

Chapter Title: How to Slander a Eunuch

Book Title: Claudian's *In Eutropium*

Book Subtitle: Or, How, When, and Why to Slander a Eunuch

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Published by: University of North Carolina Press

Stable URL: http://www.jstor.com/stable/10.5149/9780807863053_long.9

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How to Slander a Eunuch



1. Graphic Images

Ancient invective, from the freewheeling attacks of democratic Athens and republican Rome to the formalized epideictic theory of late antiquity, always centered on the person of its victim. Authors presupposed that the character of an opponent determined all his acts. Not only his conduct in the practical issue at hand, but also his private life, childhood, and family origins entered the argument. Wild allegations mingled freely with verifiable facts. Authors sought to persuade by emotive portraits as much as by rational means.

For Claudian, the central fact of Eutropius's person was that he was a eunuch. Simple references to his lack of virility recur continually in both books of *In Eutropium*; I count 58 separate references.¹ Key terms include "castrate" (*castrare*, 4 times), which Claudian uses only in this poem, "eunuch" also here only (*eunuchus*, 28 times; *spado*, 4 times), "soft" or "effeminate" (*mollis/molliscere/mollire/mollitia/mollities*, 9 times), "woman" (*muliebris*, once), "old woman" (*anus/anilis*, 4 times), "half man" (*semivir*, 2 times), "man" and "manly" in hostile contrast (*vir/virilis* 9 times), and in various combinations "male" (*mas*, here only, 3 times).

But Claudian and his late antique audience associated eunuchism with much more than the clinical fact alone. Eunuch slaves were a long tradition. They had served in private households since at least the fourth century B.C. in Greece and the Augustan period in Rome.² They were still conspicuous luxury

1. *Eutr.* 1.8, 10, 29, 39, 45, 56, 99, 145, 152, 171, 190, 193, 214, 231, 234, 240, 252, 255, 296, 298, 315, 319, 324, 326, 337, 419, 425, 438, 461, 462, 467, 494, 497; 2pr.21, 26, 33, 43, 45–46, 51, 74, 75; 2.22, 55, 62, 74, 80, 90, 112, 122, 138, 157, 192, 223–24, 415, 550, 552, 555, 563. Cf. Guyot 1980, 37–42.

2. Guyot 1980, 52–57; cf. A. H. M. Jones 1964, 851–52 and notes. On eunuchs in the Byzantine period, see Judith Herrin, "In Search of Byzantine Women: Three Avenues of Approach," in Averil Cameron and Kuhrt 1983, 171.

items. Claudian's contemporary Ammianus vividly pictures the "armies" of servants aristocrats marshaled to escort them about the streets of Rome (Amm. 14.6.16–17). Bringing up the parade would be

the throng of eunuchs, from the old men down to the boys, sallow and deformed by the misshapen fitting of their limbs. Wherever anyone goes and sees the lines of mutilated humans [*mutilorum hominorum*], he will abhor the memory of that ancient queen Semiramis: she was the first of all to castrate unhardened males [*teneros mares*], doing violence to Nature, as it were, and throwing her back from her established course—Nature, who among the very cradles of growth, through the primordial founts of seed, shows by some silent law the routes for propagating posterity.

As in satire or diatribe, Ammianus dwells on the ugliness, cruelty, and unnaturalness that belong to this display of wealth; these qualities rebuke the aristocratic masters. He uses emotive, graphic language for maximum impact. The details conveyed by his rhetorical bombast are precise and medically correct. Modern spectrophotometric studies of hypogonadal and castrated men confirm that their low androgen levels cause lower than normal circulation of blood to the skin, lower than normal levels of hemoglobin in the blood, lower than normal supply of melanin and higher than normal amounts of carotene in the skin, all of which would contribute to the "sallow" complexion that Ammianus notes.³ Those who observe such men often remark on the softness, pallor, and pastiness of their skin, and the mesh of fine wrinkles that it develops even at early ages.⁴ Prepuberal castration causes the long bones of the legs and arms to grow several inches longer than is normal, because androgens hasten the epiphyseal closure that puts an end to bone growth. Therefore eunuchs have abnormally long limbs and can fall victim to osteoporosis, curvature of the spine, and joint deformities in middle age.⁵ Ammianus notes correctly "the misshapen fitting of their limbs." Although in humans castration does not necessarily result in caponism, both prepuberal and postpuberal castrates tend to distribute fat in a feminine pattern, depositing it especially on the hips, buttocks, breasts, and abdominal wall.⁶ Much more than their genitals marked eunuchs as "mutilated men."

3. Dorfman and Shipley 1956, 208–9, 316; with references to clinical studies.

4. E.g., Bremer 1958, 82–83, 109, 111, 307; cf. Dorfman and Shipley 1956, 316.

5. Dorfman and Shipley 1956, 315. The same is also true of hypogonadal men, photographs of whom illustrate the chapter. Some individuals are strikingly malproportioned.

6. Dorfman and Shipley 1956, 210, 315–16; Bremer 1958, 82–83, 110–11, 307. Adrenal androgens normally suffice to cause an adult growth of axillary and pubic hair, but in postpuberal castrates as well as hypogonadal men and prepuberal castrates it grows in a

Members of a society that used such men in daily life at all commonly would have had ample opportunity to observe their deformities.⁷ Ammianus's description gains effectiveness from being accurate. Eunuchs did look abnormal, and their strangeness could be perceived as unpleasant. Claudian takes full advantage of this perception; indeed he does everything that he can to emphasize Eutropius's condition and, through it, induce a visceral reaction against him.

He opens his invective with a catalog of traditional portents of disaster (1.1–7):

Semiferos partus metuendaque pignora matri,
 moenibus et mediis auditum nocte luporum
 murmur et attonito pecudes pastore locutas
 et lapidum diras hiemes nimboque minacem
 sanguineo rubuisse Iovem puteosque cruore
 mutatos binasque polo concurrere lunas
 et geminos soles mirari desinat orbis.

Half-beast births, and babes to frighten their mothers;
 in the midst of the city walls the murmur of wolves, heard
 in the night. Sheep that spoke to their astonished shepherd.
 Dire winter storms of stones. With bloody cloud,
 a threatening Jove grew red. Wells were transformed
 with gore. Double moons run about the pole,
 and twin suns—at these things the world ceases to wonder.

“Half-beast births” joins human and animal. Pliny uses the same phrase to describe the offspring of bestial unions among the Indians (Plin. *NH* 7.30). He also lists kinds of births that were considered portentous: births of more than three children at once, of hermaphrodites, and of animals or half animals to human parents (7.33–35). *Pignus*, originally a legal metaphor, ought to convey

feminine rather than masculine pattern, with the pubes a clearly defined triangle (Dorfman and Shipley 1956, 317; Bremer 1958, 82–83, 109–10, 307). Other readily apparent abnormalities of prepuberal castrates and hypogonadal men are immature genitalia, retained juvenile voice (although it was observed of the operatic castrati that “many castrati passed through a difficult period, vocally speaking, during the years in which their voices would have broken, had they not been what they were, and some of them were never able to sing again,” Angus Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera* [London: Secker and Warburg, 1956; rpt. New York, 1975], 172), and a juvenile hairline (“an uninterrupted curve without the usual wedge-shaped indentations which are present over the sides of the forehead in the normal adult. Extensive simple baldness does not occur,” Dorfman and Shipley 1956, 319).

7. For ancient observations, see Danilo Dalla, *L'incapacità sessuale in diritto romano*, Seminario giuridico della Università di Bologna 76 (Milan: Giuffrè, 1978), 29–67; Guyot 1980, 16–17, 37–42 and notes. Lucian, *Eunuch*, epitomizes ancient prejudices.

the sense that a child validates the bond between its parents,⁸ but these *pignora* are so horrible that they repel their mother. Both the limits of natural fertility and the human bonds consequent on fertility are ruptured. With his first words Claudian introduces a theme that runs throughout his indictment.⁹

Claudian's catalog continues with other weird conjunctions: wolf howls being heard inside the city, sheep speaking to their shepherds, rains of stones, bloody clouds, wells turned into gore, doubled moons and suns. He is echoing, as Birt observed and Richard Bruère detailed, Lucan's catalog of portents when Caesar arms for civil war and Pompey flees from Rome.¹⁰ Lucan begins with meteorological omens, unusual behavior of cult fires, floods, and weeping and sweating cult statues. The omens that interested Claudian come in the middle of Lucan's list: wild animals make their lairs inside Rome, sheep begin to speak, and deformed human babies terrify their mothers (Luc. 1.559–63):

accipimus, silvisque feras sub nocte relictis
audaces media posuisse cubilia Roma.
tum pecudum faciles humana ad murmura linguae,
monstrosique hominum partus numeroque modoque
membrorum, matremque suos conterruit infans.

We hear that bold wild beasts, deserting the woods
at night, have put their dens in the middle of Rome.
Then the tongues of sheep grow apt to human murmurs,
and births of men are monstrous in both the number and the manner
of their limbs, and her own child terrifies a mother.

Then dire Sibylline oracles are circulated, Bellona's and Cybele's self-mutilating priests sing of the gods and human disaster, and warlike ghosts begin to walk. Claudian evokes Lucan's horrific atmosphere, but eliminates the directly religious omens and the ones that transparently indicate civil war. Instead he gives pride of place to events that overturn laws of nature; the social disruptions they may imply, particularly in light of Claudian's allusion to Lucan, darken foreboding subliminally. The violations appall the senses directly. Children should belong to a single species, and should bond with their mothers. The wilderness should avoid civilization. Sheep should be silent while shepherds speak.¹¹ The elements should remain constant, not interchange with one

8. The *OLD* and Lewis and Short s.v. indicate that the meaning "child" is post-Augustan: first in elegy (Prop. 4.11.73; Ov. *Her.* 6.122, 12.192), though soon passing into prose. Cf. 3 *Cons.* 152, *Eutr.* 1.74.

9. Claudian here improves on Africa's complaint that Gildo has married his black barbarians to "Sidonian matrons," "a discolored infant frightens his cradle" (*Gild.* 193).

10. Luc. 1.524–83; Birt 1892, 74 ad loc.; Bruère 1964, 239.

11. In neat verbal interlock, *attonito pastore* contrasts with *pecudes locutas*, *Eutr.* 1.3 (quoted previously).

another or with animal life. The heavens should remain single. A new and ghastlier abomination, plainly, awaits.

The world no longer marvels at the omens, Claudian continues (*Eutr.* 1.8.):

omnia cesserunt eunucho consule monstra.

All prodigies have given way, when a eunuch is consul.

