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UT SCULPTURA POESIS: STATIUS, MARTIAL,
AND THE HERCULES EPITRAPEZIOS
OF NOVIUS VINDEX

CHARLES MCNELIS



Abstract. Statius' *Silvae* 4.6 and Martial's *Epigrams* 9.43 and 9.44 concern a Greek statue that, after a storied history, has ended up in the hands of Novius Vindex, an otherwise obscure Roman of the early imperial period. While Vindex manifestly fits into the pattern of Romans who use Greek art to enhance their position and status, the two poets also use the statue to demonstrate their inheritance and control of the work of generic predecessors in order to underscore their own poetic accomplishments in an imperial Roman world.

POEMS THAT DESCRIBE WORKS OF ART typically address in some fashion the relationship between the literary and plastic arts.¹ In this article, I will look at one example of this relationship between text and image as depicted in a poem by Statius (*Silvae* 4.6) and two epigrams by Martial (*Ep.* 9.43 and 44). The two poets report that a storied miniature Greek statue was made by Lysippus and then owned by Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Sulla before it ended up in the hands of Novius Vindex, a relatively unknown Roman.² This genealogy links Vindex with powerful figures, and in doing so it suggests that he, too, is a person of some authority.

In addition, I argue that each poet describes Vindex's statue in ways that situate his own poem(s) within a particular literary tradition and that each then uses that tradition to highlight his own artistic accomplishments. Statius, for example, praises Vindex in part through allusions to epinician celebrations by Vergil and Callimachus of their respective rulers, Octavian and Berenice. Statius thereby creates a genealogy that mirrors the explicit line of the statue's transmission from Alexander to Vindex and that enhances his praise of Vindex by linking him to another set of

¹ See, e.g., Fowler 1991; Krieger 1992; Laird 1993; Heffernan 1993, 137.

² Vindex seems not to have been a senator, though it is possible that he was a *praefectus equitum*; see Coleman 1988, 173.

Roman and Hellenistic leaders. At the same time, this second genealogy links Statius' congratulatory poem to the work of his famous poetic predecessors. The statue thus becomes a point of departure for Statius to demonstrate his own inheritance and control of the literary past—both Greek and Roman—and to use the tradition to reflect positively upon his own accomplishments as well as those of Vindex.

Martial's praise of Vindex and his Lysippan statue likewise engages with Hellenistic poetry, though his particular interest concerns epigrammatic treatments of Greek sculpture. In ways that illustrate how his poetic project differs from those of his generic predecessors, Martial ultimately confounds assessments made by earlier epigrammatists about Greek sculptors and their work. Specifically, Martial uses Phidias' monumental art to align his own small-scale poetry with the grandeur, richness, and authority of the Roman world. Martial and Vindex thus similarly use small forms of Greek art for their own Roman purposes.

Since Statius and Martial incorporate the statue within their poems through strikingly different literary strategies, it is clear that their poems are not simply mechanical reactions to Vindex's own interests or even to prevalent social concerns.³ Indeed, when they are considered in light of the published collections of which they are part, these poems depict and even create a rich and complex world of social interactions.⁴ This is not to say that the occasional context is irrelevant. The three poems, for instance, share a number of features that may depend upon the occasion of performance: both poets record that Lysippus made the statue; that it had been formerly owned by those three famous military leaders; that the statue depicted Hercules in a way that calls to mind his visit to the recherché mythological character Molorcus; and that the statue was able to find rest in the peaceful home of Vindex. Yet the literary program of each of the poems deserves greater attention since these common features are framed in ways that correspond to the poets' own absorption and transformation of different genres of Greek poetry.⁵ The connection

³Zanker 1979, 314, unfortunately dismissed the treatment of art in *Silvae* 4.6 as banal. At that time, however, the Callimachean papyrus find that sheds so much light on Statius' practice had not yet been widely discussed. Ridgeway 1997, 304, claims that Martial and Statius "aim *only* at flattering their credulous patron" (my emphasis).

⁴For the importance of reading the published poems as published pieces, see Fowler 1995, 38–51; Lorenz 2004.

⁵Henriksen 1998, 206–7, and White 1975, 286, rightly discuss the similarities between the poems and offer that Vindex must have had something to do with the topics, but the poems' particular strategies merit further analysis.

between the plastic and literary arts thus defines the poems: as the Greek statue suggests Vindex's prominence, so, too, the poets' reception and reconfiguration of distinct generic traditions mark their own creative strength. Before discussing the poems themselves, however, some Roman attitudes towards Greek art must be outlined in order to reveal important dynamics at work in Vindex's display of the statue and, ultimately, the poems of Statius and Martial.⁶

VINDEX AND THE COLLECTION OF GREEK ART

Horace succinctly connected Greek art to Roman power when he stated that after Rome had conquered Greece, Greece conquered Rome (*Epist.* 2.1.157). By the early imperial period, this cultural interplay had spread to many levels of Roman society. Well-to-do and even less affluent Roman homeowners, for example, displayed Greek architecture and sculpture in their residences in order to establish themselves "as a person of refinement who belonged to the cultural elite."⁷ In some cases, the prevalence of Greek images in domestic architecture represents a conviction that Rome had absorbed the Greeks' cultural heritage and understood how to live as well as how to conquer and rule.⁸

Whether or not the impressive pedigree of Vindex's statue is true does not matter so much as its rhetoric:⁹ the transmission of the statue from the hands of Hannibal and Alexander to Vindex follows this pattern that uses Greek art to demonstrate Rome's military prowess and its cultural absorption of the Greek world. After all, the two foreign generals represent two Mediterranean dynasties that posed threats to Rome but ultimately came under its dominion.¹⁰ Moreover, artistic depictions of

⁶Pollitt 1978 remains a fundamental study of Greek art in Rome.

