

Alberto CANOBBIO (Hg.), M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammaton liber quintus. Introduzione, ed. critica, traduzione e commento a cura di A. Canobbio. Studi latini Bd. 75. Napoli: Loffredo 2011, pp. 634*

It was almost a quarter of a century ago, in 1982, when J. Griffith, in his review of P. Howell's 1980 commentary of Book 1 of Martial's *Epigrams*, argued that it would hardly be academically necessary or financially justifiable to produce commentaries on all 15 books of Martial: 'Martial's most fervent admirers can hardly claim that he is worth all that big a slice of a library's budget, however it may be spread out over the years.' (CR 32 [1982]: 174) At that time, only Book 1 was covered by, not just one, but two commentaries: the detailed commentary & edition by M. Citroni (Florence 1975) and Howell's somewhat unfortunate follow-up on the same Book, however entertaining in its lightheartedness it may be. Griffith's inappropriate statement may thus have been a reaction to this unnecessary doublet, given that the remaining 14 books had back then still been neglected at all in the 20th century. Fortunately, Martialists from 1982 onwards have remained completely unimpressed by this verdict. For, meanwhile almost the entire corpus has been appreciated by up-to-date modern commentaries: C. Williams on Book 2 (Oxford 2004), A. Fusi on Book 3 (Hildesheim etc. 2006), R. Moreno Soldevila on Book 4 (Leiden etc. 2006), Canobbio under review here, and P. Howell (Warminster 1995), on Book 5, myself on Book 6 (Göttingen 1997), G. Galán Vioque on Book 7 (Leiden etc. 2002), C. Schöffel on Book 8 (Stuttgart 2002), C. Henriksén on Book 9 (2 vols, Uppsala 1998-1999; rev. ed. Oxford 2012), G. Damschen & A. Heil (eds) on Book 10 (Frankfurt 2004: unfortunately rather useless; see my review in *Gymnasium* 113 [2006], 551-553)¹, N.M. Kay on Book 11 (London 1985), T.J. Leary on Book 13, the *Xenia* (London 2001), *id.* on Book 14, the *Apophoreta* (London 1996), and K.M. Coleman on the *Liber Spectaculorum* (Oxford 2006). The only gap, most hardly felt indeed, is still the lack of a reliable commentary on Book 12, Martial's *liber Hispanus sive Hispaniensis*.² — *Ad summam*: We can fondly say that most of Martial's Books have by now received due attention by modern

* The reviewer sincerely apologizes to the book's author and its readers for the extreme tardiness of this review.

¹ It is in fact a pity that the 1981 Cambridge DPhil thesis on select poems of *Epigrams* 10 by J. Jenkins never made it to the press. Jenkins' commentary covers 10.1-10, 20(19), 30, 34, 35, 38, 48, 50, 53, 61, 63, 72, 92, and 101. C. Francis' unpublished University of Otago PhD thesis (*Martial Epigrammata Book X: A Commentary*) of 2006 will remain unpublished for good reasons.

² M. Bowie's 1988 unpublished Oxford DPhil thesis cannot fill this gap.

scholars; only Books 10 and, particularly, 12 deserve more attention, that is, on a much higher level than in the editions so far available.³

Alberto Canobbio's (C.'s) new edition and commentary of Book 5 is to be most warmly welcomed, for it replaces Howell's lightweight Warminster commentary on the same Book of 1995, which is primarily aimed at high school teachers and their pupils. Most likely, this limitation is owed at least to some extent to the rules imposed by *Aris & Phillips*, but one must stress that, within the same series, commentaries have appeared that reach a readership way beyond British class rooms. Suffice it to recall A. Sommerstein's volumes on the comedies of Aristophanes.

C.'s some 60 pages of introduction cover the traditional topics: a general characterization of Book 5 proper; a section on meter, length of the poems, and their arrangement within the Book; date; transmission (which is, of course, an issue going beyond the individual book); specific criteria relating to the present edition; a *conspectus siglorum* of the manuscripts; and a 'tavola comparativa' in which C. lists deviations from, and agreements with, the standard editions of Martial by Lindsay (*ed. altera* of 1929, *OCT*), Heraeus (*ed. correctior*, supplied by Borovskij, of 1976, *BT*), and Shackleton Bailey (1990, *BT*, supplemented by some corrections and afterthoughts in the 1993 *Loeb ed.*).⁴

Book 5 could be labeled 'the Theater Edict Book', for it contains a unique cycle of epigrams relating to the *Lex Roscia theatralis*, originally sponsored by the tribune Roscius Otho in 67 BCE, then renewed by Augustus as the *Lex Iulia theatralis*, and re-confirmed by Domitian who was so notoriously desperate to become the Flavian Augustus. In 2002, C. published a useful little book, *La lex Roscia theatralis e Marziale: il ciclo del libro V*, on which this commentary in part draws.