“All” and “prodigies” frame the line. “Eunuch” is centered and set off by the caesura and diaeresis; momentarily the line appears to make an even more grim statement, “all things have given way.” A eunuch as consul is the ultimate incongruity. When these two things go together, only disaster can result. The highly charged portentous atmosphere sparks into Juvenalian hyperbole, dire but at the same time ambiguously undercut. Juvenal can discuss applying to Nero the horrible traditional Roman penalty for parricide, hold up the mythological example of Orestes for matricide and find Nero’s motives more squalid, even before observing that he killed his sister and his wife as well, and finally cap these crimes with Nero’s competing on the stage and composing an epic on Troy.¹² It is both an ironic deflation and a transition to a different level of consideration, where Nero’s social and literary crimes imply even more awful lawlessness than do his murders.¹³ A eunuch consul is both more horrible than the other monstrosities Claudian enumerates, and faintly silly in comparison. The imperceptibly self-conscious exaggeration here foreshadows the grandiose ridiculousness toward which Claudian develops his portrait.

Claudian turns now to the Sibylline Books, which Lucan makes contribute to the general panic as people relate oracles to one another.¹⁴ Claudian calls for interpreters: pontiffs, augurs, and haruspices. Birt compared Juvenal’s protests against Gracchus’s taking a husband in *Satire 2*: he demands whether a censor or a haruspex should intervene, and whether births of one species to another would seem a worse portent.¹⁵ In Claudian’s combination, the sexual scandal of Juvenal informs the ominous structure of Lucan. As Isabella Gualandri has observed, Claudian frequently makes several different allusions at once. Not only has he assimilated a great breadth of literary tradition, but he joins disparate elements from the traditions to make new statements.¹⁶ His catalog

12. Juv. 8.213–30; cf. Courtney 1980, 383–84; Mayor 1901, 2.48–53 (better than Courtney on Nero’s murders). Aristophanes similarly leaps from sociopathy to artistic sin at *Ran.* 146–51.

13. Cultural terrorism is a crucial theme in Juvenal, which I hope to treat elsewhere; compare, e.g., Juv. 1.42–44 with the programmatic statements of that satire, esp. 1.1–21; Domitian’s culinary council of Juv. 4; domestically, the literary critic of Juv. 6.434–56.

14. As Birt and Bruère noted, both use the periphrasis, “songs of the Cumaean priestess” (*Cumanae carmina vatis*, *Eutr.* 1.11; Luc. 1.564).

15. Birt 1888, 52–53; Juv. 2.117–23.

16. Gualandri 1969.

of portents is no less suggestively dire than Lucan's. But it also has distinct overtones of sexual violation, which point the book toward a theme it takes up in more detail later.

Claudian calls for the evil prodigy to be destroyed, in order to avert the omen it bears (*Eutr.* 1.19–23):

quae tantas expiet iras
victima? quo diras iugulo placabimus aras?
consule lustrandi fasces ipsoque litandum
prodigio; quodcumque parant hoc omine fata,
Eutropius cervice luat.

What victim will expiate such great
angers? By what throat shall we placate the dire altars?
With the consul must the rods of office be purified, and with the prodigy
itself
must the propitiating sacrifice be made; whatever the fates are preparing
with this omen,
let Eutropius make atonement with his neck.

The passage recalls Lucan's Arruns (*Luc.* 1.589–91):

monstra iubet primum, quae nullo semine discors
protulerat natura, rapi sterilique nefandos
ex utero fetus infaustis urere flammis.

First he bids the prodigies, which from no seed a jangling
Nature had brought forth, to be snatched forth, and the unspeakable
offspring
from a sterile womb to burn with baleful flames.

This call for execution is the climax and immediate goal of Claudian's conceit that Eutropius is a prodigy. But the idea develops further. The thought of fate leads him to rebuke Fortuna, whose wanton whim has lifted Eutropius to culminating honor from the basest depths of slavery. Eutropius gets no credit for raising himself. His former position as slave at least matched his low nature, Claudian grants, but now "the crime of servility befouls the curule chairs" (*servili placuit* [sc. *Fortunae*] *foedare curules crimine*, 1.26–27). That is, socially too Eutropius is an incongruous prodigy. This quality is later recalled by the string of *adynata* to which the "more serious" Western mind compares the prospect of his consulate (1.350–57).¹⁷

Even as a slave, numerous resales attest that nobody wanted Eutropius or valued him. Claudian uses his whole account of Eutropius's slave career to

17. Cf. Birt 1890.

demonstrate this assertion. The obvious polemical end must cast doubt on the detail he alleges; he is our only source. To compare an example from a milieu where individual and family backgrounds must have been better known than the Easterner Eutropius's could have been in Milan, Cicero does not hesitate to call Piso "some unknown Syrian from the mob of new slaves" in the same speech that he mocks him for coming from Insubrian or even Transalpine Gallic stock.¹⁸ The slanders are not consistent, let alone all true. Cicero adds that Piso has a "servile complexion" and lacks "any particle of the freeborn or free man" (Cic. *Pis.* 1; fr. viii). In the same speech he also dismisses scornfully "two tribunes bought off the stone," that is as slaves, who failed to support his return (*Pis.* 35).¹⁹ Such people are worthless, the allegation implies; their opinions need not be taken seriously. Nor need individual slanders have been taken seriously either. They merely added to a cumulative, impressionistic sketch of character.

Claudian had more opportunity to press the charge of slavery literally, since eunuchs were normally slaves. He amplifies hyperbolically. Eutropius had as many masters as the sea has waves, or Libya grains of sand (1.32–33). Another favorite device is rhetorical exclamation: "How often was he stripped, while the buyer consulted the doctor, lest his loss lurk in a hidden fault!" (1.35–36).²⁰ The miniature scene sustains a momentary drama, in that respect alone enriching Claudian's work. Eutropius stands naked. The buyer doubts the value of his purchase, and fusses with the doctor. The aesthetic vividness of the scene makes concrete the fact that Eutropius has been a chattel, which is intrinsically demeaning; the same technique is applied to the same purpose when other writers claim that chalk still marks the feet of former slaves.²¹ Moreover, the image enacts Claudian's other claims about Eutropius. While he is being exhibited as a chattel, within the scene and by it to Claudian's audience, he is degraded before them by the inspection.²² The hesitation that prompts it adds an extra sting.

Other images function more viscerally. Eutropius could only be sold, of

18. Cic. *Pis.* 1 (cf. *Red.* 14); *Pis.* fr. ix, xi; 62. Cf. Koster 1980, 217–18, 226–27; Nisbet 1961, 194; Ronald Syme, "Who Was Decidius Saxa?," *JRS* 27 (1937): 130–33 (= *Roman Papers*, vol. 1, ed. Ernst Badian [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979], 33–38); on Gallic senators and Saxa as well as Piso; Süß 1910, 247.

19. Cf. Nisbet 1961, 97 ad loc.

20. Christiansen 1969 (see esp. 92–102) missed this image, and other such miniature scenes as well. The enumeration of Eutropius's masters, which he noted, uses concrete but very ordinary comparands and does not sustain the images.

21. See the references of Mayor 1901, 1.140 ad *Juv.* 1.111.

22. The remarks of Bella Zweig on the degradation of "The Mute Nude Female Characters in Aristophanes' Plays," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed. Amy Richlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 73–89, apply still more readily to Eutropius, in the unambiguously defamatory context of *Eutr.*

course, while he was still worth buying at all. But “afterward, he was left a misshapen cadaver [*deforme cadaver*], and all of him sagged down in anile wrinkles.” His masters gave him away just to be rid of him (1.38–41). The image of them “contending [*certatim*] to drive him from the threshold,” like the buyer’s examination, illustrates a point that Claudian enunciates elsewhere. Epigrammatic paradox underlines the same point again at the close of the section, twice: Eutropius “never ceased, but nonetheless often began, a service ancient, but ever new” (1.42–44).

Eutropius himself is simply, directly repulsive. Any eunuch may be “misshapen,” but deformity need not be unique to be horrid. The word *deformis* denotes an offense against the conventional ideals that identify beauty with worth:²³ Petronius’s Encolpius marvels, for example, that Trimalchio’s pet slave boy is “wizened, bleary-eyed, more misshapen than his master” (Petron. 28.4). Apuleius has Venus assign labors to Psyche on the grounds that being “so misshapen,” she can hope to win lovers only by her service (Apul. *Met.* 6.10). The antierotic connotation often borne by *deformis* is not crucial in this passage of *In Eutropium*, but it is an element that figures elsewhere in the invective. I shall return to it. Eutropius, further, is a *cadaver*.²⁴ His life is already exhausted. Nothing more remains. “All of him” and “flows down” image extravagant collapse. “Anile wrinkles” suggests not merely old age but, by being female, also sexual repulsiveness: wrinkles feature prominently in antierotic poetry about old women.²⁵

Yet more lurid is the scene of Eutropius’s castration, which stands for *genesis* in Claudian’s account of his *anastrophe* (1.44–57). The language is graphic and emotive. Castration is described as “bloody penalties,” “bloody” being dramatically juxtaposed with “his earliest cradle.” Assonance of *c* and *p* also bind the words together: *cunabula prima cruentis / debita suppliciiis*. Or even before he reaches a cradle (1.45–51),

rapitur castrandus ab ipso
ubere; suscipiunt matris post viscera poenae.
advolat Armenius certo mucrone recisos
edoctus mollire mares damnoque nefandum
aucturus pretium; fecundum corporis ignem

23. The adjective *deformis* is used by both Claudian and Ammianus in the passages already cited; cf. *TLL* s.v. II, for transferred, moral applications: it is used quite commonly of abstract qualities (5, 1, col. 368.79–329.39).

24. Cf. Cic. *Pis.* 19, *eiecto cadavere* of Piso, from whom no serious help could be expected, but who if propped up might at least sustain the name of consul.

25. E.g., Hor. *Epod.* 8.3 (description, discussed by Richlin [1983] 1992, 109–13); *Carm.* 4.13.11 (curse fulfilled); Prop. 3.25.12 (curse); Juv. 6.144 (anticipatory); transposed into prose with a gender variation, Petron. 23–24 (description of an aged and painted homosexual who rapes Encolpius).

sedibus exhaurit geminis unoque sub ictu
eripit officiumque patris nomenque mariti.

He is snatched for castration even from
the breast: punishments take him up after his mother's guts.
An Armenian flies to him, who has well learned how to soften the males
he trims with his sure blade, and who will by the injury increase
the damnable price;²⁶ the body's fertile fire
he drains from its twin seats and under one blow
tears away both the office of a father and the name of a husband.²⁷

Haste in "he is snatched" and "flies" heighten the brutality of the scene, and the disapprobation conveyed by "injury" and "damnable." *Damnoque nefandum / aucturus pretium* neatly juxtaposes the antithetical "loss" and "increase." Now the pace slows. "Uncertain of life he lay, and deeply into the top of his brain the severed sinews drew chills" (1.52–53). The newborn baby has been subjected to unspeakable violence by a greedy barbarian, and nearly dies in consequence. The scene should be pathetic. But with total unconcern Claudian asks, "Are we to praise the hand that took away strength from an enemy?" (1.54). No, finally: "he stands out the happier by his shame; he would be a slave still if he were stronger" (1.56–57). The smug rhetorical quibble abruptly defuses the pity aroused by the description.