⁷Bartman 1991, 79.

⁸Zanker 1998, 19. See also LaRocca 1986, 3–35; Bergmann 1995, 106; Wallace-Hadrill 1998. Edwards 2003 adds that the display of sculpture could also create problems such as the perception of licentiousness and the breakdown of Roman values. Among ordinary Romans, Clarke 2003 argues for a great diversity of styles and interests that did not simply emulate the art of higher classes. Such diversity may implicitly underscore the connection between power and art that drove practices—such as incorporating Greek art into their households—at higher levels of society.

⁹Bartman 1991, 76, notes the sometimes preposterous nature of such genealogies. See also Ridgeway 1997, 294–304, for a discussion of the facts concerning the Epitrapezios statue.

¹⁰Spencer 2002, 158.

these very generals were exploited at Rome to suggest its control over the Mediterranean.¹¹ Augustus, for instance, displayed in his forum two paintings of Alexander by Apelles, and “the symbolic analogy between the two leaders must have been obvious.”¹² Claudius later had the head of Alexander replaced with the head of Augustus (Pliny *NH* 35.36), thereby drawing an explicit connection between Hellenistic and Roman potentates.¹³ In the case of Hannibal, statues of the Carthaginian general in Rome may have served to honor him and to help constitute Roman identity.¹⁴ For certain, the depictions of Hannibal were visible signs of the Roman incorporation of the conquered.¹⁵ In fact, the Hannibalic wars played a central role in narratives about Roman conquest and the inheritance of Greek art. For example, the conquest of Syracuse, which had struck an alliance with Carthage, in 212 B.C.E. by Claudius Marcellus purportedly led to Rome’s initial encounter with Greek art (Plut. *Marc.* 21.1). Moreover, the destruction of Tarentum, a town that Hannibal had seized, led to the importation of a huge amount of Greek art to Rome three years later (Livy 27.16.7). Both Hannibal and Alexander, then, play major roles in accounts of Roman power and the concomitant acquisition and display of art. Though worryingly aggressive and in this respect similar to Hannibal and Alexander,¹⁶ Sulla caps this expression of Roman military dominance through art because his conquest of eastern lands famously led to the importation of much Greek art to Rome (e.g., Sall. *Cat.* 11.6).

¹¹ Stewart 1993 and Spencer 2002 discuss Alexander’s varied reception. Alexander was both admired and despised in Rome; Lucan 10.20–52 is a famously harsh critique of Alexander.

¹² Bergmann 1995, 90.

¹³ That the “Alexander mosaic” was found in the House of the Faun indicates that his image could also be used to generate prestige and authority in a private setting as well. Bergmann 1995, 82, comments upon the important ways in which medium, access, viewpoint, and lighting would have modified the way the purported original painting was perceived in a new context; Spencer 2002, 188–89, argues that this new context for the mosaic rendered Alexander a shifting or even a forgotten figure. She argues that the placement of the mosaic on the floor provides an Alexander who can be trampled upon; however that may be, it is manifest that the Greek conqueror was used to call attention to the position of the homeowner.

¹⁴ Edwards 2003, 63–64.

¹⁵ Especially if such statues had been moved from Carthage; see Edwards 2003, 63.

¹⁶ Sulla also fits well with Alexander because the Hellenistic ruler was a model for Roman generals who absorbed too much power for themselves; see Spencer 2002, 242, n. 9.

Vindex's very name ("Champion") reinforces the suggestions of great Mediterranean generals and Roman conquest. Of course, Vindex was not a famous general, nor seemingly even a famous citizen. In fact, Statius and Martial both shift the terms of authority away from the battlefield to a new, peaceful context of friendship. But imputing militaristic values to a person like Vindex is hardly unusual since private art and decoration regularly displayed martial images such as eagles, armor, and even prows of ships (Zanker 1988, 277–78). Statius and Martial fit Vindex into this early imperial pattern of individuals who used domestic decoration to promote their status and social position. Vindex's possession of the statue thus encapsulates in miniature both Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean and his own participation in that expression of power. And in their poems, Statius and Martial start with this familiar point and proceed to offer their own representations of a complex and diverse cultural relationship between Greece and Rome.

STATIUS' TREATMENT OF THE STATUE

Silvae 4.6 revolves around an evening of food and conversation provided by Vindex. Statius claims at the start of the poem that he was summoned to the party (*Silv.* 4.6.3–4), and from there he shifts to the meal and ultimately to the collection of Greek statues owned by his host (*Silv.* 4.6.6–31). Works of Myron, Polycleitus, and Praxiteles are part of Vindex's gallery, but the centerpiece of his collection is Lysippus' statue of Hercules (*Silv.* 4.6.32–35). While Statius may single out the works of Greek masters in order to promote Vindex's knowledge and position, his focus on the Lysippian statue ultimately provides an opportunity to relate the plastic arts to his own poetic interests.¹⁷ For instance, he names Vulcan, Brontes, and the Telchines as sculptors who could not have made the statue:

tale nec Idaeis quicquam Telchines in antris
 nec stolidus Brontes nec qui polit arma deorum
 Lemnius exigua potuisset ludere massa. (*Silv.* 4.6.47–50, Courtney)

The Telchines in their caves under Mt. Ida could not have created any such thing from a small mass, nor could brutish Brontes have made it, nor the Lemnian who polishes the weapons of the gods.¹⁸

¹⁷Chinn 2005 examines how Statius' description of the statue proceeds in light of the epigrammatic and ekphrastic traditions.

¹⁸All translations are mine.

