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DOCTORS AND PATIENTS IN MARTIAL'S EPIGRAMS

Abstract: This article examines Martial's epigrams dealing with medical practitioners and their various interactions with others, especially with their patients. It discusses his approach to medicine, the representatives of this discipline and the individuals affected by an illness under different rubrics which are, however, somewhat connected with each other: (1) the doctor as the bringer of death, (2) the doctor in a sexual context, (3) other dubious doctors and a few exceptions, and (4) medical discourse combined with other themes. In addition to the analysis of the conscious use of rhetorical elements and the creation of humour, connections are established with other (at first sight unrelated) epigrams of the poet's entire corpus. Material from numerous other authors, especially those collected in the *Anthologia Palatina*, Pliny the Elder and several medical writers, is also taken into account in order to not only appraise Martial's distinctive take on the theme, but also to scrutinise to what extent his epigrams may reflect certain aspects of real life in the ancient Roman world.

Keywords: Ancient medicine, ancient epigram, Martial, *Anthologia Palatina*, medical ethics, doctor-patient relationships, creation of humour, satirical portrayals and mockery

> "In sich trug zu allen Zeiten der heilende Stand und seine Kunst die ironisch-satirische Mine, die nur auf den geeigneten Anstoß wartete, um zu explodieren. (…) Zu allen Zeiten war es (…) der billigste Gassenwitz, die Wohltäter der Menschheit, die Ärzte, lächerlich zu machen (…)."
>
> (Holländer ^{2}1921: 3)

> "Daß wo durch vermeßnen Artzt ist ein Krancker doch genesen, Kan wol seyn; doch wird es nicht Kunst und Regel zugelesen."
>
> (Friedrich von Logau, Epigramm 2.9.38)[1]

1) Quoted from the following edition: Friedrich von Logau, Sämmtliche Sinngedichte. Herausgegeben von Gustav Eitner, Tübingen 1872, 384.

1. Introduction

The humorous or satirical treatment of medical practitioners and their various interactions with others, especially with their patients, has a long tradition in ancient literature. As far as we can reconstruct, it starts in Greek comedy and is then further elaborated in Menippean satire, the mime and other types of satirical writings. Another genre in which doctors and their patients are caricatured or even ridiculed is epigram.[2] The *Anthologia Palatina* contains a wide range of good examples, which seem to have inspired the Latin epigrammatist Martial (* between A. D. 38 and 41, † no later than A. D. 104) who repeatedly makes fun of bad medical practitioners, but also of their patients' behaviour. This topic has indeed been pursued by several other scholars. However, previous studies are for the most part restricted to relatively mechanical lists of passages or brief paraphrases of their content with limited analysis of the literary quality of the texts.[3] By contrast, this paper attempts a thorough examination not only of the content, but also of the way in which it is presented by Martial. There is thus a strong emphasis on the conscious use of rhetorical elements and the creation of humour. I will consider the evidence in Martial's corpus and discuss his approach to medicine, the representatives of this discipline and the individuals affected by an illness under different rubrics which are, however, somewhat connected with each other: (1) the doctor as the bringer of death, (2) the doctor in a sexual context, (3) other dubious doctors and a few exceptions, and (4) medical discourse combined with other themes. Furthermore, I will establish connections with other (at first sight unrelated) epigrams of the poet's

2) On the literary tradition, see e. g. the overview in Brecht (1930: 45–49). Specifically on Greek epigram, see Prinz (1911: 22–28), Rolleston (1914), Ehrhardt (1974) and André (1987: 175–177). On Greek comedy, see Welcker (1850), Rankin (1972: passim), Gil / Rodríguez Alfageme (1972), Kudlien (1988: 141–148), Cordes (1994: 51–63), Rodríguez Alfageme (1995) and Ihm (2005); on Roman comedy, see Cèbe (1966: 99, 102) and Rankin (1972: esp. 181–191). On Menippean satire, see André (1987: 171–172) and André (2006: 39–42).

3) See the studies by Peyer / Remund (1928), Dolderer (1933) and Spallicci (1934), as well as the short articles by Crawfurd (1913), Mans (1994) and Moreno Soldevila (2003). See also Witkowski (1884: 98–114), Holländer (^{2}1921: 22–24), Rosenbloom (1922) and Cerchiai Manodori Sagredo (2020: 162–165).

entire corpus. Material from numerous other authors, especially those collected in the *Anthologia Palatina*, Pliny the Elder and several medical writers, will also be taken into account in order to not only appraise Martial's distinctive take on the theme, but also to scrutinise to what extent his epigrams may reflect certain aspects of real life in the ancient Roman world.

2. The doctor as the bringer of death

In the two related epigrams 1.30 and 1.47, Martial mocks a former doctor called Diaulus (presumably one and the same individual) who now works as an undertaker. First, epigram 1.30:[4]

> *Chirurgus fuerat, nunc est vispillo Diaulus.*
> *coepit quo poterat clinicus esse modo.*
>
> Diaulus was once a surgeon, now he is an undertaker. He has started to practise medicine the only way he knew how.

And second, epigram 1.47:

> *Nuper erat medicus, nunc est vispillo Diaulus:*
> *quod vispillo facit, fecerat et medicus.*
>
> Recently Diaulus was a doctor; now he is an undertaker. What he does as an undertaker is the same as what he did as a doctor.

Here the joke relies on the fact that he carries out the two different occupations in the same fashion – in other words, he buries people both as a doctor and as an undertaker.[5] While the first lines of each

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4) For the most part, the text and translations printed here follow Shackleton Bailey's three-volume Loeb Classical Library edition (1993). There are, however, some occasional modifications.

5) On the connection between the name Diaulus and his professions, see Walter (1996: 85): "ὁ δίαυλος (eigtl. ‚Zweirohr') ist die Doppelrennbahn und der auf ihr ausgetragene Doppellauf; Martial wählt den Namen, um die unglückliche ‚Laufbahn' des Mannes, der in beiden Berufen immer dasselbe tut, zusätzlich zu charakterisieren. Duff (…) übersetzt ‚Dr. Doublecourse'." See also Giegengack (1969: 38–39), Citroni (1975: 100), Howell (1980: 170) and Vallat (2008: 536–537). The name is

epigram are very similar (with the name of the person at the very end of each line), the second lines are constructed in a slightly different way. In 1.30 the term *clinicus* refers to the Greek word κλίνη, meaning 'bed' or 'bier', and alludes to the sick-bed or death-bed on which Diaulus' patients typically found themselves.[6] The second line of 1.47 is more straightforward.

In the first line of 1.30, the contrast between the two professions is underlined through a chiastic positioning of predicative nouns (*chirurgus* and *vispillo*) and verbs (*fuerat* and *est*). The syntax of the first line of 1.47 is characterised by a strict parallelism of temporal adverb, predicate and predicative noun, suggesting an analogy between the two activities;[7] that they were carried out at different times is highlighted through the past and present tense of the verbs and the corresponding adverbs *nuper* and *nunc*. The second line of 1.47 is also chiastic, and the temporal distinction between past and present expressed in the first verse is taken up again (though with the pluperfect *fecerat* instead of the imperfect *erat*).[8]

In both epigrams the sound patterns are quite remarkable. In the first line of 1.30 the emphasis on /u/ sounds stands out, repeated in the first line of 1.47. In addition, the second line of 1.30 has a number of /o/ sounds. Although it is slippery territory to base an interpretation on sound patterns, one may argue in these two cases that the /u/ sounds particularly serve to create a slightly sombre atmosphere, evoking the world of death and thus effectively alluding to the inefficiency of the supposed medical expert.

Greek and reflects the origin of many specialists in the area of medicine. For Martial's entire corpus, Henriksén (2012: 364 n. 5) lists altogether fourteen Greek names of doctors as opposed to only four Latin ones; see also Vallat (2008: 93–95, 425).

6) On the ambiguity of the word *clinicus* and the structure of 1.30, see Joepgen (1967: 59–60).

7) See also Weeber (2020: 59): "Vor allem aber sind die beiden Sätze parallel gebaut und suggerieren so auch eine gewisse Parallelität der beruflichen Tätigkeiten." On the rhetorical elements in 1.47, see Joepgen (1967: 113).

8) On the use of temporal antitheses ("Früher-Jetzt-Gegensätze") in Martial and Greek epigrammatists, see Siedschlag (1977: 29–30). Specifically on *facit* and *fecerat*, see Joepgen (1967: 113–114): "'facit' und 'fecerat' sind insofern mehrdeutig, als das Tun, auf das mit dem gleichen Verb hingewiesen wird, jeweils ein anderes ist. Der Dichter gebraucht absichtlich keine konkreten Verben, er überläßt es vielmehr dem Hörer, sich das Tun des Diaulus in seinem jeweiligen Berufe ganz genau auszumalen (…)."

The two poems have been compared to the anonymous epigram Anth. Pal. 11.125 which also establishes a connection between physician and undertaker:

Ἰητρὸς Κρατέας καὶ Δάμων ἐνταφιαστὴς
κοινὴν ἀλλήλοις θέντο συνωμοσίην.
καί ῥ' ὁ μὲν οὓς κλέπτεσκεν ἀπ' ἐνταφίων τελαμῶνας
εἰς ἐπιδεσμεύειν πέμπε φίλῳ Κρατέᾳ·
τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος Κρατέας εἰς ἐνταφιάζειν
πέμπεν ὅλους αὐτῷ τοὺς θεραπευομένους.

The physician Crateas and the sexton Damon made a joint conspiracy. Damon sent the wrappings he stole from the grave-clothes to his dear Crateas to use as bandages and Crateas in return sent him all his patients to bury.

Yet the differences are hard to ignore: In this poem, doctor and undertaker are two different individuals, not one and the same as in Martial's epigrams 1.30 and 1.47. Crateas and Damon closely collaborated (v. 2: κοινὴν ἀλλήλοις θέντο συνωμοσίην) to ensure that they flourished in their respective jobs, and this arrangement expected the physician to transfer all of his patients to Crateas for burial.[9] In Martial's two distichs, there is no such co-operation; they are both about one person's change of profession, with the activities (or at least their consequences) remaining the same.

Another poem thematising the incompetent doctor as the bringer of death is 8.74, which directly addresses an unnamed individual:

Oplomachus nunc es, fueras opthalmicus ante.
fecisti medicus quod facis oplomachus.

You are a gladiator now, you were formerly an eye-doctor. You did as a doctor what you do as a gladiator.

9) The word ὅλος (v. 6) is used here in the meaning of πᾶς. See Henry George Liddell / Robert Scott / Henry Stuart Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon, Oxford 1990, 1218 (s. v. ὅλος I. 5). On this poem, see Ehrhardt (1974: 158–162).

While 1.30 and 1.47 refer to Diaulus in the third person, 8.74 is more immediate because of the second-person verbs. Structurally, it uses similar techniques: the first line is chiastic, the second is parallel. It builds the contrast between past and present activities through corresponding tenses of the same verbs (polyptoton of *esse* and *facere*).[10] Like the first lines of 1.30 and 1.47, the first verse of 8.74 is also asyndetic and purely paratactic. The second line of 8.74 makes use of a short period consisting of a main clause and subordinate clause, and thus follows the general syntax of 1.30.2 and 1.47.2.

As in 1.30, this epigram refers to a specialist (*opthalmicus*), not just to a medical doctor more generally (*medicus*), as in 1.47. This specialist is contrasted twice with the current profession of the addressee: that of a gladiator (*oplomachus*), occurring at the very beginning and the very end of the poem. To comprehend the funny character of this piece, one needs to remember a widespread treatment performed by ophthalmologists, namely cataract surgery: the gladiator stabs his adversary with a sword or a similar weapon, just as the eye-doctor uses a sharp instrument to remove the cataract.[11] It is revealing that the words *opthalmicus* and *oplomachus*, though referring to different spheres, are Greek. It seems to suggest that many medical practitioners in Rome were of Greek origin and that the discipline as a whole was commonly associated with Greece, as it was, for example, by Cato the Elder.[12]

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10) On the contrast between past and present jobs, see also Martial's epigram 8.16 about a baker turned lawyer: *Pistor qui fueras diu, Cypere, / causas nunc agis et ducena quaeris: / sed consumis et usque mutuaris. / a pistore, Cypere, non recedis: / et panem facis et facis farinam.* What this poem has in common with 1.30, 1.74 and 8.74 is that the switch to a new profession did not really change anything for the individual in question. However, unlike the other three poems, 8.16 does not thematise the incompetence of a supposed professional. On epigram 8.16, see Schöffel (2002: 201–205); see also Kuppe (1972: 72–73).

11) See also Schöffel (2002: 620): "Das – nicht explizit genannte – Tertium ist natürlich das Stechen: Während mit dieser Methode der Augenarzt dem grauen Star, einer Eintrübung der Linse, zu Leibe rückt, raubt der Gladiator mit einem Stich das Lebens-, oder doch zumindest das Augenlicht." Further Watson (1982: 73–74) and Watson / Watson (2003: 288–290). More generally on cataract surgery in antiquity, see e. g. Jackson (1988: 121–123), Künzl (2002: 77–84) and André (2006: 412–414).

12) See esp. Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 29.14: *Dicam de istis Graecis suo loco, M. fili, quid Athenis exquisitum habeam et quod bonum sit illorum litteras inspicere, non perdiscere. vincam nequissimum et indocile genus illorum, et hoc puta vatem*

The connection between Greek doctors and cruel or even lethal therapies, as implied especially by epigram 8.74, is most pointedly expressed by a passage in Pliny the Elder's history of medicine at the beginning of Book 29 of his *Naturalis historia*. Following the authority of Cassius Hemina, Pliny refers to Archagathus who came to Rome in 219 B.C. and worked there as a wound specialist (*vulnerarius*). Because of his savage surgical methods, this practitioner quickly acquired the nickname *carnifex* ('executioner' or 'murderer') and tarnished the reputation of the entire profession.[13] Martial's epigram 8.74 is obviously based upon a very similar concept, but unlike Pliny the Elder's passage, it is not part of a more comprehensive account of the development of medicine in the Roman world. Martial's approach is different: Because of its ironic wordplay and the anonymity of the addressee, the tone is lighter, though not completely without sarcasm. The second person singular may have been chosen to present this epigram as a direct accusation. However, since the poem is so short and pointed, the text can hardly be understood as a fierce and thoroughly serious attack. Rather, it plays with an established stereotype, as ever so often in the author's collection.

A hyperbolic variation on the theme of the doctor as the bringer of death is epigram 6.53 about a man called Andragoras who suddenly died after he had seen a doctor in his dreams:

Lotus nobiscum est, hilaris cenavit, et idem
inventus mane est mortuus Andragoras.
tam subitae mortis causam, Faustine, requiris?
in somnis medicum viderat Hermocraten.

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dixisse: quandoque ista gens suas litteras dabit, omnia conrumpet, tum etiam magis, si medicos suos hoc mittet. iurarunt inter se barbaros necare omnes medicina, sed hoc ipsum mercede faciunt, ut fides iis sit et facile disperdant. nos quoque dictitant barbaros et spurcius nos quam alios Ὀπικῶν *appellatione foedant. interdixi tibi de medicis*. For details and further references, see Fögen (2021: 329–332).

13) Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 29.12–13: *Cassius Hemina ex antiquissimis auctor est primum e medicis venisse Romam Peloponneso Archagathum Lysaniae filium L. Aemilio M. Livio cos. anno urbis DXXXV, eique ius Quiritium datum et tabernam in compito Acilio emptam ob id publice. vulnerarium eum fuisse tradunt, mireque gratum adventum eius initio, mox a saevitia secandi urendique transisse nomen in carnificem et in taedium artem omnesque medicos* (…). On this passage and its background, see Nutton (1993: esp. 49–50, 53–60).

> Andragoras bathed with us, ate a cheerful dinner; the same man was found dead in the morning. Do you enquire the cause of so sudden a demise, Faustinus? In his dreams he had seen the doctor Hermocrates.

The poem falls into two halves: The first distich represents the exposition which confronts the reader with a paradoxical situation of a man dying for no obvious reason during the night after a dinner with friends. Following a literary technique well established in his corpus, Martial inserts a question in line 3 to draw attention to that paradox.[14] The answer is then given in the final line. This poem thus corresponds perfectly to Lessing's structural parameters of 'Erwartung' ('suspense') and 'Aufschluß' ('solution, dénouement'), postulated for Martial's epigrams.[15]

What is extreme in this text is the fact that a mere dream is sufficient to kill someone. In other words, Andragoras (positioned at the end of the first distich) does not even have any direct encounter with the doctor Hermocrates (placed at the end of the second distich). From the first two verses, it seems clear that Andragoras was absolutely healthy and had spent a completely normal day with his friends; he had not engaged in any extraordinary or even risky activities. This makes it even more alarming that he was dead the next morning. It is precisely this exaggeration that creates the humour in this poem, which is an elaboration of the following distich by Lukillios (Anth. Pal. 11.257):

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14) See also Weeber (2020): "Der vom Dichter angesprochene Faustinus steht stellvertretend für alle, die über die plötzliche Todesursache rätseln. Sein ratloses Fragen wird aufgegriffen, die Spannung dadurch auf einen neuen Höhepunkt getrieben: Man fiebert dem Aufschluss förmlich entgegen." More generally on the use of questions in Martial's oeuvre, see the typology proposed by Siedschlag (1977: 19–28).

15) See Lessing (2000: 188): "Es muß über irgend einen einzeln ungewöhnlichen Gegenstand, den es zu einer so viel als möglich sinnlichen Klarheit zu erheben sucht, in Erwartung setzen, und durch einen unvorhergesehenen Aufschluß diese Erwartung mit eins befriedigen. Am schicklichsten werden sich also auch die Teile des Epigramms *Erwartung* und *Aufschluß* nennen lassen (…)." On Lessing's view on ancient epigram, see the very succinct summary in Walter (1996: 282–284), further Barwick (1959: esp. 3–11, 33–34, 37), Citroni (1969), Riedel (1976: 180–207), Lausberg (1982: 84–86), Hess (1989: 47–52), Sullivan (1991: 222–224), Beltrán (2005: 189–193), Laurens (^{2}2012: 378–382, 432–433), Barié / Schindler (^{3}2013: 1103–1113) and Watson / Watson (2015: 71–80).

