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Publication in Martial's Time and the Publication of his Works

Jack Kaufmann

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PUBLICATION IN MARTIAL'S TIME AND THE PUBLICATION OF HIS WORKS

By

JACK KAUFMANN

A master’s thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Classics in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

2016
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By

Jack Kaufmann

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Classics in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Thesis Advisor

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ABSTRACT

PUBLICATION IN MARTIAL’S TIME AND THE PUBLICATION OF HIS WORKS

By

Jack Kaufmann

Advisor Name: Professor Ronnie Ancona

I have attempted in this thesis to broadly discuss the nature of literary publication in classical times, characterized by (a) the lack of printing presses or any other means to make multiple copies of a work except by writing out each copy by hand, and (b) the lack of any copyright or other protection of a writer’s work. These factors led to a very different concept of publishing than our modern one. I have then focused on the epigrams of Martial (ca. 40 A.D. – 103 A.D.) in particular, because (a) his epigrams contain a wealth of information relating to how works in general, and in particular his own works, were published in his time; and (b) Martial’s works provide a good example as to how modern scholars have been able to create a manuscript tradition to determine the timing and form of the publication of his works; and (c) there is much scholarly debate in Martial’s own case as to precisely what he published and when.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank Professor Craig Williams, who provided the inspiration for this thesis in his course on Martial’s epigrams which I took some years ago, and in which I wrote a paper on the same subject (indeed, with essentially the same title, but of course considerably shorter). I would also like to particularly thank my advisor, Professor Ronnie Ancona, for her instruction and guidance and for her invariably germane and helpful editing suggestions during the somewhat prolonged (by me, not her) process of writing this thesis. Moreover, I would like to thank Professor Philip Thibodeau, who as second reader provided invaluable editing suggestions, and Professor Dee Clayman for her direction and support. Finally, I am grateful to every professor and student in the Classics department whom I have had the privilege of knowing for providing such an enriching learning experience.
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Publication in Martial's Time and the Publication of his Works

Introduction

The concept of publication in classical times is quite different from that of publication in modern times, and indeed even the use of the word “publication” with respect to classical times can be misleading to the modern reader. I will endeavor to show in this thesis the many ways in which publication in classical times differed from that in our time with respect to the origination of an author’s work, the means by which it was produced and distributed to readers, and the protection (or lack thereof) of the author’s work from copying, amendment, or claims of ownership by others.

In doing so, I will focus on the epigrams of Martial, both because Martial himself frequently speaks of the various issues relating to publication of his work, and because the work of scholars creating a manuscript tradition for Martial’s work tells us much about how and when Martial’s epigrams were published, and more generally how classical literary works were created and preserved.

Finally, I hope to show how important these issues are to a good understanding of classical literature: a reader cannot fully appreciate the works of Martial, or any other classical author, without an understanding of how they were written, published, or circulated, nor can the reader appreciate the issues relating to the accuracy of any modern edition of a classical work without an understanding of how classical works have been transcribed over the years and how scholars have attempted to determine the original author’s text by creating a manuscript tradition.
Two factors combine to make publication in modern times an entirely different concept from that of Martial's time: the printing press and copyright laws. The printing press provides efficiency of scale, allowing the production of a great number of copies of a written work at very little incremental cost per copy, and with no variation, and hence no errors introduced, in the text of each copy. Copyright laws, of course, protect an author, and those in contract with him, from others who might wish to copy his work or claim it as their own.

In Martial’s time, however, each copy of a written work had to be copied by hand, each copy requiring as much labor as the previous one, and each copy inevitably containing errors introduced by the copyist. Thus there was no efficiency of scale, and no reason to make more than one copy at a time, or indeed any copy, unless and until there was a demand for a copy.

Moreover, in Martial’s time there was no concept of legal protection for an author's work, and as a result anyone was free to copy any work that he could lay his hands on, either for his own or his friends' use, or possibly even to claim it as his own work, or simply to make whatever profit he could by copying it for a paying customer — thus precluding any bookseller or copyist from obtaining exclusive rights to a work and thus making it economically impossible for a bookseller or copyist to pay any significant royalties or other fees to an author.

As a result, “publication” with respect to the classical period has an entirely different connotation from what it has with respect to modern times. Rather than suggesting the actions of a publishing enterprise making a large number of copies of a work, paying the author advances and royalties, having exclusive rights which preclude
other publishers from publishing the work, and having copyright protection against plagiarism or unlawful copying, “publication” in Martial’s time meant only the release by an author of at least one copy of a work to the public, which would allow any and all interested persons to copy it at will for their own enjoyment or profit.\footnote{Indeed, the legal definition in modern copyright law is very similar to its meaning in Martial’s time. For example, U.S. Copyright Law provides that “‘Publication’ is the distribution of copies . . . of a work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease, or lending. . . .” (17 United States Code § 101). Before 1978 publication without first (a) registering a copy with the Library of Congress and (b) marking the work with the appropriate copyright notice (e.g., © 1977) on the back side of the title page was fatal to any copyright rights, putting the work in the public domain, just as in the classical period. In 1978 Congress decided to make the law more forgiving because of its harshness to authors, and as a result registration of a work with the Copyright Office is no longer a prerequisite for copyright protection. However, registration is still required to bring an action in court for copyright infringement.}

The epigrams of Marcus Valerius Martialis (anglicized as Martial) provide a unique insight into the nature of publication in his time: they touch on how an author's writings might gain wide circulation; the existence and nature of a book trade, and how that book trade might tend to introduce copying errors into an author's work; how the publication of an author's work might gain the author fame and reputation, as well as immortality; the fact that, whatever other benefits publication of an author's work might provide him, he would not have earned a significant income from that publication; and the fact that Martial, and presumably other authors, had to continually deal with plagiarism.

A study of Martial's epigrams also provides an excellent example as to how scholars are able to establish a manuscript tradition of an author's work to recreate as exactly as possible an accurate and complete record of what an author published. In Martial's case in particular, scholars have attempted to determine to what extent his
epigrams, published in the fifteen books established by manuscript tradition, may also have been separately published as individual epigrams or in smaller groups than the established books. Scholars have also considered whether Martial may have revised and republished his epigrams in revised books or combinations of books.

I will begin (in Part I) with a discussion of the materials and forms of classical books. As will be shown below, the fact that books were almost always in the form of scrolls until late in the classical era, and always hand-written, led inevitably to a multiplication of errors which made accuracy uncertain in classical times and can limit the ability of modern scholars to create manuscript traditions to ascertain the texts of Martial and other classical authors.

I will continue (in Parts II and III) by analyzing how books were published in classical times, in light of the fact that each copy was individually hand-written, and given that, with no equivalent to copyright protection, once a work was in the public domain anyone was free to make or have made a copy for himself or for others. (As I will show below, Martial often suggested to his readers how and where they might obtain copies of his books, and railed against others who claimed his work as their own or plagiarized it.)

Part IV considers the benefits to a classical author of publishing his work. Given the lack of copyright protection and the inability to efficiently make multiple copies of a book, an author could not expect to profit financially (at least directly) from publication of his books. What was clearly a motivating factor, however, was a desire for fame and a form of immortality. As shown below, this thought occurs frequently in Martial’s
epigrams, and indeed, as shown below, Pliny commented at the time of Martial’s death that he wrote his epigrams as if they would be eternal.