These verses have deep literary resonance:¹⁹ the exclusion of the gnome-like Telchines, who famously criticized Callimachus' failure to produce a continuous poem of many thousands of verses about kings and heroes (*Aetia* 1.1.1–4), calls to mind grand-scale poetry.²⁰ In addition, the phrase “polishes the weapons of the gods” evokes the scene from the *Aeneid* in which the Cyclopes work on the weapons of Jupiter and Minerva (e.g., *A.* 8.426 *polita*; 436 *polibant*). Moreover, the adjective *Lemnius* recalls Vergil's description of Vulcan (*A.* 8.454), and Brontes is one of the Cyclopes who had been working on Jupiter's thunderbolt just before Vulcan charged them with the new task of creating Aeneas' shield (*A.* 8.425). Statius' account thus evokes the quintessential Roman epic hero and his emblem.²¹ Heroic ideals, however, are ultimately diminished in *Silvae* 4.6. After all, Vulcan's position has been reduced from forging epic emblems to simply polishing divine arms, and the verb *ludere* reinforces the idea that this scene lacks epic gravity.²² Moreover, these workers are of the kind that could not have worked on the statue. By suggesting that the statue is not the work of such grand artisans, its small-scale nature is positively reinforced.

Statius then defines the statue's artistic heritage in more certain terms. Despite its impressive appearance (*Silv.* 4.6.38, *sentirique ingens*; 46, . . . *ingentes animo versare colossos*), Statius insists upon the statue's small size (*Silv.* 4.6.37, *parvusque videri*; 43, *brevi . . . formae*). In a programmatic phrase, he claims that Vulcan could not have worked with the small amount of material from which the statue was created (*Silv.* 4.6.49, . . . *exigua potuisset ludere massa*).²³ This privileging of small-scale artistry

¹⁹Newlands 2002, 76–78, discusses the poetic character of these verses.

²⁰The only Latin author before Statius to mention the Telchines is Ovid (*Met.* 7.365) so there is good reason to think of Callimachus' literary enemies. Vollmer 1898, 479, rightly notes that the Telchines contribute to the learned environment, though for different reasons than I suggest.

²¹Statius reinforces the grandiose attributes of these artisans elsewhere in his poetry. In *Silvae* 1.1, Brontes is mentioned as a possible creator of a large equestrian statue of Domitian. Vulcan and the Cyclopes are also paired in an ekphrasis in the *Thebaid* (2.269–91). In that generically destructive epic, however, those craftsmen create a woman's necklace, not an epic shield. On the necklace and its connection to *Silvae* 4.6, see Newlands 2002, 77–80; McNelis 2007, 68–73.

²²Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 361, note that *ludere* is used for almost any kind of verse except epic and tragedy.

²³For the literary suggestions of *exiguus*, see *TLL* V.2, 1476, 12–32; Newlands 2002, 78, discusses Statius' programmatic use of it here to suggest short, refined poetry of the kind that is found in the *Silvae*.

is also revealed by the very occasion of the poem. At the start of *Silvae* 4.6, Statius explains the circumstances of his arrival at Vindex's house, and he claims that he was taking a break from writing:

forte remittentem curas Phoeboque levatum
pectora, cum patulis tererem vagus otia Saeptis
iam moriente die, rapuit me cena benigni
Vindicis . . . (*Silv.* 4.6.1–4)

As I, wandering in the Saepta Julia and wasting time at the end of the day, happened to be putting aside my concerns and my mind was relieved of poetic concerns, kind Vindex took me to his dinner.

The phrase *remittentem curas* suggests a respite from some sort of poetic composition,²⁴ and coupled with the reference to Apollo—whom Statius invokes in the proem of the *Achilleid* (1.9)—it seems that he has put aside an epic project.²⁵ Indeed, in his subsequent description of the evening, Statius' diction reinforces that he has left behind grand poetic endeavors:

nobis verus amor medioque Helicone petitus
sermo hilaresque ioci brumalem absumere noctem
suaserunt mollemque oculis expellere somnum. (*Silv.* 4.6.12–14)

There was true affection between us, and conversation sought from the heart of Helicon, and pleasant joking encouraged us to exhaust the winter night and to keep soft sleep away from our eyes.

The words *hilaresque ioci* in particular situate the sophisticated evening in a “neoteric” tradition because it recalls Catullus' account of his evening with Calvus (*C.* 50.6).²⁶ Statius' use of the literary tradition to characterize the evening with Vindex squares well with the small statue.

Statius continues to characterize the evening in literary terms when he defines the kind of work that Lysippus actually did create:

²⁴For the literary connotations of *cura*, see Ovid *AA* 3.206, *Pont.* 1.5.61; Lucan 7.209.

²⁵Though Apollo has wide poetic associations, his epic attributes are clear at A.R. 1.1; *Ov. Met.* 1.456–57; *Silv.* 1.5.2.

²⁶Coleman 1988, 179. *Sermo* also evokes small-scale poetry because it parallels Callimachus' fond remembrance of his late-night conversations with Heracleitus (*HE* 1205 = *AP* vii. 80.3 λέσχῆ).

nec torva effigies epulisque aliena remissis
 sed qualem parci domus admirata Molorci
 aut Aleae lucis vidit Tegeaea sacerdos,
 qualis et Oetaeis emissus in astra favillis
 nectar adhuc torva laetus Iunone bibebat:
 sic mitis vultus veluti de pectore gaudens
 hortatur mensas.

(*Silvae* 4.6.50–56)

The statue is not grim and unsuited to a relaxed meal, but [Hercules was depicted] as the kind of hero that the home of frugal Molorcus admired, or that the Tegean priestess saw in the groves of Alea, or such as he was when he was joyfully drinking nectar—despite Juno’s anger—after he was sent to the stars from the ashes of Mt. Oeta.