Ἑρμογένη τὸν ἰατρὸν ἰδὼν Διόφαντος ἐν ὕπνοις
οὐκέτ᾽ ἀνηγέρθη, καὶ περίαμμα φέρων.

Diophantus saw Hermogenes the doctor in his sleep and never woke up again, although he was wearing an amulet.

The name of this doctor is relatively similar to Martial's Hermocrates,[16] and his occurrence in a dream is the cause for Diophantus' death. What Martial has dropped is the concessive participle construction καὶ περίαμμα φέρων in the second line; this reference in Lukillios might serve to augment the peril associated with the doctor against whom not even an amulet offers any reliable protection, but it could also ridicule Diophantus' superstition.[17] What both texts have in common is the parody of the idea of dream healing, alluded to through *in somnis* in Martial (at the beginning of line 4 as the dénouement) and through ἐν ὕπνοις in Lukillios (at the end of line 1), which was widespread in ancient popular belief, based on the understanding that a deity appears in a dream and heals the afflicted person or at least indicates a suitable therapy.[18] Both poems twist this concept into an extreme parody by turning the supposed healer, who appears in the dream, into a killer.

16) On the name 'Hermocrates', see Vallat (2008: 529): "*Hermocrates* possède le pouvoir (*-crates*) d'Hermès. Or, Hermès (…) conduit les âmes aux Enfers: c'est donc un dieu infernal, tout en demeurant le patron des médecins. Bref, le nom est parfaitement adapté à un médecin dont la seule vision, en songe, expédie ses patients outre-tombe (…)." Regarding Lukillios' Hermogenes, literally 'son of Hermes', Vallat (2008: 529–530) writes: "Nous préférons l'adaptation de Martial qui, tout en conservant le lien avec Hermès, insiste davantage sur le redoutable pouvoir des médecins: le 'fils d'Hermès' est certes un médecin, comme l'était Asclépios, mais le 'pouvoir d'Hermès' souligne l'ambiguïté de la figure divine, maîtresse de vie et de mort."

17) For a more detailed comparison of Anth. Pal. 11.257 with Martial's epigram 6.53, see Prinz (1911: 26–28), Dolderer (1933: 31–34), Kruuse (1941: 253–254), Szelest (1963a: 159–160), Ehrhardt (1974: 62–66), Burnikel (1980: 54–64), Lausberg (1982: 406–407), Holzberg (1988: 42–44), Walter (1996: 189–190) and Holzberg (^{2}2012: 99–101). On 6.53, see also Barwick (1959: 34), Grewing (1997: 354–358) and Watson / Watson (2015: 24–25).

18) See also Neger / Holzberg (2020: 79–80). On the role of dreams in ancient medicine, see Oberhelman (1993). More broadly on the relationship between religion, magic and medicine, see Scarborough (1969: 142–148), Jackson (1988: 138–169), Krug (^{2}1993: 120–187), Steger (2004), Andorlini / Marcone (2004: 19–27), Nutton (^{2}2013: 104–115, 280–298), Flashar (2016: 208–225), Renberg (2017) and Steger (2021: 177–239).

Apart from Anth. Pal. 11.257, which may be read in conjunction with Anth. Pal. 11.114,[19] there are several other Greek poems in which the theme of the doctor as the bringer of death is hyperbolically exploited: For instance, in Anth. Pal. 11.118, written in the first person singular, the recollection of a doctor's name proves a sufficient cause for death.[20] In Anth. Pal. 11.123, the mere presence of a doctor leads to someone's death.[21] The list of examples could easily be continued.[22]

How condensed Martial's above-mentioned poems on dangerous doctors are can be gathered from a comparison with a fable from Phaedrus that deals with a similar topic (Fab. 1.14):

Malus cum sutor inopia deperditus
medicinam ignoto facere coepisset loco
et venditaret falso antidotum nomine,
verbosis adquisivit sibi famam strophis.
Hic cum iaceret morbo confectus gravi <…>[23] 5

19) See Burnikel (1980: 57–62) for a more thorough comparison of Anth. Pal. 11.257 and 11.114, including the issue of the two identical names of Hermogenes and Diophantus. See also Floridi (2014: 459–460).

20) Anth. Pal. 11.118 (Callicter): Οὔτ' ἔκλυσεν Φείδων μ', οὔθ' ἥψατο· ἀλλὰ πυρέξας / ἐμνήσθην αὐτοῦ τοὔνομα, κἀπέθανον ("Pheidon did not purge me with a clyster or even feel me, but feeling feverish I remembered his name and died"). On the doctor's name Φείδων, see Neger / Holzberg (2020: 78): "Möglicherweise liegt hier ein Wortspiel mit dem Namen des Arztes vor: Φείδων soll vielleicht an Φαίδων erinnern, Platons Dialog über die Seele, dessen Lektüre einem Epigramm des Kallimachos zufolge einen gewissen Kleombrotos aus Ambrakien zum Selbstmord verleitet haben soll (AP 7,471,3–4 = 23 Pf.) (…). Führt im späteren Epigramm die bloße Erinnerung an den Arzt Pheidon zum Tod, so ist es bei Kallimachos die Lektüre der philosophischen Schrift mit dem Titel *Phaidon*." On this epigram, see also Ehrhardt (1974: 59–61).

21) Anth. Pal. 11.123 (Hedylus): Ἆγις Ἀρισταγόρην οὔτ' ἔκλυσεν, οὔτ' ἔθιγ' αὐτοῦ· / ἀλλ' ὅσον εἰσῆλθεν, κᾤχετ' Ἀρισταγόρης. / ποῦ τοίην ἀκόνιτος ἔχει φύσιν; ὦ σοροπηγοί, / Ἆγιν καὶ μίτραις βάλλετε καὶ στεφάνοις ("Agis neither purged Aristagoras, nor touched him, but no sooner had he come in than Aristagoras was gone. What aconite has such natural virtue? Ye coffin-makers, throw chaplets and garlands on Agis").

22) See Neger / Holzberg (2020: 79) for a convenient summary.

23) On the text, see Perry (1965: 208 n. 5): "After this line another, now lost, seems to have stood in the text, the sense of which is thus conjectured by Speyer: *regis minister medicumque illum arcesserent*. The context shows that the sick person was not the king, but it may have been his child." In his edition and translation, Holzberg (2018: 54–57) refrains from such a textual intervention.

rex urbis, eius experiendi gratia
scyphum poposcit: fusa dein simulans aqua
illius se miscere antidoto toxicum,
combibere iussit ipsum posito praemio.
Timore mortis ille tum confessus est
non artis ulla medicum se prudentia,
verum stupore vulgi, factum nobilem.
Rex advocata contione haec edidit:
'Quantae putatis esse vos dementiae,
qui capita vestra non dubitatis credere,
cui calceandos nemo commisit pedes?'
Hoc pertinere vere ad illos dixerim,
quorum stultitia quaestus impudentiae est.

A bungling cobbler, desperately in want, had resorted to practising medicine in a strange locality, and, peddling what he falsely called an 'antidote', built up a reputation for himself by verbal tricks of advertising. So it happened that when <the king's minister> lay gravely ill and all but gone, <our physician was called in. Whereupon> the king of the city, to test his skill, called for a cup; then pouring water into it, but pretending to mix poison with the 'antidote', he ordered the man to drink it off himself, for a reward that he displayed. In mortal fear the cobbler then confessed that his high standing as a physician was not due to any knowledge of the art but to the gullibility of the crowd. The king then summoned an assembly and said to the people: 'How crazy you are, you may judge for yourselves. You have no hesitation about putting your lives at the mercy of a man to whose care no one in want of shoes ever trusted his feet.' This, I dare say, strikes home at those whose gullibility provides an income for impostors.

This fable offers a detailed account of an irresponsible cobbler who pretended to be a medical doctor for the sake of material gain. However, by a test, he was soon exposed as a charlatan before he could do any harm to the sick patient whom he was supposed to cure in this scene.[24] The cobbler admitted that he was not familiar at all with the art of medicine, but that he owed his reputation to the stupidity of the masses (Fab. 1.14: *stupore vulgi*). As is common

24) Tellingly, the first half of this fable is sprinkled with Greek words which serve to evoke the sphere of medicine: *antidotum* (1.14.3) and *antidoto* (8), *strophis* (4), *scyphum* (7) and *toxicum* (8). The second half (Fab. 1.14.10–18) does not contain any such words because the alleged doctor has now been uncovered as a charlatan.

in fables, there is a clear moral message towards the end of the story: first in the form of a proclamation by the king to his people who are criticised for being so naive and gullible (Fab. 1.14.13–16), and second by an authorial comment (epimythion) in the final two lines, further clarifying the lesson that is to be learned from this text (Fab. 1.14.17–18). It is remarkable that there is no reference to a punishment of the impostor (apart from the public shaming by the king in 1.14.16); he just disappears from the scene, whereas the *vulgus* is censured for having allowed him to mislead them.[25]

While Phaedrus' fable has an evident didactic character, Martial's above-mentioned epigrams do not primarily aim at instruction. Instead, they are written in a more light-hearted tone and geared towards entertainment. This does not mean that they do not entail more serious ethical connotations, but they are nevertheless more indebted to the spirit of Horace's *ridentem dicere verum* (Sat. 1.1.24).

3. The doctor in a sexual context

Somewhat related to Martial's epigrams portraying the doctor as the bringer of death are several poems in which the physician is presented as an adulterer who is a potential risk for the husband or official partner of his beloved.[26] The first example is epigram 6.31:

> *Uxorem, Charideme, tuam scis ipse sinisque*
> *a medico futui. vis sine febre mori?*
>
> You yourself know, Charidemus, that your wife is fucked by your doctor, and you permit it. Do you want to die without a fever?

This rather explicit distich, with its preponderance of /i/ and /s/ sounds,[27] addresses a cuckold who does not put an end to the sexual

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25) On this fable, see the commentary by Gärtner (2015: 171–178), with further references. See also Kudlien (1986: 182, 190, 192, 197, 207–208) and Henderson (2001: 165–174).

26) A connection between medicine and adultery is briefly mentioned by Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 29.20: *iam vero et adulteria etiam in principum domibus, ut Eudemi in Livia Drusi Caesaris, item Valentis in qua dictum est regina.*

27) See Walter (1996: 191): "Die vielen i- und s-Laute geben der Schilderung eine grelle, etwas unwirsche Färbung."

relationship between his wife and a medical doctor; his unwillingness to take action is even mirrored by his name.[28] After the paradoxical diagnosis of the situation in the hexameter and the first half of the ensuing pentameter, the speaker uses the second half of the pentameter to phrase his reaction in the form of a rhetorical question,[29] which insinuates that Charidemus might not die a natural death accompanied by fever, but by poison if he does not intervene.[30] The keyword *mori* comes at the very end of the poem, thereby achieving a very prominent position and expressing a warning for the husband; together with the equally pronounced word *uxorem* at the very beginning, it sets the theme of this epigram.[31] At first sight, the question is perhaps not very straightforward, but through the preceding reference to the physician, it is clear that an unnatural death would be administered by him or at least with his assistance.

A slightly different approach is taken in epigram 11.74 where a medical doctor also appears as a rival:

> *Curandum penem commisit Baccara Raetus*
> *rivali medico. Baccara Gallus erit.*
>
> Baccara the Rhaetian committed his penis for treatment to a rival doctor. Baccara will be a Gaul.

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28) See Vallat (2008: 556): "*Charidemus* signifie en grec 'qui réjouit le peuple' (…) le verbe *sinis* répond au signifié nominal: obéissant à son nom, *Charidemus* fait preuve de complaisance." See also Grewing (1997: 232–233) and Weeber (2020: 63).

29) The question mark after *vis sine febre mori* goes back to Shackleton Bailey's edition. On the rationale, see Grewing (1997: 232): "(…) ein ironischer Fragesatz scheint für die hier unterliegende Dialog-Situation angemessener zu sein als ein lediglich konstatierender Aussagesatz."

30) On references to poison in Martial, see Peyer / Remund (1928: 67–76), who point out the following: "Martial war ein lachender Sittenrichter; seine Dichtungen haben vorwiegend heiteren Charakter. Deswegen spricht er nur sehr selten von der verbrecherischen Anwendung von Giften. Doch schon aus den wenigen Stellen geht deutlich hervor, wie verbreitet der Gebrauch von Giften zu seiner Zeit war (…)" (Peyer / Remund 1928: 67). More generally on poison and Roman medicine, see André (2006: 520–528).

31) A form of *uxor* also introduces the following poems: 1.84, 2.49, 2.60, 8.12, 9.66, 11.104 and 12.97. For *mori* at the very end of an epigram, see 1.18, 1.51, 2.80, 4.32, 10.2 and 11.69; see also 2.26 (*moritur*).

The general structure of this poem resembles that of 6.31: the statement in the hexameter and the first half of the pentameter is not fully transparent and requires clarification in the second half of the pentameter line.[32] The joke is achieved here through the prophesied shift from *Baccara Raetus* to *Baccara Gallus*.[33] While *Raetus*

32) Neger / Holzberg (2020: 84) rightly acknowledge the slow spondaic rhythm of the first part of the hexameter line. They interpret it as a clue "dass mit dem *penis* des Baccara etwas nicht in Ordnung ist – vermutlich leidet er an Impotenz." On cures for diseases of the penis, see e. g. Celsus, De med. 6.18.1–5, 7.25.1–2 and 7.27.1–3; see also Scribonius Largus, Comp. 234–236, further Theodorus Priscianus, Eupor. 1.77–78. On impotence, see n. 38 (below). – However, a comparison with Carm. Priap. 37 may warrant a different interpretation. In this poem the speaker mentions that he had accidentally bruised his penis and dreaded the surgeon's intervention (Carm. Priap. 37.3–4): *cum penis mihi forte laesus esset / chirurgamque manum miser timerem* (…). He thus prayed to Priapus to have it restored to health without amputation (37.8–12), and when the god granted his wish, he offered him a votive tablet, referred to in the first two lines of the poem. The phrase *curatum dare mentulam* (37.7) is similar to Martial's *curandum penem commisit*. Hence it might well be that Martial's Baccara also injured his genital rather than suffered from general impotence (i. e. not caused by physical injury of the penis). Ultimately the text is too unspecific to decide what exactly the problem was. At any rate, it is instructive that this is the only poem in the author's entire oeuvre that talks about a *mentula* affected by a medical issue; see Peyer / Remund (1928: 60–61) and Dolderer (1933: 27), who points out that "Lues, gonorrhoe, menses werden nie berührt und es ist sehr wohl möglich, daß selbst dem gewiß nicht prüden Martial ein ästhetisches Gesetz gebot: Darüber schreibt man nicht."

33) On issues of textual criticism, see Joepgen (1967: 61) and Kay (1985: 228). The name 'Baccara' also occurs in epigrams 6.59 and 7.92. On the meaning of the name, see Grewing (1997: 381): "Der Name ist nicht griechisch und Kay ad loc. verweist auf raetische Namensformen wie *Bacadus* und *Buccinius*; hingewiesen sei dagegen immerhin auf den für Nordafrika inschriftlich bezeugten Namen *Baccarus*; vgl. ThLL 2,1659,79–81. Vielleicht aber legt der Kontext hier eine nordeuropäische Heimat nahe." See further Vallat (2008: 486): "*Baccara* est un nom étrange, dont on ne peut pas même assurer qu'il soit latin. On ne le relève pas ailleurs. Peut-être conviendrait-il de le rapprocher de *baccare* et de *Boccare*, deux mots à l'ablatif relevés l'un chez Virgile (*B.* 4,19; 7,27), où il désigne une plante, l'autre chez Juvénal (7,90), où il réfère à un carthaginois. Mais en 6,59 et 7,92, la motivation semble différente. Nous rapprocherons *Baccara* du verbe *bacchari* 'faire la bacchante'. En effet, *Baccara* est l'image même de l'intempérance: en 6,59, pour pouvoir montrer ses riches manteaux, il souhaite l'hiver, et il propose des services alors même qu'il voit ce qu'il pourrait faire. En 7,92, son manque de savoir-vivre fait du personnage un être incertain, instable, tout propre à ne savoir ce qu'il fait. Cette inconscience se retrouve en 11,74. Enfin, peut-être l'épigramme 6,59 joue-t-elle sur le *baccar* évoqué par Virgile, le 'nard sauvage' (grec βάκκαρις): la plante agit sur les gonflements dus à la chaleur;

neutrally indicates the geographical origin, the word *Gallus* has two different meanings here: 'Gallic' and 'eunuch' or 'emasculated' (like the priests of Cybele called *Galli*).[34] Hence, Baccara may be very unlikely to die from poisoning, but the physician, who seems to be competing with him for the same woman, is able to abuse his medical treatment for a mutilation of his genital, make him sexually inactive and thus eliminate him as a rival. This entire story is compressed into just two lines and ends in a funny, albeit rather cruel way.

In one case, doctors are imagined as 'lover therapists' who provide a female patient with the sexual gratification that she does not get from her husband (11.71):

Hystericam vetulo se dixerat esse marito
et queritur futui Leda necesse sibi;
sed flens atque gemens tanti negat esse salutem
seque refert potius proposuisse mori.
vir rogat ut vivat virides nec deserat annos,
et fieri quod iam non facit ipse sinit.
protinus accedunt medici medicaeque recedunt,
tollunturque pedes. o medicina gravis!

Leda told her old husband that she was hysterical and complains that being fucked is a necessity for her; but with tears and moans she declares that life is not worth the price and says that she has chosen to die instead. Her man begs her to live and not forsake the years of her prime; what he does not any more do himself he allows to be done. Straight away the men doctors approach and the women doctors retire; her feet are hoisted. Drastic therapy!

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elle a une odeur soporifique; on en fait des poudres siccatives, et on la met dans des vêtements pour son odeur. Ces traits conviennent bien à 6,59: on y voit Baccara rechercher le froid à tout prix et fuir chaleur pour pouvoir exhiber ses précieux manteaux." See also Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 75).

