ethics and social morality, providing it with structures of thought and types of solution. Juvenal rejects precisely the answers that are given by moral diatribe, by that

morality that teaches men to remain indifferent to the world of concrete, external things, to regard them with irony and detachment, and to cherish instead inner goods, to strive for the *apatheia* and *autarkeia* of the sage, which are the goals of a superior nobility of the spirit. Juvenal rejects and demystifies this consoling morality with the disdain of a man who is offended at seeing vice and wrongdoing rewarded and with the rancor of a social outcast, one who sees himself as excluded from the benefits that society confers on the corrupt and forced into the humiliating position of the client.

The invective of the outcast

Rancor towards society, hidden resentment at not belonging to it, is an important element in the indignant satire of Juvenal, who represents the Italian middle class that in the daily life of the Empire's cosmopolitan capital witnessed the constant subversion of the moral and political values of the national, republican tradition. Lacking an ethical-political awareness that could explain this turbulent development, the variety and mutability of the social picture, Juvenal looks upon this confused spectacle (which relegates him to the edges of the scene) as a tragedy performed in grotesque masks, and he does not have even the bitter satisfaction of invective. In the moralist's distorted view, Roman society appears irremediably perverted, and the roles of the several classes overturned, beginning with the nobility, which has unworthily abdicated its rightful functions (e.g., protecting and promoting culture, as under the great patronage of the Augustan age) and which brutalizes itself in carousal and lust. His aggressive fury spares no one, and it grows especially heated against the figures who best symbolize the society and the manners of the swarming metropolis—the vulgar arrogance of the *nouveaux riches*, the excessive power of the freedmen, the cunning boldness of the Orientals, the moral degradation of the starveling writers. Women, both free and emancipated, are a special target. By their easy movement in society they personify for the poet the destruction of modesty; they inspire him to write the sixth satire, one of the most ferocious misogynistic documents of all time, in which the dark grandeur of Messalina, the imperial prostitute, stands out especially.

Aggressive fury against all

Misogyny

Apparent democratism

This radical aversion to his own day and the rabid protests he registers against injustice and against the oppression and misery in which the humble and the outcast live have led some to speak of a democratic attitude on the part of Juvenal. This is a mistaken view, however; apart from some occasional expressions of solidarity with the poor and the helpless, his attitude towards the crowd, towards the uncouth and unlettered, towards whoever engages in commerce or manual labor, is one of deep and inalterable scorn. His intellectual pride and nationalistic resentment of flattering, intriguing Greeks and Orientals (whose competition harms Roman *clientes*) permit him to claim for himself, at most, affluence and social recognition but leave him far from harboring any aspirations to social solidarity. Instead, injured and rejected by a society that destroys and scorns his values, Juvenal tends to idealize nostalgically the past, the good old days dominated by a sound farmer morality and polemically contrasted with the

Sterile idealization of the past

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*The later Juvenal
and the return to
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*Indignatio and
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"Tragic" satire

*Rhetorical training
and ideological
authenticity in
Juvenal*

corrupt citizenry of the present, a society not debased by Orientals, ex-slaves, and businessmen. This flight from the present, this archaizing utopia (a topical motif in Roman moral thought), seems the only possible outcome of Juvenal's *indignatio* and amounts to an implicit admission of his frustrated powerlessness.

A marked change of tone is observable in the second part of Juvenal's work, that is, in the last two books, in which the poet expressly renounces violent *indignatio* and assumes a more detached attitude, which aims at the *apatheia* of the Stoics. In this he is returning to that diatribe tradition of satire from which he has drastically departed. His view thus widens into a more general observation and allows itself the time to take a more tranquil view, one that is resigned in the face of the world's incurable corruption. And yet upon this facade of impassability cracks open here and there, showing the old fury, and the undying rage sometimes breaks out again. Not even the remedy of philosophic indifference succeeds in calming his wounded and frustrated mind.

