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SIGLE ȘI ABREVIERI / SIGLE E ABBREVIAZIONI*

ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> , II, <i>Prinzipat</i> , Berlin-New York
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> , Turnhout.
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i> , Turnhout.
Cod. Iust.	<i>Codex Iustinianus</i> .
Cod. Theod.	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i> .
DELL	<i>Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots</i> , par Alfred Ernout et Alfred Meillet, tirage de la 4 ^e édition, Paris, 1959.
EDR	<i>Epigraphic Database Roma</i> (http://www.edr-edr.it/default/index.php).
GCS	<i>Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller</i> , Berlin.
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> .
OLD	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> , Oxford, 1968.
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca</i> , Paris.
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</i> , Paris.
PLRE I	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , I, A. D. 260-395, by A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale, J. Morris, Cambridge, 2006
PSB	<i>Părinți și scriitori bisericești</i> , București
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i> , Lyon.
SCIV (SCIVA)	<i>Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie)</i> , București.
ThLL	<i>Thesaurus linguae Latinae</i> .

* Cu excepția celor din *L'Année Philologique* și *L'Année Épigraphique* / Escluse quelle segnalate da *L'Année Philologique* e *L'Année Épigraphique*.

CHARACTER, RIDICULOUSNESS AND SHAME IN THE LATIN SATIRE. THE USE OF PROPER NAMES AT MARTIAL*

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Keywords: *Martial, Epigrams, onomastics, satire, Roman society.*

Abstract: *Names and naming represent an important category for Martial's satirical construction of Roman society. The present study focuses on the origin of these names and the aims of their use. The main goal is to identify and discuss how and why names are selected or invented, following the geographical, historical, mythological, social, professional and/or etymological connotation of the onomastics in Martial's Epigrams.*

Mots-clés : *Martial, Épigrammes, onomastique, satire, la société romaine.*

Résumé : *Caractère, ridicule et honte dans la satire latine. L'usage des noms propres chez Martial. Les noms et les dénominations représentent une catégorie importante pour la construction satirique de la société romaine faite par Martial. L'étude vise l'origine de ces noms et la finalité de leur utilisation. L'objectif principal est d'identifier et de discuter comment et pourquoi les noms sont sélectionnés ou inventés, en suivant la connotation géographique, historique, mythologique, sociale, professionnelle et/ou étymologique de l'onomastique dans les Épigrammes de Martial.*

Cuvinte-cheie: *Marțial, Epigrame, onomastică, satiră, societatea romană.*

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Rezumat: *Caracter, ridicol și rușine în satira latină. Folosirea numelor proprii la Marțial.* *Onomastica și alegerea numelor reprezintă categorii importante pentru construcția satirică a societății romane de către Marțial. Studiul de față se concentrează pe originea acestor nume și pe scopurile utilizării lor. Obiectivul principal este de a identifica și discuta cum și de ce sunt selectate sau inventate numele, urmând conotațiile geografice, istorice, mitologice, sociale, profesionale și/sau etimologice ale onomasticii din Epigramele lui Marțial.*

Introduction

The fascination exerted by Martial's work lies far beyond the sphere of pure literary interest, constituting a study source for historians concerned with Roman society in all its aspects: social, political, economic, cultural and/or religious. There isn't a synthesis regarding any aspect of Roman daily life that hasn't appealed to the information offered by the Epigrams concerning garments, jewellery, diet, games and thermae. Life and death, family and clientelistic relations, disputes and trials, notoriety and plagiarism, urban turmoil and rural or provincial peacefulness, all find a place in Martial's universe.

On the other hand, through their biographical and social aspects, the Epigrams represent an X-ray, filled with irony, it's true, of the 1st century A.D. Urbs. *Non multa, sed multum* – this is how Martial's capacity for synthesis can be described, his spirit of observation and power of characterisation. His characters don't belong to a certain judicial or social category. Actual persons, from imperial figures to clerks, lawyers or famed authors of the time populate Martial's universe together with mythological heroes, but at the same time, many of the characters are fictitious. Thus, it is sometimes impossible to establish which names belong to real persons and which are pseudonyms.

Individual figures or personal vices, regarded as flaws of a certain type of character aren't all that attractive to Martial, they seem to be used rather as means of outlining certain typologies¹. In defining archetypes, as well as creating humorous effects, onomastics is an element of overwhelming significance. It seems that Martial was truly fascinated by names, by their meaningful etymology.

