MARTIAL (c. 40-104 CE), LATIN POET. For a brief biography of Martial, other selections from his Epigrams, and some comments on his reception, reputation, and translation in early modern England, see the print anthology, pp. 144-47 and 239-48.

EDITIONS:
For selected early modern and modern translations of Martial’s verse, as well as some account of his translations in manuscript and print, see the essay ‘Martial’ in “Classical Writers, their Early Modern Reputations and Translations” (Online Companion)

THOMAS MAY (c. 1596-1650), TRANSLATOR. For a brief biography, see the print anthology, p. 242.

SELECTED EPIGRAMS OF MARTIAL ENGLISHED (1629)

EPIGRAM 7.75
TO PHILOMUSUS

That great men court thee everywhere,
At feasts and at the theatre,
And would, as oft as well may be,
Walk, bathe, or take the air with thee;
Do not admire thyself for it.
’Tis not their love, but their delight.

EPIGRAM 8.46
TO CESTUS

Cestus, so chaste thou art, so wondrous fair
That Theseus’ son may not with thee compare.
To bathe with thee would nak’d Diana joy;

1 In his preface ‘To the Reader,’ May says that he was “loath to publish” these translations for three reasons: first, in translating only a selection of Martial’s verse, May might be criticized not only for the “skill in translating, but the judgement in choosing of them”; second, gentlemen readers who have translated Martial themselves might read May’s work with a more severely critical eye; and third, May’s two earlier translations of ancient Roman authors have led him to “loathe any more to vex the Roman poets (who shall sleep quietly in their urns hereafter for me).” He offers as a justification for ignoring the first obstacle the precedent of other translators; for ignoring the second, his trust in his gentlemen readers’ “good … disposition[s];” and for ignoring the third, his conviction that translation “is a thing which, I think, the ablest men do not at all condemn.” May characterizes those who do so as no real scholars of Greek and Latin, but men interested in maintaining their status as learned men with exclusive access to knowledge. They are usually those, he claims, with little real ability in these ancient languages.

2 Cestus a boy slave. Cf. Heath’s manuscript version in the print anthology, pp. 244-45.

3 Theseus’ son Hippolytus, Theseus’ son, was sexually propositioned by his step-mother, Phaedra. There are several versions of what happened next, but classical writers agree that Phaedra told Theseus that Hippolytus had tried to rape her and that Theseus, believing her story, helped bring about his son’s death.
Cybel for thee would leave her Phrygian boy;⁵
Juno would let thee lie, for Ganymede,⁶
With love, and would not thy chaste kisses dread.
Oh happy bride, whose maidenhead shall take⁷
Thy first fresh strength, and thee a husband make!

**Epigram 9.106**
**Of Two Alike Fair Brothers**

What other Leda such like twins hath bred?⁸
What other swan some Spartan dame did tread?⁹
Asillus, Castor’s, Hierus has the face¹⁰
Of Pollux; both have Helen’s lovely grace.
Had Leda’s sons been of so fair a hue,
When Venus’ gift, though worst, the rest o’erthrew,
Helen had stayed behind; Paris had then
With two stol’n Ganymedes returned again.¹¹

**Robert Fletcher (fl. 1650s), Translator.** For a brief biography, see the print anthology.

**Ex Otio Negotium. Or Martial His Epigrams Translated (1656)**

**Epigram 6.30 (50)**
**On Thelesinus**

While Thelesine embraced his chaste friends still,
His gown was short and thread-bare, cold and mean;
But since he served foul gamesters and obscene,
Now he buys fields, plate, tables at his will.
Wouldst thou grow rich, Bithynicus? Live vain.¹²
Pure kisses will yield none or little gain.

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⁴ *To bathe ... joy* implicitly, Diana would not treat Cestus as she treated the hunter Actaeon: when Actaeon saw Diana bathing naked in a pool, she punished him by turning him into a stag and setting his own dogs on him; they tore him to pieces.
⁵ *Cybel* See ‘Cybele,’ Glossary (print anthology). *Phrygian boy* i.e., Attis (see Cybele).
⁶ *for* in place of.
⁷ *maidenhead* virginity.
⁸ *What ... bred* For the story of Jove and Leda, see ‘Leda,’ Glossary (print anthology); for the Spartan queen Leda’s twins, see ‘Castor and Pollux,’ Glossary (print anthology). What May translates as ‘twins’ is actually ‘servants’ (*ministros*) in Martial’s Latin original.
⁹ *tread* have sex with (usually used to refer to sex between animals).
¹⁰ *Asillus and Hierus* are young male slaves.
¹¹ *When Venus’ gift ... again* See ‘Paris’ and ‘Helen of Troy,’ Glossary (print anthology).
¹² *Bithynicus* unidentified (probably a fictitious addressee).
EPIGRAM 6.34
TO DIADUMENUS

Seal me squeez’d kisses (Diadumene).
How many? Count the billows of the sea,
Or spread cockles on th’ Aegæan shore,
Or wand’ring bees in the Cecropian store,\(^{14}\)
Or th’ hands and voices in the theatre
When Rome salutes her sudden emperor;\(^{15}\)
I slight how many courted Lesbia gave
Catullus: he that numbers, few would have.\(^{16}\)

EPIGRAM 8.46\(^{17}\)
TO THE BOY, CESTUS

How sweet’s thy virtue, and thy shape to us?
Cestus my boy, chaste as Hippolytus!
Diana’s self may teach, and swim with thee,
More wished than Phrygus by old Cybele.
Thou mayst succeed Ganymede in his place
And unsuspected smug the Thunderer’s face.\(^{18}\)
Oh, happy she shall climb thy tender bed!
And make thee man first for a maidenhead!\(^{19}\)

