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### **Editors**

Apl. Prof. Dr. Annemarie Ambühl (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)  
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Dr. Christian Rollinger (Universität Trier)  
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### **Contact**

#### **Principal Contact**

Prof. Dr. Filippo Carlà-Uhink  
Email: [thersitesjournal@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:thersitesjournal@uni-potsdam.de)

#### **Support Contact**

Dr. Christian Rollinger  
Email: [thersitesjournal@uni-potsdam.de](mailto:thersitesjournal@uni-potsdam.de)

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FAROUK F. GREWING

(Universität Leipzig)

## A Saturnalian Poet as a Literary Critic

### The Carnavalesque Poetics of Martial's *Apophoreta* 183–196

**Abstract** This paper analyzes a specific section of Martial's *Apophoreta* (Book 14), the 'list' of fourteen literary works that the poet-*persona* suggests to the reader as potentially suitable presents to give to friends on the occasion of the Saturnalia. It focuses strictly on the literary aspects of the poems and their underlying carnivalesque poetics. This includes an assessment of the logic of the poems' arrangement and alleged inconsistencies. It is suggested that the section be read as a complex statement of Martial's on various works and genres of Greek and Roman literature. The last couplet of the section (14.196), a certain Calvus' work 'On the use of cold water' (*De aquae frigidae usu*), which is unidentifiable, receives particular attention, for previous scholarship has wasted a lot of ink on guessing what kind of work this may have been, thereby losing touch with the rich (meta-)poetics the couplet actually conveys.

**Keywords** Martial, epigram, Saturnalia, poetics, *Apophoreta*



## THE CARNIVALESQUE POETICS OF MARTIAL'S *APOPHORETA* 183–196\*

Martial's *Apophoreta* (numbered as Book 14 in modern editions), just like the *Xenia* (Book 13),<sup>1</sup> are anything but tedious catalogs of presents given on the occasion of the Saturnalia (the *Apophoreta*) or of various kinds of food and wine, oils, sauces etc. that are served in the course of a Saturnalian dinner party (the *Xenia*).<sup>2</sup> Quite the contrary, recent studies, each with varying focus, have shown that both collections are highly sophisticated and demanding works of top-quality literature.<sup>3</sup>

One of the chief characteristics of Martial's poetics is its obsession with the contrast between 'big' and 'small', 'high' and 'low', 'long' and 'short'. As Victoria Rimell so aptly puts it, "One of the most basic dynamics of Martial's poetics [...] is its simultaneous shrinking down of big to small, and magnification or elevation of the small. In this way the most lowly genre can aim for epic status,

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\* Helen King (London) and Georg Wöhrle (Trier) both read a draft of this paper and were immensely helpful in navigating me through the jungle of ancient medical writings (see below, my discussion of Mart. 14,196). As always in the past c. twenty years, Alexander (Sasha) Kirichenko (Berlin) did his best in preventing me from a lot, but far from all, absurdities in this article. And finally, my sincerest thanks to Annemarie Ambühl (Mainz) for her superb copy-editing. Needless to emphasize, for the at times preposterous theories that I have developed I alone am to blame.—It may seem to some that I do not take seriously quite a few hypotheses of previous scholarship. This is entirely true.

1 Note that the *Apophoreta* (like the *Xenia*) are most likely early productions of Martial's, pre-dating Books 1–12. See the references in Grewing (1999a) 259 n. 1.

2 For the overall order of the epigrams in the *Xenia*, see Leary (2001) 10–11 and Scherf (2001) 76–88 (an overview at 77); for the *Apophoreta*, Leary (1996) 13–21 (unnecessarily speculating a lot about possible *lacunae* in the text) and Scherf (2001) 89–105 (an overview at 90).

3 Examples include Muñoz Jiménez (1985) and (1996), Citroni (1989), Grewing (1999a) and (2010) 131–149, Roman (2001), esp. 130–138, Lorenz (2002) 82–110, Prioux (2008) 311–328, and Rimell (2008) 140–161. All these contributions disagree emphatically with Leary's rather depressing statement, in his commentary on the *Apophoreta*, that "it [...] seems fair, and even necessary, to say that the scope for literary invention provided by a series of couplets describing Saturnalian gifts is limited. [...] Therefore, having exhausted the possibilities of this type of composition, [Martial] found himself in need for something new, and it was thus that he turned to develop fully the type of epigram now regarded as most characteristic of him." (Leary [1996] 22–23). What a meteoric career: from a mediocre ad writer to one of Rome's bestselling authors!

and objective measurements are utterly subjectivised, when it suits: short can seem long, a thin book can become fat in the reading, and vice versa, and simplicity can be deceptive.”<sup>4</sup>

Perfectly in line with this dynamic is Martial’s suggestion to the reader that s/he may pick and choose from, or abridge, at will any of his books, should the reading become tedious or a given book contain items in a format which s/he disapproves of.<sup>5</sup> This idea is taken to its extreme in the second proem to the *Aphoreta*:

*Quo vis cumque loco potes hunc finire libellum:  
versibus explicitum est omne duobus opus.  
lemmata si quaeris cur sint ascripta, docebo:  
ut, si malueris, lemmata sola legas.*

(Mart. 14,2)

‘You can finish this little book anywhere you want. Every work is unfolded in two lines. If you ask why headings are added, I’ll tell you: so that, if you prefer, you may read the headings only.’

So, if the reader actually confined him/herself to the reading of the *lemmata*, the poetry book would be converted into the table of contents to a ‘poetic catalog’ of 221 items which briefly describe various kinds of Saturnalian gifts. That is to say, the reader would shrink the multi-item *poetry* collection to a minimized list de-

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4 Rimell (2008) 94. The usurpation of themes and motifs that traditionally belonged to larger and more elevated genres (such as epic, tragedy, or elegy) is a phenomenon that can already be found in Hellenistic epigram. ‘Usurpation’, here, inevitably means ‘miniaturization’. Among other things, this widening of scope allows epigrammatists to reach a higher plane in the hierarchy of poetic genres. For a sketch of this development from Callimachus and his contemporaries onwards, see Harder (2019). Martial’s handling of, and playing with, ‘higher class’ poetic genres can perhaps be seen as the most powerful conquest of non-epigrammatic formats.

5 See, e.g., 10,1,1–2 *si nimius videor seraque coronide longus / esse liber, legito pauca: libellus ero* (‘If I seem too large and long a book with a colophone coming too late, read a view pieces only: I will then be a little book.’), or 6,65,4 *si breviora probas, disticha sola legas* (‘If you prefer shorter pieces, read the couplets only.’). In 4,29, readers who feel exhausted and oversaturated by the sheer quantity of Martial’s books (lines 1–2) are given an advice that seems particularly difficult to put into practice: *tu quoque de nostris releges quemcumque libellis / esse putasolum: sic tibi pluris erit* (‘You, too, whichever booklet you re-read, think of it as the only one; so you will value it the more.’).

void of any poetic value. In fact, Martial the *poet* would disappear altogether. To press this a bit more, think of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*: after the epistolary preface, in which Pliny dedicates the *Natural History* to Vespasian's son and heir Titus (*praef.* 3), Book 1 consists of 'nothing' but a detailed table of contents and authorities of the 36 books to follow.<sup>6</sup> Martial's invitation to 'read the headings only' reduces the *Apophoreta* to something like Pliny's Book 1. At the same time, if you read the entire 2+221 poems, with all their thematic diversity, the *Apophoreta* amount to a bombastic Saturnalian (epigrammatic) version of Pliny's monumental reference work. That is, what we have here is a clever metapoetic game, the antagonists being the miniature/minimalist headings and the all-encompassing monumental 'Plinian' encyclopedia, which is wittily transformed into an encyclopedia of Saturnalian gifts.<sup>7</sup>

That said, let me now turn to a particular section of the *Apophoreta*, the 'literature gifts' contained in items 183–196.