¹ On Martial's style, see Adams 1982; Watson 2002; Vallat 2008; Henriksen 2012; Augenti 2017 etc.; on onomastics, see Giegengack 1969; Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019 etc.

Going through the 12 books of epigrams, each containing around 100 such pieces, a little over 300 names can be identified, less than half of them being mentioned in no more than an epigram.

The names which are important for their meaning are used in many ways: puns as the main interest of the epigram; hints to the character or the profession of the subjects; significant names due to their mythological, social, geographical, historical, and literary connotations.

Geographical connotations

The use of some *cognomina* with geographic resonance doesn't represent a stylistic feature and is not limited to literary texts. Latin onomastics includes such names, in most cases, to indicate a certain origin for the designated individual², especially in the case of persons with subservient origin (slaves or freedmen)³. For this reason, the high incidence of names in this category is not surprising when it comes to Martial.

The most common such *cognomina* in the Epigrams are associated with certain provinces: Africa – *Afer*⁴, *Afra*⁵, *Africanus*⁶; Gallia – *Gallus*⁷/ *-a*⁸, *Gallicus*⁹; Baetica – *Beticus*¹⁰; Bythinia – *Bithinicus*¹¹; Greek provinces – *Atticus*¹² or the Pontic region – *Ponticus*¹³. If in the majority of cases we cannot suspect any intention of the author of carefully choosing these names, there are a few cases that deserve a discussion. Thus, a certain *Africanus*¹⁴ is exposed as an inheritance hunter, whose greed is his main trait of character, allowing, however, an association with the Carthaginians, by perfidy.

² For Roman naming conventions, see Salway 1994.

³ Kajanto 1965; Solin 1996; Solin, Salomies 1988.

⁴ IV, 37; IV, 78; VI, 77; IX, 6(7); IX, 25; X, 84; XII, 42.

⁵ I, 100.

⁶ XII, 10.

⁷ I, 108; II, 47; 56; III, 27; X, 56; 74; 82.

⁸ II, 25; 34; III, 51; 90; IV, 38; 58; V, 84; VII, 18; 58; IX, 4; 37; 78; X, 75; 95; XI, 19.

⁹ VIII, 22.

¹⁰ III, 77; 81.

¹¹ II, 26; IX, 8(9).

¹² II, 7; VII, 32.

¹³ II, 32; 82; III, 60; IV, 85; IX, 19; 41.

¹⁴ XII, 10.

Afer is the prototype of the extremely rich patron, but one that behaves badly with his clients¹⁵: he either avoids them, upon his return from Libya¹⁶, or customarily lists, in front of some customers, the debts that others have to him¹⁷. If in the first case, the connection to Northern Africa was obvious, in the second case the allusion may be understood by the association of the toponymical with the concept of luxury and large fortune¹⁸. The ridiculousness emerges from the onomastic opposition creditor-debtor, considering the latter all have typical Latin names: Mancinus, Titius, Albinus, Serranus. Afer¹⁹ the hypocrite forms part of the same register, who pretends to be rich without actually being, showing off, to the bystanders' amusement, carried around by five Cappadocian slaves.

In Martial, Gallus is both a common cognomen, and a symbol of emasculation and impotence. Thus, the name implicitly conveys religious connotations. The association refers to Cybele's priests, the Galli – “a name especially susceptible to playful treatment by Martial, for it is a common Roman cognomen but derives a meaning from Roman religion which is suitable to the Priapean bent of Martial's poetry”²⁰. The cult of Cybele – Magna Mater had been “imported” in Rome from Phrygia and was already enjoying notoriety in the days of Martial, so the public didn't need their memory refreshed as to the most obvious peculiarity of the priests: self-castration²¹. Martial's geographical allusion is revealed by opposition with Tuscus, an Etruscan haruspex, who wishes to sacrifice a goat to Bacchus. To this end he asks a boorish peasant – *agrestis et rudis vir* – to cut the animals' testicles with a sickle – *ut cito testiculos et acuta falce secaret*. But he accidentally transforms his beneficiary into a eunuch, hence the wordplay – *sic, modo qui Tuscus fuerat, nunc Gallus aruspex* (so, just lately a Tuscan soothsayer, now a Gaul).

