

Male and female In Eutropium Notes:

Context: Claudian trying to undermine Eastern grandchamberlain Eutropius who was rival/enemy of his patron Stilicho (who claimed he had regency over Arcadius). For background, see McEvoy *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West*.

Eutropius elected Eastern consul > Claudian provides invective. Think about how to damn someone: lots of mud and some sticks?

The consul in the West was Manlius Theodorus whom Claudian writes a panegyric for his consulship earlier that year. Theodorus and Stilicho act as implicit foils. See Nathan. Think if any ideal male virtues demonstrated by these two are shown inverted in the *In Eutropium* (e.g. military prowess, shown associated with Stilicho, especially in Book 2: "he [Stilicho] has given us annals wherein, abandoning the East, an age polluted with servile stains might find a refuge" (Mars, *In Eutr.* 2.131-2, Mars to Bellona)

Male ideal virtues: what are the things associated with being an ideal vir at this time for Claudian's (elite) audience? What are the inverse things? We talked in class about homosexual passivity involving submission and thus problematic. Servile status= problematic (1.26f "If it was thy will to disgrace the consul's chair with a servile occupant"). Being whole = good (Claudian draws attention to the detail of the castration: "Up hastens the Armenian, skilled by operating with unerring knife to make males womanish and to increase their loathly value by such loss. He drains the body's life-giving fluid from its double source and with one blow deprives his victim of a father's function and the name of husband. Eutropius lay doubtful of life, and the severed sinews drew a numbness deep down into his furthest brain." (*In Eutr.* 1.47-51)

Eutropius would have been praised with a consular panegyric at the Eastern court which would surely not have drawn attention to his eunuch status. He would have been presented as a consul, in dress (trabea) and ceremony. Claudian gets us to think about what is underneath the trabea! Having self-control is good (is Eutropius associated with vices that show lack of control such as debauchery and greed?). One should be far removed from the bestial.

Theme of being and seeming- Claudian aims to expose (Monkey with silk *In Eutr.* 1.303-7)

Some non-male/female passages (nb if sometimes associated with females, is he also worse than females?) (see also Tougher 2015: 150 and Nathan):

"That nought might remain undisgraced, nought un-attempted, he even makes him ready to outrage arms, heaps portent on portent and wanton folly seeks to outdo itself. Mars blushed, Bellona scoffed and turned her from the disgrace of the East whene'er with arrows strung and flashing quiver the aged Amazon practises battle or hurries back as arbiter of peace and war to hold parley with the Getae. Our enemies rejoiced at the sight and felt that at last we were lacking in men." (1.234-43)

Softness (mollis= soft) (men associated with being hard): "(can a slave, an effeminate [mollem], feel shame? Could a blush grace such a countenance?) (1.252-3)

"Unhappy band, leave your womanly fastnesses, you whom the male sex has discarded and the female will not adopt." (1.466-7, eunuchs as a third gender)

"a mass of senile pendulous flesh [*in rugas totus defluxit aniles* = completely flowed into old woman wrinkles]" (1.39)

1.187f "Being a eunuch also he is moved by no natural affection and has no care for family or children."

"Hast thou children to succeed to them? Marry or be married, thou canst never be a mother or a father: the former nature hath denied thee, the latter the surgeon's knife." (1.222-5)

Spinning associated with females (when in fact also done by males)(male spinning presented as an impossible inversion of roles that might as well follow if eunuchs are allowed to govern, Eutr. 1.497-9 (“If eunuchs shall give judgement and determine laws, then let men card wool and live like the Amazons, confusion and licence dispossessing the order of nature.”); 1.273-6 “’Tis to the arts of that other Minerva thou shouldst apply thyself. The distaff, not the dart should be thine; thine to spin the thread, and, cunning craftsman that thou art, to urge on the spinning-maids when lazy; thine to wind the snowy wool for thy mistress’ weaving.”

Nb one of the jobs taken by eunuchs could be in women’s chambers so they could be associated with females: 1.463-74 “They now despise the fan and aspire to the consul’s cloak. No longer do they carry the maidenly parasol for they have dared to wield the axes of Latium. ...Change your habits and learn to follow the consul’s chair, not the woman’s litter.”