

MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS (C A.D. 40 - C A.D. 104)

Born C. A.D. 40 at Bilbilis in central Spain, son of Fronto and Flacilla, he describes himself as having 'obstinate Spanish locks' and 'hairy legs and cheeks'. He was educated in Spain and came to Rome in about 64 AD. There, he depended on patronage for existence and he makes frequent references to his status of Client.

Seneca (the younger), also a Spaniard was one of his patrons. Martial could have become a teacher of rhetoric or a lawyer but he preferred to remain a client.

He was friendly with

- (1) Frontinus (who wrote about Rome's water supply)
- (2) Juvenal (who wrote satires about life in Rome)
- (3) Pliny the younger (noted already for his collection of letters).

His works include : (a) Liber Spectaculorum (written to mark the opening of the Colosseum in AD 80)

(b) Epigrams (published between 86-98 A.D.)

By this time he was quite prosperous and enjoyed certain privileges in Roman society.

About AD 98 he retired to Bilbilis where he enjoyed further patronage, this time of a lady called Marcella. She gave him an estate.

He died in about 104 AD

An Epigram is **short** poem with a witty ending.

LIBELLUS

MARTIAL : EPIGRAMS 1: 79 "Whether or not there's something to do, you're always doing something."

You are always pleading cases and doing business, Attalus, always. Whether or not there's something to do Attalus, you're always doing something. If there are no cases, no business to do, Attalus, you drive mules. If you are really stuck for something to do, Attalus, why not kill yourself.

Notes

We cannot identify the Attalus of this poem. The poem is dependant on word-play, patterning and paradox for its effect. There is word-play on the various idioms involving the verb 'agere'. Notice the pattern in the repetition and positioning of Attalus' name. The regularity of Attalus' behaviour is suggested by the repetition of 'semper agis' - the third 'semper' implies Martials' intolerance of this behaviour. There is a paradox in the fact that even when there is nothing to do, Attalus does something. Another paradox occurs in the second couplet - having plenty to do depends on killing yourself. The tone, needless to say is light-hearted. Lawyers do not drive mules, nor do people commit suicide for want of something to do.

Questions

1. How does Martial express his impatience and intolerance in this poem?
2. "The epigram cannot satisfactorily be translated". Can you disprove this?

48 **Issa**
(Martial, *Epigrams* I. 109)

Issa is naughtier than Catullus' sparrow,
Issa is more innocent than the kiss of a dove,
Issa is more charming than any girl.
Issa is more dear than Indian gems,
5 Issa is the pet puppy of Publius.
If it whimpers, you will think that she is speaking;
She feels both sadness and joy.
She lies resting against her master's neck and sleeps
So lightly that no breathing is felt.
10 And though compelled by the call of nature,
It has not stained the cover with any drop.
But by rubbing her foot gently against him she rouses him
and warns to be put down from the couch then asks to be lifted up again.
So that her last day may not take her completely,
15 Publius is portraying her in a painting
In which you will see such a good likeness of Issa
That it is more lifelike than the puppy itself.
Place Issa, finally, alongside the painting;
Either you will think each is real
20 Or you will think each one has been painted.

Poems or children?

I asked for the privileges of a father of 3 sons. The one man who had the power to give them to me gave me the reward of poetic inspiration instead. Farewell, wife! The gift of one's master should not be wasted.

Notes.

1. natorum . . . ius trium : Augustus was the first to confer special privileges on the fathers of 3 children. Later, the privileges were often given to childless or unmarried people, thus countering the aim of stimulating child-bearing in the upper classes. Martial was given the privileges by both Titus and Domitian.
- 3 "solus qui poterat" : this refers to Domitian
Valebis : colloquial alternative for 'vale'
uxor : there is no conclusive evidence for Martial being married.
This passage may imply that he was not.

Martial's poetry is the equivalent of other men's children - it is his contribution to the perpetuity of the empire. If Martial is unmarried, then he must be addressing Domitian's wife in line 3 - and in such familiar terms! If not a batchelor, then he is proposing (in fun) a separation from his wife. If he is unmarried he is saying goodbye to the possibility of marrying and hence of having legitimate children. Both interpretations tally with line 4 producing 3 children and thus nullifying the Emperor's special concession

Question

What right has the state to control the production of children?

You are pretending to be a young man, Laetinus, with your dyed hair - you who just now were a swan, now so suddenly a raven. You don't deceive everybody; Proserpine knows that you are white-haired; she will pull the mask from your head.

Notes

Line 4 personam : An actor's mask was designed to cover the whole of the head and the hair attached to the mask was coloured to match the part portrayed.