Pity frustrated turns against Eutropius. He is an "enemy" who deserves "penalties" and "punishments." The only pity is that they did not incapacitate him further. The vividness of the scene fixes the castration in the audience's minds indelibly: from the beginning of his life Eutropius is damaged and effeminized. As in Ammianus's outburst against Semiramis, the initial injury was committed by an external force, but it becomes a fact of Eutropius's own flesh and mind. It changes him from the ordinary slave he otherwise would

26. In default of other information, *Eutr.* 1.47 and 58 are always cited as evidence that Eutropius came from Armenia or Syria (e.g., *PLRE* 2.440). Claudian may be right, but perhaps on no more basis than convention, since castration was illegal within the Roman Empire: in *CJ* 4.42.1 Constantine reiterated a ban originated by Domitian (see further Guyot 1980, 45–51).

27. Andrews 1931, 33, and Alan Cameron 1968a, 400, thought that the attributes of *Eutr.* 1.51 must be understood to be exchanged. But *patris* can be understood as predicative: by begetting children, a man performs the "office" that makes him a father, thus confirming that he has the relations with his wife that "the name of husband" recognizes merely verbally. *Nomenque mariti* recurs at *Stil.* 1.6 of Honorius, who never did father a child. (The occasional euphemism *officium* for sexual performance, e.g., *Prop.* 2.22.24, *Ov. Am.* 1.10.46, 3.7.24, cf. *Sen. Controv.* 4pr.10, lends an overtone of paradox that highlights the epigrammatic neatness of *Eutr.* 1.51.) Claudian follows ancient medical theory connecting production of semen with the brain (e.g., *Hp. Aër.* 22) in the fever that follows Eutropius's castration.

have remained into something ugly, contemptible, and more insidiously wicked. Claudian charges that he did not shame to profit by the injury too. *Suscipiunt* of the punishments taking up Eutropius “from his mother’s guts” is a technical term that substitutes them for a father acknowledging paternity;²⁸ he is thus illegitimate too. And if the contested reading *debita* accepted by Hall is right,²⁹ the description is opened by the assertion that Eutropius’s “bloody penalties” were deserved. In any case, it arouses a strong disgust that Claudian transfers to Eutropius.

Degradation and revulsion are fundamental aims of the images Claudian deploys against Eutropius. By the time his *anastrophe* concludes, he has been reduced to the lowly duties of a lady’s maid (1.105–9). “The ruler of the East and future consul” impressively unrolls his future glory. It is the subject of a sentence that continues, “combs the hair of his mistress and often, when his fosterling is bathing, stands naked bearing pure liquid [*lympham*] for her in a silver dish.” His future offices are undermined by his performance as a hairdresser: even among servile duties, hairdressing seems to have been regarded as especially base.³⁰ The luxury of the silver dish contrasts starkly with Eutropius’s exposure.³¹ A similar ironic juxtaposition of future title and present duty, opulence and degradation, breaks about the caesura in the last line of the description, “the patrician fans with peacocks’ rosy wings” (*patricius roseis pavonum ventilat alis*). “Patrician” is lofty. The rosy color bespeaks luxury. But the rest of the line corrects the perspective. All the luxury belongs to the pampered mistress. Eutropius is only an instrument who fans her in the heat.

Finally, Eutropius cannot perform even these tasks any longer. Claudian paints his decrepitude in great detail (1.110–14).³²

28. OLD s.v. *suscipio* 4. Castration corrupting the whole person, e.g., Lucian, *Eun.* 8.

29. By Hall’s report, at *Eutr.* 1.45 *debita* is given by four witnesses of the twelfth to thirteenth century (P₂, F₂, P after corr., F); Schweckendiek 1992, 69, preferred its vividness. Andrews 1931, 32 (approved by Alan Cameron 1968a, 400, though he found *debita* attractive), preferred *dedita* of six witnesses, one ca. 1050 and the others of the twelfth to thirteenth century (Γ, g, R *varia lect.*, W₁, J₃, n₁); Schmidt 1989, 407 located Γ closest to the archetype of his stemma. Birt 1892, followed by Platnauer 1922, read *debet* of three witnesses of the twelfth to thirteenth century (L in ras., P before corr., R).

30. Possibly because hairdressing was associated with adultery by the mistress: as an intimate servant, the hairdresser might act as a go-between (a commonplace of erotic elegy, e.g., Ov. *Am.* 1.11), and the mistress would want to be groomed especially well for a lover (e.g., Juv. 6.487–511). Julian *Caes.* 335B ranks hairdressing with pastry cooking, a Platonic image of base titillation, e.g., *Grg.* 464D–E, 521E–522A.

31. The combination of silver dish, eunuch, and bather parallels Trimalchio’s entourage at the baths, Petron. 27 (cf. Mart. 3.87), but *lympham* sanitizes away the rich man’s urine; Claudian emphasizes only the abasement of the slave.

32. As Birt 1892, 78, and Fargues, *Invectives* 48, observed on this passage, Juv. 10.191–209 describes similar ravages of old age: thickened skin, drooping cheeks (cf. *Eutr.*

iamque aevo laxata cutis, sulcisque genarum
 corruerat passa facies rugosior uva:
 flava minus presso finduntur vomere rura,
 nec vento sic vela tremunt.

Now his skin is loosened with age. From the furrows of his cheeks,
 his dried-out face had collapsed, more wrinkled than a raisin.
 The golden country earth is less cloven by the plow pressed upon it,
 and sails do not shake so in the wind.

Each image is fresh and different, so that its full impact is felt as it reiterates the same claims about its referents, the flapping wrinkles of Eutropius's drooping flesh. Peder G. Christiansen interpreted the images as wholly unfavorable: he asserted that "the helpless objects, disfigured by the plow and the wind, represent the mistreatment of Eutropius by his former masters."³³ But sails are not disfigured by the wind. They flap until they are drawn in and the ship takes off. The image is merely pictorial. The earth, in the georgic literature that *sulcis, flava rura*, and *vomere* suggest³⁴ and in the real life of an agricultural community, is not a passive, helpless object. It is plowed so that it may bring forth the crops on which life depends. *Flava*, as Andrews noted, is used of fields ready to be reaped.³⁵ Raisins were spread out to dry (*passa*) and become a sweet condiment. Thus Claudian's agricultural imagery suggests desirable fertility. It mocks Eutropius's sterility even as it describes his wasted face. The treatment he received as a slave does not enter into consideration.

Claudian goes on to claim that Eutropius's scalp has been chewed by grubs, so that there are gaps in his hair. Continuing his agricultural imagery, Claudian compares Eutropius's head to a cornfield stricken by drought (1.113–18).³⁶

1.258–59, but also my note 41 on that passage), wrinkles, shaky voice and limbs, baldness, sniveling, toothlessness, impotence.

33. Christiansen 1969, 93.

34. In a general way; neither Birt, Fargues, Andrews, nor I have been able to detect strong specific echoes in the passage.

35. Andrews 1931, 39 ad loc., citing Verg. *Georg.* 1.316 and Gellius's definition, '*Flavus* contra videtur e viridi et rufo et albo concretus' ("compounded of verdant green, ruddy, and white," Gell. 2.26.12 [not 2.16.12]). Entries in *TLL* s.v. *flavus* show that when applied to soil the adjective was used of sand (*harena*), which would not have been plowed, so that Claudian's *flava rura* must anticipate the ripe grain, of which *flavus* was used commonly (*TLL* 6, 1 s.v. *flavus* II.A, 888.11–20; II.D, 889.34–40).

36. Andrews 1931, 39, said of *tineae*: "this word means 'worms,' and Harper's, Quicherat, and Platnauer are wrong in thinking that in this one place it has the meaning 'lice.' [Platnauer translated "grubs" here, "lousy" at 1.260.] Claudian's description shows that Eutropius was obviously a victim of partial alopecia, a disease which is commonly produced by a species of ringworm." Andrews is too precise: Claudian only

The wrinkles plowed in him cannot produce even a raisin. The simile's dried-out ears of grain mockingly imitate his own infertility. The imagery now accords with its object.

Claudian supplies another simile (1.117–18): “or as, with feather falling from frozen rimes, a swallow dies upon a winter tree's trunk” (*vel qualis gelidis pluma labente pruinis arboris inmoritur trunco brumalis hirundo*). A bird molting always looks unpleasant, as the Romans would know from their pets. It is another pungently graphic image. But Claudian pushes the image yet further, beyond ugliness and infertility finally to death.

Eutropius himself, when Claudian returns to him, has become a walking corpse or ghost.³⁷ “Pale image,” “naked bones,” “horror,” and “bleached emaciation” (1.121–23) all suggest a specter. “A distressing corpse and shade baleful to its own family spirits” (1.130–31) makes it explicit. The imagery goes far beyond what Christiansen suggested, “a swallow is out of place in the cold frost of winter; Eutropius ought not to serve as consul” (93). Claudian indeed implies that Eutropius ought not to serve as consul, but not merely because he is out of place. He is virtually dead and unfit for anything. He is an evil omen for those he meets (1.125). He will bring destruction on the home (1.131).

This strong assertion legitimates the otherwise callous and cynical behavior of the shepherd in Claudian's next simile. He feeds his dog while he is fit to protect the flock, but “when the same dog, slower and dirty, lets droop ears now torn by mange, he undoes and keeps as profit the chains stripped from his neck”; thus is Eutropius set free (1.135–37). Claudian has just reiterated that Eutropius did not even guard when he was physically capable (1.128–30), so that as a slave he was less useful than the dog. Now when he can no longer perform even the most menial tasks, the kindest thing possible is to allow him

claims Eutropius's crop of hair looks infested. Related derogatory imagery, e.g., Jul. *Misop.* 338C (lice in the beard), Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 33 (worms in Galerius's rotting bowels, modeled esp. after 2Macc. 9: cf. Moreau 1954, 1.60–64, 2.383–87).