¹⁵ Vallat 2008, 422; Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, s.v. *Afer*.

¹⁶ IX, 6(7).

¹⁷ IV, 37.

¹⁸ See also Henriksen 2012, 42.

¹⁹ VI, 77.

²⁰ Giegengack 1969, 27-28.

²¹ Latham 2012, 85.

I would include Rusticus²² in this category. Even though it only points to a vague geographical positioning – “from the countryside” – it isn’t a random choice for Martial. The cognomen, widespread in the Roman world²³, possesses, besides its primary meaning, some derogatory connotations, being synonymous with “rude”, “boor”, “gross”²⁴.

Mythological connotations

Using names with obvious mythological connotations, just like in the case of historical ones, helps Martial reach his goal without a special effort, given the resonance these have in the mindset of his contemporaries.

King Nestor of Pylos, of whose existence there is no historical evidence, is a symbol of wisdom and eloquence²⁵ in the *Iliad*. Being the eldest combatant in the Trojan war, his voice is heard and noticed in some of the tensest moments in the “backstage” of the conflict. Such is the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon regarding Bryseis the slave or the emotional momentum of the Greeks following Achilles’ death. Martial evokes him, as a symbol of the glorious past, together with Peleus and Priam²⁶, or as an icon of longevity²⁷. The anthroponym is mentioned twice²⁸ at Martial, each time in contrast with one of the qualities of the Homeric character. In the first case, it comes to a character whose mouth smells awful, so that he transfers the stench to his listener’s ears. On the other hand, the halitosis can, in fact, be associated with a character feature²⁹: Nestor is an infamous gossiper, as opposed to the king of Pylos. The second situation presents to the public a character that not only has nothing in common with the fortune

²² VIII, 23.

²³ Only in Rome, Rusticus and its derivatives record 145 occurrences in Latin inscriptions: https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_ergebnis.php.

²⁴ Augenti 2017, 217; Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, s.v. *Rusticus*.

²⁵ Kinsey 2012, 192.

²⁶ II, 64.

²⁷ IX, 29. See Augenti 2017, 281; Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, s.v. *Nestor*¹.

²⁸ III, 28; XI, 32.

²⁹ Fusi 2006, 256-257.

or presence of a king, but cannot even be named poor³⁰ – *non est paupertas, Nestor, habere nihil*.

Theodorus³¹ – the gift of God, has the misfortune of seeing his house burn down, but the good-luck, undeserved as it was, of not perishing in the fire. Plutia³² is a pun name, derived from the name of Pluto, the god of the dead, herself a “libidinous old hag, older than a catalogue of mythical characters”³³. Parthenopaeus, one of the seven that fought against Thebes, was well-known for his youth and beauty, but at the same time a symbol of arrogance and overvaluing. At Martial, the name covers an individual³⁴ with a weak character, sickly and with a sweet-tooth, most probably a slave or freedman.

Historical connotations

Although real characters, prior or contemporary to Martial, from the widest variety of categories, from kings or emperors to influential figures in the entourage of the imperial household or renowned professionals of his time are found in the Epigram books, most often these are neither the targets of irony, nor the providers of comic imagery.

Even though a “biter” with most of the social and judicial Roman categories, Martial wasn’t a “courageous”, and he wasn’t a part of what we would today call “opposition”. He witnessed no more than ten emperors from two dynasties succeeding to the throne and lived through an age of political assassination at the highest level as well as significant military rebellions, but preferred to fawn on *potentes*. And when he has something to say about the emperors, he is careful enough to do it after their deaths³⁵.

Still, the figure of King Numa, for instance, stands out as a symbol of wisdom and piety, considered the most religious of the kings of

³⁰ Kay 1985, 142-144; Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, s.v. *Nestor*².

³¹ XI, 93.

³² X, 67.

³³ Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, s.v. *Plutia*.

³⁴ XI, 86.

³⁵ After the death of Domitian, for example, he declares that “flattery no longer takes place in the city” (X, 72), but soon falls into the adoration of Nerva (XII 6, 15).

Rome. His name appears in two epigrams: as a voice of morality condemning the eunuch Thelys for wearing a *toga*³⁶, naming him *damnata moecha*; recovering on his death bed, to the disappointment of his wife and of all those preparing all elements of the funerary ritual, in the most traditional manner, worthy of the homonymous historical character³⁷.

