

(C. Whitton, *The Arts of Imitation in Latin Prose* [2019]) and instead give my question about Lactantius its obvious answer: here, as in so much, the Handbook faithfully represents the state of scholarship on Quintilian, in which early reception is routinely forgotten or ignored.

Every reader will have their absences, and that is not to diminish the presences, many, varied and valuable: here is a book that (as Quintilian might have put it) promises not just good intentions, but much usefulness.

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## INDIVIDUALS IN MARTIAL

KISSEL (W.) *Personen und persona in den Epigrammen Martials*. (Palingenesia 132.) Pp. 233. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2022. Cased, €54. ISBN: 978-3-515-13128-5.  
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K., an expert in Roman satire and first-century literature more generally, examines in this monograph two important points of discussion in scholarship on Martial that are interrelated: persons and *persona* in Martial's epigrams.

Current philological research on Martial tends (as does Latin scholarship discussing first-person poetry generally) to suppose a literary construction of the persons as literary characters, including the first person (as epigrammatic I, *narrateur*, poet-*persona* or similar). K. warns that two axioms have so far been insufficiently verified: first, the characters in Martial's mocking epigrams are supposed to appear under arbitrarily interchangeable nicknames or cover names or even to be invented. K. asks if, on the contrary, Martial perhaps uses plain names referring to specific contemporaries and, ultimately, allows readers to identify the named individuals. Secondly, according to current scholarship, Martial's first-person statements are to be attributed to a *persona*, and the relevant epigrams are thus to be understood as role-playing poems. K. asks whether the poet, making autobiographical statements (e.g. as a husband or lawyer), possibly wants to be taken seriously after all and to be recognised as an individual in his own right.

These are fundamental questions with consequences for scholarship on Martial (p. 152). Regarding these questions, K. examines the corpus as a whole (catalogues of real names, pp. 15–140) as well as Martial's programmatic statements in particular (pp. 141–8), and he finds well-founded and interpretatively relevant answers that lead to a reassessment of individual poems (a list of epigrams that need reconsideration is on p. 206).

K. begins with real names ('Klarnamen') within Martial's environment: he catalogues the names (giving a short characterisation and indicating the epigrams) in seven groups, using social position as a criterion instead of the difficult division into *patroni* and *amici*: 'upper class', 'middle class', '(Nur-) Adressat' = 'isolated vocative' (with R. Nauta, *Poetry for Patrons* [2002], p. 46), individuals poetically honoured by Martial's epigrams, marginal figures within the town, slaves and others. He argues that pseudonyms for these people do not offer any benefits, or rather they reduce the advantages for the addressee and for the author, since there was no need for pseudonymisation that

sometimes would only reduce the effect of the epigrams. Sometimes the lists seem a little bit too long or too positivistic, but they build the basis for the interpretation (pp. 76–9). The groups of people for whom we can eliminate an invention of name or fictionalisation is long. K. objects to L. Friedländer's conclusion that identical names occurring in different epigrams are an argument for the arbitrariness of Martial's choice of names as over the years relationships may change.

Having examined the names of individuals with more or less positive connotations (the easier cases), K. moves on to the more delicate names of 'victims' ("Opfer"-Namen', pp. 80–151). He objects that even in Martial's scopic epigrams the modern interpreter must not doubt that one name indicates one person and encourages readers to feel entitled to reflect about the lifeworld background of the epigrams and to explore possible connections outside the text. The eighth group of names ('Katalog 8'), in alphabetic order, as are the other catalogues, is a relatively long collection of material (pp. 84–120) and lists the 'victims'. The guiding question is why we should distinguish between 'fictional character' and 'real character' if the characters are coherent. Is not this distinction a priori irrelevant, as K. asks in the introduction? This distinction is still made by R. Moreno Soldevila et al. (2019) in their prosopography, mentioned by K. in the introduction in a footnote (p. 13 n. 9) with criticism in this regard. Of course, readers may initially have doubts if another publication on people in Martial's epigrams after the publication of this important and useful prosopography, is necessary. But this is exactly the crucial point: do we content ourselves too quickly with textual 'realities' within the epigrams? Could/Might there be a lot more of real-life reality regarding the epigrams? K. opts for real names, even for victims (p. 123). He argues that a joke with names only works if it is based on a real name of a concrete person (p. 140), an argument that is not fully convincing. K. discusses Martial's programmatic statements that have often been brought up as evidence for the use of pseudonyms (e.g. 1 epist. 1–9, 2.23, 9.95), but he rightly states that none of these passages indicates that the characters are obliterated by the use of pseudonyms (p. 141). He sums up that there is essentially a connection to reality regarding people, names and events in Martial's epigrams (also in the *skoptika*). This leads to the second question of the book: is Martial's *persona* a fictitious mask or an authentic I?