To send books as Saturnalian gifts is a common enough practice.<sup>8</sup> According to Lucian, such a booklet makes a suitable gift for a poor man to send a rich friend:

ἀντιπεμπέτω δὲ ὁ πέννης τῷ πλουσίῳ ὁ μὲν πεπαιδευμένος βιβλίον τῶν παλαιῶν, εἴ τι εὐφημον καὶ συμπωτικόν, ἢ αὐτοῦ σύγγραμμα, ὅποιον ἂν δύνηται, καὶ τοῦτο λαμβανέτω ὁ πλούσιος πάνυ φαιδρῶ τῷ προσώπῳ καὶ λαβῶν ἀναγινωσκέτω εὐθύς.  
(Lucian. *Sat.* 16)

'The educated poor man shall send a rich man in return a little book by one of the ancient authors, provided that it is auspicious and suitable for a banquet, or whichever composition he can come up with himself. The rich shall receive it with a face beaming with joy and read it right away.'

<sup>6</sup> *Libro II. continentur [...] ex auctoribus [...]*, and so forth.

<sup>7</sup> It is certainly risky to argue that Martial's 'model' for this joke was Pliny's Book 1; however, he is definitely rather well familiar with the *Natural History*, which I shall discuss elsewhere. E.g., the wine catalog contained in the *Xenia* (13,109–125) is clearly arranged according to Pliny's treatment of the different kinds of wine in *HN*, Book 14.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Leary (1996) 5 and 247; for the social context, in which such book-gifts function, see Nauta (2002) 79–80, 105–118, and 186–187.

It is no surprise that Martial's poet-*persona*, playing—as ever so often—the poor client, adopts this 'Lucianic suggestion'. When he sends his rich friend Quintianus a selection of his verse, he pretends to feel the need to apologize for this meager gift, but only in order to add a sharp social comment:

*Quod tibi Decembri mense, quo volant mappae  
gracilesque ligulae cereique chartaeque  
et acuta senibus testa cum Damascensis,  
praeter libellos vernulas nihil misi,  
fortasse avarus videor aut inhumanus. 5  
odi dolosas munerum et malas artes:  
imitantur hamos dona: namque quis nescit  
avidum vorata decipi scarum musca?  
quotiens amico diviti nihil donat,  
o Quintiane, liberalis est pauper. 10 (Mart. 5,18)*

'Since in the month of December, when napkins, slender spoons, wax candles, paper sheets and pointed jars of aged damsons fly around, I have sent you nothing but home-bred little books, [5] perhaps I appear stingy or ill-mannered. I hate the sly and wicked tricks of gifts: presents are like hooks; for who does not know that the ravenous wrasse is deceived by the fly it has devoured? Whenever he gives nothing to a rich friend, [10] Quintianus, the poor man is generous.'<sup>9</sup>

These Saturnalian *libelli* can be autograph copies (as in the case of Martial's poem just quoted) or writings by any other, famous or not so famous, author.<sup>10</sup> In accordance with the Saturnalian spirit (remember Lucian's advice quoted above), the ideal literary gift is to be light-hearted and suited for the festival.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "The social determination and 'cheapening' of literary activity inspires a new, comic take on neo-Callimachean aesthetics, so that smallness is motivated by pragmatic concerns, poverty is harsh and real, not a lifestyle choice, and tiny, intricate poems are not necessarily perfect and polished." (Rimell [2008] 7–14, quote at 10) See further Roman (2001).

<sup>10</sup> For autograph copies as gifts, see also Mart. 10,18(17) and Stat. *silv.* 4,9; Martial's *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* themselves act as autograph copies, with the general reader being their recipient (cf. 13,3,5–6; 14,1). For non-autographs, see Catull. 14 and Mart. 5,30. Individual poems or little collections can of course also accompany non-literary gifts (cf., e.g., Mart. 7,46).

<sup>11</sup> Between close friends, this can be taken to the extreme: remember Calvus, who sent Catullus some poetry of such low quality that the latter is now trying to retaliate as best he

Consequently, Martial once asks a certain Varro to put aside for those few merry days his own laborious writings and to ‘read instead poems not to be despised in smoky December, sent to [him] in their own month’ (*sed lege fumoso non aspernanda Decembri / carmina, mittuntur quae tibi mense suo*, 5,30,5–6).

On a previous occasion, I have extensively argued that the penultimate poem of Martial’s *Apophoreta*, the *pistor dulciarius* (‘confectionary baker’) of item 222 symbolizes Saturnalian verse (light-hearted poetic trifles) and, more specifically, the Book of *Apophoreta* as a whole, whereas the final couplet, the *adipata* (‘rich, fatty cakes’) of 223, marks the end of the Roman carnival, that is, the bitter but inevitable return to the dull routine of everyday life.<sup>12</sup> Thus, this diptych lends the end of the book a strong element of closure.

*Pistor dulciarius*

*Mille tibi dulces operum manus iste figuras*

*exstruet: huic uni parca laborat apis.*<sup>13</sup>

(Mart. 14,222)

‘Confectionary baker: This hand will construct for you a thousand sweet forms of handicraft. For him alone the thrifty bee works.’

*Adipata*

*Surgite: iam vendit pueris ientacula pistor*

*cristataeque sonant undique lucis aves.*

(Mart. 14,223)

‘‘Fried-in-fat’ (?) pies: Get up! Already the baker is selling boys their breakfast, and the crested birds of daybreak are sounding from every side.’

I shall now extend this observation to the ‘literary gifts’ that are contained in the *Apophoreta*. Here is the sequence of pairs as transmitted in the MSS:

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can (Catull. 14), or (following in Catullus’ footsteps) Statius, who, with tongue in cheek, reproaches Grypus for having given him a cheapish edition of incredibly boring writings (*silv.* 4,9).

<sup>12</sup> Grewing (2010) 134–149 *contra* Fowler (1995) 55–56.

<sup>13</sup> Note that Horace’s prominent Pindar Ode, *carm.* 4,2, *viz.* lines 25–32, is most likely the pre-text for the *pistor dulciarius*-poem: see Grewing (2010) 145–147.



#	'sors divitis'	#	'sors pauperis'
183	<i>Homeri Batrachomyomachia</i>	184	<i>Homerus in pugillaribus membranis</i>
185	<i>Vergili Culex</i>	186	<i>Vergilius in membranis</i>
187	Μενάνδρου Θάξις	188	<i>Cicero in membranis</i>
189	<i>Monobyblos Properti</i>	190	<i>Titus Livius in membranis</i>
191	<i>Sallustius</i>	192	<i>Ovidi Metamorphosis in membranis</i>
193	<i>Tibullus</i>	194	<i>Lucanus</i>
195	<i>Catullus</i>	196	<i>Calvi de aquae frigidae usu</i>

Quite a few scholars limit themselves to the (apparent) observation that the *sortes divitis* ('lots for the rich man') are small books or works, whereas the *sortes pauperis* ('lots for the poor man') are all huge, at times even bombastic (such as the 'Homer' of 186, the 'all-of Cicero' of 188, or the '142-book edition of Livy' of 190.<sup>14</sup> This is certainly true and agrees with what I have said about the tiny treats of 14,222 as opposed to the fatty cakes of 14,223.