Social connotations

Martial's carnival-like universe is often created by overturning the social order. His favourite targets are, on the one hand, the nobles whose only wealth is their name, so their legal status, and on the other hand, the most numerous, in fact, the ambitious ones, who aim for swift social ascension.

Nil novi. The Empire is full of enriched people who aim for the highest possible positions in the local or provincial hierarchy, or even in the *Urbs*³⁸. What Martial's art highlights is their unmasking by the use of eloquent names. Quirinalis, for instance³⁹, is undoubtedly associated with the name of the Sabine god Quirinus⁴⁰, and with the highest of the seven Roman hills, where Martial lived, right next to the temple of Quirinus. And yet, Quirinalis, who wants to be a genuine *pater familias* and have descendants of Roman citizenship, defies tradition by refusing marriage. As a result, his sons, born from ties to domestic slaves – *ancillae*, can only be “home-born slave-knights” – *equites vernae*. The same category includes Aemilius⁴¹, who “at the warm bath takes lettuce, eggs, lizard-fish, and says that he is not dining at home”. *Gens Aemilia*, who claimed to descend from Numa Pompilius, had representatives in the highest magistracies, both during the Republic and during the Imperial period⁴².

³⁶ X, 52.

³⁷ X, 97.

³⁸ Burnand 1992; Demougin 1996; Pelletier 1997; Serrano-Delgado 1996.

³⁹ I, 84.

⁴⁰ Kajanto 1965, 184.

⁴¹ XII, 19.

⁴² See, for example, Birley 1981, 242-244.

A pun that exemplifies the derivation of some names from others, in order to associate social prestige, is that of Cinnamus, who became Cinna⁴³. As the name could often be an indicator of a certain social and legal status⁴⁴, the application of a small correction to its form would have meant, in the view of a person concerned with his social ascension, an efficient means of satisfying his ambitions. Cinnamus/Cinnamis is a Greek surname quite common in Latin epigraphy, most often attributed to a person of libertine origin⁴⁵, even if benefiting from a superior economic status, such as a Cinnamus from Aquitaine, to whom a funerary monument is dedicated by a client⁴⁶. On the other hand, the name Cinna indicates, since the time of the Republic, a superior social status⁴⁷, and in the Imperial period are mentioned by this name a Stoic philosopher, who was active half a century after the death of Martial⁴⁸, and a *procurator Augusti*⁴⁹. Martial's Cinnamus demands that the others address him by the name of Cinna, imagining that, through contagion, he will be labelled another social standing. Through a pun, Martial at the same time denounces imposture, as theft, and also announces the real effect of such a falsehood: except for the ridiculous, nothing happens – *tu si Furius ante dictus esses, / Fur ista ratione dicereris*. In another epigram⁵⁰, another Cinnamus, a barber, manages to reach the equestrian rank, not by origin, by his own wealth, or by personal merits, but by the financial goodwill of his mistress – *dominae munere*, which is certainly significant, given the required *census equitum* of 400,000 sesterces⁵¹. The connection with the impostor Cinnamus / Cinna is obvious, as the barber is accused of not standing out through any personal quality or education. In other words, a Cinnamus neither can be, nor can become a Cinna.

⁴³ VI, 17; VII, 64.

⁴⁴ See Kajanto 2012 with bibliography.

⁴⁵ Cinnamus – *CIL* III, 4250; V, 7159; X, 4933; XI, 3996; XIV, 308 etc.; *AE* 1973, 159; Cinnamis – *CIL* II 5, 1157; XII, 5186.

⁴⁶ *CIL* XIII, 1096.

⁴⁷ Smith 1867, 754-756; https://romanrepublic.ac.uk/person/?praenomen=&nomen=&re_number=&f=&n=&tribe=&cognomen=Cinna&other_names=&era_from=&era_to=&q=

⁴⁸ Smith 1867, 754.

⁴⁹ *PIR* II, 546.

⁵⁰ VII, 64.

⁵¹ Wiseman 1970, 71.

Maximus – ‘the greatest’ – is another name that bears a special weight in the epigrams. The surname is a very common one in Roman onomastics⁵². In Martial, however, Maximus is chosen to create the prototype of the patron who is, in his turn, in a patron-client relationship⁵³ – “a *rex* of his own and simply *unus inter pares*, not the superlative his name implies”⁵⁴.