Ancient libraries (Part V) were not directly related to publication, but they nevertheless played an important role in the collection and preservation of published works. As shown below, there were both private and public libraries, and they had two great advantages: they tended to receive copies soon after they became public, perhaps from the author himself, so that the texts were less likely to be riddled with the errors that accumulated in the copies that circulated generally, and second, because the books were kept in one place, and were probably not handled so much, they were presumably less subject to damage, loss, or wear and tear generally. As a result, as discussed below, it is likely that being held in an ancient library was an important factor in the preservation of classical works after their world ceased to exist.

Finally, in Part VI I will discuss the publication of Martial’s epigrams: the manuscript tradition of his work; what we can learn from the internal evidence of his epigrams as to when they were written; what Martial meant by libellus, and the scholarly disputes as to what his libelli contained and their significance; and whether and in what form Martial republished his work.

I. The Material and Form of Books in Classical Times. In ancient times (both pre-classical and classical) in various parts of the world many materials were used for the reception of writing: stone (almost always only for inscriptions), leaves (still used in India and neighboring countries into the twentieth century), bark (presumably used at one time in Italy, judging by its having provided liber, the Latin word for “book”), linen (used
for ancient records and sacred books of Rome), metals (like stone, not used for extensive writing), wood tablets (whether covered by wax or not), potsherds, clay, leather (with a long history of rather extensive use), and papyrus (Kenyon 42-46).

But so far as it is known, papyrus was the only material used from the time of the earliest literary writings in archaic Greece, probably as early as the age of Homer (ninth century B.C.) (Kenyon 12, 46-47). Herodotus, for example, writing in the middle of the fifth century B.C., tells us that the Greeks had from ancient times preferred papyrus to animal skins, while many foreigners continued to write on skins. (5.58.3) This suggests not only that the Greeks, at least, used papyrus regularly, but also that only foreigners would use animal skins, unless a lack of papyrus were to compel Greeks to also use animal skins.

The form of a book in classical times was almost invariably the scroll, at least until the second or third century A.D. A typical scroll, both in Greece and Rome, might be nine or ten inches in height, might have a length of 35 feet, which would roll into a cylinder of about an inch or an inch and a half in diameter, would have columns about 3 inches in width (although columns of poetry might be wider, depending on the meter), and perhaps a margin of about one half inch between columns. The title and author, if included at all in the scroll itself, would generally be at the end, rather than the beginning, of the scroll. The better scrolls had rollers at each end, decorated with knobs at either end. Scrolls were generally identified by tags attached to the end of one roller, containing the title and the author, so that scrolls placed horizontally in a bookshelf or vertically in a book container could readily be identified (Kenyon 50-51, 54-56, 60-62, Kenney 15-16).
Almost invariably in a Greek book, and almost as often in Roman books, there was neither any separation of words or punctuation, although occasionally a dot above the level of the letters might indicate a word separation where ambiguity might exist. Occasionally, Greek texts would have accent marks, and less often would also have rough breathing marks, but these were almost invariably added by a later hand (Kenyon 67-68, Kenney 16).  

The form of the scroll had two major impacts on classical writing and literature. First, because of its nature it was almost impossible to provide a reference with any precision to any text, beyond what book the reference was contained in, and inconvenient for a writer to look up a reference in another book, because it would involve laboriously unrolling the scroll to the correct position. As a result, authors citing another work would both be imprecise (or just plain wrong) with respect to what was written in the reference, since they could not take the time to find the reference, and could in any event only give their readers a general idea of where the citation was contained (Kenyon 69, Kenney 16).

Second, a scroll was limited in length because the longer a scroll was the more difficult it became to read it or to refer to it, for the reasons just stated. As a result, the length of the “books” identified in classical literature as divisions of larger works, as for

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2 “Note that the net effect is designed for clarity and for beauty, but not for ease of use, much less for mass readership. Importantly, this design is not one of primitivism or ignorance. The Greeks and Romans knew perfectly well, for instance, the utility of word division – the Greek school texts on papyri bear eloquent testimony to the need for emerging readers to practice syllable and word division. Similarly, philhellenism in the early empire led to the adoption of scriptio continua in Latin literary texts, which earlier had used interpuncts (raised dots) to divide the words – that is, word division was discarded by the Romans in deference to Greek aesthetic and cultural traditions” (footnotes omitted) (Johnson 20, see Kenney 17).
example the books in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* or in Herodotus, were dictated by the length of scrolls, and presumably affected a writer’s style (Kenyon 64, Kenney 18).

Toward the end of the classical period, two great changes took place in the making of books, and they occurred during approximately the same period (Kenyon 87-120, Kenney 25-27). First, the scroll began to be replaced by the codex, and second, papyrus began to be replaced by vellum. There are, however, many surviving examples of papyrus codices, so the two changes did not entirely coincide with each other. Papyrus was the dominant material used until the fourth century, when vellum rather quickly replaced it as the usual material. There is, however, a distinction between pagan literature and Christian literature with respect to the use of the codex. Papyrus codices of Christian literature were in use as early as the second century, and became the most common form of Christian book in the third century, although papyrus scrolls were still in use. However, in the fourth century vellum codices became the predominant form of Christian literature. With respect to pagan literature, on the other hand, the use of the codex did not predominate until perhaps a century after it had replaced the scroll in Christian literature, and it was not until the fourth century that the codex replaced the scroll for pagan literature. At the same time these changes were taking place, Christian literature was eclipsing pagan literature (for example, in the rubbish heaps of Oxyrhynchus (a town in Graeco-Roman Egypt), fragments of Christian books had

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3 A codex was made up of a varying number of quires, each quire consisting of vellum or papyrus sheets typically folded into fourths, creating eight leaves per quire, and bound together in a protective cover, substantially in the same form as a modern book (Kenyon 101-03).

4 Vellum, or parchment, was created from animal skins (especially young animals) which were washed and scraped, smoothed with pumice and dressed with chalk (Kenyon 87-88).

5 “There is no essential connexion between format and material” (Roberts 183).
exceeded those of pagan literature by the fourth century) (Kenyon 30-31, 96-97). This development probably hastened the end of the use of the scroll, as codices were preferred for Christian books.

It is unclear why papyrus was replaced by vellum and the scroll by the codex, why these changes occurred when they did, and finally why the changes took so long. Vellum is known to be more durable than papyrus, but it has been speculated that vellum did not replace papyrus until the methods of producing vellum were improved. Similarly, a codex is in general more durable than a scroll, but early codices may not have been. The codex, however, at least in the forms in which it was first found in quantity, had two unquestionable advantages: far more material could be included in a single codex than in a scroll, and a codex provided much greater convenience of reference to the reader. There is no equivalent to a page reference in a scroll, nor to a simple bookmark. Moreover, it has been speculated that larger volumes and ease of reference assume a greater importance in Christian literature. For example, being able to have the entire New Testament in a single codex, and being able to quickly find citations to, e.g., the gospel according to Luke, must have been clear advantages (Kenyon 112-15, Kenney 25-27).

II. Publication in Roman Times. Typically, a Roman author would circulate drafts of his works to friends, or might recite his works to them, on the understanding that the work was confidential and not to be disclosed. (On occasion, presumably as a result of a misunderstanding, a work that the author did not intend to be disclosed would become public. For example, Cicero took Atticus to task for allowing Balbus to copy De Finibus before he had finished revising the work and before he had sent a copy to Brutus,

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6 See Kenney 10-11, 12; Starr (1987) 213-23.
to whom he had dedicated the work. He would do this, of course, not only to obtain the
approbation and good will of his friends, but also to get feedback — comments and
criticism that would enable him to eliminate mistakes and improve his work. This process
might be iterated several times, and the number of recipients might well grow. However,
no author is known to have distributed a work of his before publication to anyone other
than a friend or close acquaintance — the concept of a professional editor or advisor did
not exist.

