

*Saturnalia Martialis*: Freedom and Restriction of the Reader in Martial's Book IV

The relationship between Martial and his reader has been discussed within the structure of patronage (Nauta 2002; Saller 1983) and social exchange and reciprocity (Leary 2001; Spisak 1998). Martial's epigrams were not only available to his patrons and friends but also to a general readership. Fitzgerald (2007) discusses how these anonymous readers of Martial have different levels of access to each of Martial's poems, and Fowler (1995) recognizes the multiple levels of readership for Martial's poetry: the implied reader, who takes the poems at face-value, and the *lector studiosus*, who appreciates Martial's literary play.

These understandings of the relationship between Martial and his reader can be enhanced by examining Martial's contact with his audience in Book IV, a book that is framed in a Saturnalian context. I follow Fowler's understanding (contrary to White 1974) of the published epigram-book, and I read Book IV as a complete collection intended to be read in its published form. Greenwood (1998) has examined the cycle of addresses to water in this book, and Lorenz (2004) has further argued that the water and black and white cycles within Book IV are a literary tactic employed by Martial to captivate his reader. Another thread, the Saturnalia, can be traced in Book IV to provide insight into this relationship of Martial and reader. In addition to specific references to the Saturnalia (4.14, 19, 46, 88), Book IV also keeps the spirit of the festival alive through epigrams signifying winter (4.1, 2, 3, 11, 18, 19, 34) and those that comment on gift-giving (4.10, 14, 19, 28, 45, 56, 61, 88).

Martial's use of literature to reflect the holiday has been discussed with respect to the *Xenia* by Rimell (2009), who argues that the book becomes the festivities. Rimell's discussion of the dual quality of the Saturnalia and the *Xenia*—both as liberating and constricting—can be applied to Book IV as well. This book also embodies the Saturnalia, a holiday characterized by

revelry, gift-giving, freedom from social norms, and role-reversal. Furthermore, we see Martial participate in Book IV as the dispenser of freedom. In several epigrams (4.8, 10, 14, 29, 72, 81, 82, 86, 89), Martial addresses either reader or book and appears to grant the power and freedom of reading to others, be it the individual addressed in the poem or Martial's at-large readership; however, Martial's placement of these poems within the larger context of the epigram-book often gives the reader little choice as to how to read them. The reader cannot make the decision to forgo reading a poem until after he has already read it.

Martial's licensing of the reader, and especially within a Saturnalian book, likens him to the emperor during the Saturnalia. Carole Newlands (2002), in her chapter on the Emperor's Saturnalia (227-59), analyzes how Statius explores the contradiction of the emperor's munificence during the Saturnalia and his domination of the people's freedom and time. Martial's Book IV is a representation of this very *Saturnalia principis*, with Martial filling the role of the gift-giving emperor, who opens the Saturnalia and provides entertainment, yet limits the freedom of his audience.

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