Martial is harshly direct in line 1 : "mentiris" and the idea of deception is continued in 'fallis' (3) and 'personam' (4). The change which Laetinus has undergone is comical, exaggerated as it is by Martial's choice of colour opposites. He might have got away with it if he had used something like 'Grecian 2000' which effects a gradual change of hair colour! But to go from being white as a swan to black as a raven - overnight as it were - is just inviting ridicule. He fools nobody, only himself. He will be found out at the end of the day because Proserpine (representing Death) will catch up with him and he will die an old man even though he may look young because of his dyed hair. Just like the actor who at the end of the play removes his mask and reveals his true identity, so Laetinus will have to give up his deception.

Questions

1. How well chosen are Martial's metaphors in this epigram.
2. Why is Proserpina introduced in Line 3?
3. Why has Laetinus dyed his hair? Why does Martial criticise him? Why are jokes about, e.g. hairpieces always good for a laugh?

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You bought your house for 200,000 sesterces, Tongilianus. One of those all too frequent accidents in the city destroyed it. A contribution of one million sesterces was made to you. I ask you Tongilianus, is it not possible that you may appear to have set fire to your own house?

Notes

1. Tongilianus seems to have bought his house at a bargain price.
2. Rome was "a city of tall buildings and narrow streets
..... and fire was a constant hazard from timber buildings and oil lamps".
Juvenal (Satires III 193 ff) says:
"We live in a town supported, much of it by flimsy props. That's how the landlord steadies his tottering property. He covers over the gape of an ancient crack, and tells the tenants to sleep sound as the building threatens collapse..."
3. Notice how key words are brought to the beginning of each line
empta - bought
abstulit - destroyed
conlatum - constricted
incendisse - set on fire
4. Note the repetition of the long and unpleasant sounding name, Tongilianas, implying Martial's distaste for the man.

Questions

1. Examine the pattern or structure of the poem. Is it important?
2. What is Martial's attitude towards Tongilianus?
3. How might Tongilianus have replied? Write a matching poem of 4 lines.

The first hour and the second wear out the clients as they pay their respects;
 the third keeps the hoarse barristers busy;
 into the fifth does Rome prolong its various tasks;
 the sixth will be a rest period for the weary
 the seventh will be the end
 the eighth into the ninth gives enough time for the oily palaestras;
 the ninth orders the couches to be heaped up and crumpled;
 the tenth is the hour for my little books, Euphemus, when the good Caesar, with
 your care, regulates the ambrosial meal and relaxes with heavenly nectar,
 holding in his huge hand a small goblet-full.
 Then let in the jokes. Do you saunter saucily to Jupiter before noon, my
 Thalia?

Notes.

1. Line 2 "tertia" : the courts sat early, sometimes even before the 3rd hour.
 - Line 3 "in quintam" : Rome's prime business hours were between the 3rd and 5^m hours.
 - Line 4 "quies" : probably means an early siesta which is usually taken in the 7^m hour. Some may stop work early but no one continues after the 7^m hour.
 - Line 9 "aetheric" : a title of Jupiter.
 - Line 10 "pocula" : the dinner appears to have reached the drinking stage.
 - Line 11 "gressum netive licenti" : Martial is asking his muse whether she makes provocative advances to Jupiter in the morning. The answer is clearly to be in the negative although technically it is left open.
2. Notice how Martial avoids boring the reader with a catalogue of hourly events by
 - (i) varying the number of hours mentioned in each line
 - (ii) varying the position of the numbers in the lines
 - (iii) omitting mention of the 4^m hour and not working remorselessly through 11 and 12.

Segius maintains that the gods don't exist, and that the sky is empty. And he proves his point by the fact that, whilst he denies their existence, he sees he has been made prosperous.

Notes

1. Notice position of Segius, flanked by "affirmat" and "probat".
2. His conclusive piece of evidence - gods can't exist because he has done so well for himself.

Apollo, may you continue to be rich and always take pleasure in the plains of Myrina and old swans, the Muses serve you, may your priestess at Delphi never give false prophecy to anyone, may the imperial palace worship and love you - so long as you ask the good Caesar to quickly give 12 fasces and his approval to Stella.

Then I, in your debt for fulfilling my prayer, will happily lead a young ox to fall at your country altar with its golden horns.

The sacrificial victim has been born, Phoebus, why do you delay?

Notes

1. The epigram, supposedly a prayer to Apollo is in four parts
 - a. Lines 1-5 : Martial makes a number of wishes on Apollo's behalf.
 - b. 6-7. This is what Martial wishes Apollo to do.
 - c. 8-10 This is the sacrificial carrot, or bribe,
 - d. line 11 the final line alters the tone it tries to hurry the god up.
2. Notice the conditional force of 'sic' - it's almost a piece of blackmail. Usually man gives gods an offering for favours received. Martial will make an offering only after Apollo has acted for him. The arrogance of this together with line 11 is hardly the tone of a real prayer.
3. N.B. the alliteration in line 2 of the 's' sounds.
4. Line 4 seems to hint that the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo, could be guilty of intentional deceit.
5. Lines 6-7 show that the prayer is addressed as much to Domitian as to Apollo.
6. Martial's attitude to Domitian emerges from 'bonus' and 'adnuat' which are both used of gods. The fact that Martial asks Apollo to persuade Domitian to grant the promotion of Stella implies that Domitian is in close, personal touch with Apollo and the rest of the gods.
7. Swans were supposed to sing only at the moment of death and Apollo was associated with music.
8. Fasces; these were bundles of rods, bound by red thongs and originally containing axes, carried by Lictores. The number of fasces varied with the rank of the magistrate.
9. Line 10 'victim's horns were regularly gilded.

