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MARTIAL 'IN CALLIMACHVM' (10.4)[1]

This article has the aim of bringing some fresh observations to the interpretation of a Martial epigram. Beyond the individual poem, it seeks to read Martial's poetics more broadly, particularly with regard to the presence of Greek avatars, of various kinds, in his poetic production. The strategy will be an exact reading of the literary avatars in 10.4, with an attempt to specify the tone with which individual writers are associated. Once this strategy is developed in the case of well-recognized intertextual models, it will be used to explore an underrated intertext in 10.4.

qui legis Oedipoden caligantemque Thyesten,
Colchidas et Scyllas, quid nisi monstra legis?
quid tibi raptus Hylas, quid Parthenopaeus et Attis,
quid tibi dormitor proderit Endymion?
exutusue puer pinnis labentibus? aut qui
odit amatrices Hermaphroditus aquas?
quid te uana iuuant miserae ludibria chartae?
hoc lege, quod possit dicere uita 'meum est'.
non hic Centauros, non Gorgonas Harpyiasque
inuenies: hominem pagina nostra sapit.
sed non uis, Mamurra, tuos cognoscere mores
nec te scire: legas Aetia Callimachi.

The twelve lines of this epigram are packed with literary significance,[2] both in the texts to which Martial refers and in the developed metaliterary attitude which Martial strikes.[3] It has been argued, for example, that Martial declares his satirical stance in opposition to Statius' *Thebaid* in the single word *caligans* and in the choice of the Greek accusative

[1] I am grateful to Wolfgang de Melo, Sam Hayes, Leslie Watson, the editor and an anonymous reviewer for constructive criticism of this little article; remaining errors are entirely my own.

[2] The fullest appreciation of this poem is in L. Watson and P. Watson, *Martial. Select Epigrams* (Cambridge, 2003), 95–9; see also M. Citroni, 'Motivi di polemica letteraria negli epigrammi di Marziale', *DialArch* 2 (1968), 259–301, at 280–1; E. Sergi, 'Marziale ed i temi mitologici nella poesia epica e tragica dell' età argentea (*Ep*. 10,4)', *GIF* 41 (1989), 53–64; A.L. Spisak, 'Martial 6.61: Callimachean poetics revalued', *TAPhA* 124 (1994), 291–308, at 304–5; U. Walter, *Epigramme* (Paderborn, 1996), 216–20; G. Damschen and A. Heil, *Epigrammaton liber decimus = Das zehnte Epigrammbuch: Text Übersetzung Interpretation* (Frankfurt am Main, 2004), 49–53; M. Neger, '"*'Graece numquid' ait 'poeta nescis?'*" Martial and the Greek epigrammatic tradition', in A. Augoustakis (ed.), *Flavian Poetry and its Greek Past* (Leiden and Boston, 2014), 327–44, at 334–6; R. Cowan, 'Fingering Cestos: Martial's Catullus' Callimachus', in A. Augoustakis (ed.), *Flavian Poetry and its Greek Past* (Leiden and Boston, 2014), 345–72, at 351–2.

[3] On Martial's poetics in general, see further P. Dams, 'Dichtungskritik bei nachaugusteischen Dichtern' (Diss., Marburg, 1970), 175–210, with a useful catalogue of relevant epigrams at 196 n. 1; M. Neger, *Martials Dichtergedichte. Das Epigramm als Medium der poetischen Selbstreflexion* (Tübingen, 2012); and N. Mindt, *Martials 'epigrammatischer Kanon'* (Munich, 2013); further references in S. Lorenz, 'Martial 1970–2003', *Lustrum* 45 (2003), 167–284, at 195–202 and *Lustrum* 48 (2006), 109–223, at 114.