Let me now take a closer look at the individual couplets and their diversified frolicking poetics. Some of the pairings are obviously puzzling at first glance: it is easy to see how, say, items 183/184 and 185/186 are connected—but why, e.g., does Menander go with Cicero?, why Livy with Propertius, not Sallust?, why Tibullus with Lucan, not (say) Propertius?, etc. No surprise, then, that this order has led some to suspect *lacunae* in the transmitted text.<sup>15</sup> However, our own puzzlement alone is not reason enough to think so.<sup>16</sup>

14 E.g. Lorenz (2002) 100–103; Prioux (2008) 311–328 followed by Squire (2012) 278–283, which is part of an interesting chapter entitled “Epigrammatic visions of the grand and the small” (274–283). Among other things, Squire compares Martial’s poems with the *Tabulae Iliacae* ('Iliac Tablets').—A different, and attractive, take on this section is offered by Rimell (2008) 7: “The cheap labels at *Apophoreta* 183–196 come to exemplify the *Epigrams*’ push to cram *everything* in, to chop up, reduce and remake Rome as and through its literary production.”

15 See, e.g., Birt (1882) 78–87; Friedländer (1886) II. 299–300, who speculates that the counterpart-couplets to items 187, 188, 189, and 196 have been lost; cf. also Leary (1996) 261–263 (on item 196), and Scherf (2001) 99 with n. 275.

16 Cf. Lorenz (2002) 100. There is no indication whatsoever in the MSS transmission that pieces have fallen out, nor does the order of epigrams in the sections before and after 183–196 seem to be disturbed: Leary (1996) 19.

Another hypothesis, occasionally expressed, is that the underlying compositional principle of this section is ruled by the alternation of expensive and cheap (or less expensive) writing materials. Thus, the rich man would send some luxury edition rather than some inexpensive, say, *Penguin* paperback, whereas the poor can do with the latter. This way, the result would be an evident vicious circle: if we accepted the given order of poems, we would have to conclude that the *sortes pauperis* (184, 186, ...) are cheapish copies, and vice versa; the 'All-of-Homer' edition (184) would thus be of a lesser material value than the *Batrachomyomachia* (183), etc.; if we did not accept the transmitted order, we would have to re-arrange the items according to their material value, and that is precisely what has been done by some. As the *lemmata* of five of the 'poor' items (184, 186, 188, 190, and 192) indicate, these are written on parchment (in *membranis*, in *pugillaribus membraneis*), while the 'rich' items (183, 185, ...) are written on papyrus. Nonetheless, Theodor Birt and others argue that papyrus was more expensive than parchment.<sup>17</sup> Note, however, that this alternation does not apply to the two final pairs, 193/194 and 195/196.<sup>18</sup> To uphold this 'material theory', one cannot do without postulating *lacunae* or mis-arrangements. Contrary to Birt, Ludwig Friedländer and others maintain that parchment was 'certainly' more expensive than papyrus; hence the order of poems, including alleged *lacunae*, needs to be completely re-arranged.<sup>19</sup> More importantly, the relative material value of papyrus vs. parchment cannot be determined for the 1<sup>st</sup> century C.E. anyway; nor can we tell (should that be of any interest) which of the two Martial himself considered the more valuable.<sup>20</sup> Bluntly put, those speculations do not at all further the reader's understanding of the 'literature section'.

I shall leave aside other yet more fanciful hypotheses, such as the idea of the 'rare availability' of certain works or authors in edited form, or of possible 'read-

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<sup>17</sup> Birt (1882) 78–87, esp. 78–82.

<sup>18</sup> Rightly emphasized by Leary (1996) 19 and 256, and Scherf (2001) 99 with n. 276. The *charta* of 196.2 should be a papyrus leaf.

<sup>19</sup> Friedländer (1886) II. 299–300.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Roberts & Skeat (1983) 7 (with references) and 27; Leary (1996) 19. See in particular Skeat (1995), esp. 87–93, on the price of papyrus vs. parchment; note also his comment on Martial at 78–80. For our early evidence of parchment codices, cf. also van Haelst (1989), esp. 20–21.

ing habits' of the rich ('educated') and the poor ('less educated').<sup>21</sup> This is all mere speculation.

The interpretation I want to put forward is based on the conviction that (i) no items have been lost due to any transmission error, (ii) the order of epigrams has not been altered in the transmission process, and (iii) the actual material value of the books does not account for the arrangement of the couplets; actually, the fact that an item appears as a *sors divitis* need not necessarily indicate a *material* value higher than that of its counterpart-item (*sors pauperis*).<sup>22</sup> This seems to be particularly evident in the 'literature section'. Hence, I will here propose a purely literary-critical exegesis.

In epigram 5,18, which I briefly discussed above, Martial points out that the gift a poor client should give his rich friend ought to be as modest as possible, in Martial's case his own tiny poems. Viewed against the backdrop of 5,18, the *sortes divitis*, 'lots for the rich', stand roughly for 'akin to the implied author's poetics/predilections' or 'acceptable in terms of literary genre/style' (just as the *pistor dulciarius* of item 222), whereas the *sortes pauperis*, 'lots for the poor', roughly denote works 'alien or opposed to the implied author's poetics/predilections' or 'unacceptable in terms of literary genre/style' (like the *adipata* of item 223).

For a start, one may observe that all of the *sortes divitis* are works of lesser size than their counterparts. This distinction is easily recognizable in the first two pairs, the 'Homeric' *Battle of Frogs and Mice* (300+ lines) and the 'Virgilian' *Gnat* (400+ lines), both parodying epic poetry, as opposed to Homer's *Iliad and Odyssey* in one edition (!) and the 'All-of-Virgil' edition (*Eclogues, Georgics, and*

<sup>21</sup> For such (and similar) speculations, see the summaries of extant (historical-critical) attempts in Leary (1996) 19–20 and Scherf (2001) 98–100, neither of whom, however, offer any interpretations of their own.

<sup>22</sup> As rightly emphasized by Leary (1996) 13; Lorenz (2002) 98–99 with nn. 194–196 (esp. *contra* Birt and Friedländer); cf. also Grewing (1999b) 597. This is, of course, not to say that Martial does not utilize the 'expensive-cheap' antithesis throughout the *Apophoreta*, as quite a lot of pairs rather unambiguously (seem to) suggest. See, e.g., the following (randomly picked) pairs: 12/13 ('ivory boxes' vs. 'wooden boxes'), 95/96 ('chased gold bowl' vs. 'cheap Vatinian cups'), 154/155 ('amethystine wool' vs. 'white wool from Altinum'), 170/171 ('golden statuette of Venus' vs. 'clay statuette of 'Brutus' Boy'), with Leary's (1996) notes *ad locc.*, and many more (but by far not all!) pairs as listed and discussed in Friedländer (1886) II. 295–300 and Leary (1996) 13–21.

*Aeneid*<sup>23</sup>). 183/184 and 185/186 are perfect matches.<sup>24</sup> One may further note that the *sortes divitis* tend to be much more humorous, light-hearted works than their counterparts: note again 183/184 or 185/186, and also, e.g., Menander's *Thais* (187) vs. Cicero (188), etc. In general, this binary opposition can be described in terms of 'small/humorous' = 'akin to epigram and 'Roman Callimacheanism' vs. 'grand' = 'non-/anti-epigrammatic, bombast, epic, or epicizing'.

But there is still need to account for some apparently odd pairings in the section as a whole: Menander—Cicero, Propertius—Livy, Sallust—Ovid, Tibullus—Lucan. Chaos may be in power here, and this alone, I dare say, would be hilarious enough. This 'chaos' may, however, invite the Saturnalian reader to take a closer look at the individual 'mismatches' and their respective context(s): maybe, this *ordo difficilior* turns out to be quite sophisticated?

