

(actual/perceived) Eunuchs (cf. Claudian *In Eutropium*)

1) Of Favorinus:

a) “He was born double-sexed, both male and female, as his appearance made plain: his face remained beardless even into old age. His voice revealed the same ambiguity, for it was penetrating, shrill and high-pitched, the way nature tunes the voices of eunuchs. Yet he was also so hot-blooded when it comes to sex that he was actually charged with adultery by a man of consular rank. Thus he used to speak in oracular riddles about the three paradoxes of his life: he was a Gaul who spoke Greek, a eunuch who was prosecuted for adultery, and one who quarrelled with the emperor and was still alive. (Philostratus, *Lives* 489; tr. Gleason *Making Men* 1995 : 3, 6)

b) “He was libidinous and dissolute beyond bounds he had a bulbous forehead, flabby cheeks, wide mouth, a gangling scraggly neck, fat calves, and fleshy feet. His voice was like a woman's, and likewise his extremities and other bodily parts were uniformly soft; neither did he walk with an upright posture: his joints and limbs were lax. He took great care of his abundant tresses, rubbed ointments on his body, and cultivated everything that excites the desire for sexual intercourse and lust...he used to go about cities and market-places, gathering crowds in order to display his wickedness and indulge his taste in sexual debauchery ... “ (Polemo [rival orator], *On Physiognomics* 1.160ff)

2) “Borne in his swift bark over deep seas, Attis, when eagerly with speedy foot he reached the Phrygian woodland, and entered the goddess's abodes, shadowy, forest-crowned; there, goaded by raging madness, bewildered in mind, he cut off with a sharp flint the weights of his groin. So when she felt her limbs to have lost their manhood, still with fresh blood dabbling the surface of the ground, swiftly with snowy hands she seized the light timbrel, thy timbrel, Cybele, thy mysteries, Mother, and shaking with soft fingers the hollow oxhide thus began she to sing to her companions tremulously: “Up away, ye Gallae, go to the mountain forests of Cybele together, together go, roving herd of the lady of Dindymus, who swiftly seeking alien homes as exiles, followed my rule as I led you in my train, endured the fast-flowing brine...” (Catullus 63.1-15)

3) Verg. *A.* 9.617-620 “O truly Phrygian women, for not Phrygian men, go over lofty Dindymus .. where the Berecynthian boxwood of the Idaean Mother calls you; leave arms to the men”)

4) Statius, *Silvae* 3.4 (loeb) (Occasion= celebration of dedication of hair of Earinus at Pergamene temple of Asclepius. Composed c. 94 AD. Earinus a favourite of Domitian)

THE HAIR OF FLAVIUS EARINUS

Go, locks, and speed, I pray, across a favoring sea, go, lying softly on garlanded gold, go! Gentle Cytherea shall give you fair voyage and calm the south winds. Perhaps she will take you from the perilous craft and lead you over the waters in her own shell.

Accept, son of Phoebus, the lauded tresses that Caesar's lad presents to you; accept them gladly and show them to your unshorn father. Let him compare them how beautifully they shine, and long think they are from his brother Lyaeus. Perhaps he in turn will sever the beauty of his own unfailing hair and place it for you enclosed in other gold.

Pergamus, more fortunate by far than pine-clad Ida, though Ida pride herself on the cloud of a holy rape—for surely she gave the High Ones him at whom Juno ever looks askance, recoiling from his hand and refusing the nectar: but you have the gods' favor, specially commended by your fair nursling. You sent to Latium a servant whom Ausonian Jupiter and Roman Juno alike regard with kindly brow, both approving; and not without the will of the gods is the lord of earth so well pleased.

'Tis said that as golden Venus was driving her soft swans on her way from Eryx' height to the Idalian groves, she entered the Pergamene dwelling where the gentle god is present to aid the sick, their greatest helper, staying the hastening Fates and brooding over his health-giving serpent. She sees a boy, shining with star of peerless beauty, as he plays before the altar of the very god. Deceived at first for a little while by the sudden apparition, she fancies him one of her many sons; but he had no bow and no shades springing from his radiant shoulders. She wonders at his boyish grace, gazing at his face and hair, and "Shall you go," she says, "neglected of Venus to the Ausonian towers? Shall you bear a mean dwelling and common yoke of servitude? Far be it! I shall give this beauty the master it deserves. Come now with me, boy, come! I shall fly you through the stars in my winged chariot to the leader, a gift of gifts. No common bondage shall await you: you are destined to serve dignity in the Palace. Nothing so sweet in all the world have I seen or given birth to, I own it. The boys of Latmos and Sangaris shall freely yield to you, and he that a vain image in a fountain and a barren love consumed. The cerulean Naiad would have preferred you and seized your urn in a stronger grip to drag you down. Boy, you are beyond them all; more beautiful he only to whom you shall be given."

