

East passages

1. "On the other side Anthony, with barbarian wealth and strange weapons, the victor over the peoples of the east and the Indian shores, brings Egypt with him, and the forces of the Orient, and remote Bactria; and his Egyptian consort (shameful to say) follows him" (Verg. *Aen.* 8.685-8)

2. "Now let the drinking begin! Now let us thump the ground with unfettered feet! Now is the time, my friends, to load the couches of the gods with a feast fit for the Salii!

Before this it was sacrilege to bring the Caecuban out from our fathers' cellars, at a time when the queen, along with her troop of disgustingly perverted men, was devising mad ruin for the Capitol and death for the empire—a woman so out of control that she could hope for anything at all, drunk, as she was, with the sweet wine of success.

But her frenzy was sobered by the survival of scarcely one ship from the flames; and her mind, crazed with Mareotic wine, was brought down to face real terror when Caesar pursued her as she flew away from Italy with oars, like a hawk after a gentle dove or a speedy hunter after a hare on the snowy plains of Thessaly, to put that monster of doom safely in chains. (Hor. *Carm.* 1.37.1-21)

3. "'Lo! on a sudden from that same clime comes another scourge, less terrible indeed but even more shameful, the consulship of Eutropius. I admit I have long learned to tolerate this unmanned tribe, ever since the court exalted itself with Arsacid pomp and the example of Parthia corrupted our morals. But till now they were but set to guard jewels and raiment, and to secure silence for the imperial slumber. Never beyond the sleeping-chamber did the eunuch's service pass; not their lives gave guarantee of loyalty but their dull wits were a sure pledge. Let them guard hidden store of pearls and Tyrian-dyed vestments; they must quit high offices of state. The majesty of Rome cannot devolve upon an effeminate. Never have we seen so much as a ship at sea obey the helm in the hands of a eunuch-captain. Are we then so despicable? Is the whole world of less account than a ship? Let eunuchs govern the East by all means, for the East rejoices in such rulers, let them lord it over cities accustomed to a woman's sway: why disfigure warlike Italy with the general brand and defile her austere peoples with their deadly profligacy? Drive this foreign pollution from out the boundaries of manly Latium; suffer not this thing of shame to cross the Alps; let it remain fixed in the country of its birth. Let the river Halys or Orontes, careless of its reputation, add such a name to its annals: I, Rome, beg thee by thy life and triumphs, let not Tiber suffer this disgrace—" (In *Eutr.* 1.412-36)

4. "Sister, shall we never succeed in curing the East of effeminacy [mollitiae]? Will this corrupt age never learn true manliness [rigescent]? (In *Eutr.* 2.112-14, Mars to Bellona)

5. "How like to its lord the inhabitants of the palace! Turn your eyes to the city walls. Surely they at least mutter disapprobation, though fear forbids them speak out? Do they not condemn him in their hearts? No: list the plaudits of the senate, of the lords of Byzantium, of the Grecian citizens of Rome. O people worthy of such a senate, senate worthy of such a consul! To think that all these bear arms and use them not, that manly indignation reminds not of their sex those many whose thighs bear a sword!" (In *Eutr.* 2.133-9, Mars to Bellona)

6. "Thither they came—wanton lads and debauched greybeards whose greatest glory was gluttony, and whose pride it was to diversify the outraged banquet. Their hunger is only

aroused by costly meats, and they tickle their palates with foods imported from overseas, the flesh of the many-eyed fowl of Juno [peacock], or of that coloured bird brought from farthest Ind that knows how to speak. Not the Aegean, not deep Propontis, not Maeotis' lake afar can sate their appetites with fish. Perfumed garments are their care, their pride to move foolish laughter with their silly jests. On their adornment and toilette they bestow a woman's care and find even the silk they wear too heavy a burden. the Hun, the Sarmatian, strike at the city's gates yet trouble they for nought but the theatre. Rome they despise and reserve their admiration for their own houses—may Bosphorus' waters overwhelm them! Skilful dancers they and clever judges of charioteers." (council, *In Eutr.* 2.326-41)

7. "'Tis a well-favoured army, enamoured of the city's shade, ever present at the games, anxious to shine in the baths, not to bear sun-scorch and rain, and oh! how different to that former army who, 'neath the leadership of Stilicho, endured under arms the frosts of Thrace and were wont to winter in the open air and break with their axes the frozen waters of Hebrus for a draught. Changed is the leader and changed their character. Byzantium's luxury and Ancyra's pomp¹ have destroyed their vigour" (*In Eutr.* 2.409-416)