As for the 'rich' items, one can say that Menander, Propertius, Tibullus, and Catullus—not only in the implied author's view—are connected to each other through their *erotic* theme(s) and motifs, a central feature of Martial's poetics.<sup>25</sup> Sex is a Saturnalian must. Martial's favorite, Catullus, is self-evident here anyway. Elegy (Propertius and Tibullus vs. Livy and Lucan) is, too.<sup>26</sup> Item 193, *Tibullus*, is a poem not only *about* Tibullus' works, but also *quoting* from the *Elegies*:

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23 I agree with Roberts & Skeat (1983) 25 (followed by Leary [1996] 251) that the *immensus Maro* of 186,1 refers to the entire Virgilian corpus: the poem "would lose its point if an anthology were in question". It would, however, not necessarily "lose its point" if *immensus* referred to the *Aeneid* only.

24 The same is true of the other pairs (Menander's *Thais* vs. Cicero, etc.); for 195/196, that is, Catullus vs. *Calvus de aquae frigidae usu* (the only 'spurious' work in the entire section), see below.—The massive size of five of the seven *sortes pauperis* is also emphasized in the poems themselves: note the 'many layers of skin' (i.e. the long codex) of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (*multiplici pelle*, 184,2), the 'vast Virgil' (*immensum Maronem*, 186,1), the 'long journey with Cicero' (*longas cum Cicerone vias*, 188,2), the 'gigantic Livy' (*Livius ingens*, 190,1); for Lucan (194) and Calvus (196), see below.

25 Emphasized also by Lorenz (2002) 101 with n. 206. See also Sullivan (1991) 185–210 ("Martial's sexual attitudes"). For a different take on sex, the obscene, and 'pornography' in Martial, see Spisak (1994).

26 For Martial's attitude towards elegy, see Sullivan (1991) 105–108.

*Tibullus*

*Ussit amatorem Nemesis lasciva Tibullum,  
in tota iuvit quem nihil esse domo.*

(Mart. 14,193)

‘Tibullus’: Lustful Nemesis inflamed her lover Tibullus, who was happy to be a non-entity in all his house.’

*Illa [sc. Delia!] regat cunctos, illi sint omnia curae:  
at iuuet in tota me nihil esse domo.*

(Tib. 1,5,29–30)

‘Let her rule us all, let her be in charge of everything—and let me be a non-entity in all my house.’

It is futile to speculate if Martial confuses Tibullus’ *puellae*, or Books 1 and 2 of the *Elegies*; that he did so intentionally is an attractive option:<sup>27</sup> for, by mentioning one and quoting from the other, Martial wittily refers to both Tibullan books simultaneously, and may quite jokingly insinuate that it ultimately matters little which mistress lovesick Tibullus (or any elegist, for that matter) is talking about. The elegists’ concerns are not Martial’s. What makes elegy so Saturnalian is not (so much) the theme of love and desire—when you are really raving in ecstasy, you will find Tibullus and his peers prudish anyway<sup>28</sup>—, but the elegiac idea of the inversion of social roles: the man becomes totally subject to the woman, just like the master to his slave (*servitium amoris*).<sup>29</sup>

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27 For discussion, cf. Leary (1996) 258, who points to similar misattributions (or misquotations); but see also the references in Salanitro (2003) 309–310 (whose discussion of Mart. 14, 183–196 does not, however, advance our understanding of this sequence of poems).

28 Hence, when Martial exhorts Varro to read only literature appropriate to the Saturnalia during the festival season (5,30), he excludes not only tragedy, serious (Horatian) lyric poetry, but also elegy ‘with her neat tresses’ (*cultis comis*, line 4).

29 For the suspension of the master-slave hierarchy, see Acc. frg. 3 Morel, Sen. *epist.* 47,14, Iust. *Epit. hist. Philipp.* 43,1,3–4, Macr. *Sat.* 1,11,1; for the inversion of social roles (the master waiting his slaves’ tables), Cass. Dio 69,19, Auson. *ecl.* 16,15–16 Green.—On Martial’s ‘epigrammatization’ of the elegiac system, see Sullivan (1991) 164–166, and cf. my note on Mart. 6,71: Grewing (1997) 468. For Martial’s and others’ satiric transformation of elegiac *topoi*, see Bardou (1946).





with a courtesan named Glycera may very well be a Hellenistic fantasy,<sup>33</sup> and Martial is likely to have adopted it just as Alciphron in his *Letters* (4,18/19). The theme of this couplet is particularly Saturnalian. The Thais of the play (which is almost entirely lost to us) is probably as much a *domina* as is any of the elegists' *puellae* or Menander's alleged own mistress, and the reader may suspect here that, according to Martial's poem, the *Thais* may (at least partly) be read 'autobiographically': Menander's life would then be mirrored in his plays—and become sufficiently Saturnalian.

Compare the homoerotic version, also heavily Menandrian, from the same section as 222/223:

*Comoedi pueri*

*Non erit in turba quisquam Μισούμενος ista:*

*Sed poterit quivis esse Δις ἔξαπατῶν.*

(Mart. 14,214)

'Boy comic actors': No one in this troupe will be 'The Hated One'; but anyone of them can be 'The Double Deceiver'.

"The joke [...] rests on these boys being not so much actors as potential catamites [...]. While all are desirable (hence none is *μισούμενος*), they are also all capable of double-crossing an *ἐραστής*."<sup>34</sup> The sexual implication (obvious anyway) becomes explicit in the complementary couplet (215) about a *fibula*, a kind of 'safety-pin', here attached to the fore-skin to prevent too easy sexual activity.<sup>35</sup>

*Fibula*

*Dic mihi simpliciter, comoedis et citharoedis,*

*fibula, quid praestas? 'carius ut futuant.'*

(Mart. 14,215)

'Safety-pin': Tell me plainly, safety-pin, what's your use for comic actors and lyre-players? 'Get them a higher price for their fucking.'

<sup>33</sup> For discussion, see Körte (1919).

<sup>34</sup> Leary (1996) 281.

<sup>35</sup> For the details of this joke, see Leary (1996) 282–283.—Infibulation can also serve other medical or quasi-medical purposes. See the discussion at Cels. 7,25,2 (*sed cave*: it may hurt when you read it). On infibulation in antiquity, see Stieda (1902).

Now the ‘cheap gifts’. (I shall discuss the *Sallustius* below.) Just as 184/186 (Homer/Virgil), 188/190/192 all represent huge literary works compressed into one edited ‘book’: the bulky ‘All-of-Cicero’ edition, suitable to read on long (perhaps never-ending) journeys; Livy’s 142-book *Ab urbe condita*, too gigantic even for a library to hold; the massive edition of Ovid’s 15-book *Metamorphoses*, and finally, Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (194) and Calvus’—more than shadowy—*On the Use of Cold Water* (196). For sure, each of these in its own way is non-, if not anti-epigrammatic/Saturnalian. Although Martial often refers to Cicero as the paragon of Roman oratory, the encyclopedia-like ‘All-of-Cicero’ here is as non-Saturnalian (or, compared to Menander or Propertius, anti-aphrodisiac) as the ‘All-of-Livy’. The very idea to have the entire writings of Cicero or the whole of Livy in *one* codex is immensely funny (and depressing), since this would for technical reasons be completely impossible anyway;<sup>36</sup> and it would surely deprive the poems of their point if (as sometimes suggested) anthologies or *epitomai* were meant here.<sup>37</sup>

What about the *Metamorphoses*, as opposed to *Sallustius*? It is unclear to which of Sallust’s works item 191 alludes, but this is of little account. What matters is that he is ‘the Number One in Roman historiography’ (*primus Romana Crispus in historia*), and that his works are unassuming compared to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* which, because they cover the entire history of the world from its cosmic origins down to Augustus, were at times read as a work of ‘chronographic history’.<sup>38</sup> That Sallust does not go with Livy is not, I argue, a compositional flaw, but a cun-

<sup>36</sup> See Winsbury (2009) 15–34, esp. 24. Squire (2012) 280 tentatively compares Martial’s *Livy* to the 5<sup>th</sup> c. *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis* (‘Cologne Mani-Codex’). However, the actual length of this text amounts only to a small fraction of the size an ‘All-of-Livy’ would amount to.