LIBELLUS

MARTIAL = EPIGRAMS IV. 71. Girls are just as chaste as ever but the fashion now is to give the impression of availability!

I've been investigating for ages through the whole city, Safronus Rufus, whether any girl says no. No girl says no. As if ^{it} were not right, as if it were immoral to say no, as if it were not permitted: no girl says no. Are there no virgins, then? Yes, there are thousands of virgins. So what does the virgin do? She doesn't say yes, but she doesn't say no either.

Notes

This is a light-hearted poem poking fun at the supposed promiscuity of girls in Rome and depends on the idiomatic uses of 'negare' and 'dare' for effect. The heavy first line suggests a serious and tiring search conducted by Martial but the rest of the poem quickly emphasizes the light-hearted tone. Martial's outrage is suggested by lines 3-4 where he protests that to be chaste is almost a sin - an undesirable attribute in girls. Yet there are plenty of chaste girls - it's just that they always seem to give the appearance of being available without actually saying 'yes'. Safronius Rufus we learn from other epigrams tended to be puritanical when it came to sex so Martial is no doubt having a 'dig' at him rather than expressing real dismay at the laxity of Roman girls' morals.

Questions

1. Explain what Martial claims to have discovered, and what he has in fact discovered.
2. How important are pattern and repetition to the success of this epigram?
3. Ask to hear the poem by Max Miller (The Max Miller Blue Book by P. Keating) where the same point about girls seems to be made! (Page 140).

29 Poor Little Erotion

(Martial, Epigrams V,34)

To you, Fronto my father and to you Flaccilla my mother do I entrust this girl -
my sweetheart and darling,

so that my poor little Erotion may not tremble at the black shadows
and the monstrous mouth of the dog of Tartarus.

She would only just have completed her sixth winter with all its chills,
if she had lived just six days more.

May she play mischievously among such old protectors
and may she chatter my name with her lisping tongue.

May turf cover her tender bones softly; and upon her,
O Earth, don't be heavy; she was not heavy upon you.

5

10

*To you, my parents, I send on
This little girl Erotion,
The slave I loved, that by your side
Her ghost need not be terrified
Of the pitch darkness underground
Or the great jaws of Hades' hound.
This winter she would have completed
Her sixth year had she not been cheated
By just six days. Lisping my name,
May she continue the sweet game
Of childhood happily down there
In two such good, old spirits' care.
Lie lightly on her, turf and dew:
She put so little weight on you.*

LIBELLUS

MARTIAL : EPIGRAMS VI : 35 Drink up and shut up !

Asking loudly for seven waterclocks, Caecilianus, the judge has unwillingly given you seven. But you speak for much longer and, lolling back, drink the tepid water from your glass flasks. When at last you satisfy both voice and thirst, we ask, Caecilianus, that you now drink from your waterclock.

Notes

Clepsydrae, or water-clocks were introduced into Roman courts to stop lawyers from speaking for too long. Each water-clock would last for about 15-20 minutes.

Caecilianus cannot be identified but Martial often addresses him in such unfavourable terms. Here Martial makes him out to be long-winded and loud-mouthed. The 'arbiter' obviously knows what he is like and grants him his wish 'invitus'. But Caecilianus (Martial repeats the name out of contempt) still outstays his welcome. The warm drinking water suggests the hot, stuffy room with people lolling about tired out by the droning of Caecilianus voice. Martial's suggestion for getting him to sit down is ingenious - if he slakes his thirst by drinking from the water-clock his time will be up much sooner! Notice the key word 'bibas' is left till last.

Questions

1. Find out what you can about (a) Clepsydra (b) methods of measuring time in the Roman world.
2. How can we see each couplet as an isolated component of the epigram? Can you suggest a progression?

Do you notice how little Regulus, not yet 3 years old, himself joins in the praise of his father after listening to him? How, when he sees his father, he leaves his mother's lap and considers as his own the praise which his father receives? Already, the clamour and close-packed circle of listeners of the Centumviral Court as well as the Basilica Julia are pleasing to him. He's just like the foal of a lively horse which delights in the race-track - just like the calf wishing for the battle, though its forehead is yet soft. O Gods, fulfil, I pray, the sons prayers for his mother and father; may Regulus hear his son speak in public and may the mother hear them both speak in public.

Notes

Line 2 Regulus - son of the lawyer Marcus Aquilius Regulus who was described by Pliny as 'the biggest crook on two feet' His son born in AD 87 or AD 88 was described by Pliny thus: 'quick-witted, but untrustworthy; yet he could have made an honest living had he not taken after his father'.)