The depiction of Hercules drinking among the gods is appropriate for a dinner party, as is the reference to Molorcus, who offered the hero a rustic meal just before Hercules killed the Nemean lion.²⁷ Indeed, the evocation of Molorcus’ meagre meal seems to reinforce the fact that Vindex himself offered his guests a measured meal:

neque enim ludibria ventris
 hausimus aut epulas diverso a sole petitas
 vinaque perpetuis aevo certantia fastis.
 a miseri, quos nosse iuvat quid Phasidis ales
 distet ab hiberna Rhodopes grue, quis magis anser
 exta ferat, cur Tuscus aper generosior Umbro
 lubrica qua recubent conchyliam mollius alga.

(*Silv.* 4.6.5–11)

We did not devour playthings of the stomach or courses that had been sought from distant places and wine that competes in age with the Annual Register. They are unhappy who are pleased to know how the bird of Phasis differs from the winter crane of Rhodope, which goose bears more offal, why the Tuscan boar is nobler than the Umbrian, on what seaweed slippery shellfish lie more comfortably!

This rejection of excessive and elaborate meals harmonizes with the miniature statue.²⁸ Moreover, Statius’ characterization of the small, intimate setting contrasts noticeably with *Silvae* 4.2, a poem that employs cosmic and universal themes to describe a meal with Domitian (e.g., *Silv.*

²⁷ Rosenmeyer 1993, 210–14, discusses the meal offered to Callimachus’ Hercules.

²⁸ Since exotic feasts had been criticized by Roman poets who drew upon Callimachean ideals (see, e.g., Gowers 1993, 144–55, on food and poetics), the measured meal is another way Statius connects to that aesthetic program.

4.2.10–12).²⁹ This contrast between the enormous imperial world and the more intimate setting of friendship is found elsewhere in Statius' writings, and responds, at least in part, to imperial interests. In *Silvae* 1.1, for instance, the large size of the equestrian statue of Domitian is linked to the depiction of the emperor in imperial iconography as larger than life. In turn, Statius' own artistic program of *Kolossalität* reflects imperial ideology.³⁰ This coexistence of one aesthetic program that endorses small-scale private life and another that trumpets grand public life suggests that Statius self-consciously represents different types of authority according to aesthetic principles.³¹ In fact, in the case of the meal in *Silvae* 4.6, the emphasis on Vindex's subdued modesty ultimately anticipates a point that will be made explicit later in the poem: Vindex has removed himself from public life (*Silv.* 4.6.89–93).³² Lifestyle is matched by artistic values.

A specific way in which Statius develops this conflation of aesthetic and social values is through allusion to the poetry of Callimachus and Vergil. Molorcus' hospitality has a strong Callimachean pedigree; indeed, the story appears for the first time in extant poetry in the *Aetia* (e.g., *SH* 266).³³ Since Molorcus is mentioned only sporadically in subsequent ancient poetry, mention of him in Martial's 9.43 has reasonably prompted the suggestion that Vindex introduced the Callimachean myth into the discussion of his tiny statue.³⁴ However, Statius develops the Callimachean dimensions of the myth in ways that Martial does not.³⁵ For instance, two references to Nemea (*Silvae* 4.6.40–41, *hoc pectore pressus / vastator Nemees*; 58, *cultum Nemeaeo tegmine saxum*) stem from the fact that Callimachus' Molorcus appears in an aetion about the founding of the Nemean games. Moreover, the emphasis Statius places upon small-scale poetics throughout his account of the statue and the dinner with Vindex reflects the view that Callimachean artistic ideals define both the poem and the statue. In fact, Statius' mention of Molorcus counterbalances the brand of artistry represented by the anti-Callimachean Telchines (*Silv.* 4.6.47). That is, while the statue is not the sort of creation that the

²⁹ Juvenal 4 is another famous example of the grandiosity of a Domitianiac meal.

³⁰ Cancik 1965, 90–93; see also Stemmer 1971, 574–80, on Flavian monumentality.

³¹ Newlands 2002, 80–82.

³² Newlands 2002, 82.

³³ Morgan 1992, 538, notes that Agias and Dercylus may be Callimachus' sources for this obscure mythological character.

³⁴ Henriksén 1998, 206.

³⁵ Martial does not refer to the Telchines or to Nemea, nor does he develop the reference to Molorcus.

Telchines would have made, it is a depiction of Hercules that evokes the Callimachean action in which the hero stays at Molorcus' house.

Statius' use of the statue to evoke Callimachean poetry highlights the role of patronage and the arts, a topic that lies at the core of *Silvae* 4.6.³⁶ In the *Aetia*, the story involving Molorcus and the founding of the Nemean games is part of an epinician celebration of Berenice's chariot victory at those games.³⁷ Callimachus' mythological figure is thus a part of a strategy to praise a patron, and Statius' Molorcus likewise appears in an encomiastic context. In fact, in order to enhance his praise of Vindex, Statius exploits the language and conventions of Greek epinician poetry. For instance, Statius claims that no one can compete with Vindex when it comes to collecting and recognizing the work of old masters (*Silv.* 4.6.22–23, . . . *quis namque oculis certaverit usquam / Vindicis, artificum veteres agnoscere ductus*).³⁸ The implication of the verb is clear since Statius uses it elsewhere to describe the athletic competitions that took place at Greek games (*Theb.* 6.6, *certaverit*). Statius also replicates the standard structure of Pindaric odes by starting with a celebratory announcement that is located in the present (*Silv.* 4.6.1–31); he then turns to a central “mythic” section (*Silv.* 4.6.47–88), before concluding, by shifting back to the present circumstances for the poem (*Silv.* 4.6.89–109). Just as the mythical section of a Pindaric ode often relates to the accomplishments of the victor, so, too, words such as *victor*, *regnator*, *acies opimas*, and *triumphos* that describe Alexander and his activities simultaneously contribute to the praise of Vindex.