34) A similar punchline occurs in Martial 3.24.13–14: *sic, modo qui Tuscus fueras, nunc Gallus aruspex, / dum iugulas hircum, factus es ipse caper*; see also Giegengack (1969: 28–29) and Fusi (2006: 242–243). In addition, *gallus* means 'cockerel', as in epigram 13.63: *Ne nimis exhausto macresceret inguine gallus, / amisit testes. nunc mihi gallus erit.* This little piece from Martial's *Xenia* also plays with the different meanings of this word.

The first distich sets the tone of this epigram. The 'medical' diagnosis is not provided by any experts, but by the female 'patient' herself who claims to be hysterical and in need of sexual intercourse. The Greek term *hystericus* (ὑστερικός) is placed at the very beginning of the poem and takes the reader into the sphere of medicine. The use of the vulgar word *futuere* in the second line contrasts very sharply with the Greek technical term and calls the woman's verdict into question.[35] This impression is further enhanced by her name (Leda) which refers to the mythological sphere and is reminiscent of seduction and sexual activity.[36] At the same time, it needs to be remembered that hysteria was traditionally seen as an illness of the female uterus which would wander around in the body and could cause a seizure or a choking fit if it is not fed with sperm on a regular basis.[37] This symptomatology perfectly accords with Leda's purposes: as is also pointed out in the first line, her husband is old (*vetulo*) and, as is indicated in v. 6, no longer able to perform

35) The verb *futuere* is also used in 6.31.2 (see above), equally as an infinitive present passive; see Grewing (1997: 233). On *futuere* more generally, see Adams (1982: esp. 118–122). On obscene words in Martial, see Watson (2002: 223–231); see also Sullivan (1991: 64–74), Spisak (1994), Lorenz (2002: 21–40), Fontana (2005: 39–47), Beltrán (2005: 178–184), Spisak (2007: 23–33), Wolff (2008: 62–67), Kay (2010: 323–328), Holzberg (^{2}2012: 109–119), Watson / Watson (2015: 41–47), Vallat (2016), Dominik (2016: 422–423) and Mulligan (2019: 117–121). For the poet's justification of offensive elements in his work, see esp. Martial 1 praef.: *epigrammata illis scribuntur qui solent spectare Florales. non intret Cato theatrum meum, aut si intraverit, spectet*; further Martial 1.35 and 3.69.

36) See also Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 331–333), who note that "Leda is widely attested in Rome as a female name (…). It is invariably the name of a prostitute (except for 11.71), a nuance that also pertains to the mythical character" (2019: 332).

37) See Plato, Tim. 91c1–8: αἱ δ' ἐν ταῖς γυναιξὶν αὖ μῆτραί τε καὶ ὑστέραι λεγόμεναι διὰ ταὐτὰ ταῦτα, ζῷον ἐπιθυμητικὸν ἐνὸν τῆς παιδοποιίας, ὅταν ἄκαρπον παρὰ τὴν ὥραν χρόνον πολὺν γίγνηται, χαλεπῶς ἀγανακτοῦν φέρει, καὶ πλανώμενον πάντη κατὰ τὸ σῶμα, τὰς τοῦ πνεύματος διεξόδους ἀποφράττον, ἀναπνεῖν οὐκ ἐῶν εἰς ἀπορίας τὰς ἐσχάτας ἐμβάλλει καὶ νόσους παντοδαπὰς ἄλλας παρέχει, μέχριπερ ἂν ἑκατέρων ἡ ἐπιθυμία καὶ ὁ ἔρως συναγαγόντες (…). On hysteria and hysterical choking fits, see Hippocrates, Mul. 1.7 (VIII 32 Littré) and Soranus, Gyn. 3.26–28 (CMG IV 109.9–112.3); see also Flashar (2016: 122–123), Kollesch / Nickel (^{2}1979: 34, 141–144) and Föllinger (1996). Further details are listed by Kay (1985: 222–223) and Wenzel (2007: 52 n. 3).

sexually.[38] This conflicts with Leda's younger age, conveyed by the expression *virides* (…) *annos* (11.71.5).

The first six verses of the epigram are constructed like a dramatic dialogue between aged husband and neglected wife who becomes very emotional and even wants to die (11.71.3–4). The pathos of this scene is heightened through the two grammatically identical participles *flens atque gemens* and the repeated /e/ sound in the hexameter and the first two words of the pentameter as well as the /o/ and /i/ sounds in the rest of the pentameter.[39] The husband's response is to prevent her from dying prematurely and to condone extramarital sexual affairs for the sake of Leda's satisfaction. Stylistically, the alliteration in the first half the fifth line (11.17.5: *vir rogat ut vivat virides*) and the dominance of /i/ sounds in lines 5–6 deserve to be mentioned. The latter feature may serve to voice the laughter at the husband's foolish behaviour which is unlikely to meet the reader's approval.

The final two lines function as an unexpectedly rapid résumé which proves the efficacy of the wife's dramatic and rhetorical talent.[40] Reinforced through chiastic syntax (11.71.7: *accedunt medici medicaeque recedunt*), female doctors are replaced by male ones who are supposed to implement the 'therapy' that Leda has been longing for so desperately.[41] That this treatment is of an undeni-

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38) Impotence as a consequence of old age is also thematised in Martial 11.46 (about Mevius) and 11.81 (about an unnamed *senex*); see also 3.75 (Lupercus) and 12.86 (unnamed addressee). On impotence in ancient literature, see Baeza Angulo (2010); specifically on impotence in epigram, see Obermayer (1998: 255–330).

39) On *flens atque gemens*, see Kay (1985: 223): "the same pairing at Sen. *Med.* 950; *Herc. Oet.* 1275. And it evokes the world of grand tragedy here." However, in Med. 950 (*flentes, gementes*) and Herc. Oet. 1275 (*flentem, gementem*), the two participles are asyndetic.

40) The speed with which everything happens towards the end is nicely replicated in Hofmann's German translation of these lines (Hofmann 2000: 482), which even renders the chiasmus in exactly the same order: "Gleich kommen Ärzte. Ärztinnen entfliehen. Nun Füße hoch! – O bittre Medizin." See also the comments in Weeber (2020: 79).

41) On female medical practitioners in the ancient world, see Nickel (1979), André (1987: 124–132), Krug (^{2}1993: 195–197), Parker (1997), Künzl (2002: 92–99), André (2006: 505–507), Künzl (2013), Dasen (2016) and Steger (2021: 360–365, 386–395), with references to further secondary literature; see also Kay (1985: 224). With regard to Martial 11.71.7, Steger (2021: 360) writes: "Der Terminus *medica* findet sich zum ersten Mal im 1. Jh. n. Chr. bei Martial (…). Ein möglicherweise

ably sexual nature can be inferred from the allusive sentence *tollunturque pedes* (11.71.8). The poem concludes with an exclamation (11.71.8: *o medicina gravis!*) which serves as an ironic authorial comment on the whole story – in particular on the burden that some doctors have to carry with their patients.[42]

Leda and her unnamed husband may be seen as stock-characters or types of the satirical or comedic genre.[43] They represent the lecherous, insatiable younger woman married to an older, sexually inactive man. However, in Martial this constellation has two special features: First, the husband gives his explicit approval to his wife's escapades. Second, her desire is not only dressed up as a medical case;[44] it is also presented as an issue that requires urgent action, although it is obvious from the unexpected obscene verb *futuere*, illustrating the genuine nature of Leda's 'ailments', that the reference to a medical context is just a pseudo-argument or pretence. The sudden and incongruous vulgarity unmasks the charade. The epigram may therefore be categorised as a comic miniature drama, centred on an unusual or even bizarre patient.[45] At the same time,

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früherer Beleg bei Lucilius (180–102/101 v. Chr.) gilt als umstritten: Das erhaltene *medica* kann dort nicht nur als Femininum, sondern auch als Imperativ des Verbums *medicare* verstanden werden (Luc. 1246 Krenkel)."

42) On the recurrent pattern of 'incident followed by comment' in Martial and other ancient epigrammatists, see Siedschlag (1977: 100–105). The comment can take on different shapes: "Der Kommentar, den der Dichter dem Ereignis hinzufügt, zeichnet sich vor allem durch formale Zuspitzung aus. Mit Vorliebe werden verwendet: mythologische Anspielungen, Ausrufe, Aufforderungen, Fragen, Antithesen, Parallelismen, Paradoxien und Wortspiele" (Siedschlag 1977: 101–102). Multiple parallels for the use of exclamations as 'Schlußeffekt' are listed by Siedschlag (1977: 102 n. 5).

43) See also Kuppe (1972: 52): "Sollte Martial an keine bestimmte Komödie gedacht haben, so sind die Typen doch so gezeichnet, als seien sie direkt von der Komödienbühne herabgestiegen: Der schon an Altersschwachsinn leidende Ehemann und daneben die noch in vollen Zügen das Leben genießende Frau."

44) Further examples of feigned illnesses are discussed below. See also Peyer / Remund (1928: 33–35), Mans (1994: 106–110) and Notter (2020).

45) To some extent, epigram 11.71 may be compared to 11.60, where Phlogis represents an almost pathologically sex-crazed woman who can only be cured by a male doctor (see esp. 11.60.6: *quod sanare Criton, non quod Hygia potest*). Her boundless desire is signalled by her name ('the ardent one', derived from φλόξ meaning 'flame' or 'fire') as well as the repeated phrase *ulcus habet* (11.60.2, 3, 5 and 12; on *ulcus*, see Adams 1982: 40–41 and Fortuny Previ 1988: 114–115) and stands in

it is on a similar level as many other stereotypical and misogynistic poems in Martial's corpus which define women predominantly through their sexuality and often blame them for their obsession with sex and for their unfaithfulness.[46]

4. Other dubious doctors and a few exceptions

Martial also utilises several other stereotypes about medical practitioners in his epigrams. Among them is the doctor and his entourage, the greedy doctor or even the doctor as thief. For the image of the doctor being surrounded by apprentices and students, epigram 5.9 is a good example:

Languebam: sed tu comitatus protinus ad me
venisti centum, Symmache, discipulis.
centum me tetigere manus Aquilone gelatae:
non habui febrem, Symmache, nunc habeo.

I was weak; but you came to me at once, Symmachus, accompanied by a hundred pupils. A hundred hands made cold by the north wind touched me. I did not have a fever, Symmachus, but now I have one.

The speaker of this poem begins with a very brief remark about his health.[47] With the single verb *languebam* he points to a certain exhaustion (aptly mirrored by three long syllables in a row), but

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direct contrast to the character of Chione ('the cold/frigid one', derived from χιών: 'snow'), with whom she is compared here; see Giegengack (1969: 41–42), Vallat (2008: 569–570, 599) and Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 474–475). However, unlike Leda, Phlogis does not have a husband.

46) For a useful synopsis, see Hofmann (1956/57: 445, 452–453, 459) and Watson (2019: esp. 99–101), who rightly says: "(…) since so much of ancient epigram is scoptic in tone and plays unashamedly to male prejudices about women, the genre has a vested interest in representing these in the worst possible light, a tendency which reaches its apogee in Martial" (Watson 2019: 94).

47) It is not clear to me why Wenzel (2005: passim) identifies the speaker of this epigram with Martial; this assumption leads to some exaggerations in this scholar's analysis of the poem. More prudently, Canobbio (2011: 152) speaks of "l'io epigrammatico". On Martial and the persona theory, see in particular Schmitz (2011: 43–44); see also Lorenz (2002: 4–42) and Vallat (2008: 115).

presumably not to a serious illness.[48] It is therefore surprising that he was visited by the doctor Symmachus,[49] abruptly introduced by the pronoun *tu* and addressed by name in lines 2 and 4 (in each case in exactly the same position within the verse),[50] who brought a very large group of students with him. The number *centum* is hyperbolic and should not be taken too literally; it is taken up again in the third line, with reference to the countless hands touching the speaker in the course of the examination.[51] The irony of this text is that the speaker was basically healthy before he was visited by Symmachus and his entourage and that he has now become sick precisely because of their visit. This is nicely underscored by the sequence of the verbs *non habui* (in the perfect tense) and *nunc habeo* (in the present tense), which build up an evocative contrast.

Symmachus, presumably a Greek native or at least someone who has a Greek name, is an instance of a doctor who "does not actually kill his patients, but merely leaves them worse off than they were" (Howell 2009: 74). What the speaker seems to be criticising here is that Symmachus' visit was not even necessary and that bringing along such a multitude of other people was completely out of proportion. His call was not motivated by concern for his patient's welfare, but by concern for his own medical reputation,

48) On the etymology of the verb, see Michiel de Vaan, Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the Other Italic Languages, Leiden / Boston 2008, 325: "'to be sluggish or faint' (…). The basis was probably an adj. **lang-u(o)-* 'faint, weak', a nasalized variant of the root **lag-* found in *laxus*."

49) The name Symmachus, equally applied to a doctor, can also be found in epigrams 6.70.6 and 7.18.10. Howell (1995: 85) believes that "[h]e is obviously not a real person." See further Canobbio (2011: 155–156): "A ogni modo, reale o fittizio che sia, il medico chiamato in causa nel nostro epigramma porta un nome che, in questo contesto, è indubbiamente 'parlante' nonché antifrastico (…), in quanto il nostro *Symmachus* si rivela tutt'altro che un alleato dell'io epigrammatico nel combattere il suo stato di malessere (…)." See also Vallat (2008: 120), Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 571–572), Neger / Holzberg (2020: 80) and Weeber (2020: 61–62).

50) On the repetition of personal names in Martial, especially in the vocative, see Vallat (2008: 427–452).

51) Philostratus reports an incident where two doctors, Seleucus of Cyzicus and Stratocles of Sidon, were attended by more than thirty pupils (Vit. Apoll. 8.7.41–42). The number is specified here because they may function as potential witnesses of the death of Philiscus of Melos.

which needed a forum to exhibit his art. That Symmachus was surrounded by his pupils and thus the centre of attention is syntactically echoed in the second line (*centum, Symmache, discipulis*). The actual examination is conducted in a rather detached and impersonal manner: The third line (*centum me tetigere manus Aquilone gelatae*), which deepens the distance between the patient and the group of practitioners by its elevated epic diction,[52] connotes that the patient is degraded to an object of scientific study who is touched by 'hands', functioning as a *pars pro toto* for Symmachus and his students. Hence, the whole scene comes across like a show.

In Book 29 of his *Naturalis historia*, Pliny the Elder denounces those representatives of the field of medicine who have reduced their discipline to some kind of *ostentatio*, a public event used to promote themselves; he also asserts that they were more interested in self-stylisation and financial gain than in the patient.[53] While it is true that in Martial's epigram 5.9 there is no reference at all to the pecuniary aspects of the medical profession, he seems to share at least some of Pliny the Elder's concerns. But as has already been observed above (section no. 2 on epigram 8.74), Martial's poem is not part of a detailed analysis of the status of medicine as a discipline. What he offers instead is a brief and humorous snapshot.

The economic side of the medical profession, in particular the greed of doctors, is tackled in ancient and modern satire, and Martial is no exception in that regard, as is attested by epigram 9.94:

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52) Together with this passage, the word *Aquilo* is attested three times in Martial's entire oeuvre. In 1.49.20 it is embedded in an 'epic' context. In 10.82.3 (*stridentesque feram flatus Aquilonis iniqui*) the tone is also quite serious – fully in line with the pitiable suffering of the client; on epigram 10.82, see the comments in section 5 (below).

53) See Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 29.9, 29.24–25 and esp. 29.11: *nec dubium est omnes istos famam novitate aliqua aucupantes anima statim nostra negotiari. hinc illae circa aegros miserae sententiarum concertationes, nullo idem censente, ne videatur accessio alterius. hinc illa infelicis monumenti inscriptio: turba se medicorum perisse*. See also Dio Chrysostom, Orat. 33.6–7 and Theodorus Priscianus, Eupor. 1.2–3 (esp. 2.14–3.3 Rose): (…) *Iactatur aeger magna tempestate morbi. Tunc nostri collegii caterva concurrit, tunc nos non pereuntis miseratio possidet, nec communis naturae condicio convenit, sed tamquam in olympico agone alius eloquentia alius disputando alius adstruendo destruendo alius inanem gloriam captant.* (…). For a more detailed discussion, see Fögen (2009: 242), further Koelbing (1977: 178–184).

Santonica medicata dedit mihi pocula virga –
os hominis! –, mulsum me rogat Hippocrates.
tam stupidus numquam nec tu, puto, Glauce, fuisti,
χάλκεα *donanti* χρύσεα *qui dederas.*
dulce aliquis munus pro munere poscit amaro?
accipiat, sed si potat in elleboro.

Hippocrates gave me cups drugged with Santonian twig and (the impudence of the fellow!) asks me for mead. Glaucus, methinks even you were never so stupid, who presented gold armour to him that gave you bronze. Does anybody ask for a sweet gift in return for a bitter one? Let him take it, but only if he drinks it in hellebore.

The first distich creates a scene in which a doctor called Hippocrates provides the speaker with a kind of wormwood (absinth), used as a medical herb to cure various diseases. In return he expects the patient to give him honeyed wine (*mulsum*) – a request that is perceived as an impertinence. It is extremely ironic that this doctor is called 'Hippocrates', yet does not live up to the expectations attached to this name. That he asks for wine could be a sign not only of his greed, but also of his unhealthy penchant for drinking or even alcoholism. Vallat (2008: 373) has even maintained that this has negative repercussions for the perception of the real Hippocrates: "Hippocrate ivrogne laisse supposer que le modèle n'est pas aussi sobre que dans ses prescriptions. L'image du grand médecin subit ainsi un traitement burlesque." However, there is no need to extend the argument so far; enough irony is generated by the fact that the name 'Hippocrates' is carried by someone who clearly does not subscribe to the high standards of the famous Greek physician.