Line 5 centum viri: a court consisting of up to 180 jurors dealing with important disputes about wills and inheritances. It attracted all the outstanding lawyers of the day e.g. Pliny and Regulus.

Line 6 Iulia tecla : this was where the centumviral court sat. It was situated on the south side of the Forum and was 101 metres x 49 metres.

Line 9 Regulus' son died young (in AD 102 or 103). The father was very upset and Pliny tells how he had the boy's ponies, dogs, nightingales, parrots and blackbirds killed around the funeral pyre, commissioned statues and portraits of the boy. The boys size and age are stressed in line 1 and later on in line 6 where the huge Basilica with its noise and bustle must dwarf the little boy. The young man's precocious behaviour starts in line 2 - nor only does he listen to his fathers speeches but also appreciates his rhetoric along with everybody else. In line 3 there is a hint of bravery as the boy leaves his mother's lap to make straight for his father as any true Roman would. Notice that Regulus here is not simply 'pater' but 'genitor' which is far more grand in tone. In lines 5-6 notice how Martial suggests the noisy, crowded atmosphere of the court ('c', 'q' alliteration). Notice that this awe-inspiring sight actually pleases the toddler who significantly here is labelled as 'infanti' i.e. a non-speaker.

Unlike Pliny, who did not have a good word for Regulus, Martial pays him a number of compliments:

Line 2 - Regulus the father is 'auditum' - i.e. he commands attention.

Line 4 - patrias landes - Regulus is praised for his rhetorical skill.

Lines 9-10 Martial's prayer is as much a prayer for long life for father (and mother) as for survival for the son.

The poem is altogether more hopeful, optimistic and more generous to Regulus than Pliny's letters about him. It is a cruel irony that Regulus junior died so young.

Questions

1. How does Martial create the scene in visual terms?
2. What can we conclude about Martial's relationship with Regulus?
3. Why does Martial stress young Regulus' youth?
4. What can we learn from this poem about the roles of Women and children in Roman society?

The inconsiderate shopkeeper had taken up the whole of the city and no shop stayed within its own doorway. You, Germanicus, ordered the narrow streets to grow and what had been just now an alley has been made into a street.

No (shop) pillar is surrounded now by fettered wine-flasks nor is the praetor forced to go in the middle of the mud, the razor is not blindly drawn in the dense crowd, nor does dirty snack-bar invade all the streets.

Barber, shopkeeper, cook, butcher - they keep to their own doorways.

Now there is Rome where not long ago there was a great bazaar.

Notes

1. "Germanicus" is the emperor Domitian who took the title 'Germanicus' after his expedition against the Germanic Chatti in AD 84.
2. Praetors having to walk in the mud reminds us of the street stepping stones in Pompeii.
3. Further evidence of Martial's adulation of the emperor is provided by this poem. Domitian here is flattered with his military title prior to being congratulated on his domestic policy. Domitian's order that the streets should 'grow' sounds magical certainly the actions of a god.
4. Notice Martial dwells more on Rome before Domitian's edict. The bustle and confusion obviously provides him with more to write about! Though Martial's attitude towards the shopkeepers is clear from the word "temerarius"

Questions

1. What is the problem? Why does it arise? Who solves it?
2. What is Martial's attitude to (a) shopkeepers (b) Domitian?
3. What does Martial mean by 'caeca' in line 7?
4. How effectively does Martial use (a) exaggeration (b) selected examples (c) word order?

All the friends you have are old women, ugly or more hideous through old age. You lead these around with you as your companions, dragging them through parties, the porticoes and theatres. In this way you are beautiful, Fabulla; in this way you are a young girl.

Notes

Line 5 Fabulla is mentioned elsewhere by Martial as being 'creta' ('powdered') and so frightened of rains; purchasing false hair; inclined to boast about her supposed youth and riches.

Line 1 presents a sordid picture; line 2 is even more so. The sneering tone is suggested by the 's' alliteration. Martial implies that pressure must be put on these old hags to accompany Fabulla by the word 'trahis'. The places mentioned in line 4 are the smart places where you wanted to be seen. Fabulla cuts a fine figure in these circles - but only because she surrounds herself with the ugliest old women around. She looks young because they are so old; she looks beautiful because they are so ugly! Notice that Fabulla is not mentioned by name until the very last line - it comes as a surprise because up till now we might have thought Martial was addressing a man who has ugly girl-friends. Notice in line 5 the alliteration and assonance in "Fabulla puella."

Martial has no sympathy for Fabulla - only impatience at her vanity and he exaggerated it to make his point - all of her friends are old and/or ugly - or so he would have us believe.

Questions

1. What is the effect of withholding Fabulla till line 5?
2. Is Fabulla a credible character?
3. What tone does Martial adopt in this poem?
4. What are the sound effects in this poem?