37. *Trunco* in the swallow simile alludes indirectly to Eutropius's castration and moribund state: cf. Verg. *Aen.* 2.557, 9.332 (death); Ov. *Am.* 3.7.15 (sexual impotence). Heinsius suggested it be applied to Eutropius directly at *Eutr.* 1.254, *truncum vexilla secuntur* for *tum cum* J₆ (before corr.; *tunc cum* g, P₂, R var. *lect.*, F; *tunc tum* σ); Hall accepted the emendation. R and other manuscripts Hall considered the best, including the stemmatically prior Γ (cf. Schmidt 1989, 407), read *peditum*, but as Schweckendiek 1992, 82–83, commented, that the units should consist of infantrymen adds little meaningful information. He preferred Koenig's *tumidum*, underscoring the farcical delusion of Eutropius's triumphing. Despite Schweckendiek's professed incredulity, I cannot see how “the standards follow a trunk” emasculates the army any more (or less) than Claudian's calling them “maniples of eunuchs” in the next line. Ovid's use of the image sets up a nice counterpoint for the hollow action of this “legion most worthy of Hellespontine emblems” (see subsequent discussion and in Chap. 8.I).

to skulk off and die by himself. His freedom in no way reflects anything good about him. Rather it passes a final verdict on his worthlessness.

Yet Eutropius does not skulk off and die. “There is a time when contempt helps too much,” Claudian bitterly remarks (1.138). By some evil humor of the gods, from being rejected from slavery Eutropius is catapulted into power. He finds shelter in the palace like an “ancient vixen,” an animal proverbial for cunning,³⁸ but he still is the same “venal cadaver” who has “crept into the sacred service,” to the grief of all (*vetulam vulpem; inreperere sacris obsequiis . . . venale cadaver*, 1.145–47). *Sacris* at this point means no more than “imperial,”³⁹ but the sense of pollution is retained from the earlier comparison to a corpse.

Eutropius is not improved by success. When he returns from his Hunnic campaign, Claudian recalls his hair-grubs with him too (1.260),⁴⁰ as well as his drooping cheeks, sallow complexion, and high-pitched voice.⁴¹ Such a hideous figure looks incongruous indeed at the focus of a public celebration. The evidence for late antique triumphal ceremonies, studied in detail by Michael McCormick, shows that the structure of Claudian’s account fits the custom.⁴² At least as Claudian portrays it, Eutropius reinforced his pretensions to victory by making his assertion in the public language of ceremony. Claudian belies the victory itself with his picture, immediately before the return, of barbarians with their ferocity unabated: they turn to slaughter merely because they are bored with plunder (1.250–51). Eutropius himself is appalling, but as “a slave and an effeminate” unashamed by anything (1.252). His army moves forward

38. E.g., Hor. *Serm.* 2.3.186; Pers. 5.117.

39. As early as the Augustan period (*Ov. Fast.* 6.810), and standard in later antiquity: *OLD* s.v. *sacer*.

40. Hall reported a marginal note in the *Isingriniana* of *tunicas* for *tineas*; but though the corruption would not be difficult paleographically, “his maggots sprinkled with dust” has the more force from its incongruousness, whereas “tunics sprinkled with dust” is pedestrian.

41. “He labored to puff out his flabby cheeks” (*Eutr.* 1.258–59) betrays not simply old age (despite 1.110, “skin gone slack with age”), but also Eutropius’s eunuchism, as do his “words broken beyond depravity” (1.260–62): modern studies have found that the skin of eunuchs shows “increased distensibility as determined by quantitative procedures” (Dorfman and Shipley 1956, 316), and observers remark on the “poor turgor and freshness” of the facial skin of castrates (Bremer 1958, 109). Werner A. Krenkel, “Hyperthermia in Ancient Rome,” *Arethusa* 8 (1975): 385–86, collected evidence showing that the Romans considered a “broken voice” to be a sign of effeminacy in uncastrated men (e.g., *Juv.* 2.111, quoted in Chap. 2). It is not possible that, as he proposed, a fashion for high-pitched rhetorical delivery had anything to do with the Romans’ notoriously hot baths possibly impairing spermatogenesis: once testosterone has triggered the thickening of the vocal cords in pubescent males, the change is irreversible (cf. Bremer 1958, 110).

42. McCormick 1986, 35–64, 80–130; cf. 11–34; on *Eutr.* 1.252–71 specifically, 48–49.

with its standards, but it consists of eunuchs and the like, “a legion most worthy of Hellespontine emblems” (1.256). As Fargues and Andrews noted, this characterization does not slander Constantinople gratuitously, but refers to a major cult center of Priapus: the traditional association of eunuchs and licentiousness is being played upon.⁴³ Eutropius is met by a grateful delegation: “dependent” and “defender” indicate their relationship. They embrace. Eutropius delivers a speech in which he “retells the battles.” He further declares himself exhausted in public service, and unable to support the weight of domestic ill will (*livori, procellas invidiae*, 1.265–66). Ammianus reports for Constantius’s triumphal entry into Rome in 357 the same sequence of progress toward the city, greetings outside the walls by a senatorial delegation, further parade and entrance to the city, and an address to the people; Constantius completed the festivities with games for the populace and a tour of Rome (Amm. 16.10).⁴⁴

The speech Claudian assigns Eutropius could be interpreted positively in context. But Claudian characterizes it as pitiful whining, and concentrates on Eutropius’s ignobly quavering voice. Similarly, his description replaces the impressive garments a triumphator would have worn with dust that spatters Eutropius’s ravaged scalp and pallid, filthy face.⁴⁵ Finally Claudian compares him to a bibulous, exhausted old woman. The glory that a triumph should parade is wholly overshadowed by the demeaning images with which Claudian fills out its basic scheme. Such caricatured pageantry had particular investive

43. Worship of Priapus at Lampsacus on the Hellespont: Pausan. 9.31.2; e.g., *Hellespontiaci . . . Priapi*, Verg. *Georg.* 4.111. Fargues, *Invectives* 61, reported Koenig’s suggestion that some of the Eastern units used an image of Priapus on their standards. Andrews 1931, 52–53, declared the collocation “strongly ironical, for of all men eunuchs could least expect some direct benefit from addressing their devotion to a god of fertility and procreation.” Compare rather, e.g., Juv. 6.366–78 (women choose to copulate with postpuberal castrates because they are infertile) and references cited by Courtney 1980, 309–11 ad loc.; Guyot 1980, 63–66. Some of the castrates studied by Bremer 1958 retained erectile capacity even without androgen treatment, although “rectal exploration of slightly more than half the cases confirmed that the prostate glands disappear, as stated in other investigations” (110, summarizing case histories taken six to fifteen years after castration). Presumably ejaculate ceases to be produced. Rousselle 1988, 107–28, delineated a positive ideology of castrate sexual activity. It cannot have been actuated by many, but it could reinforce the satirical image. On the other hand, Lucian, *Eun.* 12–13, jokes at castrate sex as an absurdity.

44. Compare too the Eastern army’s return to Constantinople, *Ruf.* 2.348–70. On the impact of pageantry within literary descriptions and in real life, see Ramsay MacMullen, “Some Pictures in Ammianus Marcellinus,” *Art Bull.* 46 (1964): 435–55 = 1990, 78–106; cf. MacCormack 1981, 17–89; MacCormack 1972.

45. See note 40 on the readings *tineas/tunicas* for *Eutr.* 1.260. Compare the splendor of the triumphator on the column of Arcadius (presumably Fravitta after the defeat of Gainas; McCormick 1986, 50, 53, reproduced a sketch and discussed the image).

force in the ceremonious world of late antiquity: Julian rouses fine scorn from the sham imperial proclamation of the usurper Silvanus,⁴⁶ for example, and Ammianus of Procopius.⁴⁷ Claudian achieves no less with his vivid pictorial commentary.

Manipulation of images is a fundamental artistic technique, which Claudian shares with every literary genre. At a simple but by no means unimportant level, these pictures contribute immensely to the liveliness and general interest of the invective. They indelibly establish Claudian's identification of Eutropius as a limited, alien, repulsive being: he is a eunuch, with all the unattractive qualities that castration entails. This is the central theme of Claudian's attack on him, especially in book 1. The figure of the eunuch makes an irreconcilable antithesis with all the honors Eutropius achieves. Creating a vivid sensory impression that will remain in the audience's mind is the imagery's most important task. An example of its effect, with supporting details further elaborated, is given by the contrast of the slavish, effeminate, shameless, sagging, filthy, whining, bibulous eunuch's impersonation of a triumphator. Other pictures directly illustrate specific claims: for example, the contest of Eutropius's masters to drive him from their homes demonstrates actively how undesirable he was as a slave. Some series of images effect a more general commentary. The omens cataloged in the opening lines, with their reminiscences of Lucan, set a horrific mood for the introduction of Eutropius. The revulsion reflects onto him. Scenes of his slavery demonstrate the debasement of his position, and by their vividness fix it as the norm of his character. When Eutropius is finally "freed by contempt" (1.132), the progression of images from his actual infertility to the death that should have disposed of him permanently both advances and interprets events. He remains a "dead body, so many times up for sale" (*totiens venale cadaver*) as he enters imperial service (1.147).

11. Feminine Motifs

The final image of Eutropius's triumph in book 1 is of a "parched mother-in-law" (*arida socrus*) who travels a long way to see her daughter-in-law and scarcely gets there when she starts demanding wine. The incongruous and gruesomely ludicrous sensory details of the triumph are summarized in a single petty scene of comic low life that conclusively, derisively erases the military victory that Eutropius was celebrating. In the feminine, domestic context to which Claudian translates his scene, glory has no part.

46. *Jul Or.* 1.48C, 2.98D: "effeminate purple"; cf. *Claud. Ruf.* 2.343–47.

47. *Amm.* 26.6.15 for the crowning *purpureum pannulum*, but surrounding sections more generally. I discuss the manipulation of imperial imagery in proclamation scenes in my paper "The Emperor's New Beard," *Thirteenth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference: Abstracts of Papers*, 1987 (distributed by Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.).

Any androcentric culture would find emasculation a natural invective tactic.⁴⁸ It demeans the victim because it denies him any capacity for exercising the masculine virtues according to which he could be esteemed. The scene of Eutropius's castration literally emasculates him at the beginning of his invective biography. His castration physically effeminized him in fact. And this physical feminization afforded Claudian many opportunities for literary attack. Eutropius began his career, Claudian claims, as a catamite (1.61–77). Pathic homosexuality so obviously puts a man in a feminine position, and so obviously degrades him, to ancient ways of thinking, and so often was charged in ancient political invective, that already Aristophanes in *Ecclesiazusae* can turn the conceit on its head with Praxagora's argument that since the best speakers are the most pathic, women are naturally equipped to address the Ecclesia.⁴⁹ Cicero accuses numerous opponents of having had older lovers in boyhood;⁵⁰ Clodius he even claims continues to perform pathically as an adult.⁵¹ As I have noted, no holds were barred in the political invective of democratic Athens and republican Rome, whereas attacks of the late empire stuck closer to the political issue itself; even the *Panegyrici Latini* do not make this accusation against the usurpers they revile.⁵² But Libanius's invective

48. On classical Athenian views of feminine characteristics, e.g., Dover 1974, 98–102. Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), argued that Athenian culture systematically enforced male sexual dominance both literally and as a metaphor for broader social interaction; reviewers have found individual claims overstated or sloppily supported, but upheld the value of Keuls's central thesis (e.g., T. Marsh, *Helios* 12, 2 [1986]: 163–69; H. A. Shapiro, *AJA* 90 [1986]: 361–63). Richlin proposed a Priapic model for the world view represented by Roman satire ([1983] 1992, esp. 57–63); for commentary see now the introduction to her second edition, esp. 1992, xvi–xviii. See too “*Mollitia*: Reading the Body” in Edwards 1993, 63–97, for discussion and further references.