The fact that a bitter herb and a sweet drink are incommensurable is explained by a reference to Book 6 of the Homeric *Iliad* where the Lycian commander Glaucus and the Argive warrior Diomedes exchange their armour of unequal value.[54] This well-known scene is also used by several other Roman authors for similar pur-

54) See Homer, Il. 6.215–236, esp. 6.234–236: ἔνθ' αὖτε Γλαύκῳ Κρονίδης φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεύς, / ὃς πρὸς Τυδεΐδην Διομήδεα τεύχε' ἄμειβε / χρύσεα χαλκείων, ἑκατόμβοι' ἐννεαβοίων. In 9.94.4 (χάλκεα *donanti* χρύσεα *qui dederas*), Martial has even directly integrated two words from Homer's verses.

poses.[55] However, what is peculiar about the passage in Martial is that Glaucus is directly addressed (by the pronoun *tu* and the vocative).[56] The idea of entering into a dialogue with a distant figure from the heroic realm is already bold enough. Moreover, the speaker's statement that even Glaucus was not so stupid that he would agree to a deal like the one suggested by Hippocrates must be seen as a very cheeky and disrespectful remark towards a mythical hero. The ostensible evocation of the world of epic is thus immediately deconstructed and employed for an irreverent joke.[57]

The fifth verse of the epigram then resumes the disparity of the herb and the wine through a rhetorical question, elegantly composed as a combination of chiasmus (*dulce munus* vs. *pro munere amaro*) and polyptoton (*munus pro munere*). The final line offers a preliminary answer which is instantly modified through a witty conditional clause, referring to hellebore as a cure for insanity.[58]

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55) See Horace, Sat. 1.7.15–18; Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 33.7; Pliny the Younger, Epist. 5.2; Aulus Gellius, Noct. Att. 2.23.7–8. See also Cicero, Ad Att. 6.1.22. On the function of this reference in Pliny the Younger's Epist. 5.2, see Fögen (2020: 219–220).

56) On the diversified use of the vocative in Martial's epigrams, see Laurens ([2]2012: 350–359), who circumscribes its general function as follows: "D'instinct l'ironiste a senti que l'insertion du vocatif pouvait à la fois conférer à la phrase une légèreté brillante et, en détachant certains mots, appuyer malicieusement une intention, dégager avec plus de netteté la pointe" (Laurens [2]2012: 350). See also Siedschlag (1977: 14–16).

57) On the use of myth in Martial, see Weinreich (1928: 29–73), Szelest (1963a: 225–226, 228–231), Kuppe (1972: 58–68), Corsaro (1973), Szelest (1974), Szelest (1986: 2590–2591, 2606) and Hofmann (2000: 760–762); see also Vallat (2008: 128–139, 195–210). Szelest (1974: 297) offers some useful statistics: "Zuerst müssen wir feststellen, dass in den Gedichten unseres Autors ungefähr 280 Namen verschiedener mythischen Gestalten auftreten. Sie erscheinen in 276 Epigrammen, die 19,4 % der ganzen Sammlung bilden. (…) Mythologische Gestalten treten in den Epigrammen mannigfaltigen Inhalts auf (…) und erfüllen verschiedenartige Aufgaben." One of the functions of these mythological references is the creation of humour, as in epigram 9.94. Among the poems dealt with further below in this paper, one may compare 2.16.5 (*dimitte Machaonas omnis*; metonymically referring to the physician Machaon in Homer's *Iliad*), 6.70.12–13 (Priam and Nestor) and 11.28 (Hylas).

58) On hellebore, see Henriksén (2012: 366): "The idea that hellebore (…) was active, among other things, against insanity was naturally a creation of folklore, but it was nonetheless prescribed by serious authors like Pliny (*Nat.* 25.54–5) and Celsus (2.13.2). It is often mentioned when insinuating insanity (…)."

A rather cynical picture of a doctor's greed is offered by epigram 10.77 about a physician who is denied his profit because of his patient's premature and sudden death:

> *Nequius a Caro nihil umquam, Maxime, factum est*
> *quam quod febre perît: fecit et illa nefas.*
> *saeva nocens febris, saltem quartana fuisses!*
> *servari medico debuit ille suo.*
>
> Nothing naughtier, Maximus, was ever done by Carus than his dying of a fever. The fever too did a very bad thing. Cruel, noxious fever, you might at least have been quartan; he ought to have been kept alive for his doctor.

The first three lines create a great deal of suspense which is not resolved until the end. Why Carus' fever is blamed for a wicked deed (*nefas*) and should have been at least a quartan remains mysterious until the final line reveals the reason. If the disease had not been fatal,[59] but of a less aggressive nature (as in the case of a quartan fever), the medical expert would have been able to charge a higher fee for a prolonged treatment.[60] The reproachful tone engendered by the comparative *nequius* and the substantive *nefas*, which almost has the resonance of a legal accusation, is sustained in the third line by the incensed exclamation which addresses the fever directly and

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59) Vallat (2008: 589) is prepared to derive the name 'Carus' from the Greek substantive κάρος ('heavy sleep' or 'torpor') which would adequately reflect the patient's death.

60) The idea is that a quartan fever may last particularly long, even though its duration generally depends on the season when it befalls the patient. On the different types of fever (quotidian, tertian and quartan) and their treatment, see esp. Celsus, De med. 3.3.1–3.4.1 and 3.5.1–3.17. On the prolonged duration of quartan fever, see Celsus, De med. 2.8.42: *Quartana aestiva brevis, autumnalis fere longa est maximeque quae coepit hieme adpropinquante*; see also De med. 2.1.9, 3.15.1, 3.15.3, 3.16.1–2 and 3.21.2. Most important for the interpretation of Martial 10.77 is Celsus' remark that a regular quartan fever kills no one (De med. 3.15.6). Intermittent fevers were also discussed by Greek medical writers; specifically on Galen and his use of Hippocratic concepts, see Wittern (1989), with detailed references. As Wittern (1989: 12) shows, both Hippocrates and Galen thought that the quartan is the least dangerous and aggressive fever: "man kann an den fieberfreien Tagen seinen gewohnten Geschäften nachgehen. (…) Andererseits ist es schwer zu beenden und das langwierigste unter den intermittierenden Fiebern."

decries it as 'fierce' and 'pernicious' by the two consecutive adjectives *saeva nocens*. The dénouement eventually unveils the distinct irony of the poem which is aimed at a criticism of doctors who do not take an interest in the speedy cure of their patients since it would prohibit requests for higher payment through continuous services. Standing on its own, the infinitive *servari* would imply that being saved from a disease is what a patient would normally expect from a competent physician. However, since *servari* is directly linked with the dative *medico*, the final verse distorts or even perverts this hope; the doctor of this scenario is concerned with nothing but his financial gain. The highly rhetorical quality of this epigram signals that such an attitude is just grotesque and that it contradicts the principles of properly understood medical ethics.[61]

The doctor as thief is an established motif in ancient satire and epigram.[62] Consequently, it also occurs in Martial's corpus, as shown by epigram 9.96:

Clinicus Herodes trullam subduxerat aegro:
deprensus dixit 'stulte, quid ergo bibis?'

Doctor Herodes had purloined a ladle from a patient. When caught he said: 'You fool, why are you drinking then?'

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61) See also Weeber (2020: 76): "In diesem Epigramm nimmt Martial die sarkastisch zugespitzte Perspektive ein, die die ‚Auslastung' einer Krankheit im Sinne der Honorarmaximierung in den Vordergrund stellt. Der Patient, sein Leiden und der Ausgang seiner Krankheit interessieren nicht, sondern einzig der Profit, der sich aus einer gesundheitlichen Beeinträchtigung schlagen lässt." A completely divergent understanding, originating from a slightly different textual basis (*fuisset* instead of *fuisses* in 10.77.3 and *illa* instead of *ille* in 10.77.4), takes Carus to have been "a specialist in quartan fever" who "should have been allowed to die by his own particular disease" (Ker 1968 [vol. 2]: 214 n. 1). Yet another interpretation is advocated by Shackleton Bailey who believes that Carus "deserved worse" than dying of a fever, namely to suffer "a slow, painful death" given to him by the doctor (Shackleton Bailey 1993 [vol. 2]: 387); see also Mans (1994: 113) and Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 114). However, none of these two readings, already offered as alternatives by Friedlaender (1886 [vol. 2]: 152–153), is fully persuasive, though the second (Carus dying a slow death) sounds more plausible than the first.

62) See e. g. Anth. Pal. 11.112 (Nicarchus), 11.113 (Nicarchus) and 11.333 (Callicter). One may compare Anth. Pal. 11.382 (Agathias Scholasticus); see Ehrhardt (1974: 7–8, 12, 70–76, 147–171), Duffy (1983), Plastira-Valkanou (2003) and Neger / Holzberg (2020: 82–83). For further references, see Brecht (1930: 47–49).

Despite its strict epigrammatic brevity, this distich blends two themes: the stealing doctor (who in this case gets caught in the act) and the danger of alcohol. It is this amalgamation that generates the humour in this poem: when the physician is convicted of his theft, he presumptuously confronts the patient with the question as to why he is drinking alcohol anyway, assuming that the ladle is useless to all those who live healthily.[63] Yet it is obvious that Herodes did not remove the object because he was worried about the patient's health. With the scornful vocative *stulte* he adds insult to injury and couples criminal behaviour with impudence. The second verse is particularly memorable through the alliteration in the first half of the pentameter and the dominance of the /i/ sound, which may be interpreted as an acoustic translation of the doctor's contempt for the *aeger*. Herodes is thus uncovered as a cynical, immoral and thoroughly untrustworthy representative of his profession.

However, with regard to the motif of alcohol being harmful, there is also evidence of medical experts who do feel a strong sense of responsibility for their patients and advise them strongly against drinking. A striking example is Martial's epigram 6.78:

Potor nobilis, Aule, lumine uno
luscus Phryx erat alteroque lippus.
huic Heras medicus 'bibas caveto:
vinum si biberis, nihil videbis.'
ridens Phryx oculo 'valebis' inquit.
misceri sibi protinus deunces,
sed crebros iubet. exitum requiris?
vinum Phryx, oculus bibit venenum.

Phryx, a famous toper, Aulus, was blind of one eye and bleary of the other. Heras, his doctor, told him: 'Don't drink. If you drink wine, you'll lose your sight altogether.' Phryx laughs, and says to his eye 'good-bye', then forthwith orders trebles mixed for him and plenty of them. You want to know the outcome? Phryx drank wine and his eye drank poison.

63) On the occurrence of direct speech at the end of an epigram, see Siedschlag (1977: 106–110).

Although the notorious drinker Phryx, mentioned three times (6.78.2, 5 and 8),[64] already has serious problems with his eyes, he disregards his doctor's emphatic recommendation to refrain from the consumption of wine.[65] He therefore represents the type of the ignorant patient who could not care less about his physician's instructions. The first six-and-a-half lines of the poem may be read as a report of Phryx' medical history,[66] interspersed with a miniature dialogue between doctor and patient, which is indicative of the latter's reluctance to take on board what he is told. The second half of v. 7 is reserved for a question that generates suspense, resolved in the laconic final line which details the outcome of Phryx' reckless behaviour. The chiastic arrangement of this verse places two keywords (*vinum* and *venenum*) at the beginning and the end, thereby producing a frame of alcoholic drink and its detrimental impact. In the phrase *oculus bibit venenum*, the eye is personified so as to drastically illuminate what happens to the patient's body.[67]

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64) See Grewing (1997: 505): "Durch die dreifache Namensnennung des Trinkers (… jeweils an derselben metrischen Position) wird eine gewisse Monotonie erzeugt, die dem berichtenden Stil des Gedichts insgesamt gerecht wird und zugleich durch den regelmäßigen Rhythmus (…) auf die Sturheit des Säufers hindeutet." That Phryx is a notorious drinker is emphasised by the very first word *potor* and the repeated use of forms of *bibere* (6.78.3, 4 and 8), but also by the hyperbolic *misceri … deunces* (6.78.6).

65) For medical advice to avoid wine, see also Martial 6.86; one may compare the longer discussion in Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 23.31–53, esp. 23.35 (*creditum est obscuritatem visus facere, nec prodesse nervis aut vesicae*), 23.38 (*vino modico nervi iuvantur, copiosiore laeduntur, sic et oculi*) and 23.49. On (male and female) drinkers more generally, see Martial 1.11, 1.26, 1.28, 1.87, 2.73, 2.89.1–2, 5.4, 6.89, 7.67.9–10, 11.82, 12.12, 12.27(28), 12.65 and 12.70; see also 3.16.3–4, 9.22.11, 9.73.5, 11.15.5 and 12.76. Evidence in Greek comedy and epigram is collected by Rolleston (1914: 115–117), Brecht (1930: 66–67) and Grewing (1997: 504), with further references.

66) See also Kuppe (1972: 127): "Das Gedicht als Ganzes ist eine 'narratio' (…)."

67) The following remarks by Watson (1982: 71–72) are easily applicable to 6.78: "In utilizing this bodily flaw as a source of wit, Martial is catering to the typically Roman propensity to poke fun at the physical peculiarities of others, a characteristic attested both in literary sources and in the prevalence of derogatory surnames like Crassus, Naso, or Strabo. He is also influenced, in a general way, by the epigrammatic tradition. (…) very often the physical defect does not provide the sole motive for the attack." – In epigram 8.9 an individual named Hylas is also diagnosed as *lippus* and has lost one eye (*luscus*): *Solvere dodrantem nuper tibi, Quinte, volebat / lippus Hylas, luscus vult dare dimidium. / accipe quam primum; brevis est*

The physician's name was perhaps chosen by Martial because it would automatically remind the reader of the famous Cappadocian doctor Heras, later praised by Galen.[68] It fits nicely with Martial's practitioner who exemplifies the competent, conscientious and morally upright physician. His expertise is also accentuated in his direct speech: the construction *bibas caveto* (6.78.3), which links an imperative with a subjunctive, is equivalent to similar modes of instruction in ancient didactic treatises.[69] The subsequent conditional period (6.78.4) is a model of clarity and brevity – stylistic virtues often associated with technical writing.[70]

A certain similarity with Martial's text can be discerned in a poem by the much later sixth-century epigrammatist Macedonius Consul of Thessalonica (Anth. Pal. 11.61):

> Χθιζὸν ἐμοὶ νοσέοντι παρίστατο δήϊος ἀνὴρ
> ἰητρός, δεπάων νέκταρ ἀπειπάμενος·
> εἶπε δ᾽ ὕδωρ πίνειν· ἀνεμώλιος, οὐδ᾽ ἐδιδάχθη,
> ὅττι μένος μερόπων οἶνον Ὅμηρος ἔφη.
>
> A physician, a foeman, stood by me yesterday when I was ill, forbidding me the nectar of the cups, and told me to drink water, an empty-headed fellow who had never learnt that Homer calls wine the strength of men.

The anonymous speaker of these lines is somewhat reminiscent of Martial's Phryx. He is equally careless and throws his doctor's ad-

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occasio lucri: / si fuerit caecus, nil tibi solvet Hylas. However, a lot of ink has been spilled on the precise meaning of this poem. For example, it is not sufficiently clear whether Quintus, who is directly addressed here, is to be seen as a moneylender or as an (incompetent) ophthalmologist who does not deserve the agreed payment. See the excellent overview in Schöffel (2002: 156–162) and n. 116 (below).

68) For references, see Grewing (1997: 507) and Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 272).

69) See e. g. Cato, De agr. 1.4, 20.2, 28.1, 31.2, 32.2, 37.4, 38.2, 38.4, 40.2, 45.2, 49.2, 53.1, 66.1, 161.2, 161.4, 162.2; Columella, De re rust. 5.11.11, 12.56.1; Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 16.193–194, 17.125, 18.335. See also Huisintveld (1949: 115): "De constructie *cave(to) ne* + coni. komt wel enkele malen voor bij Martialis, maar hiernaast lezen we toch ook VI 78, 3 *bibas caveto*; VI 79, 1 *sciat hoc Fortuna caveto*; X 72, 12 *caveto – loquaris*."

70) On the significance of *perspicuitas* and *brevitas*, as described by ancient technical authors, see Fögen (2009: esp. 26–34) for details.

vice to the wind. One might even say that he is worse than Phryx, since he insults his physician as a 'windbag' (Anth. Pal. 11.61.3: ἀνεμώλιος) and blames him for his lack of familiarity with a Homeric line (Il. 11.706),[71] failing to recognise that this kind of epic wisdom is hardly applicable to his own case. Unlike in Martial's epigram, the patient here speaks in the first person, which only increases the impression of his arrogance and stupidity. However, both texts are based upon the assumption that doctors can do very little or nothing at all if their patients are stubborn and resistant to their advice. Ultimately, this perception – however justified it may be in real life, both in antiquity and modern times – plays a minor role in the ancient epigrammatic discourse on medicine. For the most part, the texts in question blame the doctors, not the patients, for their conduct and character.

5. Medical discourse combined with other themes

In several instances, references to doctors and patients are not limited to the medical sphere, but intertwined with various other themes. One could even argue that in such cases medical discourse is exploited for purposes not directly related to it. Epigram 10.56 illustrates this particularly well:

Totis, Galle, iubes tibi me servire diebus
et per Aventinum ter quater ire tuum.
eximit aut reficit dentem Cascellius aegrum,
infestos oculis uris, Hygine, pilos;
non secat et tollit stillantem Fannius uvam,
tristia †saxorum† stigmata delet Eros;
enterocelarum fertur Podalirius Hermes:
qui sanet ruptos dic mihi, Galle, quis est?

You tell me to be at your service all day, Gallus, and traverse your Aventine three times or four. Cascellius extracts or restores an ailing

71) See Homer, Il. 6.261: ἀνδρὶ δὲ κεκμηῶτι μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει. See also Il. 9.705–706: νῦν μὲν κοιμήσασθε τεταρπόμενοι φίλον ἦτορ / σίτου καὶ οἴνοιο· τὸ γὰρ μένος ἐστὶ καὶ ἀλκή. For further references, see Papakonstantinou (2009: esp. 4–5).

> tooth; you, Hyginus, burn off hairs that trouble the eyes; Fannius does not cut but removes a dripping uvula; Eros effaces the repulsive brands of slaves;[72] Hermes is said to be the Podalirius of hernias; tell, me, Gallus, who is it that heals the worn-out?