Eventually (assuming the author did not abandon his work), he would give copies
to friends, and perhaps a presentation copy to whoever might be the subject or dedicatee
of the work and presumably would be honored or flattered, on the understanding that the
work could be shared and copied. At that point, as we have seen before, the work was in
the public domain, and those with copies were free to make additional copies for
themselves or for friends, or to lend copies to others so that they might copy it or have it
copied. The extent to which this occurred, of course, would depend on the popularity of
the author. Undoubtedly works of well-known authors would quickly gain a wide
circulation, while other works languished, never to be heard of again.

Martial provides an entertaining example of how his works might thus gain wide
circulation by being shared among friends: in 7.97 Martial instructs his little book:

Nosti si bene Caesium, libelle,

montane decus Umbriae, Sabinum,

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7 Att. 13.21a
8 Starr (1987) 214
9 See p. 2
10 All texts of Martial’s epigrams are taken from the 1993 edition of the Loeb Classical
Library, edited by D. R. Shackleton Bailey.
Auli municipem mei Pudentis,
illi tu dabis haec vel occupato.
instent mille licet premantque curae,
nostris carminibus tamen vacabit.
nam me diligit ille proximumque
Turni nobilibus legit libellis.
o quantum tibi nominis paratur!
o quae gloria! quam frequens amator!
te convivia, te forum sonabit,
aedes, compita, porticus, tabernae.
uni mitteris, omnibus legeris.

If, little book, you know well Caesius Sabinus, the glory of mountainous Umbria, the fellow-townsman of my friend Aulus Pudens, you will give these verses to him, even if he is busy. Although a thousand cares may pursue and press upon him, he will still have free time for my poems; for he loves me, and reads me next to the noble books of Turnus. Oh, how great a name is being prepared for you! Oh what glory! How numerous the admirers! You will resound at feasts, in the forum, in the temples, the crossroads, the porticoes, the shops. You will be sent to one; you will be read by all.11

11 All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.
III. Private and Commercial Copying. Private copying was very common, and most likely the great majority of books were circulated in this way. Atticus, for example, seems to have had copied large numbers of books not only for his own benefit but also on behalf of his friends, including in particular Cicero. The audience for books, of course, was a literate elite representing a very small percentage of the population, and such persons presumably in most cases had slaves trained to do copying for them.

By Martial’s time there were also book dealers, and we frequently hear of them from Martial. For example, in 1.2 we hear of the freedman Secundus, from whom the reader may buy a copy of Martial’s book. The fact that Secundus was a freedman suggests that book dealers had a low status, and we can infer that it was not a highly profitable trade. The reasons, of course, which I have alluded to above, were that (a) a book dealer could not become more profitable by producing multiple copies, since the cost to him in time and money was the same per copy however many he made; and (b) the demand for a book dealer’s copies must have been very uncertain, since (i) any private person could copy or have copied his own copy; and (ii) worse, any other book dealer with access to a copy could copy and sell it in competition. Nor, for the same reasons, was there likely to have been any significant market in used books (other than rare or antiquarian books).

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12 See p. 2
13 “[A]lthough the Roman world appears to have had a small second-hand-book trade, . . . it was probably restricted largely to school texts circulating outside the circles of aristocratic readers and writers who provide most of our surviving evidence. At most, a used-book trade potentially affected a comparatively small group: those lucky enough to have had a literary education but not wealthy enough (or inclined) to own or employ their own copyists or to buy many new books.” (Starr excludes rare or antiquarian books that have a special value as objects rather than simply as texts to be read.) ((1990) 148, 149)
Martial suggests in 2.8 that a book dealer could make a copy while a customer waited:

Si qua videbuntur chartis tibi, lector, in istis

sive obscura nimis sive Latina parum,

non meus est error: nocuit librarius illis

dum properat versus annumerare tibi.

. . . .

If anything in these pages, reader, will seem too obscure to you, or insufficiently Latin, it is not my error: the copyist harmed them when he was hastening to count out the verses for you. . . .

This epigram also alludes to a serious problem with the copies of the time: they were riddled with errors. There are a number of reasons for this: (1) In Martial’s time and until Christian works became predominant two or more centuries later, the vast majority of books were in the form of papyrus scrolls. Such scrolls were fragile and did not last long, both because the papyrus was delicate and because the nature of a roll made it easily damaged (Kenney 16). As a result, books had to be frequently recopied, and each copy inevitably introduced new errors. (2) Because scrolls were awkward to manipulate and it was difficult to easily find a particular reference, it was difficult to check the accuracy of a doubtful word or phrase in a copy (Kenney 16), and as a result errors were not corrected when a copy was made. (3) Moreover, because copies tended to contain

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14 Kenney 25-26
errors, each owner would routinely make his own corrections in his own copy, thus further magnifying the variations in the outstanding copies of a work (Kenney 18). (4) Once a work left the author’s control and copies proliferated, there was no easy way to determine what the correct text should be in a doubtful passage (Kenney 19). However, as we shall see later, private and public libraries were likely to reduce the number of such errors, both because they tended to receive copies soon after they became public, perhaps from the author himself, so that the texts were less likely to be riddled with the errors that accumulated in the copies that circulated generally, and because the books were kept in one place, and were probably not handled so much, they were presumably less subject to damage, loss, or wear and tear generally.

IV. The Benefits of Publication for the Author. An author in Roman times, like authors in any era, was undoubtedly motivated by desire for fame and reputation, for the approbation of his friends and acquaintances, and perhaps by a wish to obtain some form of immortality by creating works which would live beyond his death. Martial, for example, tells us that:

Hic est quem legis ille, quem requiris,
toto notus in orbe Martialis
argutis epigrammaton libellis:
cui, lector studiose, quod dedisti
viventi decus atque sentienti,
rari post cineres habent poetae.  1.1
This is that man whom you are reading, whom you demand, Martial, known throughout the world for witty little books of epigrams: to whom, eager reader, you have given honor while living and appreciative, which few poets have after death.

Ore legor multo notumque per oppida nomen
non expectato dat mihi fama rogo. 3.95.7-8

I am read aloud by many a voice and fame gives me a name known throughout the towns without waiting for death.

sed toto legor orbe frequens et dicitur "Hic est", 5.13.3

I am constantly read throughout the world and people say “It is he”.

As for immortality, Martial claimed that:

lector, opes nostrae: quem cum mihi Roma dedisset,

“nil tibi quod demus maius habemus” ait.

“pigra per hunc fugies ingratae flumina Lethes
et meliore tui parte superstes eris”. 10.2.5-8
Reader, you are my wealth: when Rome gave you to me, it said “I have nothing greater that I give to you; through him you will escape the slow streams of the ungrateful Lethe, and you will survive in the better part of yourself”.

A benefit that a Roman author almost certainly did not expect to receive, however, was income, at least in the sense that we understand an author is remunerated today. Friends who might receive a copy from the author would almost certainly not pay for it, and indeed the author would have the expense of making any copy he might hand out. Thus Martial suggests in 4.72 that he would send someone seeking a copy of his work to a book dealer so that he himself would not have the expense:

Exigis ut donem nostros tibi, Quinte, libellos.
non habeo, sed habet bibliopola Tryphon.
“aes dabo pro nugis et emam tua carmina sanus?
non” inquis “faciam tam fatue”. nec ego.

You demand that I give my little books to you, Quintus. I do not have them but the bookseller Tryphon has them. “Will I as a sane man give a copper for trifles and buy your poems? No,” you say, “I will not act so foolishly.” Nor will I.

