

DATA FOR THE DETAILED CONGRESS PROGRAMME

A. DEDINITE TITLE OF THE LECTURE:

*Martial: the loss of an epic?*

B. LANGUAGE OF DELIVERANCE OF THE LECTURE:

English

C. INSTITUTIONAL ADDRESS FOR THE CONGRESS PROGRAMME:

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E. FINAL ABSTRACT:

There are no authors apart their epochs. However, *Marcus Valerius Martialis* has been a truly compromised fruit of his own time.

The first century A.D., that begun with a Golden Age, was no longer, in its eighties, living under the good fortune brought by the first *Princeps*. From *Octavianus'* reign on, growing economical, social and political troubles progressively prevented the *Vrbs Aeterna* from living its epic myth. The last, yet completely useless, effort of Rome's first principality towards its inaugural glory was hopefully called the "*iuuenis diues*". But even before Nero's madness, the Age of Augustus came to an end.

Far were already the circles of Maecenas, allowing the emergence of authors like Horace or Virgil, who could once be totally dedicated to their art. Literature didn't escape the *fatum* of the Empire and, after 68 A.D., together with the *Magna Vrbs*, waited for a time that would finally be able of a renewal.

Would the new Flavian Dynasty operate the redemption of the Roman Empire?

After major achievements of the Flavians, a new *Aurea Aetas*, that the Antonines would later consolidate, bleached.

However, it was impossible to recover the past. The Empire was no longer the same: more than ever before, the wealthy searched for "purple", the populace claimed for "*panis et circenses*". The definite change of times had, in the artistic production, one of its major proofs. A new despicable way of patronage – the *clientela* – left the authors by themselves!

Accepting the invitation sketched through Martial's *opera*, our ambition is to, finally, comprehend how had it been possible to a writer to survive those times and bring his work to light and, most of all, what made prophetic these very words: "*Hic est quem legis ille, quem requiris, toto notus in orbe Martialis*"!

The artistic world was in a complete disorder... The most considered genre continued to be the Empire related one: the Epic... But, how could one then raise up a festive "*tuba*"? What would one still celebrate?

To sing the new Empire in its everyday life, at once, graceful and disgraceful, only a rude “*auena*”, jocosely and mordaciously, would do. The Epigram, not the Epic, was the new voice of Rome! Martial perfectly understood his adoptive city and, hoisting his “*auena*”, applied all his mastery to the celebration of his Rome and his fellow-citizen Romans – “*Hominem pagina nostra sapit*”.

Have we lost a talented epic who devoted himself to a minor genre or have we gained a unique singer that lived in perfect harmony with his own time?

Indeed, Martial’s epigrams could truly bewilder readers *Vrbis et Orbis* and even defy and defeat the eras...

Martial proved that there was no need to be an epic writer to reach immortality: from his contemporaries not even a name among the epics achieved that fame... It is the *opera* that counts: and therefore the name of *Marcus Valerius Martialis* will never be forgotten, as he predicted: “*Si... fas est cineri me superesse meo!*”

Yet Martial’s “single” did was fulfilling his words: “*Angusta cantare licet uidearis auena, dum tua multorum uincat auena tubas.*”!