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Oedipoden (first attested in Statius).[4] The debate over the precise nature of Martial's stance towards Statius has been a *cause célèbre* in Martial scholarship: whether we should take the poem as evidence for a heated literary rivalry[5] or as evidence for the playful adoption of a rhetorical attitude,[6] Martial has distanced himself decisively from Statian epic. Furthermore, the manner in which he has done so shows a consummate mastery of literary tone. The end of the poem returns to the issue of famous, learned predecessors. The addressee, Mamurra, is a familiar figure from the poems of Catullus: as a rule, a perfect picture of vice, being prodigal,[7] sexually indulgent[8] and a poetaster.[9] In Martial the name occurs also in 9.59, and again the bearer is over-sexed, pretentious and ridiculously incapable of backing up his delusions of grandeur. The strategy of borrowing this figure had already been employed by Horace (*Sat*. 1.5.37): Mamurra had become a byword, and the notion that Mamurra in Martial was a mere 'willkürlich gewählter Name' seems untenable in view of the consistent portrayal with which he is furnished.[10] Catullus' view of Mamurra is thus being co-opted by Martial: Mamurra, of all people, stands in need of correction, of 'knowing himself', both in the Catullan text and in Martial's reflection of that text in his own epigrams. The addressee of the poem is thus himself a deliberately literary character.

Yet, for readers of earlier Latin poetry, the literature from which Martial wishes to protect his addressee strikes an unusual note (10.4.11–12):

> sed non uis, Mamurra, tuos cognoscere mores
> nec te scire: legas Aetia Callimachi.

Catullus' Mamurra, who might benefit from better reading-material but whose character does not allow him to do so, is said to prefer reading the *Aetia*. Catullus—Martial's favourite intertext—is thus distanced from Callimachus, since Catullus' target is to read literature that Martial also distances himself from.[11] Callimachus' prized status among the Augustan poets hardly needs demonstration.[12] To name him here explicitly

[4] Watson and Watson (n. 2), 96; for a similar 'coding' of intertextuality in 7.19 (again with grand epic, this time Valerius Flaccus), see G. Galán Vioque, *Martial, Book VII. A Commentary. Translated by J.J. Zoltowski* (Leiden, 2017), on Mart. 7.19, A. Zissos 'Navigating genres: Martial 7.19 and the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus', *CJ* 99 (2004), 405–22, at 409–15.

[5] See L. Friedländer, *M. Valerius Martialis* (Leipzig, 1886), 1.361; H. Heuvel 'De inimicitiarum, quae inter Martialem et Statium fuisse dicuntur, indiciis', *Mnemosyne* 4 (1937), 299–330.

[6] C. Henriksén, 'Martial and Statius', in F. Grewing (ed.), *Toto notus in orbe: Perspektiven der Martial-Interpretation* (Stuttgart, 1998), 77–118. Further bibliography on the question can be found in Lorenz (n. 3 [2003]), 260–1.

[7] Catull. 41.4, 43.5, 114, 115; cf. also Hor. *Sat*. 1.5.37.

[8] Catull. 29.13; 57; 94; 115.8.

[9] Catull. 105. For what is known of Mamurra's biography, see C.L. Neudling, *A Prosopography to Catullus* (Oxford, 1955), 112–15.

[10] Martial's use of Catullus' Mamurra: C. Henriksén, *A Commentary on Martial* Epigrams *Book 9* (Oxford, 2012), 249; 'willkürlich gewählt': *RE* 14.1 (1928), s.v. 'Mamurra' fin.

[11] On Martial's use of Catullus after R. Paukstadt, *De Martiale Catulli imitatore* (Halle, 1876), see B.W. Swann, *Martial's Catullus. The Reception of an Epigrammatic Rival* (Hildesheim, 1994), W. Fitzgerald, *Martial: The World of Epigram* (Chicago, 2007), 167–86, S. Lorenz, 'Catullus and Martial', in M.B. Skinner (ed.), *A Companion to Catullus* (New York / Oxford, 2007), 418–38, Neger (n. 3), 54–73, Mindt (n. 3), 131–61 and the further references in Lorenz (n. 3 [2003]), 253–5 and id. (n. 3 [2006]), 114. For ways in which Martial activates readings of Catullus through his critical reception of Callimachus in 1.92, see Cowan (n. 2).

[12] W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom. Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (Wiesbaden, 1960), R.L. Hunter, *The Shadow of Callimachus. Studies in the Reception of Hellenistic Poetry at Rome* (Cambridge, 2006).