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15 Pliny, in a letter to his friend Priscus, said that he had heard of Martial’s death and, discussing the epigram Martial had written praising Pliny, said:
Tametsi, quid homini potest dari maius quam gloria et laus et aeternitas? At non erunt aeterna, quae scripsit; non erunt fortasse, ille tamen scripsit tamquam essent futura.

And yet what can be given to a man greater than glory and praise and eternity? You may say “But they are not eternal, the things which he wrote.” Perhaps they are not, but nevertheless he wrote them as if they were going to be. (Epistles 3.21)
Nor do we have any evidence that an author received any significant income from book dealers, and the lack of income from his works is a frequent theme of Martial’s. For example, in 11.3 he complains:

Non urbana mea tantum Pimpleide gaudent
    otia nec vacuis auribus ista damus,
sed meus in Geticis ad Martia signa pruinis
    a rigidio teritur centurione liber,
dicitur et nostros cantare Britannia versus.
    quid prodest? nescit sacculus ista meus.
at quam victuras poteramus pangere chartas
    quantaque Pieria proelia flare tuba,
cum pia reddiderint Augustum numina terris,
    et Maecenatem si tibi, Roma, darent!

Not only the city’s leisure rejoices in my muse, nor do I give these verses to empty ears, but my book is thumbed by the hard centurion near martial standards in Getic frosts, and Britain is said to recite my verses. What comes of it? My purse does not know those things. But what immortal pages could I have written and what great battles blow with a Pierian trumpet, if, when the kind divinities
restored an Augustus to the lands, they had also given a Maecenas to you, Rome.\textsuperscript{16}

This is not surprising: the only income a book dealer could have received was a fee for making a copy. He had no exclusive rights or other protection against either private copying or other book dealers making copies in competition with him. Thus he simply could not make enough to pay anything to the author — if he did, he would be beaten by competition which did not have the expense of payments to the author. Nor in most cases would he have been motivated to do so: A book dealer did not need the author’s approval to make copies, so long as a copy was extant that he could get his hands on. (Perhaps a book dealer favored by an author, who might receive a copy before others in the trade could find one, and to whom the author might refer friends or other customers, might have paid something to the author. But despite the references in Martial’s epigrams to book dealers that he recommended, there is no evidence that he received any compensation from them.)

Another benefit that an author did not receive from publication was any protection from plagiarism, as there were no intellectual property laws in Martial’s time. And judging by Martial’s frequent invectives against plagiarists, plagiarism was common. In 1.29, for example, Martial wrote:

\begin{flushleft}
Fama refert nostros te, Fidentine, libellos \\
non aliter populo quam recitare tuos. \\
si mea vis dici, gratis tibi carmina mittam:
\end{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{16}Maecenas was a friend of Augustus and an important patron of poets of the Augustan age.
si dici tua vis, hoc eme, ne mea sint.

Rumor reports that you, Fidentinus, recite my little books in public just like your own. If you wish them to be called mine, I will send the poems to you for free: if you wish them to be called yours, buy this, in order that they not be mine.

Indeed, Martial appears to have first used the Latin word *plagiarius* in the modern sense of “plagiarist” in 1.52:

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Commendo tibi, Quintiane, nostros —
nostros dicere si tamen libellos
possum, quos recitat tuus poeta:
si de servitio gravi queruntur,
assertor venias satisque praestes,
et, cum se dominum vocabit ille,
dicas esse meos manuque missos.
hoc si terque quaterque clamitaris,
impones plagiario pudorem.
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I commend to you, Quintianus, my – if however I can say my little books, which your poet recites: if they complain about harsh servitude, come as their champion and offer satisfaction, and when that man calls himself their master, say that they
are mine and sent by my hand. If you shout this three or four times, you will impose shame on the plagiarist.¹⁷

V. Libraries. While libraries were not directly related to publication, they nevertheless played an important role in the collection and preservation of published works. Asinius Pollio is said to have founded the first public¹⁸ library at Rome in 39 B.C., more than a century before Martial's time (Kenney 24). Augustus subsequently founded two public libraries, and other emperors followed suit, so that by Constantine's time it has been estimated that there were twenty-eight public libraries in Rome (Kenney 24; Kenyon 81-82). Moreover, there were extensive private libraries. Lucullus, for example, was said to have had a very large collection, which anyone might use (Kenyon 81), and by Seneca’s time private libraries had apparently become so common that he was complaining about ostentatious collections.¹⁹

Libraries had two great advantages for the preservation of Latin literature: First, they tended to receive copies soon after they became public, perhaps from the author himself, so that the texts were less likely to be riddled with the errors that accumulated in the copies that circulated generally (Kenney 25). Second, because the books were kept in one place, and were probably not handled so much, they were presumably less subject to

¹⁷ "[plagiarist comes] from Latin plagarius ‘kidnapper, seducer, plunderer, one who kidnaps the child or slave of another,’ used by Martial in the sense of ‘literary thief,’ from plagiare ‘to kidnap,’ plagium ‘kidnapping’ . . . " (Online Etymology Dictionary).
¹⁸ "Public" would not have had the same meaning as with a modern public library. Those having access would undoubtedly have been very limited, and of course few people could read anyway: William Harris, for example, concluded in an exhaustive survey of ancient literacy that the overall level of literacy in Italy and Rome during the late republic and the high empire is likely to have been below 15%, and that would have included many readers (tradesmen, slaves, etc.,) not concerned with literary works (259-67).
¹⁹ 9.4-6
damage, loss, or wear and tear generally (Kenney 25). (The great exception is the
destruction caused by fires, which were so frequent that it has been said that only one
library of all those founded by emperors survived to the fifth century.\(^{20}\)

The ultimate survival of what has come down to us of Roman literature probably
depended on the following factors: (1) whether it had been preserved in a public library;\(^{21}\)
(2) whether it was considered sufficiently important to be copied in codex form onto
vellum, or parchment, when those forms became predominant; and (3) whether a
monastic or cathedral library obtained and preserved the work. As E.J. Kenney put it:

[E]ven those texts which still survived somewhere were effectively lost unless
they satisfied two requirements. Their existence had to be known, and they had to
be deemed worth the trouble (and expense) of recopying. Texts which failed to
pass this double test were doomed to disappearance. Further losses of course were
to occur during the Dark and Middle Ages, but they must have been relatively
small in comparison with what failed to survive the end of classical antiquity. A
text that had been copied into a codex and lodged in a monastic or capitolar

\(^{20}\) (Kenney 25), but Kenney cites as his source for these facts the *Historia Augusta* for
Aurelian and Probus, adding "— for what this testimony is worth." (The *Historia
Augusta* is widely considered untrustworthy.)

\(^{21}\) Kenney asserts that “the textual quality of the average copy in general circulation in
antiquity can be inferred from the evidence of surviving papyri and other ancient
fragments, citations in grammarians and similar sources, and from the complaints of
contemporaries: it was not high. Yet the medieval tradition of many Latin authors is not
nearly as corrupt as we should expect if our earliest surviving *codices* are the lineal
descendants of such generally current copies.” He accounts for this fact by supposing
"that the early monastic and cathedral libraries in Italy built up their stocks of books by
acquiring or copying from manuscripts in the old pagan public libraries of Rome, some of
which might have been of great age and most of which were likely to have been textually
superior to copies in general circulation" (25).
library was by no means out of the wood; but it had a better than sporting chance of coming through. (Kenney 27) (footnotes in quoted text omitted)

VI. What did Martial Publish and When? We have two sources from which we may attempt to determine what Martial published and when: (a) the manuscript tradition (the surviving manuscripts that preserve a given work); and (b) internal evidence derived from the epigrams themselves.