Statius, however, also alters practices of epinician poetry in ways that are useful for his celebration of Vindex. For example, Pindar establishes an antagonistic relationship between epinician poetry and the plastic arts by claiming that his fluid poetry celebrates victories better than static sculpture does (e.g., *N.* 5.1–6). Statius rejects that idea and fuses the literary and plastic arts to create a Callimachean, poetic analogue to a small-scale Lysippan sculpture. Part of the background to Statius' strategy may be the fact that Lysippus was purported to be the

³⁶Newlands 2002, 81, discusses patronage in *Silvae* 4.6. The theme is highlighted by Statius' opening word (*forte*), which recalls the start of the poem in which Horace walks to Maecenas' house (*Satire* 1.9, *Ibam forte*).

³⁷Parsons 1977, 38–39. Berenice reappears at the end of *Aetia* 4 and thus prominently frames the last half of the poem.

³⁸Bergmann 1995, 91–92, points out that the recognition of originals in antiquity was problematic for multiple reasons. Vindex's purported skill will thus have been an important—if overstated—one.

only one allowed to depict Alexander (Plu. *Mor.* 335 A–B).³⁹ The sculptor thus brings to mind a reciprocal recognition of excellence that would be appropriate for the context of Statius' evening with Vindex: the artist promotes powerful individuals, who in turn recognize the artist. Statius' reworking of Callimachus thus highlights the relationship between poet and patron.

Statius was not the first to adapt Callimachus' epinician celebration of Berenice to a new Roman context involving poets and patrons.⁴⁰ Most prominently, Vergil refers to Molorcus at the start of *Georgics* 3 in a passage that reworks Callimachus' description in *Aetia* 3 of Berenice's victory at the Nemean games in order to praise Octavian.⁴¹ Vergil's language indicates his strong interest in the epinician dimensions of that Callimachean scene.⁴² Nonetheless, Vergil departs from the practice of Callimachus (and other Greek epinician poets) by emphatically celebrating his own victory (*G.* 3.8–9, . . . *qua me quoque possim / tollere humo victorque virum volitare per ora*; *G.* 3.17, *victor ego*). Moreover, his victory has nothing to do with athletics but rather the transfer of Greek culture to Italy (*G.* 3.10–12, *primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita supersit, / Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas; / primus Idumaeas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas*).⁴³

Vergil's subordination of athletic victories to cultural accomplishments modifies Callimachus' celebration of his queen's athletic (and political) success and paves the way for Statius to treat Vindex's cultural pursuits as a kind of victory. After all, Vindex is no athlete or political ruler. But ancient evidence suggests that his actual position did not matter as much as his symbolic one. Statius' tactic of alluding to a Hellenistic

³⁹The edict forbidding other sculptors to produce Alexander's portrait appears first at Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.232–44, where the facts are distorted; see Stewart 1993, 25–27; Ridgway 1990, 113–14.

⁴⁰Statius himself had earlier used Callimachus' action in *Silvae* 3.1 (see Newlands 1991 and Thomas 1983) to praise Pollius Felix. The adjectival form *Molorceis* also appears in the *Panegyricus Messallae* when the poet hopes that Messala will accept the praise of the lowly poet in the same way that Hercules associated with the modest Molorcus (13).

⁴¹Thomas 1988, 41, notes Vergil's intense engagement with Callimachus and each poet's interest in their respective rulers.

⁴²*G.* 3.7–8, *Hippodameque umeroque Pelops insignis eburno, / acer equis*; *G.* 3.18, *centum quadriugos agitabo ad flumina currus*; *G.* 3.20–22, *cursibus et crudo decernet Graecia caestu. / ipse caput tonsae foliis ornatus olivae / dona feram*. Vergil's language recalls epinician, but his engagement with Pindar and Callimachus has been variously argued; cf. Thomas 1999, 9, n. 13, for bibliography.

⁴³Horace also uses language of athletic epinician when describing his poetic accomplishments (*Carm.* 1.1.3–6; 3.30.15–16; 4.3.3–9).

ruler is paralleled by the practice of other Roman aristocrats who sought to make connections with those Greek sovereigns. As Catharine Edwards has suggested, statues of Alexander served to represent on one level the extent of Rome's power over other cultures and "could also work to convey the position of particular individuals drawing on new languages of power—indeed actually filling the shoes of the greatest Greek rulers."⁴⁴

Alexander's successors had some appeal as well: portraiture of Ptolemaic kings and queens, for example, has been found in Rome at the Villa Verospi near the Horti Sallustiani,⁴⁵ and the Villa of the Papyri contained sculpture of Hellenistic monarchs such as Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Seleucus I.⁴⁶ While sculptural programs are notoriously difficult to assess,⁴⁷ it is reasonable to conclude, in light of Hellenistic galleries such as that of Ptolemy II (Athen., i.e., 5.196a–97c) and the ship-turned-museum of Ptolemy IV (Athen. 5.204d–6c), that these statues evoked an aristocratic life that conveyed the social position of the Roman host (Neudecker 1998, 91). Military figures and rulers from the Hellenistic past thus enhance the domestic Roman world.⁴⁸ In Vindex's case, Statius' allusive evocation of Berenice accomplishes in poetic form what villa owners sought to accomplish through the plastic arts: he uses the Hellenistic past—and an earlier Roman reconfiguration of that past—to exalt a private individual. Poetry and sculpture thus work together to indicate the transformation of the Hellenistic Greek world to the values and ideals of a private, Roman world.

