
In recent years, Martial has been well served by a number of commentaries on individual books. This new commentary on Book 3 is among the best of these, offering an introduction, an extensive commentary with a translation of each epigram and a text with an unusually full critical apparatus, and a useful index.

The work is prefaced by an introduction written by the author’s mentor, Piergiorgio Parroni, who recommends it as a fine example of the art of the commentary as he conceives it. Parroni discusses the relative merits of existing commentaries on the various Martialian books, suggesting that the ideal commentary should, among other things, be a full work of reference, should include a translation and should have a heavy emphasis on textual matters. No one would dispute Parroni’s praise of Grewing’s Book 6, or Citroni’s Book 1, but Howell’s commentaries on Books 1 and 5 are dismissed by him as insufficiently full, while the (to my mind) excellent edition of Book 11 by Kay does not warrant a mention. Though Fusi’s commentary might shape up well on Parroni’s criteria, I must take exception to the dogmatic implication that there is only one type of acceptable commentary—not surprisingly, given that my own work on Martial, published in a series with a briefer compass and a different intention, is ignored by Parroni, but not, it must be pointed out, by Fusi, who often finds some use in it!

F.’s introduction begins with a useful but controversial discussion of the background to the third book and its dating, as well as of the themes and the arrangement of the epigrams. The book, written during Martial’s stay in Cisalpine Gaul, presents some special problems/features: why did Martial retreat there (he presents himself as an Ovidian-type exile); if, as is likely, he stayed as the guest of a patron, who was this patron and why isn’t his generosity acknowledged in the book; the absence of Domitian from the book; the unusual division of the book into two unequal sections, the first containing no obscenity, the second replete with it. F. rightly links the lack of flattery of Domitian with Martial’s absence from Rome, and especially with the degree of obscenity in the second section of the book (in contrast for instance to the ‘clean’ Book 5, dedicated to the emperor). It is also suggested (and F. is by no means the only scholar to take this view) that the frequent complaints in the book about the temporary abolition by Domitian of the monetary *sportula* in favour of a *cena recta* may be tied to the reason for Martial’s leaving Rome—his reaction to this adverse treatment of clients—but this is surely to take too biographical an approach. Given that Martial was in reality comparatively well off, the loss of a hundred *quadrantes* would hardly make a dent in his finances, but what one could say is that the poet’s temporary absence from Rome...
at a time when the *sportula* had been abolished furnishes his *persona* as impoverished *cliens* with rich material for complaint. As to Martial’s host in Gaul, F. attempts to show that this was Faustinus, the dedicatee of the book (cf. epigram 2). Among several arguments, the most persuasive is that Martial’s host in Gaul would otherwise be unacknowledged (assuming that his prolonged holiday was financed by a patron; presumably if the poet owned an estate there himself he would have mentioned it). F. finds major evidence for his theory in a perceived difference between the dedicatory poem to Faustinus and others, such as 4 and 5, where the book is said to be going on a long journey from Gaul to Rome—in 2 it simply flees *Faustini in sinum*, suggesting to F. that Martial’s patron is near at hand, i.e. that Martial is staying in his villa in Gaul, rather than that Faustinus is in Rome, as is usually assumed. But it seems strange that Martial doesn’t mention Faustinus’s villa (cf. poem 57, a long description of a villa owned by Faustinus at Baiae); furthermore epigram 2 is full of reminiscences of Ovid’s *Tristia*, which suggests that the book is journeying from a foreign place of exile to Rome.

The introduction concludes with a very full and useful discussion of the manuscript tradition. Unusually for a commentator on Martial, the author has examined and collated all the manuscripts either personally or via microfilm. The result is that the Latin text which precedes the commentary on each epigram contains a complete apparatus, which in setting out all the alternate readings of the manuscript tradition corrects the errors of earlier editions and aims to provide the reader with the greatest possible help in deciding between textual variants. Although enormous effort has gone into this endeavour, I find its value questionable. There is little point in listing unimportant and clearly erroneous textual variants, nor can I find any place where perusal of the manuscripts has added new insights. This said, F.’s discussion of disputed readings is always full, with cogent reasons provided for his choice, e.g. in the case of *an possim quaeris* (preferred over *non possum. quereris*) at 32.1 or *Nioben* (rather than *Niobam*) at 32.3. F. tends to prefer the reading of the better manuscripts (the first two families) over the third family or early conjectures (thus *fuscus* is preferred to *fusus* at 3.82.26) but with some judicious exceptions, e.g. *facite* (rather than *facere*) at 37.2 and *Acori* at 93.24.

In two poems F. offers a fresh interpretation based on changes to the punctuation. In 7, his very detailed discussion is sensitive to stylistic register and argues convincingly for the attribution of l. 5 *regis superbi sportulae recesserunt* to the clients, leaving the last line *nihil stropharum est: iam salarium dandum est* to the poet. I am not, however, convinced by the suggestion that the gerundive has a future reference which reduces to mere irony, rather than a demand for a *salarium*, the poet’s criticism of the patrons’ withdrawal of the *sportula*: the parallels offered are all for the gerundive used adjectively without the verb ‘to be’ (e.g. Ovid’s *oscula . . . non iterum repetenda*); in such cases the future sense is clear (the parallel offered in