<sup>37</sup> The *Homer*, *Virgil*, and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* cannot be ‘anthologies’. The *Cicero* need not be the ‘full corpus’ (half of it would do, anyway). For the idea that item 190 (Livy) may refer to an abridged text, see Ascher (1969), re-visited by Butrica (1983); cf. line 1 of the poem: *pellibus exiguis artatur Livius ingens* (‘gigantic Livy is compressed in tiny skins’). Indeed, *artare* could (just as *coartare* at Cic. *de or.* 1,163; Sen. *epist.* 94,27; Plin. *epist.* 1,20,8) probably mean ‘to shorten, abridge’, but Roberts & Skeat (1983) 25–27 offer good reasons why this is not the case here. (Note also that the use of *artare* at Mart. 1,2,3 and 12,4[5],2 does *not* help.)

<sup>38</sup> Even *if* Martial refers to Sallust’s *Histories*, annalistic unlike the *Catiline* or *Jugurtha*, the contrast to ‘Ovid, the historian’ works. The 5-book *Histories* cover a relatively short time-period, from 78 B.C.E. to we-don’t-exactly-know (last surviving fragment: 67 B.C.E.). For the *Metamorphoses* as ‘chronography’, see Feeney (1999).

ning twist that the reader is meant to appreciate. The connecting link between the pairs is not genre, but content, style, and size. Additionally, the reader might laugh about the ‘degradation’ of the *Ab urbe condita* in particular: Quintilian, at *inst.* 2,5,19, recommends ‘Livy for school children (!) rather than Sallust, although the latter was the greater historian’ (*Livium a pueris magis quam Sallustium—etsi hic historiae maior est auctor*). I suggest reading Martial along similar lines here.<sup>39</sup>

Now Lucan.

*Lucanus*

*Sunt quidam qui me dicant non esse poetam:*

*sed qui me vendit bybliopola putat.*

(Mart. 14,194)

‘Lucan’: There’re some who say I’m not a poet; but the bookseller who sells me thinks I am.’

The epigram comments on the notorious verdict in antiquity whereby Lucan was considered not a poet but rather a (versifying) ‘historian’ (e.g., by Servius, on *Aen.* 1,382) or a ‘kind-of-orator’ (e.g., by Quint. *inst.* 10,1,90).<sup>40</sup> The reasons for such judgments are relatively clear. The poem should, I think, be read on two different (but interrelated) levels: (i) in the context of the *Apophoreta*, (ii) against the background of Martial’s oeuvre as a whole. In the latter context, item 194 can be read as a defense of Lucan, in that the poem explicitly denounces the grammarians’ and rhetoricians’ critique—or even as an homage: Martial indeed seems to have admired his countryman and was fond of imitating his verse.<sup>41</sup> He never attacks Lucan, either on generic grounds or any other (which is, perhaps, no surprise since Lucan wrote historical epic, not mythological); rather, Martial

<sup>39</sup> Again, Martial would be distinctly anti school-canon.—Martial’s verdict on Sallust reflects the general enthusiasm about him: see Syme (1964) 274–301 (on Mart. at 292). Tacitus, e.g., calls him *rerum Romanarum florentissimus auctor* (*Ann.* 3,30,1); *alii aliter*.

<sup>40</sup> For references, see Leary (1996) 259 and Grewing (1997) 492.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Reggiani (1976) 136–137; Sullivan (1991) 102; Grewing (1997) 492–493, where I offer a random list of (possible) verbal parallels. The mini-cycle of *genethliaka* to Lucan (commissioned perhaps by his widow, Polla Argentaria), 7,21–23, is Martial’s most striking example of reverence for Lucan; on these poems, see Galán Vioque (2002) 168–179 (with ample bibliography at 168–169).

seems to be playing with him in a witty but friendly way.<sup>42</sup> This playfulness helps us to understand the role of Lucan in the *Apophoreta*: 194 jokingly suggests that the bookseller's opinion ('Lucan is a poet') matters little; the implied author here simply rejects this judgment—for Saturnalian reasons: please, spare us epic Lucan (or Homer, Virgil, Ovid, etc.) and, since Lucan after all 'isn't' a poet, spare us Lucan, the historian (or Livy or 'historicizing Ovid', etc.).

Finally Calvus.

*Calvi de aquae frigidae usu*

*Haec tibi quae fontes et aquarum nomina dicit,*

*ipsa suas melius charta natabit aquas.*

(Mart. 14,196)

2 *suas*—*aquas* T $\gamma$  : *suas*—*aquis* R : *suis*—*aquis*  $\beta$  | *natabit*  $\gamma$  (Leary) : *natabat* B (Lindsay, Heraeus, Shackleton Bailey) : *notavit*  $\beta$  : *notabat*  $\alpha$

"Calvus 'On the Use of Cold Water': This roll which tells you the sources and names of rivers will be better off swimming in its own waters." (tr. Leary)

Textual matters first. T $\gamma$ 's accusative *suas aquas* going with *natare* is, of course, right ('swim in ...');<sup>43</sup> and  $\gamma$  is the best witness for this poem anyway. The imperfect tense (*natabat*), accepted by most modern editors, would mean something like "were better swimming in their own waters" (tr. Shackleton Bailey)—to paraphrase: 'it would have been much better if Calvus' work had never been written; rather, the papyrus should have been immediately thrown into the Nile, in Egypt, where it comes from (hence *suas*).'<sup>44</sup> But Leary is surely right in point-

42 Most telling, I think, is 10,64, in which Martial asks Polla to receive his epigrams *non tetrica fronte* ('without frowning brow') and which he concludes with a—true or made-up?—quotation from (an epigram of?) Lucan, just as obscene as Martial's own verse: *si nec pedicor, Cotta, quid hic facio?* ('If I'm not even sodomized, Cotta, what am I doing here?'). Here, epic and epigram clash—but not at Lucan's expense.

43 See Leary (1996) 264, citing *OLD*, s.v., 1b, and see Mart. 1,49,9–10 (*natabis lene ... vadum / mollesque ... lacus*); for passive *natare* cf. Mart. 4,30,3 and 6,43,2. Note that at 1,49,9, according to Citroni (1975) 159, the MS *G* has *notabis*, the same corruption as  $\alpha\beta$ 's here or most MSS's at Prop. 3,12,32. (The reverse case would be Suet. *Aug.* 64,3, where the MSS read *natare* and Lipsius unnecessarily conjectured *notare*.)

44 Thus, e.g., Shackleton Bailey (1993) III. 303 n.d.



ing out that “one of the standard fates of bad poetry was to be consigned to the waters”, and to compare Mart. 1,5:<sup>45</sup>

*Do tibi naumachiam, tu das epigrammata nobis:  
vis, puto, cum libro, Marce, natare tuo.* (Mart. 1,5)

‘I give you a naval battle [*i.e.* in the Colosseum], you give me epigrams. I think, Martial, you want to swim together with your book.’