49. Ar. *Eccl.* 112–14, *πλεῖστα σποδοῦνται*, “they are banged the most”; cf. 228, *βινούμεναι χαίρουσιν ὡσπερ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ*, “they love to be fucked, just like before now, too” (here the crucial claim is that women will govern well because they are consistent). Cf. *Nub.* 1089–94; etc.

50. Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.32–33; 2.3.159–62 (Verres' son); *Red. Sen.* 11; *Dom.* 126; *Sest.* 18 (Gabinius), 110 (Gellius); *Har. Resp.* 42, 59 (Clodius); *Phil.* 2.3, 44–46, 86; 3.15; 13.17 (Antony). Ps.-Cic. *Inv. Sal.* 21 uses the same term *paelex*, “mistress,” which Claudian calls Eutropius at *Eutr.* 1.62. Cf. Richlin [1983] 1992, 97–98; Ramsay MacMullen, “Roman Attitudes to Greek Love,” *Historia* 31 (1982): 484–502 = MacMullen 1990, 177–89 = Dynes and Donaldson 1992, 340–58.

51. Cic. *Har. Resp.* 42; *Pis.* 65. Cf. Richlin [1983] 1992, 98.

52. Barbara Saylor Rodgers suggests to me that *Pan. Lat.* 12[9].4.3–4 (discussed in Chap. 3.III) could be read with overtones of the licentiousness and deformity assigned to eunuchs, if *ille* Maximiani suppositus *tu Constantii Pii filius* be taken to impute pathic sexuality to Maxentius; but since Maxentius and Constantine are contrasted particularly as sons and *supponere* commonly refers to substitution of an alien in the

against Philip confirms the natural expectation that pathic homosexuality lost none of its negative connotations in the later empire (Lib. *Prog.* 9.3.4). The fact that throughout time it was notoriously a service of castrated slaves adds social to sexual degradation.⁵³

But Claudian does not allege simply that Eutropius was pathically homosexual as a slave. He makes the whole of Eutropius's slave career into a history of rejections. Thus Eutropius, having been a dubious purchase,⁵⁴ first appears in slavery as a discarded catamite. Among the innumerable owners through whose hands Eutropius passed in rapid succession, Claudian declares the *miles stabuli* Ptolemaeus "relatively well known. Fatigued by long use of his mistress [*paelicis*], he passes him on to Arinthaëus" (1.60–63). Despite *longo usu*, Ptolemaeus passes in and out of active participation in the poem only slightly less instantly than the hordes of unnamed masters.

Eutropius laments the callous "divorce" in a hilarious burlesque of the deserted woman of elegy and epyllion.⁵⁵ The disparity between the clichés he invokes and his own unloveliness highlight his desperation and erotic unsuitability; the experience of frustration mocks him generally. He is petty and incompetent, even in the already debased role of a homosexual "mistress." "Was this, Ptolemaeus, this your faithfulness?" he begins with melodramatic anguish (*haec erat, haec, Ptolemaee, fides?* 1.66). In its repetition, apostrophe, and accusations of perfidy, the outburst recalls Catullus's Ariadne: "Have you left me thus, faithless man, carried from my father's altars, faithless Theseus, on a deserted shore?" (*sicine me patriis avectam, perfide, ab aris, perfide, deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?*).⁵⁶ Ovid's *Heroides* are a catalog of forsaken women,

place of a legitimate baby, not to sexual submission (cf. Lewis and Short, *OLD* s.v., and Pacatus's parallel slur on Maximus, *Pan. Lat.* 2[12].31.1), the suggestion must be remote. Tyrants are reviled for active sexual debauchery, e.g., *Pan. Lat.* 4[10].8.3, Lact. *Mort. Pers.* 8.5, *HA Car.* 16.1; cf. Moreau 1954, 2.253.

53. Guyot 1980, 59–63; cf. Mark Golden, "Slavery and Homosexuality at Athens," *Phoenix* 38 (1984): 308–24 = Dynes and Donaldson 1992, 162–78, on how pederastic relationships among Athenian citizen males evaded servile associations.

54. The scene of Eutropius on display (*Eutr.* 1.35–36) may recall Horace's satirical advice to shop for a sexual partner at brothels rather than among matrons, whose clothes cover their bad points (Hor. *Serm.* 1.2.80–95), although there are no close verbal echoes. Cf. Halperin 1990, 92–93 and n. 44, on the similar theme of Xenarchus fr. 4.

55. Another parodic homosexual "divorce" and overblown reaction, mocking conventions of the novel, is to be found in Petron. 79–81: cf. E. Courtney, "Parody and Literary Allusion in Menippean Satire," *Philologus* 106 (1962): 86–100, esp. 93–94, 97. Opelt 1965, 33–38, discussed words women call their abandoners (she referred also to H. Hross, *Die Klagen der verlassenen Heroiden in der lateinischen Literatur*, diss., Munich, 1958).

56. Cat. 64.132–33. Birt 1892, 76, and Fargues, *Invectives* 44 ad loc., compared Clau-

and like most of them Eutropius calls upon his past bonds with the abandoner. His however are limited to sexual service. And where Ovid's Ariadne, for example, excites pathos from the bed that no longer holds Theseus with her (Ov. *Her.* 10.7–16, 51–58), the bed on which Eutropius calls is so placed as to evoke laughter: “Was this the profit of my youth spent in your bosom, and the conjugal bed [*lectusque iugalis*], and sleep so often spent between the horses' stalls [*inter praeseptia*]?”

The real nature of Ptolemaeus's office, “soldier of the stable,” is debated. Maurice Platnauer emphasized *stabuli* over *miles* and identified him as “a servant in a public post-house”;⁵⁷ he used the title *stationarius* for this post, which as Cameron pointed out designates rather a local police official, “in any event a very humble” one.⁵⁸ Cameron preferred to identify Ptolemaeus as a *comes stabuli*, on the grounds that Claudian terms him “better known” among Eutropius's owners and discusses him at length. The more pressing reason for Claudian to devote time to Ptolemaeus is that his duties afforded an opportunity for humorous exploitation; Claudian returns to him, as Cameron also noted, in order to pun on his name and compare Eutropius to Pothinus, eunuch slave to the Ptolemies (1.480).⁵⁹ Conceivably, “better known” could overstate a low rank either to inflate it and justify the attention devoted to this episode, or ironically to emphasize the lowliness of Eutropius's owners. On the other hand, the jokes read more easily, particularly before Claudian's Western audience, if Ptolemaeus was a prominent figure. He was apparently well enough placed to have connections with the consular Arinthaëus.⁶⁰ Cameron's identification is the more likely, *miles* merely avoiding a metrical difficulty. The comic point comes from taking *stabuli* literally and making it concrete.

Beds are one theme of the abandoned heroines; marriage is an even more prominent one, whether it had taken place or merely been promised.⁶¹ Eu-

dian's line with Stat. *Theb.* 10.812–13 (not 807), “this was, this, the fearsome hand and sword, which I myself insanely gave” (*haec erat, haec metuenda manus ferrumque, quod amens ipsa dedi*). Though the impassioned repetition is the same, in Statius it belongs to Menoecus's mother lamenting over his suicide; it may add a note of epic burlesque. Possibly Claudian echoes more specifically Propertius's Arethusa (4.3.11), but the reading is corrupt: *haecne marita fides* et pact(a)e iam mihi noctes PVo; et *pacat(a)e mihi* FL; et *parce avia* N; et *pactae in savia noctes* Haupt (favored by Fedeli [Stuttgart: Teubner, 1984], though he printed the reading of N and judged the corruption ultimately insoluble); *pactae et mihi gaudia noctis* L. Müller; et *primae praemia noctis* Housmann; *alii alia*.

57. Platnauer 1922, 1.142 n. 1.

58. Alan Cameron 1968a, 401; cf. A. H. M. Jones 1964, 600.

59. For Pothinus, see the prosopography of Guyot 1980, 221–24, no. 83.

60. *PLRE* 1.753, Ptolemaeus 2, concurred; Arinthaëus, *PLRE* 1.102–3.

61. Marriage: Dido (Verg. *Aen.* 4.314–16, 324, 496; Ov. *Her.* 7.31, 69, 167), Penelope

tropius's phrase "the conjugal bed" embraces both ideas (*lectusque iugalis*, 1.67).⁶² The promises he charges Ptolemaeus with breaking, however, were to free him. Ovid's Briseis, as a slave mistress closely analogous to Eutropius, begs Achilles to keep her as a slave if not a mistress, if only he will keep her with him (*Ov. Her.* 3.75–82). But Eutropius displays no such devotion.

A more material point in Claudian's indictment is that sex was the only thing Eutropius had to offer. He has no other skill or strength with which he might serve. His many resales constitute the testimony of his masters that they found him worthless. Now Eutropius demonstrates why. He wails (*Eutr.* 1.75–77):

cum forma dilapsus amor; defloruit oris
gratia. qua miseri scapulas tutabimur arte?
qua placeam ratione senex?

Along with my beauty, love has disintegrated; my features' grace
has lost its bloom. By what art will my poor self save my shoulders?
On what account may I please in old age?

He faces the same disaster as the wife loved for her beauty in Juvenal's *Satire* 6: "let three wrinkles come up and her skin grow dry and loose, let her teeth get dark and her eyes less great," and her husband will turn her out of the house (*Juv.* 6.144–46).

Eutropius lacks the other resources on which such women could rely, as he says (*Eutr.* 1.71–74):

generis pro sors durissima nostri!
femina, cum senuit, retinet conubia partu,
uxorisque decus matris reverentia pensat.
nos Lucina fugit, nec pignore nitimur ullo.

The hard lot of our kind!
A woman, when she ages, retains her marriage by childbirth,
and reverence for the mother pays out the honor of the wife.
Lucina flies us, and we are not supported by any pledge.

