Although Martial strongly invokes the Latin epigrammatic tradition in his poetological statements—and thus in part actually constitutes this tradition—the intertextual references in his poetry point far beyond the genre of epigram. In his monograph on Martial, John Sullivan briefly discusses the role of satire and elegy in his view our poet’s most important intertextual points of reference. According to Sullivan, Martial takes from satire his critical view of society and human behavior, and from elegy especially the element of self-representation. Even prior to Sullivan, of course, the question of Martial’s relationship to satire was posed frequently, and the answers focused on the humorous and mimic elements; on the poet’s description of “types” such as the parvenu, the hypocrite and the legacy-hunter; and on his criticism of Roman society and the system of clientela.\(^1\)

To my mind, the limitation of this approach consists in the difficulty of adequately defining the object “satire”. Scholarship has too often abstained from seeking precise, concrete lines and tendencies of development in this genre, and done so in good conscience on the grounds of satire’s intrinsic uarietas.\(^2\) As far as our topic is concerned, this fact has led to a kind of optical illusion: the relationship between Martial and Juvenal has moved to center stage, while Martial’s much broader and more nuanced relationship to the various forms and stages of the satirical tradition has receded into the background.

Martial’s epigrams do, in fact, draw strongly on satire. In this paper, I would like to attempt in particular to demonstrate the existence of a privileged relationship between Martial and Horace’s works in hexameters. The most interesting and specific elements connecting Horace and Martial are not, however, primarily of a humorous or mimic character. The significant, if not exclusive attention that schol-
ars have devoted to these aspects appears to be the result of Juvenal’s presence obstructing the view: his satire together with the so-called satirical epigram of Lucilius have been simply projected backwards, thus creating the lens through which the relationship between Martial and Horace’s sermo is generally viewed.

Two premises. The first: a highly relevant text of Horace’s for Martial, his second epode, will be left aside completely here as it does not hold a place in the satirical tradition, despite showing strong correspondences with this tradition in terms of both themes and narrative technique. Furthermore, the persona loquens in the second epode is “the usurer Alphius”, while in the hexametric texts that we will be examining, it is “the poet Horace”. In other words, in the satires the situation is expressed through the poet’s “I”, while in the epode it is conveyed through an “other voice”—an important distinction for the rest of my analysis.

The second premise: in the following, I will deal with the subject of Horace’s sermo—that is, his Satires and Epistles—without distinguishing sharply between these groups of works. Classifying the two as belonging to one and the same genre would of course be going too far, but nevertheless, with Horace, the Satires and Epistles are parts of an organic poetic development. It is important that the later satirists recognized a lato sensu satirical potential in Horace’s Epistles and that they made use of it in their own work: recall here Persius 6, which begins as an epistle; or the relationship of Juvenal 11 to Horace Ep. 1.5 (to Torquatus). Among modern authors, an example is Ludovico Ariosto, whose satires have the form and character of a letter.

What I would like to discuss here deals with the relationship between Horace and Martial as constituted in the tenth book of Epigrams, and especially with two closely related topics: the motif of the countryside and places distant from Rome on the one hand, and the depiction of chaotic life in the city on the other. The considerations that I put forward here can in no way deal exhaustively with the topic of Martial’s relationship to Horace’s hexameter poems: rather, I hope to contribute one piece to a mosaic that will slowly grow, change and take shape over time.

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3 According to Fraenkel 1957, 310.