The poem is a reply to 1,4, in which Martial asks Domitian to receive his epigrams benevolently.<sup>46</sup> We have here the only (!) instance in Martial of the emperor as first-person speaker, and a witty one, threatening the poet with drowning him along with his ‘bad’ poems. This literary topos, already well established in Augustan poetry and relatively frequent in Martial, usually implies that the *contents* of the papyrus had better be washed out, that is, the text must have been *written* before.<sup>47</sup> Hence read *natabit*.

However, the more vital question is: Who is this Calvus? As 196 goes with the *Catullus*-poem, 195, the most reasonable guess is that this is the politician, orator, and neoteric poet, C. Licinius Calvus, friend of Catullus, whose poetic production is indeed very Catullan (a mini-epic on Io, some epithalamia, erotic poems, satirical epigrams).<sup>48</sup> But (of course?) no trace whatsoever of any *De aquae frigidae usu*. Two options: (i) Calvus *did* write a work *On Cold Water*—and there is

<sup>45</sup> Leary (1996) 263.

<sup>46</sup> 1,4–5 is discussed in detail by Lorenz (2002) 112–120.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. (always with a future sense) Mart. 3,100,3–4; 5,53 (tragedy worthy of the Flood or fire) with Fusi (2006) 553–554; 9,58,7–8; similarly, 4,10,5–6 (text to be sponged out). For Augustan parallels, see Citroni (1975) 34, and add Suet. *Aug.* 85.

<sup>48</sup> For an assessment of the few fragments that have survived, see Courtney (1993) 201–211, and the detailed commentary in Hollis (2007) 49–86. Shackleton Bailey (1993) III. 302–303 n. c reminds us that of course we cannot be certain if Martial’s Calvus here is the same as Catullus’ Calvus: “If this were a different Calvus, the juxtaposition with Catullus could be a joke on M.’s part.”—To be fair, I frankly confess that I am unwilling to discuss Herrmann’s (1968) proposition that Martial’s Calvus is not a Calvus at all, but the poet L. Iulius Calidus (mentioned only once by Nepos, *Att.* 12,4), for it is based on an incomprehensible (at least to me) interpretation of the variant readings of the poem’s *lemma* (which are best documented in Lindsay’s edition).

no proof that he did not;<sup>49</sup> (ii) Martial made this up—which I find the much more attractive bet. In this case, the literature section ends with a work that never existed at all—a twist that would reduce the whole debate about good vs. bad literature to a mere Saturnalian joke.<sup>50</sup> And I like Sven Lorenz’ productive idea of reading Martial’s poem as cunningly taking revenge on Calvus for having sent Catullus a pathetically bad poetry collection on the occasion of the Saturnalia (!):<sup>51</sup>

[...]  
*nam quid feci ego quidve sum locutus,*  
*cur me tot male perderes poetis?* 5  
 [...]  
*di magni, horribilem et sacrum libellum!*  
*quem tu scilicet ad tuum Catullum*  
*misti, continuo ut die periret,*  
*Saturnalibus, optimo dierum!* 15 (Catull. 14,4–5, 12–15)

‘For what have I done to you, or what have I said, that you should kill me with all these poets? [...] Great gods! What a horrible and accursed book—which you sent your Catullus, so that he should die at once on the day of the Saturnalia, best of days!’

Evidently, Martial’s ‘revenge’ is as much a joke as Catullus 14 is fictitious. In this line of reasoning, the *De aquae frigidae usu* would work extremely well as an invention of Martial’s. (Note that it would work no less well if it were not a fake!)

<sup>49</sup> Leary (1996) 262 refers to Charisius who once (p. 102,20–22 Barwick) quotes from an (unnamed) work (probably in prose) of Calvus’, which may (or may not) have been on ‘proper diets’ or something similar; no need to assume that this is his *De aquae ...*; no need either to conclude (as Leary, *ibid.*, did) that there is a *lacuna* after the *lemma* of 196.

<sup>50</sup> Annemarie Ambühl kindly referred me to the hilarious book by Stefano Tonietto, *Letteratura latina inesistente: Un'altra letteratura latina che non avete studiato a scuola* (Macerata: Quodlibet 2017), a parody of a scholastic textbook of made-up ancient Latin works, such as Lesbia’s response to Catullus’ poems or on the brat who jangled Horace’s nerves and who allegedly had already annoyed Cicero, etc.

<sup>51</sup> Lorenz (2002) 103.

We then have a double (triple?) joke: (i) let's flood Calvus' work (topos),<sup>52</sup> (ii) by drowning it 'in its own contents' (*On Water*, that is why we have *suas!*)—but, of course, the joke is in itself a joke: (iii) Martial does not condemn seriously any of Calvus' works; it is just a literary game.

Whatever the true answer may be, before putting forward a completely new reading of this poem, let me dwell a little further on what kind of text *On the Use of Cold Water* could *theoretically* have been, that is, let me for a moment pretend to believe that this work existed. If it was a piece of poetry my only guess would be that it was a (mock-?) didactic poem or some dull 'epic- or epyllion-style' catalog. If it was a prose treatise the range of possibilities would be a lot wider.<sup>53</sup> Leary compares Callimachus' works *Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένη ποταμῶν* ('On the rivers in the Greek world') and *Περὶ τῶν ἐν Εὐρώπῃ ποταμῶν* ('On the rivers in Europe') mentioned in the Suidas under *Καλλίμαχος*.<sup>54</sup> However, these two are more likely to have been treatises on river-related *mirabilia* that would fit in with the works of the Alexandrian librarian.

It goes without saying that cold water is, in many ways, an essential and much desired product in hot and dry climates such as in the Mediterranean area. In Greek and Roman medicine, the use of water (cold, tepid, warm, or hot) is a much discussed topic;<sup>55</sup> but especially *cold* water receives attention from various points of view. Hippocrates, e.g., in *De aere, aquis, locis* ('On Airs, Waters, and Places'), warns us that the consumption of, esp. cold, water mixed from two or

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52 On the destruction of literature, be it by drowning it in water, using it as wrapping paper for various kinds of food (often fish) or as wrap in a cookshop, see Coleman (1988) 227 (on Stat. *silv.* 4,9,11–13) and Grewing (1997) 395 (on Mart. 6,60 [61],8). Note also Catull. 95, in which Catullus welcomes the publication of Cinna's neoteric-Callimachean *Zmyrna* which will become an immortal world-wide bestseller, and at the same time condemns Volusius' old-fashioned, anti-neoteric *Annales* which he predicts will not even get beyond the place of their origin (Padua) and 'often make loose jackets for mackerel' (*laxas scombris saepe dabunt tunicas*, line 8). See further Watson (2005) on the links between Catull. 95 and 36 (Volusius' *Annales* as *cacata carta*).

53 I didn't have access to S. Isetta, "Sul *De aquae frigidae usu* di Calvo," in: *Studi e ricerche dell'Istituto di Latino* 1, Genoa (Facoltà di Magistero) (1997) 107–112.

54 Leary (1996) 262; plus, he compares Book 3 of Sen. *Nat.*, *De aquis terrestribus*, and the late antique (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> c.?) catalog *De fluminibus, fontibus, lacubus, nemoribus, gentibus quorum apud poetas mentio fit* by a certain Vibius Sequester. One can only hope that good old Calvus did *not* produce such a weird thing.