The Sublime Satiric Style

Whereas in the earlier tradition the fact that satire had ordinary reality as its subject led it to adopt a humble stylistic level, a familiar and unpretentious tone (*sermo*, in fact), now, when this reality has become unusual and vice has peopled it with *monstra*, satire must match it with grandiosity. It therefore no longer adopts a lowly style, but one like that of the genres traditionally contrasted with satire, epic and especially tragedy. Satire would lack an essential feature of these genres, their fictionality (which Juvenal several times polemically rejects), because it would remain realistic, but it would have their loftiness of tone, that grandeur of style that would correspond to the violence of his *indignatio*.

Juvenal thus transforms profoundly the formal principles of the satiric genre, breaking the traditional link with comedy (i.e., dispensing with the *ridiculum*) and bringing satire near to tragedy, on the level of content (the *monstra*) and style, which is similarly "sublime." A familiar technique in Juvenal is the employment of epic-tragic language precisely in connection with the coarsest, most vulgar content; his purpose is to bring out the lowness of the material by contrasting it with the loftiness of the form of expression. His realism, which richly documents for us the habits and usages of daily life at the time, strongly tends to distortion, of course, because he is dealing with figures and scenes of such coarseness that the indignant moralist's biliousness vents itself on them.

His expression, which is always prone to explode in hyperbole and in which courtly and plebeian tones and lofty and obscene words clash, with intentionally striking effect, is visual and pregnant, dense and sententious (many of Juvenal's verses have become proverbial). In his declamatory emphasis, in this tone which is always ready for denunciation and invective (and which rarely relaxes into reflection or laughter), in the fixity of the targets he attacks and in the repetition of the moralizing topoi, some have

perceived the influences of the rhetorical schools and of the declamations that Juvenal had long practiced, and his poetry has always been burdened with this accusation of academicism. But the studies of the last decades have examined Juvenal's poetics more deeply and shown how his means of expression serve the ideological purposes of "the most tragic and greatest poet of human vices."

Literary Success

Antiquity

Juvenal seems to have been relatively neglected in the second and third centuries; neither Donatus nor Jerome ever refers to him. He is first mentioned by Lactantius, and Ammianus Marcellinus attests his rise to popularity in the last quarter of the fourth century, especially among poets and grammarians—Servius cites him more than seventy times in the course of his commentary on Virgil, and Servius's student Nicaeus published an edition of the *Satires*. One evident result of this brief spurt of interest in Juvenal, which seems to have reached its climax by the end of the century, is the two sets of scholia on his poems, which go back in part to this period but continued to grow through the Middle Ages (when one was attributed to Valerius, the other to Persius's friend Cornutus). He was read by such poets of late antiquity as Ausonius, Rutilius Namatianus, and Claudian, while his presence in bilingual glossaries suggests that he was used in the eastern part of the Empire to teach Latin to speakers of Greek.

Middle Ages

Juvenal returned to prominence during the Carolingian revival and figured in Charlemagne's court library. Throughout the Middle Ages his popularity as a moralist secured him both a wide circulation (besides fragments of three ancient manuscripts, well over five hundred medieval ones have been found) and a firm place in the medieval school curriculum. Heinrich of Auxerre studied him and is mentioned in the scholia; students practiced the rules of meter on his verses; he provided examples for the teaching of rhetoric; and in 1086 the grammarian Aimericus gave him the first place in his canon of authors. For the genre of medieval Latin satire, which flourished in the twelfth century, Juvenal provides the most important model. Both medieval prose authors and poets refer to him often. Dante and Petrarch knew his works; Geoffrey of Monmouth, John of Salisbury, Vincent of Beauvais, and other medieval authors quoted him frequently, and in his *Troilus and Creseide* Chaucer provides explicit confirmation for a judgment expressed in the tenth satire by "Juvenal lord." Indeed, according to one of the ribald university songs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries "they believe more in Juvenal than in the doctrine of the prophets" (*magis credunt Juvenali, quam doctrinae prophetali*).