The fusion of literary and sculptural art also benefits Statius' own poem. By creating a second chain of transmission that links his celebra-

⁴⁴ Edwards 2003, 57. For Roman cultural interests in Hellenistic rulers and society, see Wojcik 1986, 269–70; LaRocca 1986, 9–10. Less opulent homes at Pompeii and even a wealthier villa at Oplontis, in contrast, did not contain such sculpture (De Caro 1988, 129).

⁴⁵ Stanwick 2002, 98–99. See Lollo Barbieri, Parola, and Toti 1995, 141, 148–49, for another statue of Ptolemy II.

⁴⁶ Wojcik 1986. Other statuary found in the villa may also portray Hellenistic rulers—including Berenice II—but the identifications are not uniform. See Pandermalis 1971; Kyrieleis 1975, 167, 170; Wojcik 1986; Neudecker 1988; and esp. Mattusch 2005, 160–64, 260–67, for varying treatments. Pfrommer 1992, 19–21, has speculated that the cithara player painted on a wall in the Villa of the Mysteries is Berenice II.

⁴⁷ Pandermalis 1971, 186–87; Zanker 1979, 286–88; Bartmann 1991, 74–75.

⁴⁸ Clarke 2003, 233, well argues that audiences would take pleasure in perceiving from a piece of art the difference between the Roman present and Greek past: "the paintings both held up a model and permitted her the amusement of comparing that model with the real-life convivia. . . ."

tion to similar poetic accounts in Vergil and Callimachus that concern their rulers, Statius updates Callimachean aesthetic tenets as well as the dynamics of patronage and authority for a Roman imperial context. In doing so, he certainly marks the break between his world and that of earlier imperial dynasts. At the same time, however, he also depicts himself as an heir to Vergil and Callimachus and thereby stresses the continuity between his poetry and that of his lofty and distinguished predecessors. With respect to the way that Statius uses the statue to lend prestige to his own endeavors, he and Vindex similarly put Greek art and the reception of it to Roman ends.

MARTIAL AND THE STATUE

Martial wrote two poems about Vindex's statue. The first, written in elegiac couplets, describes the statue in relatively straightforward terms:

Hic qui dura sedens porrecto saxa leone
 mitigat, exiguo magnus in aere deus,
 quaeque tulit, spectat resupino sidera vultu
 cuius laeva calet robore, dextra mero:
 non est fama recens nec nostri gloria caeli;
 nobile Lysippi munus opusque vides.
 hoc habuit numen Pellaei mensa tyranni
 qui cito perdomito victor in orbe iacet;
 hunc puer ad Libycas iuraverat Hannibal aras,
 iusserat hic Sullam ponere regna trucem.
 offensus variae tumidis terroribus aulae
 privatos gaudet nunc habitare lares
 utque fuit quondam placidi convivium Molorci
 sic voluit docti Vindicis esse deus. (9.43, Henriksen)

This one who sits on hard rocks that are softened by a stretched out lion-skin, a great god in a small bit of bronze, and he who watches with an upturned face the stars which he supported, whose left hand is busy with his club, whose right with wine, this one is no recent wonder nor the glory of a Roman chisel. You see the excellent work and gift of Lysippus. The table of the tyrant from Pella, the victor who lies buried in the world so quickly conquered, had this divinity. And the boy Hannibal swore by this statue at Carthaginian altars, and this divinity ordered harsh Sulla to put aside kingship. Offended by the haughty terrors of different royal courts, it now rejoices to inhabit a private house. As he was once the guest of pleasant Molorcus, so now the god wished to be learned Vindex's.

Like Statius' poem, Martial's epigram cites the impressive list of previous owners and indicates a welcome shift from a public—or even autocratic—context to a private one (9.43.11–12, *offensus variae tumidis terroribus aulae / privatos gaudet nunc habitare lares*).⁴⁹ Martial also refers to Molorcus (9.43.13), and presumably in an effort to reinforce the Hellenism that people like Vindex cultivated, he points out that the sculpture is not the work of a Roman (9.43.5, *nec nostri gloria caeli*) but of Lysippus (9.43.6). The statue's great stature despite its tiny size is also mentioned (9.43.2, *exiguo . . . aere*), and Vindex is complimented as learned (9.43.14, *docti*).

In keeping with Martial's practice when dealing with multiple poems on the same topic, the epigram that follows upon the first is more humorous (Henriksén 1998, 211). Indeed, the change of meter to jocular hendecasyllables suggests that this poem will be comical,⁵⁰ and it is:

Alciden modo Vindicis rogabam
 esset cuius opus laborque felix.
 Risit, nam solet hoc, levi que nutu
 "Graece numquid" ait "poeta nescis?"
 inscripta est basis indicatque nomen."
 Lysippum lego, Phidiae putavi.

I recently asked the Hercules statue of Vindex whose work and happy toil was behind it. It laughed, as it is accustomed, and with a slight nod said "Surely you, a poet, know Greek? The base is inscribed and contains the name." I read Lysippus, but thought the statue was Phidias'.

Since 9.44 temporally precedes 9.43, the actual position of the poems suggests that the confusion is contrived and artificial.⁵¹ One result of this uncertainty is that the statue and thereby its owner are emphatically praised because Phidias was one of—if not *the*—most esteemed artists of antiquity (Henriksén 1998, 214). In addition, Martial's feigned ignorance likely hints at a central point of *Silvae* 4.6, namely, Vindex's skill in recognizing the works of different sculptors (Henriksén 1998, 214). Humor seems to be involved in this sudden ignorance as well: Martial's

⁴⁹Wallace-Hadrill 1996, 283, discusses the monarchical undertones of the word *aula*.