55 For an overview, see Leven (2005) 914 (with references).

more sources can ultimately result in urinary tract stones.<sup>56</sup> Galen, in his *De sanitate tuenda* ('Hygienics') 3,4, stresses the therapeutic value of cold water, esp. in baths. The most prominent role, at least to my knowledge, cold water plays in Celsus' *De medicina* ('On Medicine').<sup>57</sup> In fact, Celsus' frequent discussion of the benefits of (cold) water even prompted two German *dissertationes historico-medicae* in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>58</sup> And don't forget that Dio Cassius reports how the physician Antonius Musa successfully 'restored' Augustus 'back to health by prescribing both cold baths and cold drinks' (καὶ ψυχρολουσίαις καὶ ψυχροποσίαις ἀνέσωσε, 53,30,3) when the emperor fell seriously sick in Spain 23 B.C.E.<sup>59</sup>

Let me turn to yet another emperor. According to Pliny (*HN* 31,40), Nero found a way of how to use snow to produce an ice-cold drink of water without having to drink the potentially perilous snow as well, the famous *decocta Neronis* ('Nero's boiled water, cooled down').<sup>60</sup> And Tacitus reports that Nero once

<sup>56</sup> See Poulakou-Rebelakou *et al.* (2015).

<sup>57</sup> I here single out my favorites, e.g. 1,8,4 ('He whose food tends to turn sour should beforehand take a draught of tepid water and vomit; but if as a consequence he has frequent motions, he should after each stool take a draught of cold water.');

3,7,2 (cold water to treat ardent fever, 'but certainly not before the fourth day,' and then the patient should consume it 'even beyond satiety');

3,18,22 (to cure excessive depression); 3,20,3 (lethargy); 3,23,6 (epilepsy); 4,31,6 (podagra and cheiragra). The list could go on.—I was too lazy to check ancient veterinary medicine (such as Vegetius, the *Mulomedicina Chironis* ['Chiron's Medicine for Mules'], or Pelagonius); Columella, who introduced the term *medicina veterinaria* (7,3,16), mentions cold water twice in the treatment of sick cattle (6,14,6, 16,2).

<sup>58</sup> E. F. C. Oertel, *De aquae frigidae usu Celsiano*, Munich 1826, and H. H. F. Zimmermann, *De aquae usu Celsiano particula I*, Halle 1844 (*particula II* never made it to the press). I took the liberty of *not* reading either of the two. However, those wishing to do so can easily access the texts online via the catalog of the *Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*, Munich.

<sup>59</sup> Suetonius (*Aug.* 81) only mentions *frigida fomenta* ('cold poultices'). On (the therapeutic value of) bathing in cold (or hot) water, see Fagan (1999) 85–103; for Antonius Musa, see Michler (1993).

<sup>60</sup> See Suet. *Nero* 48,3 and Cass. Dio 63,28,5 on the day of Nero's 'assisted suicide' (although it is more than likely that Suetonius and Dio are here simply echoing the hostile anecdote-laden propaganda that started right after Nero's death). On the de(con)struction of the notorious 'bad' emperors, Nero and Domitian, by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius, see the recent study by Schulz (2019), with ample bibliography, but also consult G. Andrews' review, *BMCR* 2020.07.32.—Martial, too, alludes to the *decocta Neronis* at 14,116–117, and see Iuv. 5,50.

took a bath in the spring of Rome's most famous aqueduct, the *Aqua Marcia*,<sup>61</sup> thereby contracting a serious illness.<sup>62</sup> This may simply be an anecdote to discredit the former emperor who had fallen in disgrace right after his death. It is, however, noteworthy that Pliny (*HN* 31,41) records that 'the first prize for the coolest and most wholesome water in the entire world has been awarded by the voice of Rome to the *Aqua Marcia*, one of the gods' gifts to our city' (*clarissima aquarum omnium in toto orbe frigoris salubritatisque palma praeconio urbis Marcia est inter reliqua deum munera urbi tributa*).

This, finally, brings me back to Leary's rendering of the Calvus-poem (quoted above). All translations (English, German, Italian, French, Spanish, and Portuguese) I have checked render the *aquarum nomina* of line 1 as '(natural) rivers or waters'. Yet, we should not preclude the possibility that the phrase means 'names of aqueducts'.

Let me now put an end to this vast accumulation of ultimately frivolous speculations and return to the real epigrammatic and Saturnalian qualities of the poem.

In the world of Roman carnival, when life is turned upside down, merriment and the burlesque take over, and boozing parties abound, that is, when the 'Law & Order' of the everyday routine and discipline is temporarily suspended,<sup>63</sup> it is more than palpable that 'cold water' is the opposite of one of the essentials of

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61 The spring was located slightly west of the 83<sup>rd</sup> milestone of the *Via Sublacensis*, a road built to connect Nero's palace (the *Villa Sublacensis*) to Rome. For this villa in Sublaqueum (present-day Subiaco), see Frontin. *Aqu.* 7,6.

62 Tac. *Ann.* 14,22,4: [...] *nimia luxur cupidus infamiam et periculum Neroni tulit, quia fontem aquae Marciae ad urbem deductae nando incesserat; videbaturque potus sacros et caerimoniam loci corpore loto polluisse. secuta anceps valitudo iram deum adfirmavit.* ('Nero's excessive passion for extravagance brought him disrepute and danger, for he had entered, and swum in, the spring of the *Aqua Marcia* that had been channeled to Rome; and it was considered that by washing his body he had polluted the sacred waters and the holiness of the site. The grave illness which followed confirmed the anger of the gods.') For discussion, see Woods (2009), and see n. 60 above.

63 Note that the appreciation of Martial's epigrams is enhanced by drinking alcohol: Mart. 13,1,4 *postulat ecce novos ebria bruma sales* ('see, boozed midwinter calls for new jests'), 14,1,9 *sed quid agam potius madidis, Saturne, diebus [...]*? ('But what better have I to do in your tipsy days, Saturn [...]?'); and that the poet-persona is simply unable to produce his verse while sober: 11,6,12–13 *possum nil ego sobrius; bibenti / succurrent mihi quindecim poetae* ('I can do nothing sober, but when I drink, fifteen poets will come to my aid'). This water-wine antithe-



Saturnalian dinner parties, the excessive consumption of wine. He who restricts himself to the drinking of water is nothing but a boring ascetic such as Cato Uticensis, the paragon of dignity (*gravitas*), often enough ridiculed in Martial (and elsewhere):<sup>64</sup>

*Nosses iocosae dulce cum sacrum Florae  
festosque lusus et licentiam vulgi,  
cur in theatrum, Cato severe, venisti?  
an ideo tantum veneras, ut exires?*

(1 *praef. epigr.*)

‘Although you knew of sprightly Flora’s pleasant ritual, the festal jests and license of the crowd, why, stern Cato, did you come into the theater? Or had you only come in order that you might go out?’

Drinking water, thus being sober, generally accounts for sound common sense and intellect, whereas drinking wine stands for the opposite.<sup>65</sup> More specifically, drinking water is associated with the meticulous planning and elaboration of forensic speeches, e.g. when, in Aristophanes’ *Knights*, Paphlagon (‘Cleon’), in his conversation with the simple-minded sausage-seller, asserts that one of the things one ought to do as a speech writer is to ‘drink water’ (ὕδωρ τε πίνων, Aristoph. *Equ.* 349).

This, finally, leads me to what I believe Martial’s poem is (much more likely to be) about: Calvus, not the Neoteric poet, but the orator.

At first sight, the distich offers by far the most dim-witted of titles in the entire section, if not collection. But it may not be dim-witted at all. I am tempted to take the *frigida (aqua)*, not as refreshing or healthy, but as referring to the

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sis is fairly common; see Kay’s note (1985) 74–75 and Rubensohn (1891). Of course, drinking is also a prerequisite for the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> cent. C.E. poet of three-line riddles, Symp(h)osius (see *Anth. Lat.* 281 SB, *Aenig. praef.* 5,7,17).—Let me skip the other particulars which characterize the celebration of the December festival. See instead the excellent synopsis in Döpp (1993); for a short summary, see Leary (1996) 1–9.