Renaissance and later

In the Renaissance Juvenal's popularity, like Persius's, decreased somewhat. In particular he ceased to be regarded as a universal sage and was understood instead within the more limited confines of the moralizing satirical tradition; but within this genre he remained a dominant influence. It was Juvenal, for example, rather than the other Roman satirists, who contributed most to Luigi Alamanni's thirteen satires on the vices of Italy.

to Ariosto's seven on social corruption (including not only women and priests but also patrons and humanists), to the satires of Parini and Alfieri, of Hugo and Carducci and Joseph Régner. English translations by Stapylton (1660), Holyday (1673), and Dryden (1693) suggest his importance to neo-classical satire, and in the next century Samuel Johnson modernized, sanitized, and humanized his third satire ("London") and his tenth ("Vanity of Human Affairs").

The strange taste for neo-Latin satires in the Juvenalian mode lasted longer than anyone might have expected. In the eighteenth century they were written on English matters by Pope's contemporary William King and on Polish ones by Antonius Loz Poninski, in the nineteenth century on Swiss matters by Petrus Esseiva and on Croatian ones by Junius Resti, and as recently as the 1960s on American matters by Harry C. Schnur, who also published a supplement to Juvenal's last satire, perhaps inspired by the miraculous feat of a young Oxford undergraduate, E. O. Winstedt, who in 1899 discovered thirty-six previously unknown verses in a manuscript of the sixth satire.

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Martial and the Epigram

LIFE AND EVIDENCE

Marcus Valerius Martial was born at Bilbilis, in Hispania Tarraconensis, on 1 March in some year between A.D. 38 and 41 (this and other biographical notices come to us from his own verses and from a letter of Pliny the Younger). In 64 he went to Rome, where he found the generous support of the most conspicuous Spanish family in the capital, the family of Seneca, which introduced him into good society. He became acquainted with Calpurnius Piso and the circles of the senatorial opposition to Nero, whom the emperor in 65, as a result of the Pisonian conspiracy, would bloodily suppress. For some years thereafter he probably led a modest life, pursuing his poetic activity as a client. He must have won a certain notoriety, since in 80 he composed (probably on commission from people at court) and published a collection of epigrams celebrating the inauguration of the Flavian Amphitheater. The work won for him the appreciation (including monetary appreciation) of the new emperor Titus. From 84–85 he began to publish his poems regularly. Success smiled upon him, and he also held honorific posts: he was military tribune, and thus achieved equestrian status. He came into contact with eminent people—the future emperor Nerva, for instance, and writers such as Silius Italicus, Pliny the Younger, Quintilian, and Juvenal—but this did not bring him a steady income (in antiquity, copyright did not exist, so only the bookseller profited from the sale of books). He complains repeatedly of the hardships he suffered and the difficulties he experienced in finding patrons and sponsors who were ready to offer him recognition and support.

In 87–88, annoyed by city life, he left Rome to stay at Forum Corneli (today Imola) and other cities in Emilia, but after a short time he returned to the capital. He left it again, definitively, in 98, when he decided to return to his native Bilbilis (Pliny the Younger helped him by paying for his voyage). There he found the tranquillity he was seeking but also the pettiness of a provincial atmosphere, and he missed the turbulent life of Rome. Disappointed and still unhappy, he died at Bilbilis around 104.

WORKS

We possess a collection of Martial's epigrams divided into twelve books that were written and gradually published from A.D. 86 to 101–102. The

body of the collection is preceded by another book with about thirty epigrams (*Epigrammaton Liber*), composed independently (as was said) in 80 and known today as the *Liber de Spectaculis* or *Liber Spectaculorum*. Two other books (usually referred to as books 13 and 14), which are also independent, follow. These are, respectively, the *Xenia* and the *Apophoreta*, published in 84 and 85. They consist of very short inscriptions, each one a single couplet, which, like labels on an object, accompany presents of varying sorts given on the occasion of the Saturnalia (the *Xenia*, or "gifts for guests") and gifts presented to guests at banquets (the *Apophoreta*, or "carry-outs"). The present arrangement of Martial's complete works probably is that of an ancient edition made after the author's death.