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as a model to be avoided is therefore a significant stance.[13] Indeed, the very naming of the poet and his work, entirely contained within a single metrical colon, is in deliberate contrast to the oblique reference to Statius at the poem's opening. If we must guess the identity of Statius, and the particular work at which Martial is tilting here, from the opening line of the epigram, the end of the poem leaves us in no doubt that an individual writer and a particular poem were indeed meant. The coupling of a Latin and of a Greek writer serves to underline Martial's point that mythological poetry monotonously reconfigures the same material.[14] Good poetry, therefore, must be sought elsewhere. Indeed, it is precisely with good poetry and what makes it that Martial is concerned in the sequence 10.2–10.5, providing us with an instance of Martial's careful structuring of his individual books.[15]

The question of Martial's judgement of Callimachus is important for our argument. In the only other reference to Callimachus, 4.23, the Greek poet once again fails to reach Martial's standards.[16] Callimachus is said to have conceded the palm of epigram of his own accord to Bruttianus, whose talent in the field of Greek epigram is thereby assured.[17] Martial's prayer to Thalia, Muse of epigram, is that she put him second to Bruttianus, should the latter begin to write Latin as well as Greek epigram. But the terms in which Bruttianus' skill is couched call for comment (4.23.6–8):

> qui si **Cecropio** satur **lepore**
> Romanae sale luserit Mineruae,
> illi me facias, precor, secundum.

The charm with which Martial fears Bruttianus may be sated is specifically 'Attic' charm.[18] In connection with Cyrenaean or (perhaps more relevantly) Alexandrian Callimachus, this seems strange. Bruttianus might have been given the palm of Greek epigram by Callimachus, but he is explicitly distanced from Callimachus' literary heritage: in fact, Callimachus is effectively dismissed.[19] One might compare Horace's

[13] Sergi (n. 2), 63 terms the appearance of Callimachus ἀπροσδόκητον, Neger (n. 2), 336 a *para prosdokian*; see also Dams (n. 3), for whom Callimachus' appearance here is 'erstaunlich' (204), and Spisak (n. 2), 304 n. 48, who documents Martial's relationship with Callimachus and the Neoterics. For Callimachus' reception in the Neronian period, see J.P. Sullivan, *Literature and Politics in the Age of Nero* (Ithaca and London, 1985), 74–114, esp. 79–80 on Martial 10.4.9–12 ('the nadir of [Callimachus'] reputation'). For Martial's less specific attacks on mythological epic, see 5.53, 8.3 and 9.50.

[14] Sergi (n. 2), 60; a character in the *Poiēsis* of Antiphanes (fr. 189) famously made a rather similar point.

[15] J. Scherf, 'Zur Komposition von Martials Gedichtbüchern 1–12', in F. Grewing (ed.), *Toto notus in orbe: Perspektiven der Martial-Interpretation* (Stuttgart, 1998), 119–38; S. Lorenz, *Erotik und Panegyrik. Martials epigrammatische Kaiser* (Tübingen, 2002), 8 n. 20; Fitzgerald (n. 11), 68–105.

[16] On this poem, Sergi (n. 2), 63; Neger (n. 3), 77–8; G.O. Hutchinson, *Greek to Latin. Frameworks and Contexts for Intertextuality* (Oxford, 2013), 143.

[17] J.P. Sullivan, *Martial: The Unexpected Classic. A Literary and Historical Study* (Cambridge, 1991), 74 cites 4.23.4 to show that Martial considered Callimachus 'the victorious doyen of epigrammatists'; likewise, R.R. Nauta, 'The *recusatio* in Flavian poetry', in R.R. Nauta, H.-J. van Dam and J.J.L. Smolenaars (edd.), *Flavian Poetry* (Leiden, 2006), 21–40, at 40 n. 53; this seems diametrically opposed to the implication of the text, that Callimachus has been made to yield.

[18] The adjective is applied in Martial to bees and bee-products (for which Attica was famous) four times (9.12.2, 11.42.4, 13.24.1, 13.105.2), to Minerva (1.39.3) and 'Pandion's citadel' (1.25.3) once apiece, and to a mountain (6.34.4); it thus has lost none of its specific semantics and cannot be written off as a synonym for 'Greek'. The editor reminds me of Stat. *Silu*. 2.6.55 *Cecropiamque fidem*.