This complaint follows closely Juvenal's complacent observations about the male brides of *Satire* 2: "they are unable to give birth, and by birth to retain

(*Ov. Her.* 1.84), Oenone (*Ov. Her.* 5.9–12, 80–88, 108, 133), Hypsipyle (*Ov. Her.* 6.41–46), Hermione (*Ov. Her.* 8.17–42, 101), Deianira (*Ov. Her.* 9.27–35), Medea (*Ov. Her.* 12.162, 192), Arethusa (*Prop.* 4.3.11–16, 49–50). Promises: Ariadne (*Cat.* 64.139–48; *Ov. Her.* 10.116–18), Phyllis (*Ov. Her.* 2.31–44).

62. As Birt noted (1892, 76), Dido includes "the conjugal bed" among the items to be included in the courtyard pyre that will destroy her love for Aeneas, Verg. *Aen.* 4.496.

their husbands” (*nequeant parere et partu retinere maritos*, Juv. 2.138). Claudian’s *retinet conubia partu* varies Juvenal’s phrase only superficially.⁶³ Both authors make the same point, that the catamite’s biological incapacity makes him inferior to women. But in referring to “our kind” Claudian treats Eutropius’s castration as dictating his sexual role and consequent devaluation;⁶⁴ moreover, he explicitly ranks Eutropius below women. “And indeed, if a woman assumed the celebrated fasces, it would be less disgraceful” (*esset turpe minus*, 1.320–21). There are queens, goddesses, and priestesses but no corresponding roles for eunuchs (1.321–30).⁶⁵ Once more the emphasis falls on the eunuch’s lost fertility (1.331–32): “A woman is born for fruitfulness and future offspring; this race was invented that it might serve” (*nascitur ad fructum mulier prolemque futuram: hoc genus inventum est ut serviat*).

Although Claudian uses this comparison and devalues Eutropius against women for sexual unproductiveness, he nevertheless continually identifies Eutropius with female types. After he is discarded as a mistress, he passes on to pandering (1.77–97). Claudian declares him “scarcely otherwise” than the proverbially infamous *Lais*, who, when she can no longer draw lovers of her own, “stands nonetheless. She plays the bawd and girdles other handmaids, and although long-lived, circles the brothel she has long loved; her habits keep the thing her age has lost.”

The identification places Eutropius in a long line of sexually desperate repulsive old women derided by ancient poets. In *Ecclesiastus* three successively more horrible hags battle over the young man to whom a new political dispensation gives them a right (Ar. *Eccl.* 977–1111).⁶⁶ An old woman in *Plutus* complains that her gigolo will no longer serve her (Ar. *Plut.* 959–1096). Various nurses in Greek and Roman New Comedy lament their lost youth, drink, and advise their charges to extract from their lovers as much as they can while the

63. Birt 1888, 53, connected Juv. 2.138 to *Eutr.* 1.224, *numquam mater eris, numquam pater* (“you will never be a mother, never a father”). G. B. A. Fletcher, “Imitationes vel loci similes in poetis Latinis,” *Mnemosyne* 3rd ser. 1 (1933–34): 198, linked *Eutr.* 1.72 and Juv. 2.138 as I do.

64. *Generis* refers to eunuchs as a class: cf. *Eutr.* 1.332, 415. At no point does Eutropius regret anything that he has done, so he does not truly resemble “an old woman grieving over her misused past” (Christiansen 1969, 94); if he did, he would be displaying a redeeming touch of decency, however tardy. Claudian does not allow such a thing.

65. Claudian here ignores the Galli of Cybele, to whom he refers at *Eutr.* 1.280. The Galli should have been postpuberal castrates, not eunuchs strictly defined (cf. Rousselle 1988, 121–28), but Claudian does not make the distinction. Barbara Saylor Rodgers kindly calls to my attention two passages of which Claudian betrays no awareness, an ironic protest at eunuch-rule in Persia, Ruf. *Hist. Alex.* 10.1.37, and a serious assertion at Plin. *NH* 13.9.41.

66. Jeffrey Henderson, “Older Women in Attic Old Comedy,” *TAPA* 117 (1987): 105–29, surveyed “Satirical Images,” 117–20.

getting is good; the model is perpetuated in erotic elegy.⁶⁷ Horace in the *Odes* threatens unyielding women by forecasting lonely decrepitude⁶⁸ and in the *Epodes* rejects decrepit old women who woo him.⁶⁹ His gruesome portraits have counterparts in Petronius, the *Priapea*, and the Vergilian Appendix.⁷⁰ These awful women and their eternal frustration perennially fueled scornful laughter. Casting Eutropius as a whore who refuses to retire reinforces the invective implications of his divorcée's lament. If sexual submission is demeaning under any circumstances, Eutropius's desire reveals even greater depravity.⁷¹ The analogy of *Lais* suggests that he wants it personally, not just as an alternative to being beaten; the fear he shows in his lament admits that he is worthless in other servile capacities. Finally, both roles show Eutropius frustrated. He is not good enough at the thing he wants to do to be able to retain it. Frustration is risible. It also condemns.

In *Lais*'s lingering in the brothel and Eutropius's prolonged involvement with socially disapproved sexuality, Claudian may also have thought of Juvenal's *Messalina*: she too, in an unforgettably lurid description, haunts a brothel overlong and still cannot satisfy her lust (Juv. 6.114–32).⁷² Her extremity of desire and the lengths to which it drives her make her more profoundly horrible than the frantic crones. They can always be rejected, but with what she insatiably takes she contaminates the palace. Eutropius too in his future position of imperial minister will stain the palace, but in this immediate context vicarious immorality achieves a compromise with his postsexual condition. The threatening lusts that old women can represent are neutralized. The comparison merely diminishes him. His proclivities are unchanged, but he can no longer indulge them himself. On the other hand, his talents for pandering continue to reveal his essential depravity. "His mind was not slow to the craft, and was capable of his duty" apes high praise, until it is revealed that the art

67. E.g., Plaut. *Most.* 157–292; *Ov. Am.* 1.8; *Prop.* 4.5.

68. E.g., Hor. *Carm.* 3.10, fulfilled in 4.13. Birt 1892, 77, and Fargues, *Invectives* 47, compared the first lines of Hor. *Carm.* 1.25, *parcius iunctas quatiant fenestras / iactibus crebris iuvenes protervi* ("more seldom do bold youths shake your closed windows with frequent blows") with *Eutr.* 1.92–93, *iam turba procax noctisque recedit / ambitus et raro pulsatur ianua tactu* ("already does the importunate crowd and night's sollicitation fall away, and the door is beaten with a rare touch"). Erotic elegy uses similar images, e.g., *Prop.* 3.25.11–18 (= 3.24.31–38, reading 3.25 as continuing 3.24: cf. A. LaPenna, "Marginalia," *Maia* 79 [1955]: 134–35).

69. Hor. *Epod.* 8, 12. See discussion of Richlin [1983] 1992, 109–13 and 284.

70. E.g., Petron. 134–38; *Pr.* 57; *Verg. App.* 83 Bücheler, pp. 151–53 Oxford, lines 26–37; cf. Richlin [1983] 1992, 113–16.

71. Richlin [1983] 1992 discussed the general principle in numerous connections, esp. 57–80. Cicero abuses Antony for desire at *Phil.* 2.45, adding a financial incentive which also demeans, but in a different way.

72. Cf. Richlin [1983] 1992, 106–8.

and duty consist of “plotting against chastity” (*nec segnīs ad artem mens erat officiique capax omnesque pudoris hauserat insidias*, 1.78–80).⁷³ Fargues showed that the specific techniques Eutropius practices against chastity echo commonplaces of erotic elegy.⁷⁴

Claudian contrasts Eutropius’s skill with the proper role of eunuchs (1.98–100):

hinc honor Eutropio; cumque omnibus unica virtus⁷⁵
esset in eunuchis thalamos servare pudicos,
solus adulteriis crevit.

From here Eutropius wins honor. When the single virtue among
all eunuchs is to keep bedchambers chaste,
he alone grew on adulteries.

Even as a eunuch, Eutropius is an incongruous prodigy. But Claudian no sooner makes this point than he begins to depict a loss of ability in pandering too. Eutropius’s master grows hot with anger when his lust is frustrated, and beats him. Eutropius has indeed fallen to the fate he anticipated when he was cast off as a mistress. Again he fails in degrading duties.

He assumes another female role when his old master fobs him off on a new son-in-law as nurse to the bride. Now, ironically, he fills the position that was just described as typical for a eunuch: he has finally become safe for it. Even though hairdressing was conventionally associated with pandering,⁷⁶ Eutropius combs his mistress’s hair without incident. His duty of holding a basin of water for her, naked while she is washing, parades the annihilation of his sexuality (1.104–7). Claudian completes the process of decay with a general physical description. His imagery advances to death when Eutropius is set free, as I have discussed.

It is as a female fox that Eutropius goes to ground in the palace (*vetulam vulpem*, 1.145), and when he emerges from civil administration into the full daylight of martial endeavor it is as an “Amazonian crone” (*anus Amazon*, 1.240).⁷⁷ The enemy is delighted to see that “men are lacking” (*desse viros*,

73. Compare Cicero’s censures on Verres’ freedman Timarchides, *Verr.* 2.2.134–36.

74. Fargues, *Invectives* 46. Ovid gleefully assembles clichés in *Ars Amatoria* (Fargues cited particularly AA 1.605–6); cf. Tib. 1.2.94.

75. Birt 1892, 78, and Fargues, *Invectives* 47, suggested that Claudian took *unica virtus* from Juv. 8.20 on the relative worthlessness of family titles and statues. In Juvenal, however, as Courtney 1980, 388, said, “*virtus* is the subject, *nobilitas sola atque unica* the predicate.”

76. See note 30.

77. In Book 2 Aurora says Eutropius at first enjoyed strictly private influence within the palace and gradually consolidated his power before invading civil administration,

1.243); devastation ensues. Here the feminization of Eutropius functions simply. Since he is not a man, he cannot possess masculine military virtue. Therefore he cannot achieve victory, though as a shameless “slave and effeminate” he presumes to claim it (1.252; discussed under “Graphic Images”).

When Eutropius does claim victory, Claudian snidely compares him to “a dried-up mother-in-law going to see her distant daughter-in-law: scarcely has she sat down exhausted and already she seeks wines” (*arida socrus, lassa, iam vina petit*, 1.269–71). In the clichéd whininess of old women, Eutropius’s exertions are diminished and his victory is obscured. Female bibulousness is a recurrent joke in ancient literature. Depending on context, drinking betokens indulgence or cupidity, but also through Dionysian associations fertility and growth.⁷⁸ Thus tipping was sometimes associated particularly with old women, in substitution for their perished sexuality.⁷⁹ Claudian evokes this aspect through the adjective “dried-up,” which recalls the blighted cornfield of Eutropius’s scalp (1.116).⁸⁰ The “clear liquid” borne by Eutropius so that his bride-mistress may bathe, as he stands naked and excluded, similarly emblemizes the youthfulness and fertility of her sexuality against the age and aridity of his expired, perverse sexuality. A mother-in-law has resigned her sexual function to the next generation. But this one attends not to the future fertility of her family, only to her own irremediable dryness. Liquid imagery relates the passage, which conspicuously emasculates the victory by substituting a female domestic context, to Eutropius’s absolute sexual incapacity. His infertility degrades him even below women.