Martial Epigrams X.12

You, Domitius, who are heading for the peoples of the Aemilian Way, the Vercella^e of Apollo and the fields of Phaethon's Padus - I gladly send you off, blow me if I don't! Although without you no day is pleasing to me. But my sense of loss is worth enduring just so that for one harvest at least you may take the pressure off your neck which has been rubbed sore by the yoke of the city. Go then, I pray, and soak up all that sun with your greedy skin. O how handsome you will be - whilst abroad! You will come back and won't be recognised by your 'white' friends and the pale crowd will envy your cheeks. But Rome will quickly snatch away the tan which the Way has given you even though you may come back with a dark Egyptian face.

Notes

Line 1 Via Aemilia: was one of the most important routes N.W. across the Italian peninsula.

Line 2 Phaethontei Padi : Phaethon, son of the Sun, drove his father's chariot for a day, scorched the earth and was killed by a thunderbolt from Jupiter.

This type of poem in which the poet says farewell to a departing traveller is quite common but whereas usually it follows a set pattern and is basically serious in tone, Martial's poem here focuses on far too frivolous a topic - namely a suntan - for it to be taken too seriously. Lines 1-2 have an adventurous feel about them - the geographical and mythological references no doubt calculated to impress. Line 3 contains a surprise - far from the poet wanting to stop Domitius from going or even expression of regret at his departure - he in fact sends him off gladly! (-note the jingle of 'Domiti, dimitto') The professed reason is that the benefits to Domitius outweigh the sense of loss felt by Martial. The time of the year is suggested by 'messe' (line 5) and references to heat and sun come thick and fast

line 2 Phaethon - son of the Sun

line 5 'messe' the harvest in late summer

line 6 'perusta' here = rubbed sore, but implying 'burnt' - perhaps by the sun.

line 7 'soles' sunshine.

Line 7 begins the second half of the epigram. Martial now concentrates on the effect the sun will have on Domitius' appearance. 'avida' (line 7) suggests that his body has been deprived of the sun whilst in Rome - obviously it will have been if he has been working in full formal dress - so Martial urges him to 'drink up' or as we now say 'soak up' the sun. The fact that the sun actually makes you thirsty is witty in itself! Line 8 pictures a handsome Domitius - but it is only whilst he is away that he keeps the beautiful suntan for as Martial goes on to say (line 11) the tan will disappear soon after he returns to Rome: for a short time, however the people of Rome ('white', 'pale' by comparison with him) will envy him his colour - exaggerated here as being 'black'. Then finally the colour disappears and the real point of the epigram emerges: Rome is so unhealthy that it can turn even a black man white. Note the 'l' alliteration in lines 9-10.

Questions

1. Draw and label a map of the Roman road - network in Italy.

Martial Epigrams XI 79

Because we have arrived at the first milestone at the tenth hour we are being accused of dawdling. But that's not my fault - not my fault at all. It's your fault for sending me your she-mules, Paetus.

Notes

Martial is on his way from Rome to Paetus' suburban estate. He is at the estate one mile out of Rome at the 10th hour and the ninth hour was the regular time for cena supposing himself to be an hour late for dinner he makes play with the two numbers in line 1. He then imagines himself on a criminal charge for which the second complet is the speech for the defence, delivered with passion. His defence is that his host sent him inefficient transport - a cheeky excuse but one which is hardly likely to offend Paetus.

Question

1. Investigate methods of travel in the ancient world.

51 Recipe for a Happy Life

(Martial Epigrams X.47)

The things which make life happier,
my dearest Martial, are these:
property which is not acquired through toil but inherited;
land which gives a good return, a hearth where there is always a fire burning;
never a lawsuit, few official duties, an untroubled mind;
the constitution of a free man, a healthy body;
prudent honesty, equal friends,
agreeable company, plain meals;
a night time which is not drunken but free from worry,
not a sad marriage-bed, yet one which is chaste;
sleep which may make the night short;
wish to be what you are and seek nothing in preference;
and do not fear death nor desire it.

*Of what does the happy life consist,
My dear friend, Julius? Here's a list;
Inherited wealth, no need to earn,
Fires that continually burn,
And fields that give a fair return,
No lawsuits, formal togas worn
Seldom, a calm mind, the freeborn
Gentleman's health and good
physique,
Tact with the readiness to speak
Openly, friends of your own mind,*

*Guests of an easy-going kind,
Plain food, a table simply set,
Nights sober but wine-freed from fret,
A wife who's true to you and yet
No prude in bed, and sleep so sound
It makes the dawn come quickly round.
Be pleased with what you are, keep
hope
Within that self-appointed scope;
Neither uneasily apprehend
Nor morbidly desire the end.*

Please let me grow up!

You were the rocker of my cradle, Charidemus, and, when I was a boy, my guard and continual companion.

Now the barber's towels become dark with clippings from my beard and my girl complains at being pricked by my lips. But in your eyes I have not grown up: our steward trembles at you, so does the accountant, the house itself is frightened of you.