[19] The contrast between Callimachus and the 'Athenian charm' called for in the epigram is often elided by commentators, as is Martial's positioning of himself *over*, not *equivalent to*,

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Pindar poem, *Carm.* 4.2, and Prop. 2.34, in which there is a similar 'triangulation' of poetic talent:[20] in the case of Horace, between himself, Iulus and Pindar; in the case of Propertius, between himself, Lynceus and, ultimately, Virgil. Propertius' Virgil is the representative of 'grand' poetry, precisely the kind of writing Lynceus is warded away from; Iulus is also contrasted both with Horace and with Pindar, the latter standing for a style beyond the imitative powers of lesser poets, the former demonstrating how such imitation might be done while disclaiming any intent to do so. In Martial, differently, Callimachus is to be nudged gently into third place, given Bruttianus' putative foray into Latin epigram; it is probably impossible to say whether or not this is deliberate inversion of the pattern in Horace and Propertius. Attic charm, Roman wit and Alexandrian epigram are thus ranked in this order and, as we shall see, the specific qualities of Attic literature are crucial for the argument of this paper.

Evidently, then, the kind of Greek literature with which Martial associates Bruttianus—in flattering terms—is Attic and not Alexandrian; and by implication it is this kind of literature which Martial sees also as his own province. Even if Callimachus is here a representative of epigram, it is clear that Martial sees his work as fundamentally different in kind; the taint of mythological literature, it seems, still lingers.[21] Martial's statements here are sometimes brought into alignment with the *recusatio* so often practised by Augustan poets.[22] But there is a significant difference from the Augustan use of this motif. The Roman elegists disclaim an *ability* to write the required verses; the *recusatio* is a request to be let off from the duty of producing grand epic. Martial's point, both in 10.4 and in 4.23, is that writing mythological epic is *less good* than writing epigram: 'his principal argument is not that he is unable to write in the loftier genre … but straightforwardly attacks those who write in the genre of mythological epic as well as tragedy'.[23] This accords with Martial's polemic elsewhere, for example in 9.50.5–6:

> nos facimus Bruti puerum, nos Langona uiuum,
> tu magnus luteum, Gaure, Giganta facis.

The beauty of Brutus' famous statue (cf. 2.77.4, 14.171, Plin. *HN* 34.82) is contrasted with the 'dirty great Giant' of Gaurus' mythological poem on Trojan topics (9.50.3–4); note that size alone is not the issue as much as poetic finish.[24] The combination of the word *luteus*, so often used of dirty water in metapoetic contexts, with the Gigantomachy, the classic subject of inflated epic, links Martial's poem with this literary topos.[25] The contrast between the Giant, a fictional unpoetic creature, and the deceptively realistic *Langon*,[26] which is so lifelike that it may be described as *uiuus*, is plain. The catalogue

Callimachus; see Sullivan (n. 17), 60, R. Moreno Soldevila, *Martial, Book IV* (Leiden and Boston, 2006), 227–32, esp. 230, Cowan (n. 2), 350.

[20] 'Das Dreiecksgefüge der Dichter' in the words of W. Wimmel, 'Recusatio-Form und Pindarode', *Philologus* 109 (1965), 89–91.

[21] Cowan (n. 2), 349–50 is sceptical about our ability to identify a unified stance in Martial; this paper takes the line that 4.23 and 10.4 do express the same message. Indeed, Cowan's interpretation of 1.92 in fact tends in the same direction (see 363–4 on Martial's anti-Callimachean use of a Callimachean stance).

[22] Sullivan (n. 13); Sullivan (n. 17); Nauta (n. 17).

[23] Henriksén (n. 10), 218. See also Nauta (n. 17), 38 and Zissos (n. 4), 416–17 on 7.19.6, in which the single plank—the metapoetic *tabella*—is *sanctior* than the whole ship would have been.

[24] Cf. 2.77.3 on the beauty of the Colossus, and 6.65 and 1.110 defending Martial's 'long epigrams'.

[25] Dams (n. 3), 203.

[26] For the problems in identifying this work, see Henriksén (n. 10), 222–3.