64 See Citroni (1975) 11; cf. 11,2,1.

65 E.g. Isocr. 8 (Περὶ εἰρήνης [*On Peace*]),13; Plat. *Rep.* 8,561c9. For a sober discussion, see Asper (1997) 128–134, and cf. Crowther (1979). Asper rightly emphasizes that the ‘water vs. wine’ debate has nothing whatsoever to do with Callimachus, let alone his poetics.

work's *style* ('lifeless, insipid, lame').<sup>66</sup> Calvus was particularly famous as an orator practicing a strong 'Atticism' in opposition to Cicero's 'Asianism'.<sup>67</sup> Unsurprisingly, Cicero is critical of Calvus' overall skills:

*Sed ad Calvum [...] revertamur; qui orator fuit cum litteris eruditior quam Curio tum etiam accuratius quoddam dicendi et exquisitius adferebat genus; quod quamquam scienter eleganterque tractabat, nimium tamen inquirens in se atque ipse sese observans metuensque ne vitiosum colligeret, etiam **verum sanguinem deperdebat**. itaque eius **oratio** nimia religione **attenuate** doctis et attente audientibus erat inlustris, a multitudine autem et a foro [...] **devorabatur**. (284) Tum Brutus: **Atticum** se, inquit, Calvus noster dici oratorem volebat: inde erat ista **exilitas** quam ille de industria consequabatur.*

(Cic. Brut. 283–284)

'But back to Calvus: he not only had more academic training than Curio, but he even displayed an oratorical style much more accurate and meticulous. Although he handled it with knowledge and elegance, yet through too much self-examination and fear of making a mistake **he lost true vigor**. Hence **his style, attenuated** by too much scrupulousness, was recognized as lucid by learned and careful listeners; however, the common crowd and the forum just **gulped it down**. (284) Then Brutus said: Our Calvus wanted to be called an '**Attic orator**'; hence that **meagerness** which he cultivated so assiduously.'

As is well known, the 'Atticism-Asianism dispute' of the Ciceronian era continued to be an issue later, e.g., in Quintilian's *Institutio* and Tacitus' *Dialogus*, that is, it was still part of the rhetorical discourse in Martial's time. In the *Dialogus* (at 18,5), Aper refers to the correspondence between Calvus (and Brutus) and Cicero, from which it 'was easy to gather that Cicero found Calvus blood-

66 For this quasi-technical use of *frigidus*, see *ThLL* 6,1329,82ff. ('i.q. enervis in dicendo' *vel sim.*); cf. Greek ψυχρός at *LSJ*, s.v., II 4.

67 The *testimonia* are conveniently collected in Malcovati's *ORF*<sup>4</sup>, pp. 493–494. A very useful account of this dispute and its dimensions can be found in Leeman (1963) 136–167 ("Cicero and the Atticists"); on Calvus, see esp. 138–142.

less (*exsanguis*) and dry (*aridus*), while to Calvus Cicero was flabby (*solutus*) and meager (*enervis*).<sup>68</sup>

*Mutatis mutandis*, I find it tempting to read Martial's poem not only as a reaction to Catullus 14, but also as a comment on Calvus as orator. After all, it is Calvus' oratorical brilliance that Catullus, with reference to his famous speeches *In Vatinius*, praises in c. 53:

*Risi nescio quem modo e corona,  
qui, cum mirifice Vatiniāna  
meus crimina Calvos explicasset,  
admirans ait haec manusque tollens,  
'di magni, salaputium disertum!'* 5 (Catull. 53)

'I laughed at someone in court recently who, when my friend Calvus had given a brilliant account of Vatinius' crimes, threw up his hands and said with admiration: 'Great Gods, what an eloquent squirt!'<sup>69</sup>

The overwhelming success of his speeches *Against Vatinius* secured him a place in the school curriculum down to the time of Tacitus:

[...] *in omnium studiosorum manibus versantur accusationes quae in Vatinius inscribuntur, ac praecipue secunda ex his oratio; est enim verbis ornata et sententiis, auri- bus iudicum accomodata* [...] (Tac. *dial.* 21,2)

'[...] the orations entitled *Against Vatinius* are in every student's hands, especially the second one; for it is rich in style and full of ideas, and well adapted to the judges' ears.'

<sup>68</sup> Of course, all those metaphors are partly interchangeable and could be used either to characterize an Atticist or an Asianist. Quintilian, e.g., reports (at *inst.* 12,10,12) that, among other things, Cicero was accused of being *frigidus* (by Calvus and Brutus).

<sup>69</sup> The meaning of *salaputium* has been much discussed (see any commentary on Catullus, *ad loc.*); it suffices here to follow the Elder Seneca (*contr.* 7,4,7) who describes Calvus as *parvus statura* ('of exiguous stature'; cf. Ov. *trist.* 2,431) *propter quod etiam Catullus in hendecasyllabis vocat illum 'salaput(t)ium disertum'* ('because of which Catullus, too, in his hendecasyllables calls him an 'eloquent *salaputium*'). 'Squirt' is G. Lee's translation, which is on a par with 'Wicht, Zwerg' (Kroll); others who suspect a phallic nuance translate 'little cock' (Goold) *vel sim.*, German 'Schwänzchen' (Weinreich). *Alii alia.*

Martial's *Apophoretum* 196 may, *inter alia*, be perceived as taking part in this discourse.

To sum up: Looking back at the literature section as a whole, it should have become clear that there is no need to doubt its order or integrity. Rather, the sequence is very clearly structured, full of literary twists at various levels, which the reader is invited to decode. Its overarching metapoetical point is (quite simply) the binary opposition, carried out in a variety of different ways, between 'Saturnalian' vs. 'non-Saturnalian' literature. From this perspective, the final couplet on Calvus lends the section a neat element of closure: the exuberant friskiness of the few days of Saturnalian carnival is inevitably followed by the sobering return to the monotony of everyday life. Just as the schools and court rooms reopen,<sup>70</sup> so an orator such as Calvus, too, resumes his work. Seen this way, the Calvus-poem is parallel to the final couplet of the *Apophoreta*, the *Adipata* (223), which brings the Saturnalia and the Book of *Apophoreta* to a definite end. After all, it matters little what kind of literature is sufficiently Saturnalian. On top of that, if you accept my (perhaps bold) contention that Calvus' *On Cold Water* never existed, this 'non-text' would be the most suitable present a poor client could give his rich patron, i.e. nothing: *quotiens amico diviti nihil donat, / [...] liberalis est pauper* ('Whenever he gives nothing to a rich friend, / [...] the poor man is generous', Mart. 5,18,9–10).

The sad truth remains that, for 360 or so days of the year, there simply is no carnival. The good news, however, is that the reader can reactivate at will his/her personal literary carnival at any time of the year by opening, and immersing him/herself in, the many Books of Epigrams Martial has published.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> For school holidays during the Saturnalia, see Plin. *epist.* 8,7,1, Mart. 5,84,1–2, 12,81,1; for court recess, Macr. *Sat.* 1,10,1, 16,6.

<sup>71</sup> For this idea, see Grewing (1999a) 279–281.

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Farouk F. Grewing  
Institut für Klassische Philologie und Komparatistik  
Universität Leipzig  
Beethovenstr. 15  
D-04107 Leipzig  
farouk\_f.grewing@uni-leipzig.de

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