You permit me neither to play nor love. You do not want to permit me anything yet you permit yourself everything. You criticise me, watch me, complain about me, draw sighs at me and your anger scarcely refrains from using a stick to me.

If I have adopted purple clothing or anointed my hair, you exclaim "Your father never did that;" and you count my cups of wine with a knitted brow as if the wine-jar were from your own cellar.

Stop! I cannot bear a killjoy freedman. My girlfriend will tell you that I am now a man.

Notes

- Line 1 Charideme : apparently Martial's "paedagogus" (see stage 10 Education)
- 3 Sudaria : lit. sweat-cloths, put around the neck to catch shavings or to wipe the razor.
- 11 Tyrias : The production of the famous purple dye was associated with Phoenicia (hence Tyre) which was the first centre of the trade.
unxive capillos : a wide variety of fragrant preparations was used for the hair. Capua was a big centre for the production of this luxury item.
- 15 Catonem : Marcus Porcius Cato, noted for his high, unyielding standards of behaviour. He was famous for his insistence on the destruction of Carthage in 146BC ("Delenda est Carthago")

There are hints in the opening lines of the relationship between Martial and Charidemus. It has always been very close. 'adsiduus' (2) suggests it was stifling. Despite all the obvious signs of growing up, Charidemus still treats Martial as though he were a young boy. Martial has had a beard and his first shave (depositio barbae) which was a serious event in Roman eyes and regarded as a sign of coming of age. No sooner is he shaved than he has grown facial hair to trouble his girl-friend (4). Many signs here of his virility. Note the sound effect of 'puncta puella; the heavy spondees in line 6 registering the fear which Charidemus inspires in everybody and everything. The puritanical Charidemus never did and still doesn't allow Martial to play (ludere = to play, gamble, make love!) whilst he himself seems to take all kind of liberties. Mention of the cane 'ferulis' (10) recalls childhood days again but Martial is trying desperately to shed boyhood by dressing fashionably and scenting his hair. Charidemus' response is predictable : he is shocked "Your father never did that! This is his only speech in the poem and is intended to crush the spirit of the young dare-devil Martial. Having dealt with women and clothes, Charidemus turns to the question of drink. To Martial he is just being a spoil-sport - it's not Charidemus' wine he's drinking anyway, so why should he worry?! Perhaps he is simply spurred on by intense feelings of responsibility

for the family property, the legacy of many years service.

Martial's had enough by line 15 : "desine" is sharp; "non possum libertum ferre" is heavy and deliberate. He seeks to shake the freedman and make him see sense by confronting him with a witness to his sexual prowess - his girl-friend. He may be potent in that sense, but of course it still doesn't mean he is now "grown-up"!

Questions

1. What can we learn about Charidemus' character?
2. What picture of himself does Martial present from the point of view of age and experience?
3. "sed tibi non crevi" - does this conflict arise today?

The Marcia leaps here, German, not the Rhine. Why do you stand in the way and hold back this boy from the stream of precious water?

The water of the victors shouldn't relieve the captive thirst of a servant when a citizen has been shoved out of the way, you barbarian.

Notes

1. The Aqua Marcia was one of the most important Roman aqueducts. Built in 144 BC, ran about 90 Km into Rome often on arches.
2. "salit" line 1, implies water under pressure, possibly a fountain feeding a street watertank.
3. "divitis" line 2, possibly a reference to the water's noted coldness and health - giving properties.
4. Martial here is a character in the poem, an onlooker taking the side of a young fellow-countryman in a squabble at the drinking fountain.
5. Martial makes his attitude to the German clear
 - (a) by comparing the Aqua Marcia to the Rhine
 - (b) Calling him, Germane.
 - (c) the implied suggestion that it's not just a question of a German in Rome preventing a local lad from getting a drink, but a native slave insulting a Roman citizen and indeed the whole conquering might of Rome.
6. Notice the contrasts achieved by juxtaposing 'cive' and 'ministro' (3) and 'captivam' and 'victrix' (4).
7. If this sort of thing really did happen or if people really held such prejudices against slaves it is to be wondered why there were not more slave revolts!

Parasites in the Bath!

It is not possible to escape from Menogenes in the Baths or Wash-houses, although you may try with all your skill. He will try to catch the warm trigon-ball with right and left hand so that, he can often add the balls he has caught to your score. He picks up the soft beach-ball from the dust and brings it back and once he has washed he will already be wearing his dinner-sandals. If you take up your towels, he speaks of them as being whiter than snow although they may be dirtier than a child's lap. When you titivate your thin head of hair with a comb he will say that the hair you have arranged is positively Achillean. He himself will bring to you an aperitif drawn from the dregs of a smoky wine-bottle, and constantly dab the moisture from your brow. He will praise everything, admire everything until, having put up with a thousand vexations, you say "come".

