Martial, Part I: Epigrams

Marcus Valerius Martialus (ca. 45-104 CE) was the poor man’s poet. He held no official post and was often in need of a daily hand-out (sportula) from his patrons. But because of his skill as an epigrammist (a writer of short witty poems), Martial traveled in the circle of other famous authors of the Roman Silver Age (1st and 2nd centuries CE). Among his friends were Juvenal, Pliny, and Quintilian, and he eventually obtained favor from the emperor Domitian as his reputation increased. His life at Rome was the usual social round, often described in his poems. His verses are vigorous, polished, and of great variety as the following selections will show.

Text and Translation

1.47
Nuper erat medicus, nunc est vispillo, Diaulus:
Not long ago Diaulus was a doctor, now he is an undertaker.

Quod vispillo facit, fecerat et medicus.
What the undertaker (now) does, the doctor also had done.

7.3
Cur non mitto meos tibi, Pontiliane, libellos?
Why do I not send my little books to you, Pontilianus?

Ne mihi tu mittas, Pontiliane, tuos.
In order that you, Pontilianus, not send yours to me.

5.81
Semper pauper eris, si pauper es, Aemiliane:
You will always be poor, if you are poor, Aemilianus:

dantur opes nulli nunc nisi divitibus.
Wealth is given nowadays to none unless to the rich.

[Continued on the next page]
5.43

Thais habet nigros, niveos Laecania dentes.
Thais has black, Laecania, snow-white teeth.

Quae ratio est? emptos haec habet, illa suos.
What is the reason? The latter has purchased (teeth), the former, her own.

1.19

Si memini, fuerant tibi quattuor, Aelia, dentes:
If I remember, you had four teeth, Aelia:

expulit una duos tussis et una duos.
One cough expelled two and one (cough) another two.

Iam secura potes totis tussire diebus:
Now safely you are able to cough all day long:

nil istic quod agat tertia tussis habet.
A third cough has nothing which it can do there.

4.41

Quid recitaturus circumdas vellera collo?
Why, (when you are) about to recite, do you put a woolen muffler around your neck?

Conveniunt nostris auribus ista magis.
Woolen mufflers are more fitting for our ears!
Worksheet - Martial, Part I: Epigrams

a. The questions below pertain to the forms underlined in the passage (pp. 1-2).

b. When you’re asked to change a word from one form to another, change only that form of the word. For instance, if you’re asked to change *habet* to the passive voice, make *habet* passive (i.e. *habetur*) but leave it in the 3rd sing. present indicative.

**1.47**

1. What case is *vispillo* and why? __________________________________________________

**7.3**

2. Change *meos…libellos* to dative singular. _________________________________________

3. Make *tibi* plural. ______________________________________________________________

4. What case is *mihi* and why? ____________________________________________________

5. What mood is *mittas* and why? __________________________________________________

**5.81**

6. What case is *Aemiliane* and why? ________________________________________________

7. Change *dantur* to subjunctive active. ______________________________________________

**5.43**

8. Change *habet* to a passive infinitive. ______________________________________________

9. What case is *niveos* and why? ____________________________________________________

[Continued on the next page]
10. Make **Quae** modify *dentes* in the line above. 

11. Make **haec** accusative. 

12. Make **illa** genitive. 

13. Make **suos** modify *ratio*. 

### 1.19

14. Make **fuerant** imperfect first person plural. 

15. Change **tussis** to genitive plural. 

16. Make **potes** perfect. 

17. What case is **diebus** and why? 

18. Change **agat** to future passive indicative second person plural. 

19. Change **habet** to imperfect passive plural. 

### 4.41

20. Make **recitaturus** passive accusative plural. 

21. Make **vellera** singular. 

22. Change **collo** to nominative plural. 

23. Make **convenient** perfect passive singular (neut.). 

24. Make **nostris** modify the subject in the previous line. 

25. Make **ista** genitive.
### Notes and Vocabulary - Martial, Part I: Epigrams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Note/Vocabulary</th>
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| 1.47 | **nuper**: (adverb) not long ago  
|      | **medicus**: medicus, -i, m.: doctor  
|      | **vispillo**: vispello/vispillo, -onis, m.: undertaker |
| 7.3  | **Pontiliane**: Pontilianus, -i, m.: a man’s name  
|      | **libellos**: libellus, -i, m.: little book (diminutive of liber) |
| 5.81 | **pauper**: pauper, pauperis: poor  
|      | **Aemiliane**: Aemilianus, -i, m.: a man’s name  
|      | **opes**: opes, opum, f.pl.: wealth  
|      | **nisi**: unless  
|      | **divitibus**: dives, divitis: rich |
| 5.43 | **Thais**: Thais, -is, f.: a woman’s name  
|      | **nigros**: niger, nigra, nigrum: black  
|      | **niveos**: niveus, -a, -um: snow-white  
|      | **Laecania**: Laecania, -ae, f.: a woman’s name  
|      | **dentes**: dens, dentis, m.: tooth  
|      | **emptos**: emo, -ere, _mi, emptum: purchase |
| 1.19 | **memini**: memini, meminisse: remember; translate perfect as present  
|      | **quattuor**: (indeclinable) four  
|      | **duos**: acc. pl. masc. of duo, duae, duo: two  
|      | **tussis**: tussis, -is, f.: cough  
|      | **secura**: securus, -a, -um: safe; here, used as an adverb  
|      | **totis diebus**: all day long; literally, “in whole days”  
|      | **istic**: (adverb) there  
|      | **tertia**: tertius, -a, -um: third |
| 4.41 | **quid**: why  
|      | **recitaturus**: recito (1): recite  
|      | **circumdas**: = circums (“around”) + do (1): put (accusative noun) around (dative noun)  
|      | **vellera**: vellus, -eris, n.: fleece; literally, “pieces of wool”; here, wool muffler  
|      | **collo**: collum, -i, n.: neck  
|      | **auribus**: auris, -is, f.: ear  
|      | **conveniunt**: convenio, -ire, -veni, -ventum: be fitting (+ dative)  
|      | **magis**: (comparative adverb of magnopere) greatly; here, more |