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of mythical exploits in *Spect*. 27 ends on a similar note (*Spect*. 27.11–12 = 31.11–12 Coleman):

> Herculeae laudis numeretur gloria: plus est
> bis denas pariter perdomuisse feras

The dismissal of Hercules' exploits (several of which are explicitly named in the rest of the poem) in favour of the real cut-and-thrust of the gladiatorial arena again corresponds with Martial's values elsewhere.[27]

Thus, we need not be surprised at the statement in 10.4 that the *Aetia* ranks low in Martial's estimation next to his own form of poetry.[28] Indeed, given the parallels to the thought in 10.4 sketched above, it may not be correct to read 10.4 as a paradoxical joke.[29] But how does Martial characterize his own poetry? Martial frequently points to earlier poets to justify his own practice (particularly Marsus and Pedo: 1 *praef*. 11; 2.77.5; 5.5.6; 8.55.23; 7.99.7; 10.20.10). The highly structured balance of the epigram is confirmation of this:[30] we expect another author alongside Martial to balance Statius and Callimachus; furthermore, we might guess that this poet is Greek, in counterpoint to Callimachus and in combination with Martial's own role in representing Latin poetry. However, if Martial is referring to a poetic predecessor here, he is not named; we must therefore be supposed to recognize some allusion, rather as we are at the epigram's beginning. And if our reading of 4.23 is correct, we might also expect that we are looking for an Attic writer in particular, and one whose works embody the qualities of everyday realism that Martial prizes.

The clue to this poet's identity is the 'vivid personification'[31] of *uita* in 8 (10.4.7–8):

> quid te uana iuuant miserae ludibria chartae?
> hoc lege, quod possit dicere uita 'meum est'.

This is the opening couplet of the poem's second half, 'la parte propriamente programmatica', according to Sergi.[32] Watson and Watson are right to call attention to the personification, for not only is it vivid, it is highly unusual.[33] In fact, one of the very few forerunners of this motif, as seen by Holzberg,[34] is found in an epigram of Aristophanes of Byzantium:

[27] Zissos (n. 4), 408.

[28] On Martial's reaction against Callimachus, see Spisak (n. 2); A. Harder, *Callimachus* Aetia (Oxford, 2012), 1.112 also cites *Anth. Pal.* 11.275 (on which, see further Pfeiffer on test. 25). Zissos (n. 4), 405 n. 2 calls Martial 'a disciple of Callimachus … rejecting large-scale epic'; this overstates the similarity of Martial's stance to Callimachus' poetological reflections and Martial's concern with size as opposed to stylistic finish. 7.19, Zissos's subject, is indeed contrasted with Valerius' epic, but it is not clear what is specifically Callimachean about this: poetological metaphor, after all, was older than Callimachus.

[29] Lorenz (n. 15), 222.

[30] Sergi (n. 2), 56–60 on structural patterns in the epigram; cf. Watson and Watson (n. 2), 96: 'three beautiful boys are named in one line, followed by three more allotted one line apiece.'

[31] Watson and Watson (n. 2), 98.

[32] Sergi (n. 2), 61.

[33] The metonymic use of *uita* to refer to the beloved in Roman erotic literature is to be distinguished; the personification of *aetas* in Hor. *Carm*. 1.11.7 is rather different ('lifetime' perhaps, rather than 'life'). Martial himself personifies *uita* in precisely the same context at 8.3.20 *adnoscat mores uita legatque suos*; this has been seen by Lorenz (n. 15), 175, Nauta (n. 17), 39 n. 51 in the context of Menander; Neger (n. 3), 154–5 n. 82 adds that Martial's own Muse here is described in terms reminiscent of Phaedrus' depiction of Menander (5.1.12–13).

[34] N. Holzberg, *Martial und das antike Epigramm* (Darmstadt, 2002), 127; the wider literary implications of this are not explored in detail.

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ὦ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε,
πότερος ἀφ᾽ ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο;

O Menander, O Life,
which of you imitated the other?[35]

This was the most famous formulation of Menander's closeness to real life, though other poets, including Latin writers, also remarked on the realism of New Comedy.[36] Realism, in fact, is a key theme in Martial's own production:[37] the programmatic statement in the prologue to Book 1 is perhaps the clearest indication of this (1 *praef.* 9–10):[38]

lasciuam uerborum **ueritatem**, id est epigrammaton linguam, excussarem, si meum esset exemplum

It is not simply a matter of Martial's personal intention to write poems with claims to *ueritas*, rather the very nature of the genre demands the use of language enabling this claim. Elsewhere in Martial's work this link between poetic quality and *ueritas* justifies his use of obscenity (1.35, 11.90): real life is by this means brought into his poetry.