In the first two lines a client is talking to his patron Gallus, directly addressed in the vocative in the first and final line of the epigram, who is constantly demanding his services. As is manifest from several other poems in Martial's oeuvre, clients were often solicited by their patrons for all kinds of assistance, so one might say that this poem does not seem to thematise a particularly uncommon situation.[73] However, the following verses elucidate through a series of five examples how severely this client suffers from his role. Each example refers to a certain type of medical doctor who is able to heal the different ailments of their patients: a dentist, an ophthalmologist, a laryngologist, a dermatologist or a tattoo-removal expert,[74] and a surgeon specialising in the treatment of hernias. Since they are all mentioned by their names, they may represent well-known physicians, but they could also be entirely fictional.[75] This little catalogue, which is distinguished by artful *variatio*,[76] can be used

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72) The text is problematic here. Shackleton Bailey (1993) translates the conjecture *servorum* (i. e. brands inflicted on slaves as a punishment) instead of the transmitted *saxorum*. Schneider (2003: 743) suggests *sanorum*: "Nicht Kranke, sondern Gesunde finden sich bei ihm ein, um das peinigende Zeugnis einer kriminellen oder sozial verachteten Vergangenheit loszuwerden. So baut sich ein vielsagender Spannungsbogen zwischen den Attributen *tristia* und *sanorum* auf." But this is perhaps not fully convincing.

73) On patrons and clients in Martial's epigrams, see esp. Hofmann (1956/57: 461–464), Szelest (1963b: 182–184), Garrido-Hory (1985), Holzberg (1988: 65–73), Sullivan (1991: 161–162), Walter (1996: 284–291), Walter (1998: 236), Spisak (2007: 35–51), Wolff (2008: 52–55), Howell (2009: 93–100), Holzberg (²2012: 74–85), Watson / Watson (2015: 9–12, 36–40) and Flores Militello (2019: 106–245).

74) On *stigmata*, see also Martial 3.21.1 (*famulus … fronte notatus*), further 6.64.26 and 12.61.11. On their removal, see Scribonius Largus, Comp. 231 (referring to a remedy used by Trypho) and Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 30.30: *stigmata delentur columbino fimo ex aceto*.

75) For a more thorough discussion, including inscriptional documents, see Kudlien (1986: 32, 106, 111, 121, 123–124, 145–146).

76) See Dolderer (1933: 8): "Bald wird die Tätigkeit des Arztes verbal an den Anfang gestellt (v. 3 und 5), bald der behandelte Körperteil (v. 4, 6, 7), wobei durch die Anordnung der Attribute wiederum Abwechslung erzielt wird. Die Beispiele werden monokolisch, in lauter Hauptsätzen, aneinander gereiht, damit der Ein-

as a testimony of the specialisation of medical doctors in the first century A. D.,[77] but this is not the central point of the poem. The list of physicians is followed by a question which takes the reader back to the beginning where the speaker had lamented his hard lot. When he asks the patron whether he knows who would be able to heal those who are totally shattered and worn-out (10.56.8: *ruptos*), the purpose of the text becomes clear: it constitutes an eloquent and witty complaint of a client about his patron's abusive behaviour, resulting in the client's physical breakdown which is powerfully conveyed by the perfect participle of the very graphic verb *rumpere*.[78] The fact that the speaker addresses his patron directly and that he does so in a rather sardonic manner may be regarded as a sign of his boldness. He implies that it is ultimately Gallus himself who can cure his client by lowering his expectations and being less demanding. The catalogue of medical specialists therefore functions as an astute crescendo to boost the client's agenda.

The name 'Gallus' occurs rather frequently in Martial's epigrams; it is also the name of a patron in 1.108 and 10.82, with which epigram 10.56 may easily be connected. In 10.82 the client, describing himself as 'exhausted' (10.82.7: *fesso*), reviews his agonies, branded as *vexatio* (10.82.1), *cruces* (10.82.6) and *labores* (10.82.7), and deems them unnecessary for both parties. However, the client of 10.82 appeals to the patron in a much more straightforward man-

druck der Vielheit und Kunstfertigkeit der Aerzte erhöht und die Pointe des letzten Verses, zu deren Verstärkung diese ganze steigernde Exemplifizierung gestaltet ist, möglichst witzig und wirkungsvoll werde."

77) Krug ([2]1993: 193) goes even further and detects a clear tendency towards a customer-oriented business: "Groteske Züge nahm die Spezialisierung an, wenn unter den Modeärzten des kaiserzeitlichen Rom sich einzelne auf ganz besondere Wünsche ihrer Patienten einstellten, etwa das Entfernen von unschönen Wimpern oder von Brandmalen bei ehemaligen Sklaven, die das Stigma ihres früheren Daseins verbergen wollten." One may, however, debate whether the term 'Modearzt' is really applicable to the five doctors in Martial's epigram 10.56. On the specialisation of doctors in Graeco-Roman antiquity, see e. g. André (1987: 59–73), Künzl (2002: 69–76), Andorlini / Marcone (2004: 101–125) and André (2006: esp. 415–419).

78) See also Garrido-Hory (1985: 385): "Physiquement, le client est fatigué, harassé (III, 7; 36; 46; X, 70; 74; 82), il a le teint pâle (*albus*, I, 55), il est affamé (*erusitor Tuccius*, III, 14; *fames amicorum*, III, 7), tremble de froid en hiver (VI, 50; X, 16; XII, 29) et transpire en été dans des habits de mauvaise qualité. En effet, le trait physique dominant de fatigue, d'épuisement est accentué par la misère de la toge."

ner by using a double imperative, combined with a parenthetical 'I beg you': *parce, precor, fesso vanosque remitte labores* (10.82.7). This *adhortatio*, rhetorically intensified and almost turned into a lament by the predominance of dismal /o/ sounds, is even followed by a proper rationale in the form of a relative clause: *qui tibi non prosunt et mihi, Galle, nocent* (10.82.8). The speaker is as much of a skilled rhetorician in these lines as in epigram 10.56; the strategy may be slightly different, but the goal is the same.

How references to diseases or ailments can be interwoven with the theme of patron-client relationships is also demonstrated by epigram 7.39:

> *Discursus varios vagumque mane*
> *et fastus et have potentiorum*
> *cum perferre patique iam negaret,*
> *coepit fingere Caelius podagram.*
> *quam dum vult nimis approbare veram*
> *et sanas linit obligatque plantas*
> *inceditque gradu laborioso,*
> *– quantum cura potest et ars doloris! –*
> *desît fingere Caelius podagram.*
>
> Unwilling any longer to bear and suffer the coursings hither and thither, the early morning rounds, and the haughty salutations of the powerful, Caelius started to feign the gout. In his anxiety to prove it genuine, he anoints and bandages his healthy feet and walks with labouring tread. See what the cultivation and art of pain can do. Caelius has stopped feigning the gout.

Through the polysyndetic tetracolon in the first two verses and the emphatic alliteration of the two synonymous infinitives *perferre patique* in the third line, the exposition of this epigram paints a vivid picture of Caelius' hectic and stressful routine as a client that he is no longer prepared to tolerate. In order to avoid these excruciating obligations, he pretends to suffer from gout.[79] The Greek medical

79) In Martial, the word *podagra* also occurs in 1.98.1 and 9.92.9, in each case coupled with *cheragra* ('gout in the hand'). According to Pliny the Elder, who also lists appropriate remedies for this disease, it was relatively rare in the early Roman world and is therefore qualified as 'foreign' (Nat. hist. 26.100–102): *podagrae mor-*

term *podagra* in the accusative form has a prominent position because it finishes the first and the second part of the poem; moreover, lines 4 and 9 are almost identical, except for the semantically oppositional perfective predicates at the beginning of each line (*coepit* and *desît*).[80] It is the contrast between these two verbs that creates the absurd humour of this epigram: Caelius feigns his illness so well that he eventually contracts it. His zealous 'skill' is illustrated by a series of three verbs (7.39.6–7: *linit*, *obligat* and *incedit*);[81] that he completely exaggerates his endeavour is signalled by the adverb *nimis* (7.39.5) and the sarcastic exclamation *quantum cura potest et ars doloris!* (7.39.8). It is ironic that Caelius' strategy to escape from his burdensome fate as a client has worked at the cost of a different type of malaise. Martial thus creates a comic character who resembles a cunning deceiver trying to take advantage of a contrived malady. The simulation of an illness was in fact an issue that medical experts were concerned with, as is shown by Galen's short treatise Πῶς δεῖ ἐξελέγχειν τοὺς προσποιουμένους νοσεῖν ('How to convict those who pretend to be ill'), which begins with the statement that there are many reasons as to why some people feign sickness and that the

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bus rarior solebat esse non modo patrum avorumque memoria, verum etiam nostra, peregrinus et ipse, nam si Italiae fuisset antiquitus, Latinum nomen invenisset. insanabilis non est credendus, quippe quoniam et in multis sponte desiit et in pluribus cura. (…). Remedies for gout are also recommended in many other passages of Pliny's work, e. g. Nat. hist. 20.9, 20.17, 20.18, 20.29, 20.77, 20.87–88, 20.146, 20.156–157, 20.201, 20.213, 20.219–220, 20.259, 21.130–131, 21.174, 22.34, 22.37, 22.42, 22.60, 22.71, 22.76, 22.105, 22.120, 22.133, 22.143, 22.145 and 22.160–161; see also Celsus, De med. 1.9.1, 2.8.10, 4.31.1–9, 5.18.1 and 5.18.33–35, further Scribonius Largus, Comp. 101, 107, 158–162, 206, 264, 266–267, and Theodorus Priscianus, Eupor. 2.112–118. For various literary approaches to *podagra*, see Watson / Watson (2003: 320). The most famous satirical treatment is Lucian's *Podagra* where gout is even personified; on gout as the object of mockery, see esp. Pod. 332–334: πᾶς δ' ἀνεχέσθω τῶν πασχόντων / ἐμπαιζόμενος καὶ σκωπτόμενος· / τοῖον γὰρ ἔφυ τόδε πρᾶγμα. On this parodic text, see Luchner (2004: 352–402).

80) See also Galán Vioque (2002: 261): "Repetition of the same line or of syntagmata containing slight variations is a technique which Martial inherits from Catullus; cf. 4.2, 6.42, 9.55, 10.37." Further examples are listed by Friedlaender (1886 [vol. 1]: 212) ad 2.6.17.

81) Wenzel (2011: 42) rightly speaks of Caelius' "Aktionismus". On the sound quality of this passage Wenzel (2011: 42) writes: "Die eigentlich gesunden Füße erhalten Fürsorge, derer sie nicht bedürfen. Die Häufung der a-Laute (die schmerzvollen Ah-Laute bei der Behandlung) trägt das phonetisch an den Leser."

identification of such cases is assumed by laymen to be the remit of doctors.[82] Among the examples discussed by Galen is a slave who refused his services to his master on the grounds of an afflicted knee; he was subsequently discovered by the physician to be a malingerer who had used a poisonous plant (θαψία) to provoke the swelling of his knee.[83] It is incontestable that the similarities between this story and the case of Martial's Caelius are not absolutely salient, especially because Galen's report is much longer, of a more technical nature, based upon facts and free from irony or sarcasm; but on a more general level, a comparison is certainly possible. It also proves that Martial's epigram, though satirically amplified and in all likelihood narrating a fictitious case,[84] is not a complete product of the author's flowery poetic fantasy, but has a certain 'Sitz im Leben'.

The motif of the malingerer recurs in several other epigrams of Martial's oeuvre, each time taking a different angle. Another example of the nexus of medical discourse and patron-client relationships, complemented by the motif of feigned illness, is epigram 9.85. It portrays a patron who pretends to be unwell in order to avoid his obligations:

Languidior noster si quando est Paulus, Atili,
non se, convivas abstinet ille suos.
tu languore quidem subito fictoque laboras,
sed mea porrexit sportula, Paule, pedes.

Whenever our friend Paulus is out of sorts, Atilius, he does not deprive himself, he deprives his dinner guests. To be sure you have come down with a sudden fictitious ailment, Paulus, but my dole has given up the ghost.

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82) Galen, Sim. morb. 1 (CMG V 10.2.4.113 [= XIX 1 Kühn]): Διὰ πολλὰς αἰτίας ἄνθρωποι πλάττονται νοσεῖν. δοκεῖ δ' ἰατρῷ προσήκειν ἡ τῆς ἀληθείας εὕρεσις ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἅπασι, καὶ τοῦτον οἱ ἰδιῶται ἀξιοῦσι διακρίνειν τοὺς ψευδομένους τῶν ἀληθευόντων. On this treatise, see Kudlien (1961), who also examines some relevant passages in the Ἰατρικὰ ἐρωτήματα written by Rufus of Ephesus. See also Gourevitch (2009).

83) See Galen, Sim. morb. 4–5 (CMG V 10.2.4.114–115 [= XIX 4–5 Kühn]). On the plant θαψία, see esp. Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 13.123–126.

84) Epigram 7.39 is the only text in Martial's oeuvre where the personal name 'Caelius' comes up. As ever so often, it must refer to a type rather than a real individual.

The comparative adjective *languidior*, markedly positioned at the very beginning of the poem,[85] as is the verb *languebam* in epigram 5.9 (see above), is resumed by the substantive *languore* in the third line, here connected with the participial attribute *ficto*, which discloses Paulus as a malingerer.[86] The final verse then lays bare the patron's motive for his simulation of illness: he wants to evade the expenses of a *cena* and thus typifies the familiar figure of the stingy host, frequently thematised in Martial's collection.[87] The incident is narrated by a client who feels disadvantaged by this sort of behaviour which breaks the established rules of interaction between patron and client. The bitterness of the speaker, who is deprived of his *sportula*, can be gleaned from the somewhat slangy phrase *pedes porrigere*, which recalls "the image of a dead animal with its legs in the air" (Henriksén 2012: 335) and contrasts with the predicate *laboras* in the previous line. The patron is still alive and suffers from a purely imagined feebleness, while the client is left without an essential and even existential form of support.[88]

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85) On the use of comparatives in Martial, see Vallat (2020), who comments as follows on 9.85 and several other epigrams: "Très souvent, le comparatif apporte au personnage une caractérisation initiale qui peut s'identifier avec la position initiale (…), avec les mêmes effets d'hyperbole et de mise en attente (…)" (Vallat 2020: 173). See also 10.77.1 with the comparative *nequius* being the very first word of the epigram (discussed above in section 4); on the combination of a neuter comparative with *nihil*, as in 10.77.1, see Vallat (2020: 155–156).

86) The name 'Paulus' is rather frequent in Martial's epigrams. Apart from 2.20, 4.17, 5.4, 5.28, 6.12 and 7.72, it comes up in 5.22, 8.33, 10.10 and 12.69, where it also refers to the type of the miserly or abusive patron. See the summary in Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 456–458). That the name aptly suits a stingy individual is suggested by its etymology: "Le nom *Paulus* et ses dérivés sont à rapprocher de l'adverbe *paulum* 'peu', et créent une gradation dans le 'moindre' jusqu'au néant" (Vallat 2008: 507). On the theme of *avaritia* in Martial, see Hofmann (1956/57: 461, 466–467) and Wolff (2008: 55–57).

87) See e. g. Martial 1.20, 1.43, 2.19, 2.43, 2.79, 3.49, 3.60, 4.85, 6.11 and 10.49. On the role of the *cena* as well as hosts and guests in Martial's epigrams, see Szelest (1963b: 183–184, 188–189), Lindsay (2000: 318–324), Stein-Hölkeskamp (2002: 470–475), Wolff (2008: 57–59) and Merli (2008). For evidence in Greek epigram, see Brecht (1930: 71–76).

88) The personification of *sportula*, which is the subject of the final line, adds to the wit of this poem. See also Martial 10.27.3, 13.123.1 and 14.125.2. Further instances of personification as a source of wit and humour in Martial are listed by Craig (1912: 29 n. 4 and 5).

In line with the poet's desire for variation of themes and motifs, there are several instances of individuals feigning illness in order to benefit from certain advantages such as delicious food and drink or presents offered by friends. One instance is epigram 2.40:

Uri Tongilius male dicitur hemitritaeo.
novi hominis fraudes: esurit atque sitit.
subdola tenduntur crassis nunc retia turdis,
hamus et in mullum mittitur atque lupum.
Caecuba saccantur quaeque annus coxit Opimi,
conduntur parco fusca Falerna vitro.
omnes Tongilium medici iussere lavari:
o stulti, febrem creditis esse? gula est.

Tongilius is said to have a severe attack of semi-tertian. I know the fellow's tricks: he is hungry and thirsty. Now the crafty nets are set for fat thrushes, the hook is thrown to mullet and pike. Caecuban is strained and dark Falernian, the ripenings of Opimius' year, is put in small glass bottles. All his doctors ordered Tongilius to take baths. Fools, do you believe this is fever? It's greed.

From the very first line, doubt is cast on the genuineness of Tongilius' illness; this impression is created by the nominative plus infinitive construction governed by the verb *dicitur* and subsequently confirmed by the next line through the word *fraudes* (tellingly in the plural) as well as the explanation of what Tongilius' deceit consists in (*esurit atque sitit*).[89] In the middle section of the poem (2.40.3–6), his greed is exemplified by a comparatively short catalogue of food items and types of wine; it is further stressed by the imagery of hunting (2.40.3: *subdola tenduntur … retia*) and fishing (2.40.4: *hamus … mittitur*). The final distich returns to the theme of deception, but, though mentioned again,[90] this time it is not Tongi-

89) Martial's strategies for introducing material deriving from gossip and rumour have been explored by Greenwood (1998). Specifically on the use of *dicitur* and other forms of *dicere* in this kind of context, see Greenwood (1998: 285–290, 308–309).

90) See Williams (2004: 146): "The ring-composition effect is reinforced by the repetition of Tongilius' name in the same metrical position in the first line of the first and last couplet respectively (*uri Tongilius ~ omnes Tongilium*)." On the repetition of personal names in Martial, see n. 50.

lius himself who is criticised, but his physicians who are said to be disconcertingly ignorant. The rhetorical question and the forceful exclamation *o stulti* (2.40.8) articulate the speaker's disdain for these alleged experts who all get fooled by the malingerer.[91] The very terse answer to the rhetorical question (2.40.8: *gula est*) shows that the speaker, and presumably many others, know better because the simulation is so obvious;[92] it goes without saying that this throws a particularly bad light on the doctors in charge.

A similar case is that of Parthenopaeus in epigram 11.86 who pretends to be suffering from a persistent cough in order to be prescribed delectable 'remedies':

Leniat ut fauces medicus, quas aspera vexat
assidue tussis, Parthenopaee, tibi,
mella dari nucleosque iubet dulcesque placentas
et quidquid pueros non sinit esse truces.
at tu non cessas totis tussire diebus.
non est haec tussis, Parthenopaee, gula est.