EPIGRAM 8.77
TO MY FRIEND LIBER

Liber, thy friends’ sweet care! Worthy to be
Crown’d with rose-buds to all eternity!
Art wise? Still let thy hair with unguents flow!\(^{20}\)
While flow’ry garlands compass in thy brow!
May thy clear glass with Falerne wine black prove!\(^{21}\)

\(^{13}\) _Diadumenus_ a boy slave belonging to Martial. Cf. Heath’s ms. version in the print anthology, p 244.
\(^{14}\) _Cecropian_ Attican (where Athens was founded).
\(^{15}\) _sudden_ unexpected, unlooked-for (implying that the Emperor’s presence at the games was a surprise).
\(^{16}\) _I slight_ ... _have_ A reference to the Roman poet Catullus’ famous ‘Carmen 5,’ where the speaker requests thousands of kisses from his beloved, Lesbia.
\(^{17}\) Cf. May’s translation, above and Dilke’s imitation, below. _Cestus_ See n2.
\(^{18}\) _smug_ kiss. The original Latin clearly refers to Cestus giving his master kisses, when (it is implied) the master desires much more than these: ‘You might have succeeded to Ganymede’s place in bed, but cruelly you have given your master nothing but kisses.’ According to the OED, ‘smug’ does not have the meaning in this period that it obviously has here. For _Ganymede and the Thunderer_ (Jove), see Glossary (print anthology).
\(^{19}\) _maidenhead_ See n7.
\(^{20}\) _unguents_ perfumed ointments or oils.
\(^{21}\) _Falerne wine_ a wine much celebrated in the ancient world, made in Campagnia (Italy).
And thy soft bed grow warm with softer love!
A life thus led, though in its youth resign’d,
Is made much longer than it was design’d.

11.57 (56)
ON CHAEREMON

Stoic Chaeremon, ’cause that thou
Canst cry up death (I know not how),
Thou would’st have me this thy fortitude admire.
Some broken pitcher bred in thee
This seeming piece of gallantry,
Or else some frozen chimney without fire,
A noisome worm, or coverlid,
Or side-piece of thy naked bed,
Or a short coat worn by thee day and night.
Oh, what a mighty man thou’lt seem
That canst the dregs of sour red wine,
And thatch, and poor coarse black bread dare to slight!
But yet suppose thy couch should be
Stuffed with Leuconick wool for thee,
And purple vallions should thy bed attire,
And that thy boy with thee should sleep,
Which filled rich wine with rosy lip
And set thy love-inflamé guests on fire?
Oh, how wouldst thou then wish to see
Thrice Nestor’s years fulfilled in thee?
And not a minute of a day lost have?
To slight a life in misery
Is nothing, but he that can be
Contentedly distressed is truly brave.

EPIGRAM 12.99 (97)
ON BASSUS

When thou a wife so youthful hast
So rich, so noble, wise, and chast,
That the most wicked goat that is
A better cannot wish for his,

22 *Stoic* i.e., a philosopher or adherent of the Stoic school, which counseled resistance to the emotions aroused by the vicissitudes of life, such as pain, death, and loss. *’cause* i.e., because.
23 *gallantry* bravery, heroism.
24 *noisome worm* In the Latin, ‘cimex,’ or bedbug. *coverlid* coverlet or quilt.
25 *naked bed* without sheets or blankets.
26 *or ... night* Chaeremon can afford only one, ill-fitting gown.
27 *Leuconick wool* i.e., highly-prized wool from Leuconicum (a town in Eolia).
28 *vallions* perhaps ‘valances,’ drapes surrounding the canopy of a bed.
29 *Nestor* king of Pylos, described as an ancient warrior in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.
30 *chast* i.e., chaste.
Thou spendst thy strength with boys (we see),
Which thy wife’s dowry bought for thee;
So to his mistress thy prick comes
Tired, thus redeemed with mighty sums,
Nor will he stand though tempted by
The voice’s or thumb’s flattery.
Blush then, or let the Law unfold it,
(Bassus) this is not thine, th’ hast sold it.

Mr. Dilke (fl. 1678-98), Writer. For a brief biography of Dilke, a translation of Martial’s 8.46, and selections from his play The Lover’s Luck (1696), see the print anthology.

XXV Select Allusions to Several Places of Horace, Martial, Anacreon and Petronius Arbiter (1698)

Epigram 6.34

Prithee, dear youth, let me some kisses have:
D’y’ ask how many would suffice?
Bid me account the numbers in the grave;
Or tell the stars that sparkle in the skies;
Bid me as well repeat
Those many anxious cares that wait
Upon the rich and great.
Ask me how many wives there are
That love gallants more than their husbands far.
How many females mount th’ nuptial bed
Without one tittle of a maidenhead.
If I might have, as I the blessing prize,
Not time itself should e’er confine my joys.

Epigram 3.64 [65]

Sweet as the roses in their morning dew,
Or full as sweet as new blown jasmine is;
Sweet as the wind whene’er it gently blew
From fragrant boughs of aromatic trees;
Sweet as the incense curling up in smoke,

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31 stand become erect.
32 Compare Fletcher’s translation, above.
33 tell count, enumerate.
34 tittle smallest particle. maidenhead See n7.
35 Another poem for the beloved boy Diadumenus, but Dilke obscures the beloved’s gender here. Cf. May’s translation in the print anthology, p. 242.
Or as rich ointment when the urn is broke:
So are thy joys, though forced; what would they be
Wert thou so kind to make the off’ring free?