Might Martial have had some other Greek author in mind when he personified *uita* in this way? Strikingly, the only other case of the vocative of βίος in Greek literature before the Byzantine period is in an epigram of 'Aesopus' (*Anth.* 10.123):[39]

πῶς τις ἄνευ θανάτου σε φύγοι, βίε·[40] μυρία γάρ σευ
λυγρά, καὶ οὔτε φυγεῖν εὐμαρὲς οὔτε φέρειν.
ἡδέα μὲν γάρ σευ τὰ φύσει καλά, γαῖα, θάλασσα,
ἄστρα, σεληναίης κύκλα καὶ ἠελίου,
τἆλλα δὲ πάντα φόβοι τε καὶ ἄλγεα· κἢν τι πάθῃ τις
ἐσθλόν, ἀμοιβαίην ἐκδέχεται νέμεσιν.

How could anyone flee you, Life, without death! For your woes are countless, and neither flight from them nor endurance of them is an easy matter. Sweet are the things that are fine by your nature: earth, sea, stars and orbs of moon and sun; while all else is but fears and pains. And even if someone does well, he receives requital in response.

But even here the literary heritage is plain to see: this epigram has been imitated from Menander, fr. 373,[41] albeit with a less philosophical spin on the desirability of short life:

τοῦτον εὐτυχέστατον λέγω,
ὅστις θεωρήσας ἀλύπως, Παρμένων,
τὰ σεμνὰ ταῦτ᾽ ἀπῆλθεν, ὅθεν ἦλθεν, ταχύ·
τὸν ἥλιον τὸν κοινόν, ἄστρ᾽, ὕδωρ, νέφη,

[35] All translations are the author's.
[36] *PCG* VI.2 (Menander) 25, test. 83.
[37] Citroni (n. 2), 267–9, Lorenz (n. 15), 14, Holzberg (n. 34), 127–8.
[38] On this program, see P.J. Anderson, '*Absit malignus interpres*: Martial's preface to Book One of the *Epigrams* and the construction of audience response', in D.L. Munteanu (ed.), *Emotion, Genre and Gender in Classical Antiquity* (London, 2008), 193–220. This paper will return to the explicitly theatrical elements of the preface to Book 1.
[39] See D.L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1981), 108, where comment, itself epigrammatic, is restricted to the first line.
[40] Most texts punctuate this as a question; it is better understood, as Page suggested, as a wish.
[41] This was already seen by Page; on the Menander fragment and on fr. 871, which in earlier Menander editions was frequently joined with it, see G. Zuntz, 'Interpretation of a Menander fragment (fr. 416 Koerte = 481 Kock)', *PBA* 42 (1956), 209–46.

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πῦρ. ταῦτα, κἂν ἑκατὸν ἔτη βιῷς, ἀεὶ
ὄψει παρόντα, κἂν ἐνιαυτοὺς σφόδρ' ὀλίγους·
σεμνότερα τούτων ἕτερα <δ'> οὐκ ὄψει ποτέ

I call that man the happiest, Parmenon, who, having spent some time at ease among great sights here, goes back from whence he came; the shared sun, the stars, water, clouds, fire. If you could live a hundred years, if you live just a few, you will always see these things before you. And never will you see other greater sights than these.

The vocative βίε in Aesopus thus once again points us in the direction of Menander. The advice given is as much literary as it is moral. The reader of the epigram is presented with a contrast between things which are a delight to see (earth, sea, stars, moon and sun) and everything else (dismissed as 'fear and pain' or, if good, as attracting requital). Aesopus too is using the reminiscence of Menander to draw a picture of the everyday pleasures accessible to all; Menander, the reading material of everyday life, is recalled both by the address to Life and by how the good things of life are defined.[42]

Martial 10.4 thus activates the literary heritage of Attic comedy against the heritage of Alexandria.[43] Although Menander is not without reminiscences of mythological motifs, his interest is always in their relevance to the everyday lives of seemingly realistic characters, rather than in narration of details for the sake of it.[44] We are a world away from the *Aetia*'s mythological preoccupation. Menander's poetry is exactly the sort of which life could say 'it is mine'—indeed, that is precisely the point of the witty epigram of Aristophanes of Byzantium; Martial, by articulating this through the voice of 'Life' itself, draws our attention to Aristophanes' joke, and the inversion of mimetic practice it implies.