A. The Manuscript Tradition.22 There are three families of extant Martial manuscripts, usually designated α, β, and γ. These are believed to have been derived from archetypes, now lost, (labeled A^A, B^A, and C^A) dating from the eighth to the tenth centuries, which in turn were derived from manuscripts in late antiquity.

α: This family, whose principal manuscripts are designated H, T, and R, consists of anthologies of Martial and other authors.23 It contains the epigrams that survive of the so-called liber de spectaculis (our only source for that liber),24 excerpts of books 1-12 of Martial’s epigrams (about one half of the total, often only couplets extracted from epigrams), and the Xenia and Apophoreta, conventionally labeled books 13 and 14 although published before the other numbered books, in their entirety. α, alone among the family, is significantly (and without any indication of doing so) expurgated – many “obscene” words pertaining to women were replaced with less offensive substitutes, such as “monstrum” or “nefas” for “cunnus,” or “salire” for “futuere,” while

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22 See Friedlaender, Citroni, Lindsay, and Reeve.
23 Lindsay tells us, however, that there is no reason to suppose that the archetype A^A from which this family is derived was an anthology or was not otherwise a complete text of Martial’s epigrams (10).
24 Reeve asserts that H is missing epigrams 1.1 through 18.4, and that none of the other manuscripts in α have them (240-41).
maintaining Latinity, meter, and sense. It also, along with the other families, contains many variations in the personal names (fictional, apart from emperors) used in the epigrams, some of which may have originated with Martial himself rather than from errant copyists (Reeve 243, Williams 8).

β: This family, whose principal manuscripts are designated L, P, Q, and f, is known to have descended from an ancient manuscript edited by Torquatus Gennadius, a young scion of a noble family, in AD 401, as shown by subscriptions found in the principal manuscripts. It omits epigrams 1.1 and 1.2 (both discussed below), part of 4.41 and 4.42-4.47 (and the liber de spectaculis), and confuses the order of the first four books.

γ: This family, whose principal manuscripts are designated E, X, and V, has the largest number of extant manuscripts. It omits the praefatio to book 2, 10.56.7-72, and 87.20-91.2 (and the liber de spectaculis), and in later descendants also transposes 3.22.1-3.63.4 following 5.67.5. It also places epigrams 1.1 and 1.2 (both discussed below) before the epigram concluding the praefatio to book 1.

B. Internal Evidence.

1. The Dating of the Books. Martial’s epigrams are contained in a total of fifteen books: a group of epigrams generically entitled Epigrammaton liber but usually referred to as liber de spectaculis or liber spectaculorum; twelve numbered books; and the Xenia

(Shackleton Bailey vi-vii) A.E. Housman more pointedly said that “what is termed modesty in α by Mr Heraeus and elegance by Mr Lindsay (who thinks monstrum a ‘suitable euphemism’ to signify what Burke calls the fount of life itself) [referring to cunnus] is mere monkish horror of woman: α will copy down the grossest and filthiest words, such lines as III 71 1 [mentula] and VII 10 1 [Pedicatur, fellat], if only they do not call up thoughts of the abhorred sex.” (202)

See, e.g., Lindsay 1-7.
and Apophoreta, customarily numbered books thirteen and fourteen. Friedlaender established a dating of the books in 1886 which is still generally accepted (Friedlaender 50-67).

The liber de spectaculis commemorated the opening of the Flavian Amphitheater, or “Colosseum,” in A.D. 80 and was presumably published shortly thereafter. Following the liber de spectaculis were a collection of epigrams on the subject of gifts for the Saturnalia, published in two books entitled Xenia and Apophoreta but which are labeled Books XIII and XIV in the manuscripts; and books labeled by Martial Book I through Book XII (Williams 4-5). (The liber de spectaculis is usually not numbered.)

Friedlaender considered that the Xenia and the Apophoreta were published around AD 84 or 85, based on several references to a period of peace prior to, according to Friedlaender, wars with the Dacians which began in AD 84, and to a reference to Domitian as Germanicus, a name which he took in 84 (Friedlaender 51-52). Thereafter, again according to Friedlaender, Martial published Books I and II in AD 86, followed by Books III through XII at regular intervals from AD 87 to AD 104. Although there have been some alternative theories advanced, this chronology is still generally accepted.²⁷

2. The Libelli Issue.

a. What does libellus mean? Martial’s use of the term libellus has been a source of considerable uncertainty and discussion.²⁸ Sage, for example, writing in 1919, asserted that libellus could mean (1) a liber, or book, as we commonly understand it (e.g., in 5.2

²⁷ Pitcher, for example, disputed the dating of the Xenia and the Apophoreta, primarily on the grounds that Martial would not have referred to Domitian in Book 14.1 as nostrum Jovem at so early a period as 84 or 85 (330-339).
²⁸ This issue is not confined to Martial. Much has been written, for example, on the meaning of libellus in Catullus's poems, and in particular what poems comprised the libellus in Catullus 1.
Martial contrasts his previous *quattuor libellos* with his *quintus liber*; in 4.10 he refers to his *novus libellus* in line 1 but calls it his *liber* in line 5; (2) some portion of a *liber* (e.g., in 10.1 Martial advises the reader that if the *liber* seems too long he should read only a few parts, and *libellus ero*); or (3) a single epigram (e.g., in 10.19 Martial urges Thalia to take his *libellus* to his dear friend Pliny, and Pliny later quoted that epigram in a letter written on learning of Martial’s death\(^{29}\)) (Sage 168-70).

**b. The controversy between Fowler and White.** We do know that Martial published fifteen books, and we can be reasonably sure (with the exception of the *liber de spectaculis*) that these books are more or less in the form and order in which Martial put them, based upon the degree of uniformity of the manuscript tradition in the families \(\alpha\), \(\beta\), and \(\gamma\). However, there is a more or less widely held view, whose principal advocate is Peter White, that many of his epigrams must have been previously circulated in *libellis*, and that such *libelli* were more important than the subsequent books in which they are contained, on the theory that at least some of the epigrams would not have been timely or appropriate to their purpose if they were only contained in books containing many other epigrams. Others, principally D.H. Fowler, dispute that view, and, as discussed below,

\(^{29}\) Sage asserts that this shows a “complete identification” of the *libellus* with the epigram quoted by Pliny, but it only proves that Pliny had that epigram in his possession, along with perhaps many others, and there is no evidence of what (if anything) was sent to Pliny as a *libellus*. And although Sage asserts that there are several other instances where *libellus* may mean a single epigram, they are not compelling (168). In Martial III.99, for example, Martial chides one Cerdo for being angry at his *libellus* because in it Martial had played an innocuous joke on him. And in V.39 Martial purports to accuse “a certain person” of cheating him because although Martial had praised him in his *libellus* the person had acted as though he owed Martial nothing. The most that can be said of these examples is that if within one of Martial's books there is only one epigram directed at “Cerdo,” or at “a certain person,” then *libellus* in each case must refer only to that one epigram, not a persuasive argument.
contend that it is damaging to an appreciation of Martial’s poems. The question with respect to Martial is whether or to what extent his epigrams were previously published, and if so how important were such prior publications, and how does the question of such prior publication affect the reader’s appreciation of Martial’s work.