Pp. 11-20, C. neatly contextualizes Book 5 within Martial's oeuvre, with particular emphasis on the imperialism of the book. Matter-of-factly, Book 5, just as Book 8, differs significantly from the remaining collection by being almost entirely free of openly obscene or otherwise sexually explicit epigrams. C. is perhaps not to blame for saying virtually nothing about this phenomenon. Are Books 5 & 8 more 'imperial' than the rest?⁵ And if so, would this account for their lack of below-the-bottom language? Remember the *proemio al mezzo* in Book 3,

³ As to Books 10 and 12, a good starting point is S. Lorenz, *Lustrum* 48 (2006): 191-200 and 209-215, for research until 2003.

⁴ I will refer to these editions as Li, HB, SB, and SB *Loeb*.

⁵ C. might have profited from K.M. Coleman's "Martial Book 8 and the Politics of AD 93", *PLLS* 10 (1998): 337-357, which is absent from the bibliography.

huc est usque tibi scriptus, matrona, libellus ... (3.68.1). I cannot help but think of the emperor/book-as-a-lady, anachronistically modeled on Emily and Florence in the BBC series *Little Britain*. Specifically *why* this is the case remains an open question.

The section on 'Metro, lunghezza e ordinamento degli epigrammi' (pp. 20-31) is almost identical to the respective chapters to be found elsewhere, e.g. in the commentaries on Books 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Now that we have most of the material in front of us (plus the – albeit tiresome – statistics put forward by J. Scherf, *Untersuchungen zur Buchgestaltung Martials*, Munich/Leipzig 2001⁶) we might be ready for a more daring approach and try to look at structural strategies that unite Martial's Books more specifically. (I shall deal with this later elsewhere.) Recent research has paved the way, and it is somewhat odd that C. seems to be entirely unaware of it. In 2008, V. Rimell summarized the intrinsic paradox of Martial's Books thus: "Martial's project takes the difference-in-sameness of *variatio* and pushes it to its most jagged and muddling extremes." (*Martial's Rome: Empire and the Ideology of Epigram*, Cambridge, 50) C. would have profited from taking into account W. Fitzgerald's *Martial: The World of the Epigram* (Chicago 2007, esp. ch. 4: 'Juxtaposition: The Attraction of Opposites') and also D.P. Fowler's 'Martial and the Book' (*Ramus* 24 [1995], 31-58). This would have made him much more sensitive as to the metapoetics of epigram collections such as Martial's.⁷

Now, let me come to some textual issues: the critical list mentioned above contains no less than c. 170 (!) entries, but this figure blurs reality significantly, because in the majority of cases, when C. disagrees with one or two of his predecessor editions, he agrees with at least the remaining third one, or even with two of them. This once more confirms my often-enough expressed conviction that a complete re-collation of the relevant MSS is certainly futile. And yet, just like Citroni (Book 1, 1975) and Fusi (Book 3, 2006; see Grewing, CR 58 [2008] 154), C.'s edition is based on the autopsy of 24 witnesses, 10 of which belonging to the *antiquiores*, another 8 forming part of the *recentiores*, and "lemmi del commento di Calderini" (49), first published in the Aldine edition of 1501. The apparatuses following C.'s Latin texts (printed *suo loco* rather than as an isolated corpus separate from the actual commentary) are pretty packed, sometimes (like Fusi's) unwieldy. The overview of 'testimoni utilizzati' (pp. 51-59) is helpful,

⁶ See my detailed assessment of this book in *GFA* 4 (2001): 1083-1094.

⁷ C. also passes over in silence quite a number of publications that are not specifically devoted to Book 5, such as S. Lorenz, 'Martial, Herkules und Domitian: Büsten, Statuetten und Statuen im *Epigrammaton liber nonus*, *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003), 565-584; *id.*, 'Waterscape with Black and White: Epigrams, Cycles, and Webs in Martial's *Epigrammaton liber quartus*, *AJPh* 125 (2004), 255-278; N. Holzberg, 'Illud quod medium est: Middles in Martial', in: S. Kyriakidis and F. de Martino, *Middles in Latin Poetry*, Bari 2004, 245-260.

though. Textual critics will love C.'s *app. crit.*, but the majority of readers would most probably appreciate a more compact version, without *impossibilia* and *subabsurda*, and this even more so, since most of the more remote and fanciful readings can be traced in other editions, beyond the *BT-OCT* triad, anyway. But I am ready to agree that this is a matter of taste.