Notes

- 1 thermis, balnea : thermae = large-scale, imperial baths, balnea were much more numerous, of various sizes, probably the result of private enterprise and investment.
- 3 tepidum ... trigon : trigon was played by 3 players standing in a triangular formation, throwing a ball round from one to another or knocking it on. The ball was stuffed hard with hair - it is described here as 'warm' no doubt because it was a very energetic game (with sweaty hands!) left-handed play was a particularly prized manoeuvre. (see sheet on "Roman Games")
- 4 imputet : there must have been some systems of scoring in this game. Menogenes is scoring his own points to the man from whom he hopes for a dinner. Menogenes is either one of the 3 players, acting as scorer and crediting his own catches to his 'victims'; or perhaps he is standing behind as a sort of long stop and again scoring his catches to his victim.
- 5 follem : a bladder, either inflated or stuffed with feathers. Menogenes is now acting as ball boy.
- 6 Soleatus : sandals were brought by guests and worn by all when in the house, but removed and handed to a slave before reclining for dinner. For the journey to and fro, "calcei" were worn.
- 7 lintea : Menogenes' victim would have brought his own towels to the baths.
- 11 fumosae: wine-bottles were stored in the 'apotheca' at the top of the house, because the smoke from the fire was supposed to mellow the wine.
faece : the dregs of wine were used either as a cleansing agent or as an emetic before dinner. In Horace's account of a dinner, wine dregs are one of several hors d'oeuvres intended to whet the appetite.
- 14 'veni' : i.e. to dinner

Discussion

Note the construction of this epigram :

Lines 1 - 2 general remark about Menogenes

Lines 3 - 12 the various flatteries used by him
 " 13 another generalization about him
 " 14 climatic invitation about him

Line 1 : 'effugere' and 'Menogenen' (2) are both positioned for maximum impact.

Line 3 "captabit" has overtones of courting favour.

If Menogenes is ambidexterous, this explains why he can rattle up so many points ('saepe', 4)

Lines 5-6 M. has had his bath and is giving his broadest hint yet by putting on his party shoes. M will go to any lengths to get his free dinner: he plays ball-b praises the towels, describes the victims' balding head as though it had the flowing locks of an Achilles. Note the implication of 'secto ... dent ' that he only needs a single tooth to comb his thin hair. In line 12 he is wiping his victims' brow. Note how from line 3-12 he has gradually got closer and closer, putting the pressure on him. lines 13-14 are very cleverly put together with repetition and chiasmus. The word 'donec' leaves us in suspense; what is to be the outcome of all this? The crucial word is left to the very end and it is total defeat for the victim - he cannot escape giving the invitation 'veni'.

Note the heavy first half of the final pentameter expressing the idea of 1000 vexations.

Questions

1. What do you think M. is doing in lines 3-4 and 11-12?
2. What is the significance of the order of the 4 couplets in lines 3-12?
3. Examine Martial's use of contrast.
4. Discuss sound and word order in lines 13-14.
5. Revise (a) Roman games and pastimes
 (b) Roman public baths.

LIBELLUS

MARTIAL EPIGRAMS VII. 83 Twinkle-fingers - The just-so barber!

While Eutrapelus the barber goes round Lupercus' face and applies paint to his cheeks, another beard comes up.

Notes

'Eutrapelus' in Greek means 'dexterous', clever with the hands. Lupercus cannot be identified though he is frequently mentioned by Martial. It seems that paint or rouge was applied to the face after shaving, certainly in the case of homosexual males. The point of the poem is that Eutrapelus is such a perfectionist and professional that by the time he has finished off the first beard, another one has grown in its place!

Questions

1. What effect does Martial obtain by (i) the name he gives the 'tolsor' (ii) by the positioning of 'Eutrapelus tolsor'?
2. Find out what you can about the use of cosmetics in the ancient world?
3. What does the word 'lup^uas' mean could the name 'Lupercus' have any added significance in this poem?

LIBELLUS

Martial Epigrams X. 62 Give the cane a rest!

School teacher, spare your innocent flock. If you do this, crowds of long-haired boys may listen to you and the dainty chorus round your desk may like you, and neither the arithmetic teacher nor the speedy shorthand teacher will be surrounded by a larger group of people. Bright days are hot with flaming Leo and burning July cooks the parched harvest. The Scythian hide fringed with dreadful thongs with which Marsya from Celaenae was flogged and the harsh fennel-stalks, sceptres of the tutor, should take a rest and go to sleep until the Ides of October. If the boys are well in summer, they learn enough.

Notes

The more pupils he got the more a school teacher would receive in fees. Long hair was not uncommon in boys though the adult fashion was for short hair.

The sign of the lion in the Zodiac is associated with the months of July and August.

The 'Scythian's hide' probably refers to the 'scutica' - the teachers strap for naughty pupils.

Whether there was an official summer School break is unclear but Schoolmasters would no doubt have tried to keep their schools going - if only for the money.