The meters vary: along with the elegiac couplet, which is the most common, the Phalacaeon and scazon are frequent, but other meters are found as well. The epigrams also vary in length, ranging from a single couplet (or even a single verse) to ten or more verses and even to twenty, thirty, or forty. In arranging the epigrams in books, Martial distributed them in a balanced and varied way, paying attention to their meter and length and being alert especially to avoid repetition and dullness. There are in total over fifteen hundred epigrams, with about ten thousand verses altogether.

I. THE EPIGRAM AS REALISTIC POETRY

*Coexistence of epic
and epigram in the
Flavian period*

An important aspect of the literary culture of the Flavian period, which is characterized by a climate of moral restoration, is the movement back towards the highest poetic genre, the epic (Statius, Silius Italicus, Valerius Flaccus). Yet the period also witnesses the popularity and notable success of a genre such as the epigram, which, as Martial himself attests (12.94.9), is regarded as the humblest of all.

*Epigram as
commemorative and
as occasional poetry*

The epigram originates in the archaic period of Greece, where its function (the name itself means "inscription") was essentially commemorative. Epigrams were engraved, for instance, on tombstones or on votive offerings, in order to record a person, a monument, a famous place or event (e.g., Simonides' famous epigram over those who fell at Thermopylae). In the Hellenistic era, however, the epigram, though preserving its characteristic brevity, frees itself from its epigraphic form and practical purpose. Now it is a type of poem suitable for occasional poetry, suitable for fixing, within the compass of a few verses, the impression of a moment or of a small, everyday happening (this is the function performed by the sonnet or the lyric in modern poetry). The subjects are often light (erotic, sympotic, satiric-parodic), but more traditional subjects are also found, such as funeral poetry, sometimes in the gently parodic form of an *epicedion* for small animals. The *Garland of Meleager*, which later passed into the *Anthologia Palatina*, is the document that best illustrates the nature and popularity of epigram in the Hellenistic period. In Latin poetry the epigram did not have a great tradition, and little of what there was has come down to us. Except for Catullus, we know virtually nothing of the poets whom Martial

points to as his *auctores* (Domitius Marsus, Albinovanus Pedo, Lentulus Gaetulicus). It is true, moreover, that apart from professional poets, many politicians wrote *versiculi* (as Pliny the Younger attests); for them, epigrammatic poetry was little more than a refined way of enjoying their *otium*, almost a pastime without great ambitions to literary dignity. Only with Martial's work, in fact, does the epigram find artistic recognition. Thus a minor poetic form, once courtiers and patrons allow it a legitimate space in which to fulfill its destiny, readily becomes an element of social etiquette and in the end acquires independent value and artistic dignity also.

But it should not be forgotten that in the Rome of the early Empire the Greek epigram also flourished notably; it should be enough to recall the publication of the *Garland of Philip* in the time of Caligula and the success of Lucillius's witty epigrams in Nero's time. A few decades before Martial began his activity the epigrammatic genre had become very popular, the courtly function (the epigram could lend itself to an act of homage or to accompanying a gift, as happens in the *Garland of Philip*) alternating with the possibility of jesting and playful entertainment (the case of the witty epigrams).

At Rome Catullus valued the brief form, already given a special place by Callimachean poetics, as the one most suitable for expressing feelings, tastes, and passions (i.e., the subjects of private life), as well as for being a device of lively polemical attack (the epigram was exploited for this purpose by other neoteric poets also). Martial makes the epigram his exclusive genre, the sole form of his poetry, because he values highly its flexibility, the ease with which it suits the many aspects of reality. The variety and the mobility of a lively genre such as epigram are the qualities Martial polemically contrasts with the qualities of the noble genres, epic and tragedy, with their serious tones and much abused contents, those trite mythological stories that were so far removed from the reality of everyday life.