Eutropius’s campaign against the Huns is recalled when in book 2 he summons the Eastern courtiers to discuss another barbarian outbreak, the revolt of the Gruthungian Gothic *laeti* under Tribigild. The courtiers immediately begin to quarrel about the theater. Eutropius insists that more serious business is

and she relates his military incompetence to Tribigild’s rebellion (*Eutr.* 2.553–83). But in keeping with the topical, timeless emphasis of formal invective, in book 1 Claudian puts Eutropius on the judicial throne at once; he proceeds from there to generalship against the Huns (glanced over in book 2, when Eutropius begs off from serving against Tribigild, 2.367) and then the consulate.

78. E.g., *Ar. Lys.* 195–239, *Thesm.* 628–32, 730–59, *Eccl.* 153–59, 227; Aristophanic men drink too, for the same reasons, e.g., *Ach.* 1190–1233. Compare discussion of Kenneth J. Reckford, *Aristophanes’ Old-and-New Comedy*, Vol. 1, *Six Essays in Perspective* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 109–12.

79. E.g., *Ov. Am.* 1.8; *Prop.* 4.5.

80. This reminiscence is more straightforward than the obviously fertile *aridis aristas* of *Cat.* 48.5, which Birt 1892, 78 cited ad loc. (Catullus wants more abundant kisses; he uses the adjective to play on the paradoxical ancient etymology of *arista*: see David O. Ross, Jr., *Virgil’s Elements: Physics and Poetry in the Georgics* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987], 35–36).

at hand. His words recall the Sibyl's rebuke to Aeneas at the gates of Daedalus: "the time demands not these spectacles."⁸¹ The echo sets the tone for the epic parody of the scene, as *spectacula* is transferred from the poignant mythological autobiography of Daedalus on the epical gates to the implicitly tawdry Tereus and Agave of the contemporary stage. If a more popular image of the Sibyl may also be read into the echo, it again puts Eutropius in the role of an exhausted, postsexual woman. Petronius's Trimalchio, for instance, says that he saw the Sibyl so shriveled with age that she lived in a bottle and wished only to die (Petron. 48).⁸²

Eutropius excuses himself because of the fatigues of Armenia. "Let them pardon an old man, let them send young men to battles."⁸³ The refusal parallels Tacitus's account of Tiberius refusing to take the field himself against the revolt of Florus and Sacrovir, on the grounds that having won significant triumphs "in youth," he did not need to seek a vain one "now as an older man" (Tac. *Ann.* 3.47.4). Now Eutropius takes on the guise of a malignant ruler of literary tradition.⁸⁴ It reinforces his Domitianic, antiheroic position in the council, as it is modeled on Juvenal's *Satire* 4.

The conspicuous model of Juvenal gives both setting and emphasis to Claudian's points about the irresponsibility of Eutropius and of his council; I shall discuss the scene in greater detail in the next section. The refusal itself bears the literary overtones I have just mentioned, and their subtle effects, but also directly asserts that Eutropius cannot perform the role he has assumed. Armenia is evoked so vaguely as to seem remote beyond relevance.

Eutropius's past military success recedes even further from awareness when

81. *non haec spectacula tempus poscere, Eutr.* 2.365–66; cf. Verg. *Aen.* 6.37, *non hoc ista sibi tempus spectacula poscit*. Noted by Birt 1892, 109; Fargues, *Invectives* 121; Andrews 1931, 116.

82. *Eutr.* 2pr.38 calls Eutropius "blind Sibyl," alluding to Theodosius's having sent him to consult the Egyptian monk John for prophecy about the war against Eugenius (cf. Soz. 7.22.7–8).

83. *Ignoscant senio, iuvenes ad proelia mittant, Eutr.* 2.369. *Senio* and *iuvenes* have meaning in their ordinary senses, but they may also reflect a technical distinction, traditionally made by Servius Tullius, between older citizens who were exempt from military service and younger men who were still eligible: Cic. *Rep.* 2.39; Liv. 1.43.1–2. As Roger Tomlin, "Seniores - Iuniores in the Late-Roman Field Army," *AJPh* 93 (1972): 262, remarked, this distinction is not to be confused with that between the "senior" and "junior" units of the late Roman field army.

84. Tac. *Ann.* 3.47.4 runs in full: *igitur secutae Caesaris litterae, quibus se non tam vacuum gloria praedicabat, ut post ferocissimas gentes perdomitas, tot receptos in iuventa aut spretos triumphos iam senior peregrinationis suburbanae inane praemium peteret*. I do not mean to suggest a specific verbal echo, but a parallelism of behavior. On Claudian's knowledge of Roman historiography, see Alan Cameron 1970, 331–43 (334–37, 346–47 on Tacitus specifically); cf. Stoecker 1889 (for the minutest possible echoes; 83–97 on Tacitus).

Claudian compares him and the sorry assembly to “a hated nurse” and “impoverished girls,” whom “she besets and hoarsely warns to seek their feed in common from the loom. They beg to relax on festal days, to put aside their chores and see girls their own age. Angered at the work they mess the yarns with thumb already tired and wipe off their tender weeping with the thread” (2.370–75).⁸⁵ As before, the simile obscures legitimate martial concerns behind a petty domestic screen. Rendering the participants as women reduces the scope of their concerns, trivializing them against the harsh irony that Phrygia may be lost by their inaction. At the same time, Claudian declares that even Eutropius’s own cronies hate him. The nurse’s carping bears out and fixes the assertion. The frivolousness of the courtiers is established at the beginning of the passage, as they assemble; the more pitiful image here does not cancel out the earlier criticism of them, but refocuses it so as to make an extra point against Eutropius.

Claudian applies feminine motifs to Eutropius for several related effects. At a basic level, he thus exploits Eutropius’s ambiguous sexual condition: he is degraded directly by his sexual submission, and further by the burlesque of erotic commonplaces that ensues. Eutropius becomes ridiculous, as well as contemptible, as he wallows about in a role for which his sexual performance otherwise qualifies him. He falls far short of female standards. Claudian makes the same contrast more directly in passages that compare his consulate with the prospect of a woman’s (1.320–45). Just as even a workhouse slave would be a more fitting consul, if only he were a man or had had just one master (1.26–31), so even a woman is better equipped than Eutropius. At the same time, the specific female roles in which Eutropius is cast also denigrate him by their identification: he is a castoff mistress, an impotent whore, a sexless nurse, a bibulous mother-in-law, an overaged Amazon, and a hated taskmistress. He is marginalized, and no longer capable of the one thing for which he was ever suited. Many other criticisms attach to these unfavorable portraits.

I have already discussed a different kind of emasculating motif used commonly in late antique literature, that of wifely instigation (Chapter 3.III). Claudian uses it indirectly against Eutropius through the figure of Bellona. *In Eutropium* 2 dramatically suggests that Eutropius provoked Tribigild’s revolt and now cannot handle the crisis. Therefore Bellona’s nagging fits into an argument ultimately attacking Eutropius’s government, even though it reflects immediately on Tribigild. The base greed with which she inspires him adds insult to the injury of his attack, deepening the criticism. Some of the encour-

85. Marilyn Skinner has suggested to me that Claudian may draw the image from Erinna’s *Distaff*, since Erinna says that she stood at the loom fearing her mother (cf. *AP* 9.190.5; generally, Averil Cameron and Alan Cameron, “Erinna’s *Distaff*,” *CQ* n.s. 19 [1969]: 285–88); Fargues, *Invectives* 121, credited it to Claudian’s imagination.

agement she offers reiterates emasculating slanders Claudian uses against Eutropius with reference to his Hunnic campaign in book 1 (2.222–25):

bella dabunt socios. nec te tam prona monerem,
 si contra paterere viros: nunc alter in armis
 sexus et eunuchis se defensoribus orbis
 credit; hos aquilae Romanaeque signa secuntur.

Wars will give allies. And I would not be so inclined to advise you,
 if you were exposing yourself against men: now the other sex⁸⁶
 is in arms and the world has entrusted itself to eunuch
 defenders. Them do the eagles and Roman signals follow.

Once more Eutropius's literal sexual emasculation is used to deny him prowess in the masculine field of war.

A variant form of wifely instigation metaphorically emasculates Eutropius when Claudian claims that he depends for his position on women. His fall from power is summarized (*Eutr.* 2pr.21–24):

mollis feminea detruditur arce tyrannus
 et thalamo pulsus perdidit imperium.
 sic iuvenis nutante fide veterique reducta
 paelice defletam linquit amica domum.

The effeminate tyrant is thrust from his womanly citadel
 and, driven from the bedchamber, has lost his empire.
 Thus when a youth's faithfulness nods and an old mistress
 is recalled, his girlfriend weeps and leaves the home.

Just as Eutropius himself was literally cast off as a homosexual "mistress" when he was a private slave (1.62), now as a simile the image describes his rejection from power in the empire. The technique of degradation by identification with female figures has already been discussed. The lofty language of "thrust forth," "citadel," "tyrant," and "empire" is undercut by "effeminate," "womanly," and "bedchamber," so that it appears to exaggerate events that are really petty. Eutropius is also forced to "mollify angered daughters-in-law" (2pr.28). Philostorgius and Sozomen say the empress Eudoxia demanded that Eutropius be dismissed;⁸⁷ since it was Eutropius who arranged for Arcadius to marry her (Zos. 5.3) and since Claudian can exploit Eutropius's title of *patricius* to call him Arcadius's father (2pr.49–50), she corresponds to the angry daughters-in-

86. "Exposing yourself against men" may have obscene overtones, cf. *Eutr.* 1.363; "the other sex" probably means "women," derisively applied to eunuchs rather than designating them directly, cf. *Eutr.* 1.467.

87. Philost. *HE* 11.6, 136.1–18 Bidez and Winkelmann; Soz. 8.7.3.

law of whom Claudian uses a generalizing plural. If Eutropius could be brought down by a domestic squabble, as the feminine reference implies, then it is implied that equally trivial causes supported him.