For Damschen, the key to the interpretation of this epigram was line 10: *hominem pagina nostra sapit*. This line, with its culinary tone (linking it with 10.59 in Damschen's interpretation), led him to see the whole epigram as a battle over the content—the 'flavour'—of different forms of poetry.[45] Other scholars have also seen culinary themes as crucial to Martial's output, in particular to his poetic claims.[46] For our purposes, the more important link is the frequently observed similarity to New Comedy, particularly Terence.[47] And yet, the interest in moral qualities like 'humanity' is no Terentian invention: they can be traced back into Greek New Comedy as well. Perhaps the most striking example of this can be found in the prologue of Menander's *Dyskolos* (6):

Κνήμων, ἀπάνθρωπός τις ἄνθρωπος σφόδρα

Knemon, a most inhuman human

[42] For Damschen—in Damschen and Heil (n. 2), 50—10.4 begins a sequence of philosophical poems scattered through Book 10, of which the most famous is 10.47, on which see Damschen and Heil (n. 2), 183–7, Watson and Watson (n. 2), 139–43.

[43] For Martial's use of Menander, see Neger (n. 3), 34–42, 95.

[44] Cf. *Dysk.* 153–9 (Perseus), *Sam.* 495–7 (Oedipus, Tereus), 589–96 (Zeus and Danaë). The last is particularly telling, being coupled with the humorous and homely question of Nicestratus' leaking roof.

[45] In Damschen and Heil (n. 2), 50–3.

[46] E. Gowers, *The Loaded Table. Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford, 1993), 247–9; W. Fitzgerald, *Variety. The Life of a Roman Concept* (Chicago, 2016), 158–61.

[47] Sergi (n. 2), 53: the phrase has a 'vago sapore terenziano'; see E. Paratore, *Storia della letteratura latina* (Florence, 1950), 680. The reference is presumably to the famous line at *Haut.* 77 (*homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto*).

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The play will dramatize the process by which Knemon's humanity is (partially) re-established. More widely, the idea of an essential unity in humankind is a frequent topos exploited by Menander, usually by young men seeking approval for their choice of partner (cf. Men. fr. 835 and a sadly fragmentary dialogue passage on an apparently similar theme at *Sam*. 137–43 m).

There may be yet another indication that Martial has Menander in mind in the last couplet of the poem. Callimachus is recommended as Mamurra's reading material not because Mamurra has explicitly mythological interests as such, but rather because he has no desire either to discover his own ways or to know himself. The reference to the Delphic wisdom γνῶθι σεαυτόν could hardly be more apparent.[48] Yet, the poet who perhaps made more, and more famous, play with this proverb than any other was once again Menander:[49]

> Σμικρίνη, πάνυ μοι δοκεῖ
> τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτ' εἶναί τι μεμεριμνημένον
> τὸ 'γνῶθι σαυτόν'. (*Asp*. 189–91)

Smikrines, this saying seems to me very much worth keeping in mind: 'know thyself'.

> τὸ 'γνῶθι σαυτόν' ἐστιν, ἂν τὰ πράγματα
> εἰδῇς τὰ σαυτοῦ καὶ τί σοι ποιητέον (*Con*. fr. 1)

'know thyself' is when you know your own affairs and what you have to do

> ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος ῥῆμά τι
> ἐφθέγξατ' οὐδὲν ἐμφερές, μὰ τὸν Δία,
> τῷ γνῶθι σαυτόν (fr. 193.3–5)

but he said a saying not at all, by Zeus, similar to 'know thyself'

> κατὰ πολλά γ' ἐστὶν οὐ καλῶς εἰρημένον
> τὸ γνῶθι σαυτόν· χρησιμώτερον γὰρ ἦν
> τὸ γνῶθι τοὺς ἄλλους (fr. 181)

In rather many respects, 'know thyself' is not well put; more useful is 'know other people'.