It is precisely its realism, its closeness to actual life, that Martial claims as the distinctive mark of his poetry (*hominem pagina nostra sapit* [10.4.10]), and he proudly regards this as confirmed by the enormous acclaim with which the public received it. In his epigrams the public could find the concise evocation of a spectacular event (as in the *De Spectaculis*), or the idea for a *bon mot*, a clever poetic tag, to accompany a gift for a friend or a guest (as in the collections of *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*), or the commemoration of actual events, of important moments in the life of the various recipients, such as births, weddings, holidays, celebrations, and so on. In other words, the public found in the epigram their own experiences filtered and ennobled by an artistic form possessing flexibility and potent expressiveness. It is, in short, a poetry that combines practical usefulness and literary amusement, painting an incisive and variegated picture of everyday reality with all its contradictions and paradoxes.

Martial observes the spectacle of reality and of the various people who occupy its stage with a distorting glance. He accentuates their grotesque features and reduces them to recurring types (parasites, vain people, plagia-

Catullus's epigrams

*Martial's epigrams
and closeness to
everyday life*

*Success and the
subjects of Martial's
epigrams*

*Martial and the
diverting spectacle
of the world*

rists, misers, swindlers, legacy hunters, petulant poetasters, dangerous doctors, etc.). Deformation and grotesqueness are the result of a representation from close up, an optical effect that, like the witty epigram, focuses upon individual persons and features in isolation, denying them background and contours—as if, in order to show them better, they were wrenched out of context, as if they were suspended in a vacuum, “de-realized,” so to speak. The poet’s attitude, however, is that of an alert but mostly detached observer who rarely engages in moral judgment or condemnation. His is a social satire without harshness (*parcere personis, dicere de vitiis* [10.33.10]), and he prefers laughter to indignation at the absurd spectacle of the world in which he finds himself. For that reason, all the more does he occasionally like to contemplate, by contrast, a life of simple, natural pleasures, of tranquil recreations and sincere affections (see, e.g., 1.55 and 10.47), a dream that sometimes takes on the idyllic features of his Spanish homeland (1.49, 10.96).

2. THE MECHANISM OF WIT

Prevalence of the comic-satiric element

The subjects of Martial’s epigrams are varied and embrace the whole of human experience. Some are rooted in tradition (such as the funerary epigram, of which Martial presents us with examples of great delicacy), while others deal more closely with the poet’s personal experiences (many epigrams are literary polemic, in which Martial explains his poetic preferences or laments the decline of literature and patronage) or with the social usage of the day (e.g., the celebratory epigrams or those that flatter the emperor Domitian).

The technique of the closing quip

Martial’s epigram in general develops the comic-satiric aspect more than the tradition had. In this he follows a tendency already begun by an earlier writer of epigrams, Lucilius, a Greek poet of the Neronian period, who had given much space to persons with conspicuous physical defects and to social types whom he represented comically, and he thereby joined the Roman satiric tradition, which was attentive to the analysis of social usage and quick to sketch its most characteristic representatives. But Martial also changes several formal techniques of Lucilius, for instance, the technique of the closing quip, the witty remark that brings the brief course of the thought to a brilliant close. The tendency to localize the wit in the ending was already perceptible in the Hellenistic epigram, but Lucilius had developed it and Martial perfected it. In his hands the epigram acquires a typical physiognomy and form; it becomes a comic mechanism constructed around the *fulmen in clausula*, the parting thrust. This trait goes along with that taste for the *pointe* that was so dear to the rhetoric of the day (Seneca the Elder had already collected a number of significant examples). The compositional forms are varied but can generally be reduced to a recurring mode, which has led critics from Lessing on to establish a typical scheme for the epigram: a first part describes the situation, the object, or the person, creating in the reader the tension of expectation, and the last part, with an effect

Typical scheme of the epigram

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*Martial's realistic
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of surprise (*aprosdoketon*), releases that tension in a paradox, a brilliant flare that it sends up.