Martial wishes many rewards on the teacher provided that he gives them a break from the harsh discipline in the summer months of extreme heat. Notice all the words in lines 6-7 which suggest the scorching heat of July.

"Cirrata" is a word often used to describe children so there is an intended irony in using the word here to describe the teacher's strap. Note the threatening sound of the 'r' in line 8.

Questions

1. What is Martial's attitude towards the teacher?
2. How effectively does Martial evoke a Roman summer in lines 6-7?
3. Do you agree with the implications of line 12? Should modern school buildings remain unused for long periods of time?
4. Should teachers be allowed to administer corporal punishment?
5. Revise and study further the Roman Educational system.

THE dice-thrower

The cheating hand which knows how to throw the pre-arranged knuckle-bones will get nothing but his prayers if it has thrown them from me.

Notes

Martial's Book XIV is a collection of two-line epigrams entitled "apophreta" ('presents to be taken away by guests'). The couplets describe the presents : most are in pairs, suitable for rich man and poor man alternately. It is unlikely that the dice-thrower in this poem is intended as one of the more expensive presents.

turricula : there were severe laws against gaming, but they were widely overlooked, even by emperors, and the stakes could be very high. This sort of dice-box was cylindrical and stepped outside to give a firm grip (hence its tower-like appearance)

Line 1 talos : knuckle bones (part of ankle joints in cloven-footed animals) were used for various games. When used like dice (tesserae) only the four long faces of the bone were used. The flat face counted for 1, the convex for 3, the concave for 4, and the 's' shaped face for 6. The highest score was with a 'venus' when each of four bones showed a different face and the lowest was 'dog' when four flat faces showed.

The point of this epigram lies in the ambiguity of the second line. The surface meaning is that the cheat will have all his wishes fulfilled. The underlying meaning is that the cheat will only win in fantasy, not in reality : his wishes for the dice will remain mere wishes.

Questions.

1. Read about Roman games and pastimes.
2. Most people gamble to make money, but some also gamble to lose money. Discuss gambling and its motivation.

To Some who would borrow his books.

- a) You demand that I give you my little books, Tucca
I will not do it; for you want to sell them, not read them.
- b) You demand that I give you my little books, Quintus.
I haven't got them, but the bookseller Tryphon has.
"Shall I give money for such trifles and, being of sound
mind, buy your poems?
I shall not be so foolish," you say. Neither shall I.
- c) Every time you meet me, Lupercus,
You say straightaway "Would you like me to send a boy
to whom you can hand over your little book of epigrams
which I will send back to you immediately after it has been
read?" There is no reason why you should trouble the boy,
Lupercus. It's a long way if he wants to come to the Pear-
Tree, and I live three flights up, and high flights too.
You will be able to go and get what you want nearer home,
doubtless you are accustomed to going up to the Argliteum.
Opposite Caesar's Forum there is a shop
with its doorposts written on on both sides
so that you may quickly read all the names of the poets.
Go and get my book there, and do not ask Arrectus -

the owner of the shop goes by this name -

the owner of the shop goes by this name -

he will offer you from the first or second pigeon-hole,
smoothed down by pumice stone and adorned with purple,
Martial for just five denarii.

"You are not worth so much," you say. You are wise,
Lupercus.

Wit and Humour

45 An Enigma

(Martial, *Epigrams* XII. 47)

difficilis facilis, iucundus acerbus es idem:
nec tecum possum vivere nec sine te.

iucundus, pleasant
acerbus, bitter
nec... nec..., neither... nor...

46 Two Sensible People

(Martial, *Epigrams* IX. 5)

nubere vis Prisco; non miror, Paula; sapisti.
ducere te non vult Priscus; et ille sapit.

WIT AND HUMOUR

47 EQUALITY?

(Martial, *Epigrams* VIII. 12)

uxorem quare locupletem ducere nolim
quaeritis? uxori nubere nolo meae.
inferior matrona suo sit, Prisce, marito:
non aliter fiunt femina virque pares.

quare, why
locuples, rich
inferior, lower (in status), less important

matrona (*f*), wife
maritus (*m*), husband

(Martial, Epigrams XII.47)

You are difficult, you are agreeable, you are pleasant, you are bitter;

neither can I live with you nor without you.

*Amiable but unco-operative,
Sweet-natured but a grouse -
Though I can't live without you, I can live
without you in the house.*

46 Two Sensible People

(Martial, Epigrams IX.5)

You want to marry Priscus; I'm not surprised, Paula; you have shown good sense.

Priscus doesn't want to marry you; he is also showing good sense.

47 Equality?

(Martial, Epigrams VIII.12)

Why am I unwilling to take a rich wife

you ask? I don't want to be married to my wife.

Let a wife be less important than her husband, Priscus:

in no other way does a man and a woman become equal.

*Why have I no desire to marry riches?
Because my friend, I want to wear the breeches.
Wives should obey their husbands; only then
Can women share equality with men.*