

In *Silvae* 4.9, Statius chastises his friend and patron, Plotius Grypus, for an inadequate Saturnalia gift. Why, he demands, has the young nobleman sent a cheap collection of Brutus' speeches in return for a luxuriously bound edition of Statius' own verse? As others have noted, Statius evokes two primary models for the situation, Catullus 14 and Martial 4.88, in which the poets rebuke addressees for unwelcome Saturnalia gifts (Colton 1977, Coleman 1988, Croisille 1996). The combination of these models, however, has been underestimated as a mere pastiche; Statius rather draws a very particular contrast between Catullus and Martial in their attitudes towards gift-exchange. Statius invokes the intimacy of Catullan literary exchange but also ventriloquizes Martial as a materialistic, Saturnalian profiteer. These two contrasting positions reflect Statius' own ambiguous status as a poet-client: Statius makes claims to Grypus' literary friendship, while emphasizing the social distance between himself and the rising young consular. The combined *personae* of Catullus and Martial form a rhetorical position that allows Statius to appear simultaneously flattering and abusive.

In his allusions to Catullus and Martial, Statius constructs two distinct models of social interaction. Catullus emerges as a representative of poetic friendship and literary discrimination between equals. Statius' description of his own book (*Sil.* 4.9.7-9) places it in this Catullan universe, evoking Catullus' anger towards Calvus in 14 for sending him the works of *pessimi poetae*, as well as Catullus 1 to Nepos and 22 to Varus. Whereas Catullan gift-giving is literary, Martial provides a more satirical voice that addresses the material realities of social *clientela*. The long list of shabby gifts at *Sil.* 4.9.23-45 is obviously indebted to Martial's Saturnalian poetry where, in books 13, 14 and elsewhere, gift-exchange is pointedly commodified. Martial's mercenary attitude to Saturnalian exchange in poems 4.46 and 4.88 inspires Statius' conspicuously pecuniary evaluation of his exchange with Grypus (*Sil.* 4.9.6-22). For Statius, Martial provides more than superficial Saturnalian color: his Saturnalian poetics provide a materialistic view of the holiday as a financial transaction.

By speaking through the masks of his literary models, Statius can insult his patron and get away with it. He moderates the blunt abusiveness of the epigrammatist, Martial, with flattering suggestions of Catullan literary friendship. And vice-versa: any potentially inappropriate presumptions to social equality are safely undermined by Martial's crude materialism. Statius' rhetorical strategy assumes his addressee's ability to recognize and interpret the individual references that compose these two positions. Ultimately, even the critical and mercenary voice of the Saturnalian Martial displayed in *Silvae* 4.9 serves to affirm Statius' assessment of Grypus' literary sophistication (Coleman 1978). To take offense would be to miss the joke.