⁵⁰Watson and Watson 2003, 27, comment upon Martial's use of hendecasyllables to humorous end when he revisits a theme.

⁵¹Henriksén 1998, 211, comments on the position of the poem. The final verse of 9.44 has attracted much attention in this regard; Schneider 2001, 702–3, discusses a range of bibliography on the order of the poems and the conclusion of 9.44.

uncertainty may also allow him to pun on Phidias' name and the Greek word φείδομαι ("spare"). That is, despite Phidias' reputation for making colossal statues, with Vindex's tiny statue of Hercules we would see the sculptor living up to his name (Schneider 2001, 709). While all these points contribute to our understanding of the poems, the tension between perception (*putavi*) and reality (*lego*) is central to Martial's poetry and warrants further consideration.

Perceptions of the two sculptors stem, at least in part, from literature. Phidias was known for stylistically grand work, most famously the gold and ivory statue of Zeus at Olympia (Str. 8.3.30; Paus. 5.11.7).⁵² By contrast, even though he made colossal statues (possibly even a colossal version of the Hercules Epitrapezios),⁵³ Lysippus was famous for his realism and attention to the tiniest parts of a work subject (Pliny *NH* 34.65; Plut. *Mor.* 335 A–B; 360D). Such stylistic distinctions between grand-scale artistry and attention to minute details have obvious relevance for Hellenistic literature, including epigrams of that period and later.⁵⁴ In fact, the two sculptors seemingly represent different aesthetic programs in epigram: whereas the only definite reference to Phidias' work in extant Greek epigram concerns his colossal Zeus at Olympia (*AP* 16.81),⁵⁵ Lysippus represented the novel artistic style that corresponds to innovative approaches of Hellenistic poets. In a programmatic passage of the new Posidippus, for example, the novel creations (*νέαρ'*) of Lysippus are contrasted with the works of old-style (*παλαιότηχνης*) sculptors such as Polycleitus (62.4–6, Austin-Bastianini).⁵⁶

In 9.43 and 44, Martial is clearly attuned to the conventions of Greek epigram. For instance, his uncertainty about who made the statue recalls Greek epigrams that often pose questions about statues and their creators.⁵⁷ In addition, speaking statues are rare in Latin but common

⁵²For statues of gold and ivory, see Lapatin 2001.

⁵³de Visscher 1961, 117.

⁵⁴High style oratory was also compared to Phidias' work (D. H. *Isoc.* 3).

⁵⁵There are epigrams about the Nemesis at Rhamnus—a statue that was twice life size—but they do not cite Phidias by name. Moreover, the attribution of this statue to Phidias was disputed even in antiquity (Pliny *NH* 36.17).

⁵⁶Other Hellenistic epigrams also use Lysippus as an analogue for their style; see both Sens and Stewart in Gutzwiller 2005.

⁵⁷It is disputed as to whom Martial addresses in these verses. Shackleton Bailey (and others) prefer the readings that require that Martial questions Vindex—not the statue—and thus that Vindex responds. Kershaw 1997, 269–72; Henriksén 1998, 212; and Schneider 2001, 701, offer recent support of manuscript readings of the β-group that has Martial address the statue. The most important point for my argument is that Greek poetry is emphasized

in Greek poetry.⁵⁸ Finally, in its response, the statue explicitly states that the answer to the question depends upon knowledge of Greek, and the emphasis on poetry (*poeta*) and the fact that the words are inscribed on a statue base indicate the particular importance of Greek epigram. Amidst such interest in and markers of the epigrammatic tradition, it is striking that Martial treats Phidias and Lysippus in a radically different way than his predecessors do. Lysippus, for instance, does not appear in Martial's oeuvre outside of these two poems. In contrast, Phidias is regularly mentioned,⁵⁹ often to convey a sense of grandeur and enduring art. In 7.56, for instance, Martial praises the architect Rabirius and his construction of the massive *Domus Domitiana* and then compares that imperial palace with the heavens and Rabirius with Phidias.⁶⁰ By suggesting that Phidias could have been the sculptor of the statue, then, Martial playfully hints at the grandeur of the miniature statue and reinforces the value of both the statue and, by association, Vindex. The epigram thus humorously addresses a familiar practice in which Greek art marks the prominence of its Roman owner.

Martial's privileging of Phidias also reflects a surprising link between his own epigrams and the sculptor's creations. Though Phidias' art was monumental, it consisted of smaller elements that came together to form a massive whole. Pliny, for example, discusses the battle of the Amazons that was embossed on the convex side of the shield of the sculptor's Athena in Athens (*NH* 36.18), and Pausanias describes at length the details that were included on the Zeus at Olympia (5.11.1–11). In this respect, for an epigrammatist who produces tiny poems and then collects them to form a larger whole, Phidias' work becomes an attractive analogue. Indeed, despite the fact that he represents his poems as trifles, Martial continually refers to their monumental status. At 10.2.12, for instance, Martial uses the very word *monumentum* to refer to his poetry, and, although this poem was published later than those in Book 9, similar ideas about the impressive nature of his poetry permeate Martial's earlier work. In 1.1, for example, he states that his small books of poetry

by the speaker, thereby situating Martial's poem within the Greek literary tradition. For examples from Hellenistic poetry of questions about the creator of a statue, see Sens 2002, 256, n. 30. Grewing 1997, 138, notes similar passages in Martial and elsewhere.

⁵⁸ Kershaw 1997, 272, n. 11, cites Greek models. He notes that "in one sense Martial 9.44 is a 'Greek' poem."