K. argues against exponents of a fictional *persona* such as N. Holzberg, to whom he assigns the burden of proof if data given in the text are not contradictory. K. analyses epigrams that reveal something about the material circumstances of Martial's life (pp. 165–85): Martial as *pauper eques*, his housing situation and properties, financial situation and cash needs, exchanges of gifts or his status as a *cliens*. Since Martial's statements could be a consistent realistic scenario, K. claims to have debunked the assumption that the epigrammatist stages himself in various literary characters ('in der Unverbindlichkeit von Rollengedichten', p. 164). In the following chapter K. discusses the same questions regarding further key points of Martial's life: Martial and Domitian, Martial as a lawyer and Martial as a husband, interpreting the epigrams as a reflex of biographical reality.

The concluding chapter sketches the consequences of K.'s basic premise for scholarship on Martial. You do not need to use single quotation marks or complicated terms to indicate the person who speaks, but write simply Martial, since, according to K., the author-I and poetic I do not substantially differ. Historians and sociologists are, therefore, allowed to use the epigrams for studies on Flavian society without being criticised by philologists.

Perhaps K. is a little too severe in his statement that today's philologists tend to use the term 'poetical I', 'I of the poet' and so on in order to elude a priori answers regarding the autobiographical background of literary texts (p. 159). In any case he does well to call attention to the real-life basics within the epigrams that are indeed present. Modern scholarship should not analyse and interpret them as mere art for art's sake or take the

text only as material for exercises on literary theory. On the other hand K.'s fundamental assumption risks not distinguishing between characters of the text and real individuals at all, neglecting the constraints of the literary genre (therefore historians and sociologists should still exercise prudence in using Martial as their source): undoubtedly, K. would not fall back to too simple biographical interpretations of the epigrams, but perhaps he underestimates his concession that there may be elements of self-fashioning ('Mag dieser seine eigenen Auftritte auch zum Zweck der Leserlenkung mit Elementen einer Stilisierung versehen haben', p. 203). We should steer a middle course. Taking names and information more seriously than has previously been the case and seeking coherence can be helpful for the interpretation of single epigrams the point of which has not been clear so far (e.g. 8.41 and 9.95 with Athenagoras and 12.42 with Callistratus for the interpretation of 9.95b, pp. 86–7, 89–90, 147: *vester peccat Athenagoras* in 9.95b, 6 indicates sexual deviance set free after the death of the wife). Therefore, K.'s objections to skipping too quickly over the reality outside the text and concentrating only on literary games inside the text will bring benefits to scholarship on Martial and Classics in general.

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### TACITEAN *MIRACULA*

M McNAMARA (J.), P AGÁN (V. E.) (edd.) *Tacitus' Wonders. Empire and Paradox in Ancient Rome*. Pp. x + 281. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. Cased, £65, US\$90. ISBN: 978-1-350-24172-5. doi:10.1017/S0009840X22002128

Tacitus has enjoyed great esteem among literary scholars as an author who distinguished between appearance and reality to access layers of subtext and reveal hidden truths under a regime that favoured secrecy. This new book engages with this evaluation of Tacitus' sceptical historiography in constructive and novel ways. Its reflection on *miracula* illuminates the many roads that are left unexplored when scholars take Tacitus' scepticism at face value. By examining 'the wondrous' in Tacitus' works, this book shows the rich and unforeseen breadth of his historiographical project when we redirect our gaze to elements that have been commonly put aside for being anecdotal, fantastical or false.

In the introduction the editors explain the apparent contradiction in subjecting 'the sceptical Tacitus' to the study of the wondrous, making a case for looking at *miracula* as a meaningful component of his works. Building on recent studies on paradoxography in ancient literature, the editors justify their project by pointing out that Roman historiography has not been paid attention as a *locus* for the investigation of wonders. By examining instances where Tacitus' introduction of *miracula* may undermine his authority, the chapters explore the strategies whereby the historian handles potential challenges to the credibility of his narrative. More importantly, they show the different ways in which Tacitus implicates his audience in a joint effort towards interpretation, from the adoption of an 'anti-paradoxographer' approach to the suspension of disbelief when reporting Vespasian's miracles in Alexandria.

In Part 1, 'Paradoxography and Wonder', Chapter 1 by K.E. Shannon-Henderson looks at Tacitean wonders through the lens of Hellenistic paradoxographical collections,