To soothe your throat, Parthenopaeus, constantly racked by a harsh cough, the doctor orders you honey and nuts and sweet cakes and whatever keeps boys from being fractious. But you go on coughing all and every day. This is no cough, Parthenopaeus, it's greed.

The cough and the spluttering are stylistically reproduced by the predominance of plosives and sibilants in the second and in the two final lines,[93] which implies that Parthenopaeus is excessively

91) In Martial's oeuvre, the name 'Tongilius' only appears in epigram 2.40. However, there is the very similar name 'Tongilianus' in epigram 3.52, where someone is suspected of having set his own house on fire in order to gain a significant profit from the financial support of others collecting money for him. It is this deceitful behaviour that this individual shares with the Tongilius of 2.40. Etymologically, both names might be explained as 'knowing' or 'clever'; see Vallat (2008: 503): "*Tongilius* et son dérivé *Tongilianus* sont peut-être à rapprocher du verbe archaïque *tongeo* 'savoir', dont Festus cite un exemple extrait d'Ennius. De 'savoir', nous irons jusqu'au sens de 's'y connaître' (…). *Tongilius* (…) *sait* tromper son monde pour en tirer le meilleur profit (…)."

92) The speaker's critical awareness is already stressed by the verb *novi* in 2.40.2, which spearheads the pentameter. See also Notter (2020: 275).

93) For a similar sound pattern in conjunction with a cough, see Martial 1.19.3 (*iam secura potes totis tussire diebus*; with the second half of the hexameter

parading his feigned sickness. This sound effect stands in contrast to the mellifluous verse that itemises the sweet cures (11.86.3).[94] With the two final words *gula est* (11.86.6), functioning as a final diagnosis of the real problem, the poem ends in exactly the same way as epigram 2.40; in each text the final line follows the same metrical pattern that switches from spondees in the first half of the pentameter to dactyls in the second half.[95] One might be inclined to argue that even the name 'Parthenopaeus' itself gives the malingerer away as a disingenuous individual. It also occurs in three other epigrams (6.77.2, 9.56.8 and 10.4.3), where it belongs to the eponymous mythical figure who fought among the Seven against Thebes and was thought to be invulnerable as long as he was not wearing a helmet – a feature that Martial explicitly mentions.[96] The Parthenopaeus of epigram 11.86 is the exact opposite of such a vigorous fighter and comes across as a laughable and untrustworthy figure.[97]

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resembling 11.86.5), 2.26.2 (*inque tuos mittit sputa subinde sinus*) and 5.39.6 (*mentitur tua quod subinde tussis*). In 2.26 a woman feigns her cough in order to keep her lover whom she induces to be hoping for her imminent death and presumably speculating for an attractive inheritance; the simulation of an illness is thus connected to the theme of legacy-hunting (*captatio*). For an analysis of 2.26, see Watson / Watson (2003: 282–284), Williams (2004: 104–106) and Hejduk (2010/11).

94) On the numerous remedies for a cough, see e. g. Celsus, De med. 4.10, 4.13, 5.25.9–11 and 8.9.1c–e; further Scribonius Largus, Comp. 73–74, 77, 87–96, 120, 170, 173 and 176. See also Pliny the Elder, Nat. hist. 15.36, 20.10, 20.24, 20.36, 20.38, 20.44, 20.49, 20.54, 20.56, 20.65, 20.100, 20.126, 20.127–128, 20.136, 20.155, 20.170, 20.176, 20.188, 20.197, 20.225, 20.229 and 20.241–243 (among other passages). Honey was often recommended as a treatment, also in combination with pine nuts, as in Nat. hist. 15.36: *quartum pityida vocant e pinastris, singularis remedii adversus tussim in melle decoctis nucleis: Taurini ravicelos vocant*; see also Nat. hist. 23.142–143.

95) See also Kuppe (1972: 111): "In beiden Gedichten ist im letzten Vers je ein Wechsel von reinen Spondeen zu reinen Daktylen zu beobachten; dadurch wirkt der Aufschluß nach der langsam schleppenden ersten Pentameterhälfte um so überraschender."

96) See Martial 9.56.7–8: *non iaculo, non ense fuit laesusve sagitta, / cassida dum liber Parthenopaeus erat*. See also Vallat (2008: 138): "Pour la force physique, c'est Parthénopée qui apparaît en 9,56 comme le type du jeune homme dans la force de l'âge."

97) See Vallat (2008: 333): "La mimésis est antiphrastique, puisque nous avons affaire à un malade, tout le contraire du vigoureux personnage mythologique. Ce contraste se résout dans la pointe: il s'agit d'un faux malade qui veut être dorloté." See also Kay (1985: 247) and Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 452–453).

Contrived illness as a pretext for the request of benefactions or gifts is also the theme of epigram 12.56:

Aegrotas uno decies aut saepius anno,
nec tibi sed nobis hoc, Polycharme, nocet:
nam quotiens surgis, soteria poscis amicos.
sit pudor: aegrota iam, Polycharme, semel.

You fall sick ten times or more in a single year, and this, Polycharmus, hurts us, not you. For every time you rise from your bed, you ask your friends for getting-well presents. For shame, Polycharmus, fall sick now for good and all.

The obvious difference from epigram 11.86 is that the malingerer of this poem expects to be given presents after he has recovered; the Greek term *soteria* may either denote a festive entertainment organised for someone to mark his recovery from illness or escape from danger, or it may signify the actual gifts bestowed on such an occasion.[98] Furthermore, there is no direct reference to simulation or a concrete disease; that Polycharmus is faking his illnesses can only be deduced from the unusual frequency with which they occur, as exhibited by the phrase *uno decies aut saepius anno* (12.56.1) and the temporal *quotiens* (12.56.3),[99] which stand in patent opposition to the adverb *semel* at the very end of the poem.[100] This contrast is

98) The word σωτήρια is a substantivised neuter plural form of the adjective σωτήριος (lit. 'saving', 'delivering' or 'betokening recovery'; cf. LSJ s. v., with references). 12.56.3 is the only instance of this word in Martial. It is also used as the title of Statius, Silv. 1.4 (*Soteria Rutili Gallici*), written probably in A. D. 89 to honour Rutilius Gallus, city prefect of Rome. See further Silv. 1 praef.: *sequitur libellus Rutilio Gallico convalescenti dedicatus* (…).

99) Vallat (2008: 543) proposes a correlation with the name 'Polycharmus': "Le premier membre *Poly-* est clairement motivé par *decies aut saepius*: *Polycharmus* ne cesse de tomber malade pour recevoir des cadeaux. Le second membre est moins net, mais peut-être doit-on le comprendre par antiphrase: issu de χάρμα 'joie, plaisir', il s'oppose au terme *nocet*: aussi Martial souhaite-t-il le voir malade une bonne fois, c'est-à-dire mourir." See also Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 490).

100) On the ambiguous character of *semel* in 12.56.4, amounting to a hilarious wordplay, see Joepgen (1967: 86–87): "In diesem Wunsch ist ‚semel' doppeldeutig. Der Hörer ergänzt zunächst auf Grund der Exposition: ‚Sei doch nur noch einmal im Jahr krank, damit wir nur einmal Geschenke zu bringen brauchen', während Martial dem Worte folgenden Sinn gibt: ‚Werde nur noch ein für allemal krank, d. h. stirb!'"

fused with the shift from the factual verb *aegrotas* in the first line to the imperative *aegrota* in the final verse.

It is therefore correct to call the poem a "piece of comic hyperbole" (Bowie 1988: 266), which has a parallel in 5.39, where the speaker complains about being impoverished by the countless presents he had to give to Charinus who had sealed his testament thirty times in one year. He beseeches him to accomplish once for all what his mendacious cough has continually promised (5.39.5–6: *aut semel fac illud, | mentitur tua quod subinde tussis*); the imperative *fac* juxtaposed with *semel* matches the final line of 12.56 (*aegrota iam, Polycharme, semel*). The damage that the speaker has suffered is more elaborately described in 5.39 than in 12.56, where it is limited to the second verse (*nec tibi sed nobis hoc, Polycharme, nocet*); the greater degree of conciseness is mainly due to the fact that 12.56 is only four lines long, whereas 5.39 comprises ten verses. But the overall scenario is nonetheless comparable.[101]

Epigram 12.90 not only interlaces the themes of sickness and legacy-hunting (*captatio*), but like many texts in Martial's oeuvre, it also debunks the contradiction between appearance and reality with regard to someone's conduct and character:

Pro sene, sed clare, votum Maro fecit amico,
cui gravis et fervens hemitritaeos erat,
si Stygias aeger non esset missus ad umbras,
ut caderet magno victima grata Iovi.
coeperunt certam medici spondere salutem.
ne votum solvat nunc Maro vota facit.

Maro made a vow, made it loud and clear, for an aged friend suffering from a severe, burning semitertian, that, if the sick man was not sent to the shades of Styx, a welcome victim would fall to great Jupiter. The doctors have begun to guarantee a certain recovery. Maro now makes vows against having to pay his vow.

101) See also Martial 8.64 on Clytus celebrating his birthday several times a year and expecting gifts on every occasion. This poem also has some parallels with 12.56, e. g. the phrase *sit pudor* at the beginning of a line (8.64.15 and 12.56.4) and the use of the adverb *semel* in the final verse (albeit in a different kind of context in 8.64.18: *natum te, Clyte, nec semel putabo*).

The first verse is framed by the two ablatives *sene* and *amico* which may lead to the initial assumption that the sick, old man is the centre of attention, also because the nature of his illness is stated in the subsequent line and vividly intensified by the hendiadys *gravis et fervens*. The severity of the patient's suffering and the closeness of death are further highlighted by the almost epic tone of the negative conditional clause, spawned in particular by the phrase *Stygias* (…) *ad umbras* (12.90.3).[102] However, the ailing friend for whom Maro has made a vow remains anonymous, while Maro's name is mentioned in the first and final line; the poem is thus interested in his behaviour.[103] In the first four verses, he may be perceived as a sympathetic and supportive friend who even appeals to a deity and promises a sacrifice in order for the patient to be cured. Yet this purportedly pious act emerges as an ostentatious show as soon as the friend is on his way to recover. The final verse, which reiterates not only Maro's name, but also the finite form of *facere* (now in the present tense *facit* instead of the perfect *fecit*) and the substantive *votum* (once in the singular and once in the plural), casts

102) Among epic texts, one may compare Cornelius Severus, Carm. fr. 13.25 (ed. Morel): *membra tamen Stygias tulit inviolata sub umbras* (= Seneca the Elder, Suas. 6.26 v. 25); further Ilias Latina 431 (ed. Vollmer): *et Strophio genitum Stygias demittit ad umbras*. See also Lucan, De bell. civ. 5.667, 6.569, 6.653 and 7.612; Statius, Ach. 1.630; Silius Italicus, Pun. 5.617. The phrase *Stygias* (…) *ad umbras* or *ad Stygias* (…) *umbras* also occurs in Martial 1.101.5 (obituary for Demetrius), 1.114.5 (Antulla) and 9.51.3 (Lucanus) – each time in the dismal context of death. In 11.84.1 it is used as part of a comic warning against the savage barber Antiochus; see esp. 11.84.1–2: *Qui nondum Stygias descendere quaerit ad umbras / tonsorem fugiat, si sapit, Antiochum*. See also related phrases such as *Stygios lacus* (1.78.4, 5.25.6), *per Stygias aquas* (4.73.2; cf. 9.101.8: *a Stygia aqua*), *Stygias ad undas* (6.58.3) and *Stygias domos* (6.18.2; cf. 10.72.10: *de Stygia domo*, 12.52.: *in Stygia domo*).

103) It is challenging to identify a straightforward link between the name 'Maro' and the theme of epigram 12.90. As a reference to a fictional character, it can also be found in Martial 4.80 ('Maron', not 'Maro'), 9.33, 11.34 and 11.67 – each time in a satirical context. The most direct connection with 12.90 may be observed for 4.80, where Maron is an orator who is declaiming while suffering from a fever (see also n. 115); but the illness is a rather tentative correlation between the two poems, also because in 12.90 it is the old man, not Maro, who has been afflicted by *hemitritaeos*. Epigram 11.67 shows Maro as someone who could be viewed as a stingy patron (or friend) promising the speaker an inheritance after his death; hence his role is the opposite of 12.90. See also Vallat (2008: 514–515) and Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 372–373).

the narrative in a completely different light and forces the reader to re-evaluate the story as well as Maro's personality. He is now afraid of having to make the promised sacrifice to Jupiter (probably because he cannot afford it or because he does not want to waste any money) and therefore makes further vows to avoid such a result. The plural *vota* as opposed to *votum* in the first and final line clearly mirrors the intensity with which Maro now appeals to Jupiter after he has learned that his first vow was futile.[104] Even if one is not willing to classify Maro as a client, he certainly must be seen as a dishonest character who is interested in the old man's money, not in his well-being. That he is a sly and calculating tactician who changes his strategy whenever it suits him can be surmised from the parenthetic *sed clare* in the first verse.[105] The whole point of making a vow to Jupiter was that the *senex* could hear it and get a favourable impression of Maro, who is in fact an unscrupulous *captator*.[106]

Fever as a disease is also the starting-point in two thematically related epigrams: 2.16 and 12.17. In each case the individual suffering from fever is eager to display his wealth to others; this constitutes the basis for the speaker's critique of such a pompous comportment. Both poems therefore communicate a certain ethical message, albeit not in the same way.[107] As 2.16 demonstrates par-

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104) See also Bowie (1988: 386): "Presumably Maro is to be thought of as proceeding from the premise that a plurality of vows will effect the negation of his regrettable success with one."

105) But even *pro sene* may be seen as a hint in that direction. See Bowie (1988: 383): "The age of the friend is the first clue that the vow is a tactic of *captatio*."

106) On the origin and role of this character in Roman literature, see Watson / Watson (2003: 282): "The figure of the *captator* (…) receives its first extended treatment in Hor. *S.* 2.5, and subsequently becomes prominent in the writers of the Empire, notably M., Petronius, Juvenal, and Lucian. His particular target is the rich and childless personage. Often such individuals are old (…)." See also Walter (1996: 72–73), with references.

107) One crucial difference is that the protagonist of 12.17, called Laetinus, is not a parvenu (as is Zoilus of 2.16), but a "wealthy idler", as Carson (2018: 190) has aptly put it; 'Laetinus', presumably synonymous with *felix* or *dives* (see Vallat 2008: 505), is yet another name mirroring a key feature of its owner. The fever is personified and takes on the role of a parasite, profiting from Laetinus' life of luxury and therefore unlikely to move on to a less fortunate individual such as a slave or poor freedman (cf. 12.17.10: *ad Damam potius vis tua febris eat?*). For reasons of space, an examination of epigram 12.17 has not been included in this paper. In several respects it is a complex and somewhat problematic poem which provokes many questions

ticularly well, this interpretation can be extrapolated from the use of highly suggestive rhetorical elements:

> *Zoilus aegrotat: faciunt hanc stragula febrem.*
> *si fuerit sanus, coccina quid facient?*
> *quid torus a Nilo, quid Sidone tinctus olenti?*
> *ostendit stultas quid nisi morbus opes?*
> *quid tibi cum medicis? dimitte Machaonas omnis.*
> *vis fieri sanus? stragula sume mea.*
>
> Zoilus is ill. His bedclothes make this fever. If he gets well, what will be the use of his scarlet coverlets or an underblanket from Nile or one dyed in smelly Sidonian purple? What but sickness shows off such silly wealth? What do you want with doctors? Dismiss all the Machaons. Do you want to get well? Take my bedclothes.

The first line is twofold: The pithy reference to Zoilus being ill is followed by an indication of the reason for his condition. Yet, given the paradoxical nature of the second half of this verse, it remains unclear how the two pieces of information go together; from the very beginning of the poem, doubt is thrown on the genuineness of Zoilus' illness. Through a series of five rhetorical questions (all governed by the pronoun *quid*) and two unequivocal commands, Zoilus is then detected as someone who only pretends to suffer from a fever in order to show his precious bedclothes to those visiting him in his sick-chamber. The speaker not only comes to the conclusion that doctors are useless for someone like Zoilus, but also that he ought to adopt a simpler lifestyle, more conducive to physical and moral health. The latter is hinted at by the resumption of the keyword *stragula* in the final line, referring to the speaker's bedclothes which are a metaphor for a modest standard of living.[108] The final

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and requires a more extensive discussion, as offered by Bowie (1988: 95–100), Craca (2011: 121–127), Carson (2018: 190–200) and Notter (2020: 267–268); on textual issues, see also Schneider (2002). Craca (2011: 127) is to be particularly commended for giving the right weight to the ethical implications of 12.17: "L'ozio moralmente accettabile è quello attivo e ispirato alla modestia e alla parsimonia: l'eccesso porta l'individuo alla degradazione fisica, alla malattia e alla sua trasformazione da essere pensante in ridicolo personaggio da commedia."

108) Commentaries on this poem are offered by Watson / Watson (2003: 264–266) and Williams (2004: 77–80). More generally on the motif of the simple life in ancient literature, see Vischer (1965).

line thus culminates in a stark contrast between the pretentious Zoilus and the unassuming speaker who finds himself in a morally superior position and feels entitled to chastise Zoilus,[109] who is the prototype of a vulgar and socially dysfunctional parvenu, as is also corroborated by several other epigrams in Martial's collection. For example, in 2.58 he is wearing a neatly combed toga and laughs at the speaker's threadbare outfit. In 2.81 he owns a luxurious litter. 3.82 shows him as the tasteless host of a decadent *cena* – a role in which he is strongly reminiscent of Petronius' Trimalchio.[110] In 5.79 he changes his dress eleven times during a meal. In 11.37 he wears a massive ring. While it would be difficult to piece together a fully consistent character from all the poems dealing with a man of that name, there is a recurrent pattern portraying him as a nouveau riche. What further adds to the construction of the low social origin of this (presumably fictional) character is his very name which was common for slaves.[111]

Also embedded in a medical context, but of a much more general ethical nature are the considerations to be found in epigram 6.70, which leads up to the maxim that good health matters most in life:

Sexagesima, Marcinae, messis
acta est et, puto, iam secunda Cottae
nec se taedia lectuli calentis
expertum meminit die vel uno.
ostendit digitum, sed impudicum,
Alconti Dasioque Symmachoque.
at nostri bene computentur anni
et quantum tetricae tulere febres

109) That the speaker comes across as being somewhat indignant or at least impatient may be due to the dominance of sibilants in v. 4 and 6 and the accumulation of /i/ sounds in v. 2–5 and the first half of v. 6. The two imperatives *dimitte* and *sume*, which both form part of a brisk command consisting of just three words, have a very similar effect.