White asserts in the beginning of his 1974 paper that “the poets’ published books represent only the last and least important means of presenting poems to patrons,” and that “[t]he poets’ published libri, as we have them, could not have been a very effective vehicle for conveying complimentary verse” (1974) 40. (Implicit in his assertions, but not discussed, is that the primary purpose of Martial’s epigrams was to flatter patrons. Indeed, White later asserts that “[in] the case of patron-oriented verse, the occasion of a poem overrides every ulterior consideration. We should approach this poetry first of all as a kind of log (oblique and incomplete, to be sure) of the intricate maneuverings carried on by poets vis-a-vis their patrons.” (1974) 48) To support his position, he asserts that (a) a patron, especially the emperor, would not be very flattered by an epigram buried in a large group of epigrams that also flattered others; (b) many epigrams presumably addressed to patrons, birthday poems, for example, would not be timely by the time the books were published; and (c) some epigrams do not identify the persons to whom he is writing, and therefore “[t]he poems must somehow have been made known to them well in advance of publication” (1974) 42. He then suggests that in fact such epigrams were first delivered to those whom Martial wished to flatter by (1) impromptu verses often created at convivia and the like, perhaps over wine at a patron’s country estate; (2) more
formal recitations by the author;\(^{30}\) and (3), most importantly for this discussion, written copies of Martial’s poems sent to the intended recipients. Here White describes the procedure discussed above of an author circulating drafts of works in private to friends for their comments and reaction before publication. He then adds:

For a writer who lived by gathering patronage, this system invited exploitation. It gave Martial an unobtrusive pretext for sending a series of poems to various well-advantaged friends, a pretext that was the more natural as these friends were very often literary dilettanti themselves. Moreover, since the circumstances were informal, what was sent did not need to be the full text: writers sometimes chose excerpts from a continuous work, or selections from a corpus of poems. (\(^{1974}\) 44 (citation omitted))\(^{31}\)

These excerpts or selections, according to White, are what he calls (and presumably what he believes Martial meant by the term) *libelli*. Finally, he asserts that “certain poems [11.106, 4.82, 7.26, and 5.80] represent themselves as introductions to accompanying books. Yet they are so awkwardly located for this purpose that one must conclude that Martial could not originally have designed them for the positions they now occupy”

\(^{30}\) White cites 1.3 for this claim, but that epigram playfully refers to a *libellus* which prefers to go out into the world to live in Argiletum bookshops rather than to safely remain in the author’s book boxes at home, despite the dangers of a fickle public. If anything, this suggests publication by the author and subsequent public distribution, not a recitation by the author.

\(^{31}\) White suggested that single epigrams could have been conveyed in any appropriate written medium (\(^{1974}\) 44), perhaps including wax tablets.
Therefore, he concludes, they must originally have been published elsewhere.

Fowler, writing some 21 years later, asserts that “[t]he libellus theory has been particularly damaging to the appreciation of the poems, since it has functioned by attempting to demonstrate that the epigrams do not ‘fit’ in their published contexts but must be supposed to have had more apt settings in previous informal brochures presented to patrons” (31). To demonstrate his point Fowler discusses a number of the epigrams relied on by White. For example, 12.5 reads:

Longior undecimi nobis decimique libelli
artatus labor est et breve rasit opus.
plura legant vacui, quibus otia tuta dedisti:
haec lege tu, Caesar; forsan et illa leges.

The longer labour of my tenth and eleventh books has been compressed and has filed down my work to brevity. Let idlers, to whom you have given leisure in security, read more: these, Caesar, are for you to read. Perhaps you will read those others as well.33

White had cited 12.5 as referring to an example of an unpublished libellus, shorter than one of Martial’s books and a unique copy, not duplicated for the public at large, for the

32 11.106 and 7.26 are discussed below. None of these four epigrams appear to be simple transmission letters, and in any event the names of the purported addressees are almost certainly fictitious. See Williams 8.
33 The translations in these examples accompanying the discussion of Fowler are Shackleton Bailey’s, as provided by Fowler.
emperor Nerva. Fowler, after pointing out that the example is a red herring, since excerpts from previously published books do not support White’s theory of such books being the “last and least important means” of presenting poems, argues that Martial’s real intended audience is not the emperor but the general readers to whom the emperor has given the leisure time to read the book and who have no excuse not to:

Although the poem’s implied reader is in one sense the emperor, to read it only in those terms is to miss the implications for the empirical reader: but as soon as one sets up that opposition, one sees that in another sense it is precisely the vacui who are the real implied readers. To read this poem only as a piece of evidence, a fragment of a log-book of patronage, is a wasted opportunity. (Fowler 41)

As another example, 11.106 reads:

Vibi Maxime, si vacas havere,  
hoc tantum lege: namque et occupatus  
et non es nimium laboriosus.  
transis hos quoque quattuor? sapisti.

Vibius Maximus, if you have time to say hello, read only this; for you are a busy man and not overindustrious. Do you pass by these four verses too? You show your sense.

White asserted that “[t]he poem could not have been meant to stand there, or else Maximus would have had to unroll to the third last poem in the book before he
discovered the one item of which Martial begs him to take notice” – hence it must have been the first epigram in a *libellus* (1974 47). Fowler responds by pointing out that the poem is a paradox, in that it compliments a reader for not reading it, and that while ostensibly it recites a conversation in which Martial addresses Maximus, it is in fact textual:

[I]n trying to take this poem seriously, to think when and where one could possibly utter these words, White is in a sense being exactly the reader Martial wants, but a reader who can then enjoy the absurdity rather than continuing the desperate search to resolve it is likely to have a higher opinion of Martial’s poetry. (47.)

And again, 7.26 reads:

Apollinarem conveni meum, scazon,
et si vacabit — ne molestus accedas, —
hoc qualecumque, cuius aliqua pars ipse est,
dabis: haec facetum carmen inbuant aures.
Si te receptum fronte videris tota, 5
noto rogabis ut favore sustentet.
Quanto mearum, scis, amore nugarum
flagret: nec ipse plus amare te possum.
Contra malignos esse si cupis tutus,
Apollinarem conveni meum, scazon. 10
Limping verse, go meet my Apollinaris, and, if he is not too busy (don’t approach him at the wrong time) give him this, such as it is, of which he is himself a part. Let his witty ear be the first to hear the verses. If you see yourself received with an unwrinkled brow, ask him to support you with his well-known favour. You know how ardently he loves my trifles. I can’t love you more myself. If you want to be safe against ill-wishers, go meet my Apollinaris, limping verse.

White, again seeking a literal interpretation, concludes that this must have been the first poem in a *libellus* that had been given to Apollinaris to read, and not the twenty-sixth poem in book 7. Fowler, in turn, points out that viewed textually the poem is an amusing paradox – the scazon is being told to go to Apollinaris and give *hoc* to him, but *hoc* is the scazon itself.

Fowler concludes: “I have been attempting to argue that we need never hypothesise in Martial publication [sic] of the epigrams in private brochures: the poems are not a log of ‘real’ social relations, but texts which simulate and construct a social world whose textual existence is brought before the reader at every turn.” (50-51)

The exact nature of the disagreement between White and Fowler is slippery. Fowler never challenges White when he asserts that Martial’s epigrams, or at least those meant to flatter a patron, were first privately circulated for comment, or that in doing so Martial “exploited” the opportunity in order to curry favor with patrons. Nor could he very well have, since such private circulation was routinely used by authors to get

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34 As discussed above, the term “publication” is not appropriate, because by definition private brochures would not have been available to the public; perhaps “circulation” would be a better word.
feedback and to prepare works for release to the public, and no one can know whether Martial used the opportunity to flatter patrons. From the point of view of the discussion of publication, then, there is no dispute.