Professional connotations

Sometimes the choice of names and their meanings can be related to a particular professional milieu. Martial had the opportunity to choose, in order to build his characters and hilarious situations without much effort, from predefined onomastic groups, representative for certain professional categories.

It is known that in Martial’s time, most physicians, for example, were originally Greek, or at least bore Greek surnames⁵⁵; that the traders were mostly freedmen, rich freedmen, it is true, but still freedmen⁵⁶; that the gladiators were often named according to their origin or to the weapon they used in battle⁵⁷. That is why it is not surprising that in the Epigrams 16 doctors bear Greek names: Alcon⁵⁸, a real character⁵⁹, Cinnamus⁶⁰, Criton⁶¹, Dasius⁶², Diaulus⁶³, Eros⁶⁴, Euctus⁶⁵, Heras⁶⁶ –

⁵² https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_ergebnis.php. There are over 9000 occurrences in the Latin inscriptions alone.

⁵³ II, 18; 53.

⁵⁴ II, 18.

⁵⁵ See Ángeles Alonso 2018 with bibliography.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Broekaert 2013.

⁵⁷ See Grant 2000; Jacobelli 2003.

⁵⁸ VI, 70; XI, 84.

⁵⁹ Plin. 29, 22.

⁶⁰ VI, 64. Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, s.v. *Cinnamus*¹.

⁶¹ XI, 60.

⁶² II, 52.

⁶³ I, 30; 47.

⁶⁴ X, 56.

⁶⁵ VIII, 6. See Watson 1998.

⁶⁶ VI, 78.

an ophthalmologist who considers the drink a cause of blindness (*vinum si biberis, nihil videbis*), and Herodes⁶⁷, which in turn recommends abstinence, Hermes⁶⁸, Hermocrates⁶⁹, Hippocrates⁷⁰, Hygia⁷¹, Hyginus⁷², Sotas⁷³, whose daughter, Labulla, suffers from incurable diseases: adultery and fickleness, Symmachus⁷⁴. If some of the names are chosen from the onomastics specific to this profession, such as Hippocrates, Hygia or Hyginus, associated with salutary deities, in other cases Martial chooses or invents them in order to create suggestive puns. In almost all cases, Martial's doctors are impostors, who not only fail to alleviate their patients' suffering, but even make them feel worse. Diaulus, for example, changed his job from doctor to undertaker – *vespillo*, without changing his activities too much⁷⁵; Symmachus, a real character, apparently a famous doctor in Rome⁷⁶, consults Martial with great pomp, accompanied by disciples, but the only consequence is adding fever to the list of symptoms. Hermes and his derivative Hermocrates are used with the same purpose⁷⁷: “the doctor has the power of Hermes, and brings death to his patients immediately after appearing to them”⁷⁸. It is ridiculous for a patient to believe that salvation will come to him from a psychopompous deity. Hygia herself is helpless in the face of the illness of loving Chione, who does not need a doctor, but a man.

And another professional category for which Martial uses specific surnames can be included here, such as Phyllis, Lais, Lesbis, Ly-

⁶⁷ IX, 96.

⁶⁸ X, 56. Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, *s.v.* *Hermes*².

⁶⁹ VI, 53. Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, *s.v.* *Hermocrates*.

⁷⁰ IX, 94.

⁷¹ XI, 60.

⁷² X, 56.

⁷³ IV, 9.

⁷⁴ V, 9.

⁷⁵ Howell 2009, 98.

⁷⁶ Giegengack 1969, 64.

⁷⁷ Giegengack 1969, 65.

⁷⁸ Giegenback 1969, 65.

coris: courtesans and prostitutes, “assuming that the reader will mentally apply to them each time the basic characteristic of the prostitute”⁷⁹.

Identifying the characters in real life is not a goal *per se* of the Epigrams, but some names are loaded with meanings depending on the occupations of those who bear them.