⁵⁹ 3.35.1; 4.39.4; 6.13.1; 6.73.8; 7.56; 9.24; 10.87; 10.89

⁶⁰ Roman 2001 is an excellent discussion of how Martial balances such grand descriptions of his poetry with disparaging comments that are made elsewhere in his corpus.

are read all over the world (1.1.2–3, *toto notus in orbe Martialis / argutis epigrammaton libellis*), and other poems reiterate this notion (e.g., 5.13; 5.60; 6.82; 7.17.10; 8.3).⁶¹

The links between poet and sculptor run even deeper. Phidias' artistic monumentality was thought to depict a cosmic order that arranges the universe. Propertius, for instance, comments that Phidias' statue of Zeus at Olympia imitates the heavens (3.2.19–20). In addition, Philostratus notes that Phidias imagined the heavens and the stars when he fashioned his Zeus (*VA* 6.19). And, when Dio Chrysostom has Phidias defend himself against a possible charge of inappropriately representing Zeus' divinity, the sculptor's imagined response recognizes that the charge is weighty because it concerns the god who governs the universe. In the speech, Dio has the sculptor argue that the heavens should not be considered simply by looking at them (*Or.* 12.60) and that artistic depictions of the gods help us to understand the cosmos better. Finally, Domitian depicted on his coins the statue of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in the manner of Phidias' Zeus.⁶² Rome's cosmic power could hardly be better represented. Analogous views appear in Martial's epigrams. Earlier in Book 9, for instance, he claims that Carus' portrait of Domitian, a bust that he compares with the work of Phidias, captures "the face of the firmament, the face of heaven" (9.24.3, . . . *mundi facies . . . Iovis ora sereni*). In 7.56, as we have seen, Martial compares Domitian's palace and its cosmic significance to a work of Phidian art.

Martial, however, expands the range of what is included in a Phidian universal arrangement when he suggests that the sculptor's work could represent less august aspects of Roman life.⁶³ For example, he writes that a statue of Priapus had an enormous penis that was worthy of Phidias' hand (6.73.8) and that the sculptor made a relief of a fish that was so realistic that the creature would swim if water were added (3.35).⁶⁴ The fact that Martial has turned Phidias into a veristic artist is particularly

⁶¹ My approach is in line with recent criticism that takes seriously Martial's "intratextuality" by reading his poems in light of their position within a contemporary book or to earlier books (e.g., Lorenz 2004, 255–58, which neatly summarizes the current state of the question; Holzberg 2002, 123–52 (though one need not subscribe to his thesis that Martial composed twelve books of epigrams upon the model of the *Aeneid*); Fowler 1995.

⁶² Lapatin 2001, 123–24.

⁶³ For Martial's epigrammatic interest in mundane objects, see Salemme 1976.

⁶⁴ Martial's comment about realism works within an epigrammatic tradition that stretches back to Erinna (*HE* 1797–1800 = *AP* 6.352). Strikingly, then, at the very moments he diverges from Greek epigram (by exalting Phidias), he exploits the conventions of the genre.

significant since the sculptor's work is recalled by a range of features of Roman life—from imperial palaces to enormous penises that are found on private sculptures. It is not difficult to see that this vision of Phidian art tendentiously corresponds to the content of Martial's own simultaneously gritty and grand epigrams.⁶⁵ Martial's epigrams are thus like a Phidian statue in that they offer a likeness of the universe and its operation. Yet in a Roman imperial context, the universal arrangement is no longer symbolized by Phidias' Olympian Zeus but rather by Rome and its empire, which, as Martial makes clear, consists of the high and the low, of the varied practices and behavior of a wide swath of Roman life.

Martial's reconception of monumental art considerably enhances the generic status of epigram. Comprehensive representations of the universe and order are typically associated with high genres such as tragedy and epic. Aristotle, for instance, discusses the relative comprehensiveness of tragedy and epic (*Poetics* 1462a5–15), and epic emblems such as Achilles' and Aeneas' shields were thought to reflect the cosmic underpinning of epic.⁶⁶ Though Martial himself offers that epigram is hardly a high genre (e.g., *Ep.* 12.94.9), in 9.44 he makes it a capacious genre that includes the highest possible themes. Perception and reality are thus at odds in Martial's poetic world.⁶⁷

This tension involving art that is apparently small but actually epitomizes large cultural practices in imperial Rome also pertains to Vindex's statue. After all, the storied, tiny statue crystallizes a broad account about the Roman conquest and reconfiguration of the Mediterranean world, and Vindex's ownership of the statue indicates his particular share in Rome's power. In the sense that Martial has taken over and transformed the smallest form of Greek art for his own Roman universal interests, then, his art is similar to Vindex's. At the same time, however, Martial treats the broader artistic and cultural relationship between Greece and imperial Rome in such a way that it fits into his own reconfiguration of the Greek world. Epigram, therefore, has the power to shape even the largest narratives.

In Statius' *Silvae* 4.6 and Martial's *Epigrams* 9.43 and 44, literary

⁶⁵Martial often represents his art as veristic (*Ep.* 8.3.20–21; 10.4.7–12). See, too, Fowler 1995, 35, on epigram's claims to be a reflection of real life.

⁶⁶Hardie 1985 and 1986 discusses epic and its universal attributes. Fowler 1982, 216–18, also discusses epic and universality.

⁶⁷This play also informs Greek epigrams such as Asclep. 28 (*HE* 942–45 = *AP* 7.11) in which the small size of Erinna's production (οὐχὶ πολὺς) contrasts with the power of her poems (δυνατώτερος).

texts reflect the artistic and cultural dimensions of a sculptural work, but each poet uses the statue to engage with and transform the work of distinct artistic traditions. In turn, the poets use this cooperative relationship between different forms of art to explore shifting ideas of authority within Roman society and the Roman poetic tradition.⁶⁸

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