A preference for realistic poetry such as Martial practices and repeatedly affirms is naturally accompanied by a language and a style that are similarly open to the liveliness of colloquial manner and to the richness of everyday vocabulary. In addition to words for humble, ordinary realities, Martial often enjoys introducing extremely obscene words (obscene realism is an important aspect of his poetry, which he feels called upon to justify through the motif, already found in Catullus and Ovid, of the distinction between art and life: *lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba* [1.4.8]); the expressive force of these words is sometimes enhanced by his skill at collocation. But a flexible poet such as Martial can alternate the most varied forms of expression, passing from tones of sober clarity to others that are more elegant and even precious (particularly noteworthy is his parodic use of the solemn phrases of famous poetry). In this context, his celebratory and flattering epigrams are an important document of the mannered language employed at court and in the realm of the official culture. What we find, then, is a richness in modes of expression that corresponds to the multiplicity of subjects and reproduces the flexibility and the variety of the real world that the epigram sets out to interpret.

3. LITERARY SUCCESS

Martial's popularity was immediate and long-lasting. Hadrian's adoptive son, Aelius Verus, called Martial his Virgil. In late antiquity Martial exercised an enormous influence upon such poets as Ausonius, Claudian, Sidonius Apollinaris, and Luxorius; it is Martial who mediates Catullus to late antiquity and the Middle Ages. From the fourth to the sixth centuries he is quoted often in grammarians, from Victorinus, Charisius, and Servius up through Priscian and Isidore of Seville. There are traces of at least three ancient editions of his epigrams, from one of which, prepared in 401 by Torquatus Gennadius, descends one family of medieval manuscripts.

In the Middle Ages, Martial was not a school author but still circulated, less, however, in his own right (there are only about fifteen medieval manuscripts) than in anthologies, which emphasized his *sententiae* and transmitted (often uncharacteristic) moralistic fragments. Starting in the twelfth century, he became an important model for the popular genre of medieval epigram. But the medieval Martial was not always one we would easily recognize. The archetype had provided some of the epigrams with titles that were misleading or on occasion absurdly mistaken. One family of manuscripts tried to expurgate all traces of heterosexual obscenity (remaining, however, generously hospitable to homosexual ones). And a legend followed by such authors as John of Salisbury, Walter Map, Conrad of Mure, and Vincent of Beauvais attributed the authorship of the transmitted poems to an apocryphal Martial the Cook.

Boccaccio, who discovered a manuscript of Martial, helped contribute to his popularity in the Renaissance, which increased dramatically starting in the second quarter of the fifteenth century; there are about 130 Renaissance manuscripts. It was Martial, more than Catullus or even the *Greek Anthology*, who provided poets such as Pontano and Sannazaro a model for new ways to write epigrams. The numerous ribald and obscene epigrammatists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries look back to him as their chief model. And it was with the apogee of the genre of epigram in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries that Martial's own fortunes reached their highest point. English poets from Ben Jonson to Pope imitated him and sought ways to reproduce in English language and meter the effects of concision and point he had perfected in Latin. In German literature, Martial's polemical and demystifying wit was much admired and imitated by the epigrammatic poets of the seventeenth century and later by Lessing. But not everyone admired Martial: Andreas Navagero objected so strongly to his immorality that once a year, on a day dedicated to the Muses, he solemnly burnt a copy of his epigrams.

The last major poets to be strongly influenced by Martial were Goethe and Schiller, who in 1796 published the *Xenia*, three hundred satirical epigrams on contemporary literature, philosophy, and politics. Thereafter, with the collapse of aristocratic society and the unprecedented expansion of the reading public, the genre of epigram, together with the conditions upon which it had depended, declined. And with it declined Martial's own popularity.

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