What Fowler does challenge is the statement that the published books were “only the last and least important means of presenting poems to patrons,” and the notion that the poems must be read literally, as a sort of social log of Martial’s efforts to gain favor with his patrons. And on this issue Fowler must be right. In the first place, 11.106, for example, can hardly be taken literally as the representation of a conversation Martial had with a friend Vibius Maximus, or even as an introductory epigram accompanying a *libellus* containing a small selection of poems, since it is on its face a self-deprecatory joke describing a paradoxical situation in which Maximus cannot appreciate the supposed compliment that he shows his sense by not reading the verses because he has not read the verses, and, in any event, the name Vibius Maximus is most likely fictitious (Williams 8).

In the second place, if such epigrams are to be taken literally, how in the world did they end up in inappropriate positions in the books? Does White hypothesize that Martial’s sole interest was in currying favor with patrons, and that thereafter he simply threw whatever he had previously given to patrons into books without any thought as to how they would read in those books? It is a very unflattering image of Martial, and inconsistent with Martial’s numerous references to his desire for fame and reputation.

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35 In his reply to Fowler’s paper, White states that “Fowler has challenged [my] hypothesis . . . to the effect that Martial’s epigrams circulated informally among selected individuals in small assortments before they became available to a wider public as the books . . .” ((1996) 397). Of course Fowler does not challenge that statement, but in his reply White never repeated his claim that such circulation was more important than the books themselves.
In the third place, White’s portrayal of Martial as a grubbing sycophantic toady whose principal goal was to increase the dole from his patrons (e.g., (1974) 42, 43, 44) and to frequent their convívia and villas ((1974) 42, 43) is inconsistent with what we know of Martial. Despite White's frequent suggestions of limited income and straitened circumstances, we know that he was an established figure in Rome: he was a tribune, he had equestrian rank (which presumably means that he had assets of at least 400,000 sesterces), he had more than once been granted the ius trium liberorum (by Titus and Domitian), he apparently had (subsequent to his apartment near the Vipsanian laurels) a house in Rome with a garden and grounds, and in addition a Nomentan farm (Williams 3-4, Allen et al., 345-47). It is not flattering to portray such a man, and one whose desire for a good reputation is often reflected in his works, as one who would “exploit” the system of receiving literary criticism and feedback by using the system as a “pretext” for “sending a series of poems to various well-advantaged friends” in the hope of a handout ((1974) 44). On the other hand, White is probably correct in asserting that it would be “socially bizarre” if such epigrams as relate to births, deaths, marriages, and anniversaries were not separately sent in a timely fashion ((1996) 410), and Fowler never takes issue with White on that. But such epigrams would presumably not have been contained in a brochure or libellus with other poems, but would have been sent separately. And in the end, they are not central to either White’s contentions or Fowler’s.

3. Prior or Subsequent publications or editions. Although, as we have seen above,36 for the most part the manuscript tradition shows fourteen books published in a more or less regular order with the contents of each book well-established (the liber de

36 See pp. 22-24
spectaculis is not included here as we do not have its entire contents), a number of
Martial’s epigrams have raised questions as to the order of publication of the books and
whether or not the books, or portions of them, were published in more than one edition,

or form, or in different combinations.

**a. Martial’s epigram 10.2 says:**

Festinata prius, decimi mihi cura libelli

elapsum manibus nunc revocavit opus.

nota leges quaedam sed lima rasa recenti;

pars nova maior erit: lector, utrique fave,

. . . .

Having been previously hastened, my concern for my tenth little book now
has recalled the work, having slipped from my hands. You will read some familiar
things, but scraped by a recent file; the greater part will be new. Reader, favor
both. . . .

In 10.2, Martial explicitly says that he has created a second edition of at least book 10. As
Williams says:

We also know that Martial published at least one revised edition of his works, as
Ovid had done with his *Amores*. Book X originally appeared in A.D. 95 in a form
now lost to us, followed by Book XI in December of 96, a few months after the
death of Domitian. But after the death of Domitian’s successor Nerva in 98,
Martial published a revised edition of Book X (see 10.2), which is the version transmitted to us in the manuscripts. (Williams 5.)

Martial obviously published a revised edition of Book X. It is easy to date the revised edition to after Nerva’s death, as there are several epigrams in it praising Nerva’s successor Trajan. And as the manuscript tradition does not provide any basis for two editions of Book X, the one we have must be the revised edition.

There has been some speculation as to the reason for the revised edition, but nothing definitive has been concluded. Allen, et al., for example, point out that “It is difficult to find a satisfactory explanation for the revision. . . . Finally, and this is especially striking, it is not easy to understand why a new edition of book 10 would cause the suppression of an embarrassing earlier edition.” (Allen et al. 351.) One possibility might be that the changes were so minor that the “revised” edition survived simply because it was viewed as a copy corrected by the author. But, apart from the fact that authorial revisions were not a guarantee that an earlier version would not survive, such an explanation ignores (1) the epigram 10.2 trumpeting the new edition; (2) at least several epigrams referring to Trajan that are obviously new, and (3) Martial’s statement in 10.2 that “the greater part [of the edition] will be new.” And if the revised edition was mostly new work, why not simply publish a new book? As Allen, et al. point out, there is no reason why a revised edition would suppress the earlier edition, even if (or especially if) it contained embarrassing material. But in the absence of any evidence other than the internal evidence of Book X itself, the puzzle must remain unsolved.

b. **Martial’s epigram 1.2** says:

Qui tecum cupis esse meos ubicumque libellos
et comites longae quaeris habere viae,
hos eme, quos artat brevibus membrana tabellis:
scinia da magnis, me manus una capit.
ne tamen ignores ubi sim venalis et erres
urbe vagus tota, me duce certus eris:
libertum docti Lucensis quaere Secundum
limina post Pacis Palladiumque forum.

You who desire my little books to be with you everywhere and wish to have them as the companions of a long trip, buy these, which parchment compresses in small pages. Give book boxes [used to contain scrolls of books] to the great; one hand holds me. However, in order that you not be unaware where I am for sale, and wander unsettled through the whole city, you will be unerring with me as your leader: look for Secundus, freedman of the learned Lucensis behind the threshold of Peace and Pallas' forum.

There is a widespread consensus that “[libellos] artat brevibus membrana tabellis” means that parchment compresses the little books on small pages, or, in other words, codices. And as many scholars have pointed out, this fact alone is remarkable: as discussed above, codices did not replace scrolls for pagan literature until around the fourth century, and the first known fragment of a document in codex form, found at

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37 E.g., Allen et al. 352; Sage 171; White II 398; Fowler 33; Williams 5. Any doubt that codices are referred to can be resolved by the contrasting reference to scinia (book boxes used to hold scrolls of books).
38 See pp. 8-9
Oxyrhynchus, is believed to have been written around A.D. 98, or some twelve years after Martial is believed to have written Book I.\(^\text{39}\)

But 1.2’s reference to codices containing Martial’s *libellos* raises a number of more significant questions: *First*, when was it published? It seems odd that it seems to appear as the second epigram of Martial’s first book (Book 1) which is believed to have had significant circulation; what was there to include in a codex at that point, and wouldn’t the solicitation to readers to purchase a codex have been somewhat presumptuous at that point, particularly when taken with 1.1(cited above), which shouts the following?

\[
\text{Hic est quem legis ille, quem requiris,}
\]
\[
\text{toto notus in orbe Martialis}
\]
\[
\text{argutis epigrammaton libellis:}
\]
\[
\text{cui, lector studiose, quod dedisti}
\]
\[
\text{viventi decus atque sentienti,}
\]
\[
\text{rari post cineres habent poetae.}
\]

This is that man whom you are reading, whom you want: Martial, known in the whole world because of his witty little books of epigrams: you, reader, have given him honor while he is living and sensible of it, which few poets have after death.