This last example is particularly striking, since it is the only extant case in which the Delphic wisdom is subjected to ironic criticism.[50]

Again, Martial uses the literary reminiscence with pinpoint rhetorical accuracy. Mamurra, who has no interest in self-knowledge or personal development, will turn his back on morally improving poetry. New Comedy's concern for the τρόπος of its characters, and by extension of its audience, aligns it with the epigram's assumption

[48] See H. Tränkle, 'ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΕΑΥΤΟΝ: Zu Ursprung und Deutungsgeschichte des delphischen Spruchs', *WJA* 11 (1985), 19–32.

[49] In addition to the Menander fragments cited in the text, we can add Philemon, fr. 139, but the proverb is not attested elsewhere in comedy; perhaps fr. com. adesp. 1053.13 once had the proverb in it, but there are simply no grounds whatsoever for attributing it to any particular comic writer (*pace* K.–A. ad loc., not even K. Gaiser, 'Bemerkungen zur *Hydria* Menanders', *ZPE* 47 [1982], 11–34 seriously entertains the possibility of Menandrean authorship).

[50] Tränkle (n. 48), 25.

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of a moral program.[51] Mamurra is thus susceptible neither to Martial's message nor to comedy's; mythological epic offers him, by contrast, a means of avoiding the everyday, realistic and applicable in favour of the monotonous and remote.[52]

Menander—as an Attic author, as a comic poet writing 'realistic' drama and as a writer concerned with morality in a broad sense—is revealed as the key intertext of this epigram. If the presence of comedy is accepted, we can schematize the second half of the epigram according to the following pattern:

uana ... miserae ludibria chartae	~ mythological epic
quod possit dicere uita 'meum est'	~ comedy
Centauros ... Gorgonas Harpyiasque	~ mythological epic
hominem pagina nostra sapit	~ comedy
tuos cognoscere mores	~ comedy
Aetia Callimachi	~ mythological epic

The patterning, with its sudden reversal in the final couplet, adds a further layer to the ἀπροσδόκητον identified by Sergi, and brings the structural play of the first half of the poem into the second as well. This reading of the Martial epigram has brought some new interpretative material to bear on 10.4, in particular Attic comedy, and the opposition of Attic and Alexandrian literature. Martial's polemic against mythological poetry is thus not only a matter of his own literary stance; rather, it is itself part of a rich network of literary texts forming the background of 'light' or 'small' literature.[53] Comedy, with its realistic characters and deep connection with the everyday, must have been an attractive genre in which Martial could set his own poetics.[54] Furthermore, Menander specifically must have been an attractive comic poet for Martial's purpose; the anecdotes that were told in the Imperial period of concentrated and detailed plotting followed by fluent verse composition—whatever be their veracity—provide an obvious analogue for Martial's own assertion of writing *nugae*.[55]

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[51] For Citroni (n. 2), 280 the moralizing tone of this epigram distinguishes it from Martial's other metaliterary work; however, see Spisak (n. 2), 301–3 on the link made by Roman satire between high poetry and avoidance of the duty to expose vice. On τρόπος in Menander, see A. Martina, *Menandrea I* (Pisa and Rome, 2016), 37–44.

[52] One thinks of Wagner's Wanderer in *Siegfried* and his criticism that Mime has wasted his chance to acquire knowledge on *eitle Fernen*—in context, mythological and cosmological questions about the territory of giants, Nibelungs and gods. It is in this sense that the *Aetia* can be considered 'mythological'—in its distance from ordinary life—even if not all of the *Aetia*'s content is strictly speaking 'myth'.

[53] Holzberg (n. 34), 127.

[54] Cf. 1 *praef.* 15–16 *theatrum meum*; 1.4.5–6 on the connection between *spectare* and *legere*; cf. Fitzgerald (n. 11), 71–7, Anderson (n. 38), 208–13, Neger (n. 3), 223–35. A doctorate recently completed at Exeter by Sam Hayes explores the notion of Martial's *theatrum* in greater depth.

[55] Menander's composition process: Plut. *De glor. Ath.* 347e; Martial's *nugae*: Swann (n. 11), 47–55. On the question of poetic craft in general, see Spisak (n. 2), 294–300.

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