Civis and Atestinus⁸⁰ are two lawyers from Rome, who, although talented, do not manage to earn their living from practice, a reason for discouragement for the aspiring Sextus. Their names become a source of humour in this context: ‘The citizen’ and ‘The one without a will’⁸¹ or ‘The one who proves’⁸² fail to impose themselves by law. The same cannot be said of Eulogus – ‘The good speaker’⁸³. As the name suggests, his main feature is *eulogia*, which is essential for his success as an auctioneer (*praeconius*). His old father-in-law gave him his daughter’s hand without hesitation, although his 23 rivals (two praetors, seven lawyers, four tribunes and ten poets) could have undoubtedly brought him more social prestige, but maybe not the same income. But Apollodotus lacks eloquence⁸⁴, which is ridiculous, given that he is a rhetorician, without taking into account that his name is derived from that of Apollo, god of the arts, protector of poetry⁸⁵. He has difficulties remembering the names of others, which he associates with completely opposite notions: Quintus – The Fifth instead of Decimus – The Tenth and Crassus – The Fat instead of Macer – The Thin.

Etymological connotations

Most of the names that mean something to Martial are the ones that can be translated, those which have an etymological meaning. Only through the onomastic element can the author’s intention be made clear. Thus, the name itself is often proof of a character’s nature or explains the motivation for his/her actions, even beyond or outside the context.

⁷⁹ Giegenback 1969, 117. See also Varone 1994; McGinn 2004; Younger 2005.

⁸⁰ III, 38.

⁸¹ Giegenback 1969, 88.

⁸² Vallat 2006, 133-134.

⁸³ VI, 8. Giegenback 1969, 89.

⁸⁴ V, 21.

⁸⁵ Vallat 2008, 527.

Martial's art is perfect in handling Greek names. **Names derived from adjectives** that suggest a certain trait or quality are used in Epigrams to outline characters or create hilarious images. Eutrapelos⁸⁶ (εὐτράπελος means 'dexterous', 'nimble', an extremely important trait for the character's occupation, that of a barber) has a suitable "opponent", Lupercus – 'wolf-faced', whose beard grows again until Eutrapelos is done. Or maybe the latter is not so 'nimble'? Eutyclus⁸⁷ (from the Greek εὐτυχής – 'lucky', 'happy') drowns, to the despair of Castricus, to whom he had been both his lover and muse. Eutyclus / Eutyclus is one of the most widespread Greek surnames in the Roman Empire, especially among slaves and freedmen⁸⁸. At Martial, however, the name has a special meaning: an individual who ends up so tragic can hardly be considered lucky. Eucleides⁸⁹, is derived from the Greek εὖ κλείς – 'well locked-up'⁹⁰. He poses in a well-positioned character, both socially and economically – *equitus superbus nobilis*, with divine origin and an annual income of 200,000 sesterces. However, he is exposed, and here is the main goal of using this surname, by a trivial key that escapes his pocket.

Another category of names is inspired by the **culinary and olfactory register**⁹¹. Myrtale⁹² is a drunkard who, in order to conceal the smell of wine that she exhales, routinely mixes bay leaves in the drink. From this custom derives her name, one, in fact, quite used in Rome⁹³. Μύρτος "was used for making dark and white wines and a myrtle powder for treatment of sores"⁹⁴. I should also mention Acerra, guilty of the same sin as Myrtale⁹⁵. *Acer* – 'censer' was "used to burn incense and other aromatic substances during sacrifices"⁹⁶. The name of Mystillos⁹⁷ is made up, but is associated with the area of activity of

⁸⁶ VII, 83; Augenti 2017, 152.

⁸⁷ VI, 68.

⁸⁸ Solin 1977, 1559.

⁸⁹ V, 35. Augenti 2017, 161; 254.

⁹⁰ Howell 2005, 119.

⁹¹ For associations with powerful and extremely unpleasant smell see Dumittrache 2007.

⁹² V, 4.

⁹³ See Solin 1982, 1095-1096.

⁹⁴ Called *myrtites*: Cato, *Agr.* 125; Plin. 14, 104; Giegegack 1969, 66.

⁹⁵ I, 28; Augenti 2017, 115.

⁹⁶ Moreno Soldevila, Marina Castillo, Fernández Valverde 2019, *s.v. Acerra*.

⁹⁷ 1, 50.

the character who wears it (a cook) by etymology: μίστυλλον means ‘piece of meat’, and μιστύλλω ‘to cut up the meat’. Finally, Panaretus⁹⁸ is caught replacing the wine he drinks from the cup with his own urine, a gesture that totally contradicts his name: πανάρετος – ‘model of all virtue’.