In the list just mentioned, C. singles out (in bold face) 29 textual-critical instances that he calls 'casi notevoli' (p. 60); in nine cases he departs from all three predecessors. I shall confine myself to these:

6.3-17: not a textual issue proper, but modern punctuation matters here. C. puts 3-17 in quotation marks; thus, the words of the Muses to support the poet-*persona* appear in direct speech addressing Parthenius (see pp. 117-118). This is surely worth due attention. Shackleton Bailey in his *Loeb* puts a beginning-of-quote mark at line 3, but has the quote run until the end of the poem. His *Loeb* predecessor, W. Ker (1919), has an end-of-quote mark at the end of line 17, just as C., and I strongly think that this is right.

14.2 *licebat* vs. *liceret* Li, HB, SB in a *tunc/tum-cum* sentence. C. (pp. 194-195) may (!) be right in pushing the indicative here – against the strong support for *liceret* in the best witnesses –, because elsewhere Martial uses such *cum*-clauses with the indicative, but always in the present or perfect tenses, the exceptions being *erat* at 12.70.10 (but note that forms of *esse* behave differently tensewise; contrast *erat* at 14.180.2); 4.13.10 *fuert* is future perfect. One should read C.'s defense of the imperfect indicative alongside with A. Fusi, *RFIC* 130 (2002): 478-480.

I certainly don't see any need to capitalize *elegia* at 30.4. For sure, *Elegia* can be read as a personification here (p. 322), but this works perfectly okay also without the capital *E*-. In fact, small case *e*- allows for a twofold understanding that includes both *Elegia* as a *persona* and the genre as such. But again, this is not a transmission issue.

From C.' list on p. 61, the impression may arise that poem 38 poses a particular challenge to editors. This is not the case. In line 3, C. prints *quadringenta secat, qui dicit* 'Σῶκα μέριζε', whereas the *OCT* and the *BTs* have '*quadringenta seca*' *qui dicit*, σῶκα μέριζει. It took me a while to decode C.'s critical apparatus *ad loc.* (p. 375), and the longwinded discussion of the issue (p. 376) wasn't really helpful. In fact, C. follows the *MSS*, whereas Li, HB, and SB prefer slight changes to the text. One can express this in the apparatus in less than a single line. 'That man divides a knight's fortune, who tells me to share a fig' (in F.A. Paley & W.H. Stone's *Select Epigrams from Martial* [London 1898], p. 159). I can merely

guess why the other editors decided to deviate from the MSS, but since Σὸκα μέριζε/μερίζει strongly smacks of an otherwise unattested proverb, the indicative seems more likely. Just think of the syntactic structure of short proverbs as attested in the *Paroemiaci Graeci*. Consequently we need Rutger's *seca* for *secat*.⁸ – In line 7 of the same epigram, C. retains the MSS reading *sedetis* rather than Markland's conjecture *sedebis: unus cum sitis, duo, Calliodore, sedetis? / surge: σολοικισμὸν, Calliodore, facis*. For sure, the double solecism *unus-sitis* + *duo-sedebis* is funnier than the single one in the MSS. But the transmitted text is still funny enough, and future *sedebis* works against the logic of the narrative (p. 381-382).

Finally, why 49.9 (*imperator* : *Imperator* Li, HB, SB) is singled out as noteworthy I don't get. And the commentary is silent on this line (p. 430).

It goes without saying that C.'s commentary is a treasure house of useful, often excellent, observations. It collects, as a commentary should do, all relevant material, both linguistic and literary-critical, with a great deal of further reading, etc. C.'s own interpretations in the commentary are markedly conservative and traditionalist, for better or worse. The more fanciful an attempt to explain a given poem or line of thought is, the less likely it is to meet with C.'s approval. This need not necessarily be criticized in a traditional commentary, and I know perfectly well what I am talking about. However, times have changed, and so has the general approach towards commenting poetry. 600 pages leave a lot of room for even more than a lot.

The bibliography (pp. 595-611), despite its unsettling *lacunae* (see above, p. 1233 with n. 7), is okay and 'international' (that is, not restricted to favorite languages or nationalities).

Anyone working on Martial's *Epigrams*, the Flavians, or Roman poetry in general will benefit greatly from C.'s commentary, and myself I will use him often as a reference tool.

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⁸ And indeed, Paley & Stone, in their note on the line, were tempted, but not tempted enough, to change the text accordingly.