

do ut det: Patronage and Prayer in Martial's Epigrams

1. Mart. 12.77: (cf. 6.88; Sen. fr 36-37 Haase [August. *C.D.* 6.10]; *Ep.* 95.47; *Ben.* 6.33-34)

Multis dum precibus Iovem salutat
stans summos resupinus usque in unguis
Aethon in Capitolio pepedit.
riserunt homines, sed ipse divom
offensus genitor, trinociali
adfecit domicenio clientem.
post hoc flagitium misellus Aethon,
cum vult in Capitolium venire,
sellas ante petit Paterclianas
et pedet deciesque viciesque.
sed quamvis sibi caverit crepando,
compressis natibus Iovem salutat.

As Aethon was calling on Jupiter in the Capitoline temple with many prayers, standing on tiptoe and bending backwards, he farted. People laughed, but the father of the gods himself was offended, and punished the client with three nights of dining at home. After this disgrace, whenever wretched little Aethon wants to go to the Capitol, he first seeks Paterclus' latrines and farts ten or twenty times. But even though he has taken precautions against breaking wind, he calls on Jupiter with clenched cheeks.¹

2. Mart. 2.55: (cf. Serv. *A.* 6.609: *clientes quasi colentes sunt*)

Vis te, Sexte, coli: volebam amare.
parendum est tibi: quod iubes, coleris:
sed si te colo, Sexte, non amabo.

You want respect, Sextus, and I want to give affection. So be it, you will get respect. But if I give you respect, Sextus, I will not give you affection.

3. Mart. 1.99.1-7, 16-18: (cf. 12.90)

Non plenum modo vicies habebas,
Sed tam prodigus atque liberalis
Et tam lautus eras, Calene, ut omnes
Optarent tibi centies amici.
Audīt vota deus precesque nostras
Atque intra, puto, septimas Kalendas
Mortes hoc tibi quattuor dederunt...
Quid dignum meritis precemur istis?
Optamus tibi milies, Calene.
Hoc si contigerit, fame peribis.

You used to have less than two million, Calenus, but you were so lavish and generous and elegant that your friends wanted ten million for you. A god heard our vows and prayers, and within about seven months you gained that sum from four deaths...

What should we pray for in return for such kindness? We wish you a hundred million, Calenus. If you get it, you will starve to death.

4. Mart. 7.60: (cf. CIL VI 2064, 42-44: *Imperator Caesar...ex cuius incolumitate omnium salus constat*)

Tarpeiae venerande rector aulae,
Quem salvo duce credimus Tonantem,
Cum votis sibi quisque te fatiget
Et poscat dare, quae dei potestis:
Nil pro me mihi, Iuppiter, petenti
Ne suspensueris velut superbo.
Te pro Caesare debeo rogare:
Pro me debeo Caesarem rogare.

Venerable ruler of the Tarpeian court, whom we believe to be the Thunderer while our leader is safe, while each person tires you with prayers for themselves, asking for what you gods can give, do not be angry with me, Jupiter, or think me proud, for asking nothing for myself. I ought to pray to you for Caesar's sake; I ought to petition Caesar for my own sake.

¹ All translations are my own. The text is from Lindsay's OCT.

5. Mart. 8.24: (cf. Val. Max. 1.pr.23-24: *reliquos enim deos accepimus, Caesares dedimus*)

Si quid forte petam timido gracilique libello,

Inproba non fuerit si mea charta, dato.

Et si non dederis, Caesar, permitte rogari:

Offendunt numquam tura precesque Iovem.

Qui fingit sacros auro vel marmore vultus,

Non facit ille deos: qui rogat, ille facit.

If I perhaps make some petition with my timid,
slender little book, if my poems are not shameless,
grant it. Even if you do not give, Caesar, allow
yourself to be asked; incense and prayers never
offended Jupiter. The one who makes holy images
out of gold and marble does not create gods, it is
the one who asks that creates them.

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