

Martial *Epigrams* 1.1-4, 1.66, 1.117., 2.1

§ 1.1 TO THE READER.

The man whom you are reading is the very man that you want, — [Martial](#), known over the whole world for his humorous books of epigrams; to whom, studious reader, you have afforded such honours, while he is alive and has a sense of them, as few poets receive after their death.

Event Date: 100 [LA](#)

§ 1.2 TO THE READER; SHOWING WHERE THE AUTHOR'S BOOKS MAY BE PURCHASED:

You who are anxious that my books should be with you everywhere, and desire to have them as companions on a long journey, buy a copy of which the parchment leaves are compressed into a small compass. Bestow book-cases upon large volumes; one hand will hold me. But that you may not be ignorant where I am to be bought, and wander in uncertainty over the whole town, you shall, under my guidance, be sure of obtaining me. Seek [Secundus](#), the freedman of the learned Lucensis, behind the Temple of Peace and the Forum of [Pallas](#).

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§ 1.3 THE AUTHOR TO HIS BOOK:

You prefer, little book, to dwell in the shops in the Argiletum, though my book-case has plenty of room for you. You are ignorant, alas! you are ignorant of the fastidiousness of Rome, the mistress of the world; the sons of Man, believe me, are much too critical. Nowhere are there louder sneers; young men and old, and even boys, have the nose of the rhinoceros. After you have heard a loud “Bravo!” and are expecting kisses, you will go, tossed to the skies, from the jerked toga. Yet, that you may not so often suffer the corrections of your master, and that his relentless pen may not so often mark your vagaries, you desire, frolicsome little book, to fly through the air of heaven. Go, fly; but you would have been safer at home.

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§ 1.4 TO CAESAR:

If you should chance, [Caesar](#), to light upon my books, lay aside that look which awes the world. Even your triumphs have been accustomed to endure jests, nor is it any shame to a general to be a subject for witticisms. Read my verses, I pray you, with that brow with which you behold Thymeles and [Latinus](#) the buffoon. The censorship may tolerate innocent jokes: my page indulges in freedoms, but my life is pure.

§ 1.66 TO A PLAGIARIST:

You are mistaken, insatiable thief of my writings, who think a poet can be made for the mere expense which copying, and a cheap volume cost. The applause of the world is not acquired for six or even ten sesterces. Seek out for this purpose verses treasured up, and unpublished efforts, known

only to one person, and which the father himself of the virgin sheet, that has not been worn and scrubbed by bushy chins, keeps sealed up in his desk. A well-known book cannot change its master. But if there is one to be found yet unpolished by the pumice-stone, yet unadorned with bosses and cover, buy it: I have such by me, and no one shall know it. Whoever recites another's compositions, and seeks for fame, must buy, not a book, but the author's silence.

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§ 1.117 TO LUPERCUS:

Whenever you meet me, [Lupercus](#), you constantly say, "Shall I send my servant, for you to give him your little book of Epigrams, which I will read and return to you directly?" There is no reason, [Lupercus](#), to trouble your servant. It is a lone journey, if he wishes to come to the Pirus; and I live up three pairs of stairs, and those high ones. What you want you may procure nearer at hand. You frequently go down to the Argiletum: opposite [Caesar's](#) forum is a shop, with pillars on each side covered over with titles of books, so that you may quickly run over the names of all the poets. Procure me there; you will no sooner ask Atrectus, — such is the name of the owner of the shop, — than he will give you, from the first or second shelf a [Martial](#), well smoothed with pumice-stone, and adorned with purple, for five denarii "You are not worth so much," do you say? You are right, [Lupercus](#).

Event Date: 100 [LA](#)

§ 2.1 TO HIS BOOK:

You could, I admit, have contained three hundred epigrams ; but who, my book, would have contained himself at you, and read you through? Yet learn, what are the advantages of a short book. The first is, that I waste less paper. The next, that the copier finishes it in one hour, and his services will not be confined only to my trifles. A third advantage is, that if any one happens to read you, you will not, though ever so bad, be detested. A person at table will begin to read you with his wine mixed, and finish you before the cup set before him begins to grow warm. Do you imagine that by such brevity you are secure from all objection? Alas! to how many will you even thus be too long!

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