Pun names are formed also in **connection with garments**. The poem on Sagaris⁹⁹ reveals Artemidorus – gift of Artemis, who’s cloak is very poor; as a consequence, he might be called Sagaris. That name derives from *sagum*, a rough military cloak, of the Gallic origin¹⁰⁰, synonym with “cloaky” or “barbarian”. Panniculus¹⁰¹, on the other hand, bears a name formed from *panni*, a clown costume, and is a cuckold personage, presented as a buffoon and dressed alike.

The last category of names I will refer to is **onomastics with sexual connotations**, quite consistent in the Epigrams. Telesilla¹⁰², diminutive derived from τέλεισις– ‘event’ ‘fulfilment’, Telethusa¹⁰³ – ‘bringing fulfilment at her coming’ and Telesphorus¹⁰⁴ (τελεσφόρος – ‘bringing fulfilment’, ‘allpowerful’) have in common the allusion to sexual satisfaction. Telesilla has such a high sexual appetite and a fickleness worthy of mention that the ban on adultery by reintroducing lex Iulia makes her marry ten times in about a month¹⁰⁵, but in another epigram¹⁰⁶, she suggests the opposite: she fails to bring to climax even the most experienced of lovers. Telethusa is so lascivious that she can awaken the sexual instinct even in men who have long since passed the age of experimentation, represented by the old king of Troy, Priam, or by famous faithful husbands, such as Hector. In contrast, Aegle¹⁰⁷, whose name means ‘splendour’, ‘brightness’, is a sex-hungry woman, a *fellatrix* who refuses to believe she’s grown old. Phlogis and Chione¹⁰⁸ represent two different prototypes of sexual activity: Phlogis

⁹⁸ VI, 89.

⁹⁹ VIII, 58.

¹⁰⁰ Dumitrache 2018, 34-37.

¹⁰¹ II, 7; III, 86; V, 61.

¹⁰² VI, 7; XI, 97.

¹⁰³ VI, 71.

¹⁰⁴ X, 83; XI, 26; 58.

¹⁰⁵ VI, 7.

¹⁰⁶ IX, 97.

¹⁰⁷ I, 72; 94; XI, 81; XII, 55.

¹⁰⁸ III, 34.

“serves as the name of this prurient young thing, is but the Greek equivalent of the Latin *ulcus*, and means both ‘an opened wound’ and a *latentem pruriginem*”¹⁰⁹. Her sexual insatiability is almost pathological, since she can’t find a cure. On the other hand, Chione (from χιών – ‘snow’), although beautiful, is cold and passive, in other words frigid.

Telesphorus arouses the passion in its lovers, his ‘services’ and qualities being appreciated. Polycharmus¹¹⁰ (πολύχαρμος means equally ‘warlike’ and ‘the source of much joy’), Philomelus¹¹¹ (‘fond of apples’), Papyrus¹¹² (‘pustule’), who likes to be sodomized and practices self-fellatio, and Naevolus (‘little wart’)¹¹³, who is anally penetrated by a slave, are also associated with passive homosexuality and shameful sexual activity. Pannychus¹¹⁴ (‘the one who lasts all night’) is an active homosexual.

Summary

The onomastics of the *Epigrams* represent *per se* an important chapter in the interpretation of Martial’s work. No matter how they are selected or invented, the names are to rarely neutral. Even the most commonplace *cognomen* turns into a stylistic process. Selected from all social, legal or thematic categories, names come to life in epigrams, and can often be used as well as common nouns, as they relinquish designating people and dress up human categories.

The onomastic analysis of Martial’s world reveals real names, mythical names, made-up names; Latin names, Greek names; names that mean something by themselves or acquire meaning in context; simple names and compound names; individual or collective names; names that make you laugh; names that make you think, look for analogies; all of them, names that can drive historians, linguists or literary men alike into a corner.

¹⁰⁹ Giegengack 1969, 42.

¹¹⁰ IX, 69.

¹¹¹ III, 31; 93; IV, 5.

¹¹² IV, 48; 69; VI, 36; VII, 78; 94.

¹¹³ III, 71; 95.

¹¹⁴ II, 36; VI, 39; 67; IX, 47; XII, 7.

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