\(^\text{39}\) See, *e.g.*, Allen, *et al.* 352-53. Martial also referred to perhaps six codices as special gifts in Book XIV, which consists almost entirely of two-line epigrams describing special gifts to be given at the Saturnalia, and which scholars have discounted as unusual items not reflecting significant usage at the time.
Second, what does hos [libellos] refer to? Various scholars have suggested (a) Book I, (b) Books I and II, (c) the Xenia, Apophoreta, Book I, and perhaps Book II, or perhaps (d) Books I through VII. Third, to what reader is 1.2 addressed, or put another way, how do we resolve the paradox of an epigram touting the codex form containing the epigram to someone who presumably already has the epigram, since he is reading it? As with most other questions, all we have to go on is the internal evidence in the epigrams themselves.

1. When was the codex published? The answer, of course, depends in part on the answer to the question as to what it contained – obviously, if it contained subsequent books, in particular books I – VII, it must have been published at a later date. And if that is the case, the question arises when and how did 1.1 and 1.2 come to appear in Book I? (And, of course, in that connection we must remember that 1.1 and 1.2 appeared in their present order only in the α manuscript family; in β 1.1 and 1.2 were entirely absent, and in γ they appeared before the epigram concluding the praefatio to Book I.)

Howell, in his commentary on Book I, takes the simplest approach – 1.1 and 1.2 were contained in Book I when it appeared. He accounts for 1.1 as either justified by Martial’s earlier efforts – the liber de spectaculis, the Xenia, and the Apophoreta, his earlier youthful efforts referred to in 1.113, and perhaps individual epigrams or small libelli previously circulated; or simply as hyperbole. If there is a problem with that solution, he suggests, acknowledging that the reference to libellis in 1.2 is “a little puzzling,” the solution is to hypothesize that the two epigrams were inserted in Book I at
a later, unknowable time. If, on the other hand, the codex also contained other books, we must assume a subsequent publication at a later date.

2. What was in the codex?

a. Books I and II. The only real basis for the suggestion that the codex contained books I and II is the last epigram in Book II, 2.93, which says:

“Primus ubi est” inquis “cum sit liber iste secundus?”

quid faciam si plus ille pudoris habet?

tu tamen hunc fieri si mavis, Regule, primum,

unum de titulo tollere iota potes.

“What is the first,” you say, “since this is the second book?” What should I do, if that one has more modesty? However, Regulus, if you prefer that this become the first, you can remove one “I” from the title.

The simplest explanation of 2.93 is that Martial did not begin numbering his books until he had published the second book, particularly since apparently before Martial there was no practice of numbering books. However, 2.93 has caused some scholars to speculate that the hypothetical reader was previously unaware of Book I because Books I and II were published at the same time, and of course it is then tempting to conclude, in light of 1.2, that they were published in codex form. Moreover, this theory gains weight because

40 (Howell 6, 103) Williams provides some support to this second hypothesis that they were inserted at a later time, stating that “[i]t is also likely that Martial brought out a revised edition of Book I in codex form at some later date. (see 1.1 - 2)” (5).

41 Williams called it a “novel practice” (5), and Fowler said that “Martial’s use of numbers rather than titles for his libelli is a strikingly original aspect of his practice” (35).
Books I and II are both thought to have been published around 86.\textsuperscript{42} In the absence of any other evidence, however, this theory seems unduly speculative.

b. Books I – VII. This theory stems from 7.17, which reads:

\begin{verbatim}
Ruris bibliotheca delicati, 
vicinam videt unde lector urbem, 
inter carmina sanctiora si quis 
lascivae fuerit locus Thalieae, 
hos nido licet inseras vel imo 5 
septem quos tibi misimus libellos 
auctoris calamo sui notatos: 
haec illis pretium facit litura. 
at tu munere *delicata* parvo, 
quae cantaberis orbe nota toto, 10 
pignus pectoris hoc mei tuere, 
Iuli bibliotheca Martialis.
\end{verbatim}

Library of a delightful country estate, from which a reader sees the neighboring city, if there is any place for playful Thalia among the more virtuous verses, you may insert even in the lowest bookcase these seven little books which I have sent you, marked by the pen of their author: these corrections give them value. But you, O delightful library of Julius Martialis, that will be celebrated and renowned over the whole globe because of this little gift, guard this pledge of my heart!

\textsuperscript{42} See, e.g., Sage 171-72.
This theory, first advanced in the 19th century, holds that the codex described in 1.2 must have been the form of the seven *libellos* corrected by the author and sent to the library of one Julius Martialis, in part because the combined size of seven books would justify the apparent claims of 1.2 of the large capacity of the codex.\(^{43}\) The trouble with the theory is that if it were referring to a codex, why did Martial specifically refer to *septem libellos* and not the codex he trumpeted in 1.2, especially in light of his prominent announcement in 10.2 of a revised edition of Book X? (Sage 171-74) This theory also seems unduly speculative.

**3. To whom is 1.2 addressed?** There is a paradox lurking in 1.2: it urges the reader to buy Martial’s *libellos* in the form of a codex, but he already has – he’s reading the codex. As Fowler puts it: “In poem 1.2, for instance, the *lector studiosus* [1.1.4] is told where he can get a nice collected Martial to carry around with him: but naturally he will only be reading ‘these’ *(hos, 3)* directions if he has already bought the codex.” (34) Fowler’s answer, and it is well put, is that “It is a cliché that bears repeating that the implied reader is always in fact a constructed reader, that it is interpretations which imply readers, not texts.” (35) In other words, we should not read the epigram as referring to a literal reader; Martial is simply using the convention of a constructed reader, just as many of his epigrams are ostensibly written to a specific, but in fact fictional, person.\(^{44}\)

\(^{43}\) Most scholars assume that 1.2’s references to the plural *libellis* suggests a large capacity. See, e.g., Sage 171-74.

\(^{44}\) Sage seems to go astray here, taking 1.2 literally and stating that “[t]he place for this poem was then anywhere outside of the codex edition to which it refers,” since as advertising it should be directed to someone not already owning the codex (171).
Conclusion

I have endeavored to describe and analyze publication of literary works in Martial's time, with particular focus on Martial's own epigrams. And although I have used the word “publication” and its analogs, I have tried to show how unrelated “publication” in Martial's time was to our modern concept of publication, invoking the printing, distribution and sales of thousands, or even millions, of books, all with identical (and for the most part error-free) content, all with copyright and other intellectual property protection, and potentially generating large amounts of income for the author, the publisher, and others involved in the production and sale of the books. I have also attempted to describe in what forms Martial's own epigrams were published. In doing so, I have relied to a great extent on Martial's own epigrams, which provide a unique insight into publication in his time and of publication of his own epigrams.

In discussing publication of classical works and in comparing its disadvantages in comparison with how modern works are published, it is nevertheless important to recognize how well publication in Martial’s time, and in classical times generally, worked: many thousands of works were written, published, circulated, and read, many of which unquestionably had an incalculable influence on Roman society and government (one need only think of Cicero or Vergil, among many others). And the publication, maintenance, and preservation of those works was so well done that large numbers of those works (although unfortunately a relative small percentage) survived and are available to us today.

The issues discussed above are, I believe, important to a good understanding of classical literature: a scholar not knowing how books, or literature generally, were
written, published, and circulated in the ancient world would not fully grasp the nature and limitations of our knowledge of the classical works we have available to us, including the accuracy of the text itself, how it fits with other parts of the author's work, and in what forms it appeared to contemporary readers.
Works Cited