110) For a comparison between Martial's Zoilus and Petronius' Trimalchio, see Colton (1982) and Leão (2004).

111) On the name 'Zoilus', see Vallat (2008: 410–411) and Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 620–622). On the controversial debate of the fictionality of Zoilus, see also Williams (2004: 79).

aut languor gravis aut mali dolores
a vita meliore separetur:
infantes sumus et senes videmur.
aetatem Priamique Nestorisque
longam qui putat esse, Marciane,
multum decipiturque falliturque.
non est vivere, sed valere vita est.

A sixtieth harvest has passed, Marcianus, and I think two more, for Cotta, and he does not remember feeling the discomfort of a fevered bed for a single day. He points a finger, an indecent one, at [the doctors] Alcon and Dasius and Symmachus. But let our years be carefully computed and let the time consumed by grim fevers or heavy lassitude or cruel pains be separated from better life: we are children, and we seem old men. He who thinks the span of a Priam or a Nestor long, Marcianus, is much deceived and mistaken. Life is not being alive, but being well.

Although the tone of this poem is not completely serious, it can be ranged among Martial's 'philosophical' epigrams. The final verse reads like a *sententia*, memorably summing up what is to be admired about the character Cotta who has passed sixty-two years without ever being ill (v. 1–6).[112] He has always enjoyed such a vigor that he can easily afford to mock doctors with an obscene gesture (v. 5–6).[113] By contrast, the unnamed narrator and his addressee Marcianus, both set apart from Cotta through the strong adversative conjunction *at* (v. 7) which introduces a new section within the poem, have often been confronted with ailments (v. 7–11). The rest of the epigram then prepares for the proverbial statement in the final line. While it would be misguided to look for a fully coherent philosophical doctrine in Martial's oeuvre, poem 6.70 must be seen as part of a larger whole, namely of reflections on the importance of an autonomous life free from worries, sorrows and the

112) On the use of *sententiae* in Martial's corpus, see Barwick (1959: passim), Kuppe (1972: 117–123), Siedschlag (1977: 118), Sullivan (1991: 224–225) and Pimentel (1991).

113) Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 166) write that Cotta "enjoys perfect health because he has avoided doctors." But is this really what the Latin text says? Understood in this way, it would mean that Cotta's gesture has an apotropaeic function.

burden of being dependent on others (especially a capricious patron); a robust health, which also means freedom from (potentially dangerous) physicians, is surely a vital element in that mosaic. The high value of self-sufficiency and good health is also underscored in epigram 10.47, a key text for the understanding of Martial's views on a happy life, influenced by Epicurean concepts. Among many other desirable components of a *vita beatior*, the catalogue listed here comprises natural strength and a healthy body (10.47.6: *vires ingenuae, salubre corpus*). What is advocated here is not a lush or eccentric lifestyle, but simplicity and tranquillity (ἀταραξία).[114]

A different example of medical discourse being entangled with other purposes is epigram 11.28, which takes the reader into the homoerotic sphere:

> *Invasit medici Nasica phreneticus Eucti*
> *et percidit Hylan. hic, puto, sanus erat.*
>
> Nasica, a mental case, assaulted Doctor Euctus' Hylas and sodomised him. I fancy he was sane.

The epigram begins with a word technically belonging to the military domain (*invadere*) and continued in the next line by a similar verb (*percidere*). They are both applied to a man called Nasica who is said to be suffering from madness (*phreneticus*).[115] The doctor named Euctus must be viewed as being Nasica's doctor as well as having a direct relationship with the individual called Hylas who may have been his assistant. The two predicates of the first sentence suggest that Nasica has had sexual intercourse with Hylas who seems to be a young and attractive boy. This view is endorsed

114) On philosophical elements in Martial's oeuvre, in particular in epigram 10.47 on the idea of the right measure, see Heilmann (1984), Holzberg (1988: 58–64) and Walter (1996: 228–236); see also Szelest (1986: 2588), Spisak (2007: 73–95), Wolff (2008: 69–71), Lorenz (2014: esp. 116–124) and Alonso (2015). Heilmann (1984: 58) rightly says: "Martial ist kein Epikureer, aber er kennt grundlegende epikureische Ansichten, die ihm z.T. durch die Dichtung des Horaz vermittelt werden. Seine Wünsche und Sehnsüchte gehen in Richtung des epikureischen Lebensideals. Aber die innere Unabhängigkeit des Philosophen hat Martial nicht gewonnen."

115) The substantive *phrenesis* is used in epigram 4.80.1, relating to the orator Maron who is declaiming in a fever.

by the ensuing comment of the speaker that Nasica was in fact quite sane as regards the choice of his sexual partners. The structure of this distich, which could be described as a direct sequence of 'Erwartung' and 'Aufschluß' (see above, esp. n. 15), is to some extent typical of Martial: a statement at first sight not fully transparent is explained by the following comment. However, in this case, a certain paradox, namely the fact that Nasica is at the same time a 'madman' (*phreneticus*) and 'sane' (*sanus*), is hard to overlook. In order to understand completely what is going on in this little text, it helps to remember what the name 'Hylas' usually stands for. The name occurs ten times in Martial's oeuvre and for the most part refers to the mythical figure abducted by Hercules during the journey of the Argonauts, turned into his right-hand man and later on kidnapped by the nymphs of the spring of Pegae in Mysia when he was fetching water.[116] Epigram 3.19 is the only instance where the name is attached to a relatively unspecified handsome boy (*pulcher Hylas*) who dies from a snakebite and is lamented by the poetic 'I'; this poem therefore needs to be attributed to a homoerotic context as well.[117] One of the references to Hylas as a figure from the myth of the Argonauts speaks very directly of the sexual relationship between Hercules and the boy: *incurvabat Hylan posito Tirynthius arcu* (11.43.5).[118] Like *invadere* and *percidere* in 11.28, the verb *incurvare* is also used here in an obscene way.[119] The names of the doctor and the madman are also quite revealing: 'Euctus' is not only a Greek name which once again evokes the provenance of medicine

116) Altogether eight references: Martial 5.48.5 (*raptus Hylas*), 6.68.8, 7.15.2, 7.50.8, 9.25.7, 9.65.14, 10.4.3 (*raptus Hylas*) and 11.43.5; see also Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 289–290). Epigram 8.9, where the name is given to an ugly boy (*lippus Hylas*), is out of kilter with the rest of the group and has no direct relevance for the analysis of 11.28.

117) On epigram 3.19, see Fusi (2006: 199–205), who rightly refers to the *mors immatura* motif typical of funerary epigrams. See also Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 290).

118) Hercules was called *Tirynthius* after the city of Tiryns, the birthplace of his mother Alcmene. See also Martial 7.15.3 where the same adjective is used for Hercules.

119) See Adams (1982: 191): "*Incuruo* at Mart. 11.43.5 (…) expresses the positioning of the *pathicus* for *pedicatio*; it is virtually equivalent to *pedico*." On the verb *percidere*, see Adams (1982: 146–147, 168–169, 220). See also Kay (1985: 133, 134), Fortuny Previ (1986: 87) and Fortuny Previ (1988: 103–104).

as a discipline, but with its meaning 'wished for' or 'desired' (εὐκτός < εὔχεσθαι), it may also be seen as a very suitable name for a man of his profession.[120] 'Nasica' is used in only one other epigram in Martial's collection (2.79), which is related to the theme of the *cena*. But even though it is hard to establish any link with 11.28, the name as such, which is derived from the nose as organ of discernment, may be used ironically and denote that Nasica has 'a good nose' for pretty boys.[121] Since Martial has incorporated a sizeable number of homoerotic poems into his oeuvre,[122] it was important to approach the theme from different perspectives in order to avoid monotony and guarantee a sufficient degree of *variatio*. What he achieves with epigram 11.28, which skilfully merges two basically unrelated areas (namely medical discourse and homoerotic desire), is a new and original angle from which the passion for a beautiful boy is grappled with.

6. Conclusions

The evidence investigated in this paper demonstrates that the vast majority of the medical practitioners in Martial's epigrams are derided for their incompetence, inefficiency, carelessness, greed and immorality. This is in line with the fact that good doctors are the exception in the view of most ancient and modern epigrammatists and satirists. However, it must be admitted that the *Anthologia Palatina* contains some encomiastic epigrams which praise doctors for their

120) See also Vallat (2008: 22–23, 537) and Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 219–220). Vallat (2008: 537) puts forward an interesting idea: "Il semblerait que le nom soit signifiant par hypallage, c'est-à-dire en dehors de toute considération syntaxique, et que le signifié ne porte pas sur le référent d'*Euctus*, mais sur celui de *Hylas*: c'est lui qui suscite chez *Nasica* un 'desir' irrépressible." The name 'Euctus' (if the reading is not *Auctus*) also occurs in Martial 8.6, which has no connection with 11.28. In 8.6, Euctus is a *vetulus* who proudly talks of his old drinking vessels; see Watson (1998) and Watson / Watson (2003: 204–208).

121) Similarly Williams (2004: 246), taking up Kay (1985: 133). See also Vallat (2008: 465, 498–499) and Moreno Soldevila / Marina Castillo / Fernández Valverde (2019: 412–413).

122) For a meticulous discussion of the facets of Martial's homoerotic poems, see Obermayer (1998), who has, however, ignored epigram 11.28. See also Sullivan (1991: 188–191, 207–210) and Watson (2019: 96–98, 103–106).

achievements. For example, the following piece by an anonymous author extols the famous Hippocrates for his skill and success as a physician (Anth. Pal. 7.135):

> Θεσσαλὸς Ἱπποκράτης, Κῷος γένος, ἐνθάδε κεῖται,
> Φοίβου ἀπὸ ῥίζης ἀθανάτου γεγαώς,
> πλεῖστα τρόπαια νόσων στήσας ὅπλοις Ὑγιείης,
> δόξαν ἐλὼν πολλῶν οὐ τύχᾳ, ἀλλὰ τέχνᾳ.
>
> Here lies Thessalian Hippocrates, by descent a Coan, sprung from the immortal stock of Phoebus. Armed by Health, he gained many victories over Disease, and won great glory not by chance, but by science.

Both the tone and content of this poem, with its firm emphasis on the doctor's τέχνη as opposed to mere τύχη in the final line, are altogether different from almost all epigrams discussed in this paper. The same verdict applies not only to several other celebrations of Hippocrates of Cos (Anth. Pal. 9.53, 16.267, 16.268, 16.269 and 16.271), but also to similar instances in the same collection.[123] It is with this tradition of acclamation and praise, as found in epitaphs and similar texts, that Martial and many other poets collected in the *Anthologia Palatina* play. The fact that epigram can be a medium for serious as well as amusing themes, depending on the individual author's objectives, substantiates its flexibility as a literary genre. As is the case for other themes and motives in his oeuvre, it is *variatio* that determines Martial's approach to doctors and patients. His poetic treatment not only differs with regard to length, metre, style and tone, but also integrates a wide range of types (or characters), motifs and vistas, resulting in an impressive polyphony within an overall negative portrayal of doctors. However, as has been shown above, it is not just the physicians who get an overwhelmingly negative press in Martial, but also their patients who could be classified as cuckolds, sex-crazed women, drunkards, braggarts, malingerers and greedy liars, many of them being the victims of irrational and often hypocritical behaviour. By taking into account both sides,

123) See Anth. Pal. 7.158 (Marcellus of Side), 7.508 (Pausanias), 7.559 (Ablabius, with reference to Hippocrates and Galen), 8.91–93 (Caesarius), 9.199 (Oribasius), 9.211–212 (Nicander), 9.597 (Philippus), 16.270 (Galen), 16.272 (Iamblichus), 16.273 (Praxagoras) and 16.274 (Oribasius).

i. e. of doctor and patient, Martial successfully avoids a one-dimensional picture that puts the blame on just one group.[124]

The guiding principle of variation even applies to the different types of real or feigned illnesses that the poet mentions. In the texts examined above, the most frequent ailment is fever (2.16, 2.40, 5.9, 6.31, 10.77 and 12.90). In addition, there are references to eye problems caused by alcoholism (6.78), gout (7.39), madness (11.28), hysteria (11.71), an issue related to the male genital which might be interpreted as impotence (11.74), cough and sore throat (11.86). Epigram 10.56 even lists specialists for dental, ophthalmological, laryngological, dermatological and specific surgical issues related to hernias. At the same time, there are cases where it is challenging to define the precise nature of the disease in question or obtain the full clinical picture.[125] The same applies to the therapies provided by doctors.[126] Poetic licence allows Martial to be vague whenever it suits him; he is not a medical theoretician, and terminological pedantry would have been counterproductive for the humorous character of his texts.

While the medical discourse in Martial's poems has a serious background such as illness, pain, physical deformities, mutilations or even death and may therefore allow readers to make a connection with some of their personal encounters and experiences with certain physicians,[127] the tone in which these issues are presented is humorous rather than indignant. The brief sketches are for the most part caricatures or travesties which seem to exaggerate reality.

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124) On the importance of *varietas* in Martial's epigrams, see e. g. Lausberg (1982: 44–56, esp. 50–52), Szelest (1986: 2604) and Fitzgerald (2016: 57, 158–161, 185–187).

125) See also Peyer / Remund (1928: 24): "Die Krankheitszustände, die bei Martial Erwähnung finden, sind medizinisch nicht immer leicht zu definieren. Er bezeichnet sie mit den im Volke üblichen Namen und die nur kurzen Andeutungen der Symptome und des Verlaufes erlauben selten eine eindeutige Interpretation (…)."

126) See the very brief chapter 'Therapie' in Peyer / Remund (1928: 40–43), who, in addition to Martial's epigrams, also survey some passages from Juvenal's Satires on therapeutic procedures.

127) See also Mans (1994: 119–120): "The subjects of his satirical epigrams may be fictitious, but everybody can recognise old acquaintances in them, identify with them and with life (Mart. 8.3; 10.4.10–12), and laugh at them with his friends with many a sly wink (…)."

At the same time, they are not completely dissociated from real life. Henriksén (2012: 363) has rightly pointed out the following:

> While many doctors in contemporary Roman society were undoubtedly competent and in high repute particularly with the upper classes (…), the satirical criticism of these epigrams certainly did not lack a serious background. Apparently, many alleged doctors in contemporary Rome were completely uneducated and sometimes could not even read and write (…).

In a world without diplomas, the existence of quacks and charlatans was a phenomenon against which certain medical practitioners in Graeco-Roman antiquity felt obliged to react, and this happened from a relatively early stage onwards, as is attested by the Hippocratic writings.[128] There is a plethora of texts on medical ethics which defined the standards of the discipline not only for the Graeco-Roman world, but also for later periods. Among the Hippocratic works, it is in particular treatises such as Περὶ ἰητροῦ (*De medico*) and Περὶ εὐσχημοσύνης (*De decenti habitu*) that develop precepts for the physician's appearance, behaviour and moral

128) See Steger (2004: 64 n. 341): "Schon in den hippokratischen Schriften wird auf die ‚Quacksalber' eingegangen – vgl. beispielsweise das 9. Kapitel in ‚De vetere medicina'. Hieraus erwuchs eine eigene Standesethik, deren Leitlinien im Hippokratischen Eid zu fassen sind. Der Eid ist zwar nicht *das* ärztliche Standesdokument, sicherlich aber *ein* bedeutendes zur ärztlichen Standesethik." See also Müri (1936), Koelbing (1977: 100–114, 154–155, 177–178, 181–183, 213–214), Krug ([2]1993: 188–190), Cordes (1994: 84–137), Samama (2004), Flashar (2016: 179–186), Leven (2018), Ecca (2018) and Steger (2021: 137–163). – On the training of doctors in antiquity, see e. g. Kollesch (1979), in particular the following remark (Kollesch 1979: 507): "Die besondere Situation des Arztberufes wurde weiterhin dadurch bedingt, daß von staatlicher Seite weder die Ausübung dieses Berufes einer speziellen Kontrolle unterzogen noch die ärztliche Ausbildung durch ein festes Lehrprogramm und eine bestimmte Prüfungsordnung geregelt wurde, die allein verbindliche Auskünfte über Inhalt und Form des medizinischen Unterrichts hätten geben können. Sowohl das Erlernen des Arztberufes als auch seine Ausübung waren eine reine Privatangelegenheit, und es blieb den Möglichkeiten und Ambitionen des einzelnen überlassen, in welcher Form und in welchem Umfang er sich medizinische Kenntnisse aneignete, wenn er die Absicht hatte, sich als Arzt zu betätigen. Dementsprechend war auch die zeitliche Dauer der medizinischen Ausbildung großen Schwankungen unterworfen." See also Nickel (1979: 515) and Nutton (1993: esp. 54–57), further Gervais (1964: 221–223), Koelbing (1977: 209), Nutton (1985: 30–33), André (1987: 41–58), Krug ([2]1993: 190–193), Steger (2004: 198–199) and Ecca (2018: 27–42).

qualities, describing the virtues of what has often been called the gentleman doctor.[129]

Inspired by Hippocratic ideas, Galen postulates in a separate work that the best doctor ought to be a philosopher as well (Ὅτι ὁ ἄριστος ἰατρὸς καὶ φιλόσοφος).[130] He felt compelled to write this short essay because of the poor medical training of his time and the widespread desire for financial gain. For Galen, philosophy leads to moral fortification which protects the doctor from greed and selfishness; as a friend of moderation (σωφροσύνη) and follower of the truth (ἀλήθεια), the true practitioner even shuns money and physical pleasure.[131] With such elevated ethical standards which will earn him a great deal of respect among fellow citizens, this type of doctor is the opposite of someone like Thessalus of Tralles who not only guaranteed to turn any craftsman into a medical expert within a maximum period of just six months, but also promised his patients to treat them in the most agreeable way possible and only prescribe what they requested.[132] Galen's testimony confirms that

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129) On the date, content and context of these works, see Craik (2015: 57–59, 163–165); see also Müri (1936: 31–32, 36–40), Laín Entralgo (1969: esp. 26–28, 33–37), Koelbing (1980), Nutton (^{2}2013: 157–159), Flashar (2016: 180–184), Ecca (2018: esp. 20–23) and Fögen (2005: 289–291). Specifically on Περὶ ἰητροῦ, see the recent article by Roselli (2020). The categorisation of 'gentleman doctor' is essentially based upon De med. 1 (IX 204 Littré): τὸ δὲ ἦθος εἶναι καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν, τοιοῦτον δ' ὄντα πᾶσι καὶ σεμνὸν καὶ φιλάνθρωπον. As De med. 1 (IX 206 Littré) demonstrates, this also includes the doctor's self-control towards female patients: πρὸς δὲ ἰητρὸν οὐ μικρὰ συναλλάγματα τοῖσι νοσοῦσίν ἐστι· καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὺς ὑποχειρίους ποιέουσι τοῖς ἰητροῖς, καὶ πᾶσαν ὥρην ἐντυγχάνουσι γυναιξί, παρθένοις καὶ τοῖς ἀξίοις πλείστου κτήμασιν· ἐγκρατέως οὖν δεῖ πρὸς ἅπαντα ἔχειν ταῦτα. τὴν μὲν οὖν ψυχὴν καὶ τὸ σῶμα οὕτω διακεῖσθαι.

