

Abstract: The paper focuses on the epigram 10.4 of Martial, in which the epigrammatist displays the foundation of his poetics connected with issues of literary criticism. After an introductory analysis, the line by line commentary aims at giving a new and deeper lecture of the epigram, with particular attention to its relationship with Latin literary tradition, as well as to its connections both with other Martial's epigrams on the same subject and, in a wider sense, with the approval of mythological themes among contemporary readership. In the paper, which underlines the significant contrast Martial finds between the real *vita* of his epigrams and the *monstra* of higher literary genres, a new punctuation of the epigram is also suggested.

Keywords: Martial, Poetics, Epigram, Literary criticism, Flavian poetry.