So saying, she lifts him by her side through the light air and tells him to take a seat in the swan-drawn car. In a trice, there are the Latian Hills and the home of ancient Evander, that Germanicus, renowned father of the world, adorns with new masonry and levels with the topmost stars. Then it becomes the goddess' closer care how best to arrange his locks, what dress is meet to kindle his rosy countenance, what gold is worthiest on his fingers, what on his neck. Well she knew the leader's celestial eyes; she herself had joined the marriage torches and given him his bride with bounteous hand. So she decks the hair, so drapes him with Tyrian raiment, gives him beams of her own fire. Former favorites retire, the flocks of servitors; he bears first cups to the great leader, weighty murrhine and crystal, with a hand more fair. New grace enhances the wine.

Boy dear to the High Ones, chosen to sip first the revered nectar and touch so often that mighty hand, the hand the Getae seek to know, and Persians, Armenians, Indians to touch! O born under a lucky star, greatly have the gods favored you. Once too your country's god himself left lofty Pergamus to cross the sea, lest the first down mar your shining cheeks and darken your beauty's joys. None other was entrusted with the power to soften the boy, but with silent skill Phoebus' son gently bade this body leave its sex, not shocked by any gash. Yet Cytherea is gnawed by worry, fearing the boy might suffer. Not yet had the leader's noble clemency begun to keep male children intact from birth. Now 'tis forbidden to mollify sex and change manhood; rejoicing Nature sees only those she created. No more under an evil law do slave mothers fear to bear the burden of sons.

You too, had you been born later, would now be a young man, with shaded cheeks and limbs full-grown, stronger. More gifts than one you would have sent rejoicing to Phoebus' shrine; as it is, let only the tress sail to your native shores. The Paphian used to steep it in plenteous

perfume, the kindly Graces used to comb it with threefold hand. The severed lock of purple Nisus will yield to it, and that which proud Achilles was keeping for Sperchius. When first it was decreed to crop your snow-white brow and unveil your gleaming shoulders, the tender winged ones with their Paphian mother run up and make ready your tresses and place a silken robe over your breast. Then they cut the lock with linked arrows and place it on gold and gems. Mother Cytherea herself catches it as it falls and anoints it once again with her secret essences. Then spoke a boy from the throng who had chanced to carry in upturned hands the mirror resplendent with jeweled gold: "Let us give this too. No gift will be more welcome to his native temple; it will be more potent than the gold itself. Only do you fix a look therein and leave your face there forever." So he spoke and shut in the mirror, catching the likeness.

But the peerless boy, stretching his hands to the stars: "In return for these gifts, gentlest guardian of mankind, may you long wish, if I have so deserved, to renew our lord's youth and preserve him for the world. The stars ask this with me, and the waters and the lands. Let him, I pray, pass through Ilian and Pylian years both, rejoicing that his own home and the Tarpeian temple grow old along with himself."

So he spoke, and Pergamus wondered that the altars shook.

5) (The king of Assyria has ordered his friend Combabus to accompany queen Stratonice to the Holy City and there to help her to build a votive temple to Hera. Worried about what may be thought, he takes action) "Saying this he unmanned himself, and he stowed away the mutilated pudenda in a little vessel together with myrrh and honey and spices of various sorts. He sealed this vessel up with a ring" (entrusts to king and later able to show it when faces charges) (Lucian (2nd C CE) *De dea Syria* 20)

6) Hor. *Carm.* 1.37.9f (with Cleopatra) "together with a contaminated crowd of men shameful with disease"

7) Luc. 10.133-5 (court of Cleopatra) "There too were hapless boys who had lost their manhood by the knife; and opposite them stood youths, whose cheeks, in spite of their age, were scarce darkened by any down"

Claudian's *In Eutropium*

"Or, wouldst thou be a devotee, let Cybele, not Mars, be the object of thy worship. Learn to imitate the madness of the Corybantes to the accompaniment of rolling drums. Thou mayest carry cymbals, pierce thy breast with the sacred pine, and with Phrygian knife destroy what yet is left of thy virility" (In Eutr. 1.277-80)

"Great is his self-esteem; he struggles to swell out his pendulous cheeks and feigns a heavy panting; his lousy head dust-sprinkled and his face bleached whiter by the sun, he sobs out some pitiful complaint with voice more effeminate than effeminacy's self and tells of battles. In tremulous tones he calls his sister to witness that he has spent his strength for his country's need;" (1.258-64)