130) On this work, see Jouanna (1997: 230–244), Oser-Grote (1998: 103–107, 113–114, 116–117) and Fögen (2009: 115–117), with further references.

131) Galen, Quod opt. med. 3 (I 59 Kühn): ὥστ' οὐ μόνον ἀνάγκη χρημάτων καταφρονεῖν τὸν τοιοῦτον ἐσόμενον ἀλλὰ καὶ φιλόπονον ἐσχάτως ὑπάρχειν. καὶ μὴν οὐκ ἐνδέχεται φιλόπονον εἶναί τινα μεθυσκόμενον ἢ ἐμπιπλάμενον ἢ ἀφροδισίοις προσκείμενον ἢ συλλήβδην εἰπεῖν αἰδοίοις καὶ γαστρὶ δουλεύοντα. σωφροσύνης οὖν φίλος ὥσπερ γε καὶ ἀληθείας ἑταῖρος ὅ γ' ἀληθὴς ἰατρὸς ἐξεύρηται.

132) See Galen, De meth. med. 1.1 (X 4–5 Kühn). What Galen also finds offensive is the fact that Thessalus discredited Hippocrates and viewed himself as the apogee of medicine; see his extensive polemics in De meth. med. 1.2–3 (X 7–30 Kühn), with the comments by Petit (2018: 103–107), who fittingly speaks of Thessalus' "destruction tout à fait théâtrale" (2018: 103). More generally on Galen's eis-

the spectrum of medical practitioners in antiquity was very broad indeed and that minimally qualified individuals or even impostors could enter upon a career as doctors, especially those who were rhetorically talented and sufficiently charismatic.

Among Roman medical writers of the early Empire, it was in particular Scribonius Largus, active during the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41–54), who used the preface to his recipe book *Compositiones* to outline his convictions on the ethical dimension of his discipline. In his view, medicine ought to help a l l people, regardless of their circumstances and background.[133] He also disapproves of many practitioners of medicine who have not fully penetrated the complexities of their discipline: they are not familiar with the writings of highly esteemed authorities and do not put enough effort into the acquisition of knowledge, whereas Scribonius Largus passionately prioritises his ambitious enterprise to grasp the intricacies of medicine over money or fame.[134]

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agogical works and their relationship to the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, see Oser-Grote (1998), who concludes as follows: "Galens eisagogische Schriften mit ihrem äußerst umfangreichen Studienprogramm sind auf dem Hintergrund des Niedergangs der Medizin in der zweiten Hälfte des 2. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. zu sehen. Der Arzt und Schriftsteller aus Pergamon (…) sucht der zunehmenden Zersplitterung des medizinischen Erbes in einzelne Sekten entgegenzuwirken und dieses wieder auf eine wissenschaftliche Grundlage zu stellen. Was die Tätigkeit des Arztes betrifft, hat Galen sehr genaue Vorstellungen von dem idealen Arzt, den er in der Person des Hippokrates von Kos verkörpert sieht. (…)" (Oser-Grote 1998: 116). See also Jouanna (1997), Boudon (2003) and Nutton (^{2}2013: 242–253).

133) Scribonius Largus, Comp. praef. 4: *Idcirco ne hostibus quidem malum medicamentum dabit, qui sacramento medicinae legitime est obligatus – sed persequetur eos, cum res postulaverit, ut militans et civis bonus omni modo –, quia medicina non fortuna neque personis homines aestimat, verum aequaliter omnibus implorantibus auxilia sua succursuram se pollicetur nullique umquam nocituram profitetur.* The text is quoted here from the most recent edition by Sconocchia (2020), who also offers a full-scale commentary on the *Compositiones*. Specifically on the preface, dedicated to C. Iulius Callistus, a powerful freedman at Claudius' court, see Deichgräber (1950), Römer (1987), Mudry (1997) and Jouanna-Bouchet (2004: 37–45); see also Kudlien (1986: 201–202, 203–204) and Nutton (^{2}2013: 176–178).

134) Scribonius Largus, Comp. praef. 10–11: *Ubi enim delectus non est personarum, sed eodem numero malus bonusque habetur, ⟨disciplinae ac sectae observatio perit,⟩ quodque sine labore potest contingere idemque dignitatis utilitatisque praestare videtur posse, unus quisque id magis sequitur. sic ut quisque volet, faciet medicinam. quosdam enim a perverso proposito nemo potest movere et sane omnibus permisit liberum arbitrium magnitudo professionis. m u l t o s i t a q u e a n i m a d v e r-*

However, several ancient medical treatises do not just delineate the characteristics of a good doctor, but also deliberate the role of the patient. Among the Hippocratic writings, one may think of the beginning of Περὶ παθῶν (*De affectionibus*), presumably belonging to the late fifth or early fourth century B.C. Since health is of the utmost value to human beings, it is in the interest of an intelligent patient to be able to comprehend what physicians say and how they treat his body; although, unlike them, he is a layman (ἰδιώτης), he can still be expected to have a basic knowledge in these matters.[135] But many patients do require the guidance of an expert because they often have a tendency to misjudge their situation and the seriousness of certain illnesses, as can be seen, for instance, from a passage in Περὶ ἄρθρων ἐμβολῆς (*De articulis reponendis*): After the treatment of a dislocated shoulder, patients who do not feel any pain tend to believe that there is no further need to take care of themselves; in such cases, it is the expert's task to proactively warn them in order to prevent a relapse of the problem.[136] Particularly difficult are patients who are stubborn and distrust the specialist; they refuse to adopt a healthier regimen or to take appropriate rem-

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timus unius partis sanandi scientia medici plenum nomen consecutos. Nos vero ab initio rectam viam secuti nihil prius in totius artis perceptione, qua homini permittitur, iudicavimus, quia ex hac omnia commoda nos consecuturos existimabamus, non medius fidius tam ducti pecuniae aut gloriae cupiditate quam ipsius artis scientia. magnum enim et supra hominis naturam duximus posse aliquem tueri et recuperare suam et uniuscuiusque bonam valetudinem. See Jouanna-Bouchet (2004: 44): "(…) le médecin apparaît comme une figure idéale remplie de compassion et d'amour pour l'humanité souffrante à laquelle il prodigue ses soins et il acquiert un statut presque divin dans l'accomplissement de sa mission."

135) Aff. 1 (VI 208 Littré): Ἄνδρα χρή, ὅστις ἐστὶ συνετός, λογισάμενον ὅτι τοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισι πλείστου ἄξιόν ἐστιν ἡ ὑγιείη, ἐπίστασθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἑωυτοῦ γνώμης ἐν τῇσι νούσοισιν ὠφελέεσθαι· ἐπίστασθαι δὲ τὰ ὑπὸ τῶν ἰητρῶν καὶ λεγόμενα καὶ προσφερόμενα πρὸς τὸ σῶμα ἑαυτοῦ καὶ διαγινώσκειν· ἐπίστασθαι δὲ τούτων ἕκαστα ἐς ὅσον εἰκὸς ἰδιώτην. This aspiration is repeated towards the end of the first paragraph and then again in Aff. 33 (VI 244 Littré); see also De vet. med. 2–3 (I 572–578 Littré) and Salubr. 9 (VI 86 Littré). On the date, content and context of Περὶ παθῶν, see Craik (2015: 13–20) and Flashar (2016: 153–154).

136) Artic. 9 (IV 100 Littré): Οἷσι μὲν οὖν ὅταν ἐμπέσῃ τὸ ἄρθρον καὶ μὴ ἐπιφλεγμήνῃ τὰ περιέχοντα, χρῆσθαί τε ἀνωδύνως αὐτίκα τῷ ὤμῳ δύνανται, οὗτοι μὲν οὐδὲν νομίζουσι δεῖν ἑωυτῶν ἐπιμελεῖσθαι· ἰητροῦ μήν ἐστι καταμαντεύσασθαι τῶν τοιούτων· τοῖσι τοιούτοισι γὰρ ἐκπίπτει καὶ αὖθις μᾶλλον ἢ οἷσιν ἂν ἐπιφλεγμήνῃ τὰ νεῦρα.

edies recommended by their doctor, sometimes with fatal consequences.[137] Such and other examples of desirable and undesirable forms of patient behaviour could be multiplied.[138]

Unlike Greek and Roman medical authors, Martial does not write from the perspective of an expert and therefore does not pursue an extremely rigorous ethical or social agenda. His epigrams are vibrant glimpses, not sophisticated contemplations on the state of medicine during his time; like satire, scoptic epigram tends to be hyperbolic.[139] However, Martial's poems did not exist in a vacuum, but were to some extent a kaleidoscope of Roman society. While they may not be completely realistic, they are nonetheless designed as pointed and often incisive sketches of human life and experience, and as such, they do thematise the moral dimension of human behaviour.[140]

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137) In the Hippocratic corpus, Acut. 1.5–6 (II 232–238 Littré) is a particularly enlightening passage in this regard; see Flashar (2016: 118–120). Another key passage is Prorrh. 2.3–4 (IX 10–20 Littré), which, as part of "a somewhat mannered proem" (Craik 2015: 242), discusses methods as to how to uncover the disobedience or noncompliance of patients; see Thumiger (2018: 289–290).

138) For further instances, see e. g. the brief chapter 'La responsabilità del malato' in Andorlini / Marcone (2004: 152–158). See also the examples discussed by Cordes (1994: 120–121, 127–128) and Ecca (2018: esp. 88–92).

139) See Wolff (1997: 33), repeated almost verbatim in Wolff (2008: 52): "Ensuite Martial force le trait jusqu'à la caricature, car son réalisme est toujours mâtiné d'esprit satirique. Cette attitude était du reste conforme à la loi du genre et répondait à l'attente du public. Le but de l'épigrammatiste est de faire un bon mot, et pour cela il n'hésite ni à inventer ni à exagérer." See also Mazzini (1982–84: 87): "(…) l'evidenziazione degli aspetti abnormi della realtà costituisce il fine ed il motive stesso del proprio esistere (poesia satirico-epigrammatica) (…)."

140) See Martial 10.4.10: *hominem pagina nostra sapit*; further 4.49 and 9.50, with Holzberg (1988: 88–93). On the problem of 'realism' in Martial's epigrams and their use as a source for the reconstruction of Roman social history, see also Kruuse (1941: 256–260), Szelest (1963a: 234–241), Szelest (1963b: esp. 182, 190), Cèbe (1966: 214–215), Szelest (1986: 2607–2608), Walter (1998), Fontana (2005: 32–39), Beltrán (2005: 169–173), André (2006: 45–49), Wolff (2008: 51–52), Watson / Watson (2015: 8–22, esp. 8–9), Dominik (2016) and Wolff (1997), who rightly remarks: "Martial dans ses épigrammes modifie et transpose la réalité, et ce sont les modalités de cette métamorphose du réel qu'il faut examiner" (Wolff 1997: 32). Classen (1985: 341, 343, 348–349) contended that Martial productively combines elements of *delectare*, *docere* and *monere*. Spisak (2007: 3) believes that the poems, "in the main, were also meant to instruct at a personal level" and that they are to be seen as "a manual or guide that reflected and voiced the ethical views and concerns of his readership"; see

At the same time, it must not be forgotten that Martial's epigrams are part of a longer literary tradition, operating with established motifs and topoi from which it is difficult to draw wide-ranging conclusions about the status of the medical profession during the time of the early Roman Empire. Moreover, doctors are by no means the only professionals who are mocked in ancient epigram and satire. Further targeted groups comprise lawyers, grammarians, rhetoricians, painters, barbers, athletes and others.[141] What they all have in common has been appropriately summarised by Lausberg (1982: 403):

> Das Hauptmotiv der Spottepigramme auf bestimmte Berufsgruppen ist das Berufsparadox: Der Verspottete verwirklicht gerade das nicht, was die für den betreffenden Beruf charakteristische Leistung ist. Die Fehlleistung wird besonders dann verdeutlicht, wenn das Spottepigramm auf Formen und Motive einer entsprechenden lobenden Epigrammart anspielen und sie in parodierender Umkehrung ins Negative wenden kann. Dies Verfahren läßt dem Leser das Positive als Folie bewußt und dadurch im Kontrast das Versagen in witziger Weise umso klarer werden.

The medical discourse in Martial's epigrams therefore needs to be seen in a broader context in order to be assessed properly. His poems on doctors and patients should not be studied in isolation, but with recourse to the literary tradition with its recurrent patterns and motifs as well as to thematically related mock epigrams on representatives of other professions.

After Martial, the satirical portrayal of doctor-patient relationships continues to enjoy considerable popularity. In late antiquity, Ausonius and Luxorius (or Luxurius) composed epigrams on this theme.[142] In the same literary genre, several writers of the modern

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also Spisak (2007: 7–8, 12–13, 21–22, 32, 99). However, the term 'social guide' or 'instruction manual' is somewhat overstated and perhaps more suitable for Pliny the Younger's Letters than for Martial's epigrams; Walter's expression "Grammatik des Sozialen" (1998: 223) is preferable.

141) See Prinz (1911: 28–37), Brecht (1930: 17–51), Lausberg (1982: 403–410), André (1987: 177), Sullivan (1991: 167, 169), Howell (2009: 75–77) and Neger / Holzberg (2020). Some evidence is also provided by Spallicci (1934: 103–108).

142) See Ausonius, Ep. 4, 80 and 81 Evelyn White (= 77–79 Green / Kay); see the editions and commentaries by Evelyn White (1921), Green (1991) and Kay (2001). Further Luxorius, Ep. 16 (= Anth. Lat. 302 Riese), 21 (= Anth. Lat. 307), 23 (= Anth. Lat. 309) and 83 (= Anth. Lat. 369); see the editions and commentaries by Rosenblum (1961) and Happ (1986) as well as the recent article by Notter (2022).

period emulate their ancient predecessors. Among the wide range of authors from the sixteenth and seventeenth century, one may single out John Owen (c. 1564–1622), Friedrich von Logau (1605–1655), Andreas Gryphius (1616–1664) and Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen (1621/22–1676).[143] A rather prolific poet is Johann Christoph Friedrich Haug (1761–1829), whose collections of epigrams also contain numerous pieces on doctors and patients; he even wrote *Hundert Epigramme auf Ärzte, die keine sind* (Zürich 1806).[144] Beyond epigram, the best-known humorous depictions of doctors and patients in literature are undoubtedly Molière's comedies, for example *L'Amour médecin* (1665), *Dom Juan ou le Festin de pierre* (1665), *Le médecin malgré lui* (1666) and *Le malade imaginaire* (1673), although there are several other comedy writers who exploit and develop the theme.[145] Furthermore, there is a great deal of visual material in the form of countless caricatures from different centuries, published for the most part in magazines such as *Punch*, *Fliegende Blätter* or *Simplicissimus*.[146] Medical discourse is evidently a theme that has flourished in literature and art over many

143) On doctors, medicine and illness in epigrams of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, see Kevekordes (1987), who also offers a thematically arranged anthology of the most relevant texts (1987: 110–154). On John Owen, hailed as 'the English Martial', see also Witkowski (1884: 215–217), Sullivan (1991: 284–285), Watson / Watson (2015: 126–127) and Mulligan (2022: 281–290). On Friedrich von Logau's medical epigrams, see Niefanger (2006).

144) On Haug's varied sources, see Steiner (1907). From Johann Christoph Friedrich Haug, Epigrammen und vermischte Gedichte (vol. 1), Berlin 1805, a small selection of epigrams may be quoted here. Epigram 3.2 (Medicaster Leopold): "Arztgebühr und Ehrensold / Nimmst du, reicher Leopold, / Nie von deinem Kranken, nein! – / Immer von den Erben ein." – 6.47 (Dem Medicaster Spada): "Du, Spada! – nicht Prometheus – / Du seyst des Geyers Raub! / Er schuf aus Staube Menschen, / Du schaffst aus Menschen Staub." – 6.83 (Der Arzt und der Kranke): "'So lustig?' – Wieder frohes Muthes! / 'Sehr wohl geschlafen?' – Herrlich, ja! / 'Mein Trank bewirkte doch was Gutes.' / Nichts übles; denn er steht noch da." – 8.20 (Zusatz zu dem Epitaphe eines Arztes): "Er lebte karg, und war darneben / Verschwenderisch – mit andrer Leben."

145) On Molière and his contemporaries, see Pihlström (1991). See also the succinct remarks in Holländer (^{2}1921: 109–120) and Veth (1926: 12, 14–16, 18), further Witkowski (1885: 176–275) and Witkowski (1905: esp. 224–227, 233–244, 250–254, 286–298).

146) See the rich documentation in Holländer (^{2}1921) and Veth (1926).

centuries, and it is fair to say that Martial's epigrammatic doctors and patients have had their fair share in this rich tradition.[147]

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