In book 1 Eutropius testifies that he has exhausted himself against the Huns “with trembling voice, calling on his sister” (1.263). A eunuch’s voice is a conspicuous abnormality.⁸⁸ It is hard to tell what significance Eutropius’s sister might have had for the audience of his triumph, yet evidently he invoked her in his speech. The fact that Claudian could rely on so glancing an allusion to carry meaning, the only time he mentions this sister in book 1, suggests that she was real and generally known in the West. Unfortunately her true relationship to Eutropius is lost. She may have been literally his sister, though continued contact is difficult to reconcile with the innumerable resales that Claudian claims for Eutropius.

Alternatively, Eutropius’s “sister” may have been a *subintroducta*, a woman brought into his household in a chaste union sometimes compared to sisterhood. Such unions could give the appearance of scandal, and were continually attacked by church fathers.⁸⁹ Manifestly, the practice was not eradicated. Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century reports that a Christian petitioned the prefect Felix to be castrated, “in the interests of persuading you that unrestrained fornication does not exist in our mysteries” (Just. *Apol.* 29.2); Peter Brown related this petition to the Christian “sisters.”⁹⁰ This pattern of innuendo against *subintroductae* may help explain Claudian’s surprising allegation that the emasculated Eutropius maintains an incestuous relationship with “his sister and, if portents are believed at all, his wife” (*soror et, si quid portentis creditur, uxor*, 2.88). As Birt and Fargues pointed out, Claudian’s collocation of “sister” and “wife” suggests Juno’s exalted role, *et soror et coniunx* (e.g., Verg. *Aen.* 1.47);⁹¹ yet an ironical literary reminiscence neither strengthens nor weak-

88. Cf. *Eutr.* 1.261, 340; 2pr.28; e.g., Lucian, *Eun.* 7, 10.

89. The practice is attested from the second century on: see Edmund Venables, “Subintroductae,” *A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, ed. William Smith and Samuel Cheetham, 2 vols. (Hartford: J. B. Burr, 1880; rpt. New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1968), 2.1939–41; H. Achelis, “Subintroductae,” *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907), 19.123–27. Hostile testimony around the period of Eutropius includes John Chrysostom’s *Contra eos qui subintroductas habent* (which J. Dumortier dated ca. 382: “La date des deux traités de saint Jean Chrysostome aux moines et aux vierges (P.G. 47. 495–514. 513–532),” *Mél. sci. rel.* 6 [1949]: 247–52), and *CTh* 16.2.44 of 420 (issued in the West).

90. Brown 1988, 140; Felix is presumably L. Munatius Felix, prefect of Egypt from 150 to 154: *PIR*² 5, 2 no. 723, 315–16.

91. Birt 1892, 99, and Fargues, *Invectives* 99. A. E. Housman observed that in Mart. 12.20, obscene overtones reside in the verb “have,” not in “sister” (“Why, you ask, Fabullus, does Themison not have a wife? He has his sister”; “Corrections and Explana-

ens the case for a historical identification. If Eutropius's sister can be identified as a *subintroducta*, it also suggests that Justin's man would have failed to squelch rumor by having himself castrated. In any case, Felix refused the petition (Just. *1Apol.* 29.3).

Claudian claims in book 2 that Eutropius's incestuous sister plays the role of a "chaste wife" by entertaining matrons at banquets and "celebrating the vows of her eunuch husband." He loves her, consults with her about the most important matters of state and entrusts to her his palace duties while he revels drunkenly and buys popular applause with largesse of other people's money (2.84–94). In short, he relies on her both to represent him socially and to do his real work; his dependency is of the same type as Typhos's on his wife in Synesius's *De Providentia*. It diminishes him in the same way.

When Claudian speaks of Eutropius's fall in the preface, he maliciously asks whether his sister will follow him into exile or if she now spurns him (2pr.41–44). Synesius claims that Typhos's allies desert him too (Synes. *Prov.* 122D–123A); he follows the pattern of the myth he is adapting to political purpose (cf. Plut. *DIO* 358D), but he also implies that the erstwhile supporters of his victim had felt no sincere regard for him. Eutropius's sister and daughter-in-law are no less fickle. In turn their disloyalty damns Eutropius.

III. Class, Corruption, and Competence

The relations between a minister and his colleagues and subordinates reflect in certain aspects the honesty and effectiveness with which he governs. The fact that Cleon "stole Pylos" from Demosthenes does not immediately affect the Athenian people's profit from the victory, but it does suggest that Cleon is equally ready to cheat them to his own advantage (Ar. *Eq.* 1191–1225). Cicero says that Verres openly dunned the Sicilian censors he appointed for large contributions toward a statue of himself; if they are supposed to be expressing gratitude in this way, he argues, it confirms that the offices they begged or rather bought were not conferred according to public interest (Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.137). Catullus complains metaphorically that Memmius irrumated him, and that Piso has treated Veranius and Fabullus no better (Cat. 28). Synesius claims that at the desperate last gasp of his tyranny Typhos extorted not only taxes from the people but also "a second round of contributions even from his underlings" (Synes. *Prov.* 121D). Eutropius's underlings, including his sister, figure most extensively in book 2, and Tribigild is driven to revolt in large part because of Eutropius's mismanagement (n.b. 2.177–92); but book 1 also treats administrative failings.

tions of Martial," *JPh* 30 [1907]: 260 = *The Classical Papers of A. E. Housman*, ed. J. Diggle and F. R. Goodyear [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972], 2.734–35).

A considerable section depicts misdeeds in peace (1.151–228). Themes of avarice and cruelty intertwine to unite it. The first victim of the new regime⁹² was Abundantius, whom Claudian credits with promoting Eutropius into palace service. As he puts it, Abundantius “produced the bane of Eastern affairs, and first his own” (1.154–55). He likens him to Thrasius, the seer who advised Busiris to sacrifice strangers to Zeus and was the first to be sacrificed, and to Perillus, who built Phalaris’s bull and was its first victim;⁹³ Eutropius is implicitly identified with these archetypal monsters of cruelty. Moreover, Eutropius confiscated Abundantius’s property. He rages on against vaguely identified but apparently numerous aristocrats.⁹⁴ Claudian declares that the arriviste is always most harsh, because he thinks thereby to assert his power: “he strikes all while he fears all” (1.182).⁹⁵ But worst of all is the slave “raging against free backs: he knows the groans and knows not how to spare the punishment that he underwent. Remembering his master, he hates the one he beats. Add that a eunuch is moved by no devotion, nor does he fear for family or children” (1.183–88).⁹⁶ Eutropius’s debased origins unfit him for power, not merely stain him by association. And for a eunuch, “[gold] alone his cut-off lust enjoys . . . no force castrates bloody avarice” (1.191–93). “Lust” and enjoyment on the one hand and “cut-off,” “castrate,” and “bloody” on the other fuse Eutropius’s sexual identity with his capacity for administrative abuse. The reprehensible sexuality of Eutropius’s greed, implied by the associations of *libido* (1.191), makes this transfer of a eunuch’s affections even nastier than that alleged by Ammianus, “riches alone they embrace, as their most delightful little daughters” (*divitias solas ut filiolas iucundissimas amplectuntur*, Amm. 18.5.4).

Claudian moves from this drastic excoriation to lighter burlesque. Sale of offices was an extremely trite charge in late antique political invective, as well as

92. The motif of inaugural crime if not the diction accords with Tacitus’s dramatic sense: cf. *Ann.* 1.6.1, 13.1.1.

93. Both stories are known from many sources, any of which Claudian may have used; the chosen pair of examples and *imbuit* inclined Birt 1892, 80, and Fargues, *Invectives* 53, to single out Ov. *AA* 1.645–58 (cf. Andrews 1931, 43–44). Pacatus calls Maximus Phalaris, *Pan. Lat.* 2[12].29.4.

94. The charge is conventional: e.g., *Pan. Lat.* 11[3].5.3 of Carinus; 12[9].3.6, 4.4 and 4[10].8.3, 31.1 of Maxentius; 2[12].24–29 of Maximus (discussed in Chap. 3.III). On the reality of “Judicial Savagery in the Roman Empire,” see R. MacMullen, *Chiron* 1986 = 1990, 204–17.

95. Dufraigne 1975, 181 n. 6, compared *Eutr.* 1.181 with Victor’s pompous assertion that Diocletian adopted the title *dominus* out of a vainglory belonging to very humble men raised high; Victor hastily concedes that Diocletian ruled benevolently in fact (*Caes.* 39.5–8).

96. Hall 1985 found *generi*, “family,” better attested in *Eutr.* 1.188, but some manuscripts give or are corrected to *generis*, “sons-in-law” as opposed to *natis*, “children by birth.” The contrast is slightly neater.

a common abuse in fact.⁹⁷ It engendered other abuses: governorships especially offered purchasers the chance to recoup by exploiting their provinces. The problem was not new: Cicero connects purchase of office and exploitation explicitly, as does Mamertinus in his panegyric of Julian (Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.138, *Pan. Lat.* 3[11].19.4–5, 21.1). Synesius exclaims that men who purchased governorships from Typhos pressed extortion yet further, even the younger ones expecting to lay up funds for a dissolute old age (Synes. *Prov.* 111D). Claudian realizes the conceit pictorially: he describes Eutropius's sales office, complete with a posted price list. Once more Eutropius is represented in a sordid role, now a "huckster" (*caupo*, *Eutr.* 1.198). His past slavery figures too: "having been sold himself, he longs to sell all things" (1.206–7). He brings the whole Eastern empire down to his own low level.

The price list emblemizes blatant venality. Lest its fixed prices imply any limit to Eutropius's greed, however, Claudian adds that he "often" entertains competitive bidding too, balancing sums against one another on hanging scales: "with the weight the judge inclines, and a province sinks onto the twin pans" (1.208–9). Claudian's term *iudex* in context bears its broadest sense, someone called upon to make a decision.⁹⁸ He repeats it in its more technical sense, a magistrate with judicial authority, when he characterizes Eutropius's consulate as culminating his ambition to pollute everything, "as general the battle lines, as judge the courts, the epoch as the consul!" (*dux acies, iudex praetoria, tempora consul*, 1.286). Retrospectively this passage applies the designation to all Eutropius's civilian activities in office, including his persecution of Abundantius and other nobles, as described in the earlier section. Yet properly speaking, Eutropius should not have been a "judge" at all: the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* did not possess judicial competence.⁹⁹ The misapplied term underlines a usurped authority. Zosimus reports that Eutropius prepared to sit as assessor to Arcadius in judgment over Timasius, against whom Eutropius had incited his accuser Bargus (Zos. 5.9.2–3). When the proceeding caused general offense, Arcadius retired as judge in favor of a fellow general of Timasius and a relation of the emperor Valens;¹⁰⁰ this reaction suggests that it was less Bargus's

97. E.g., *Ruf.* 1.180; Eunap. fr. 87M = 72.1 Blockley; Zos. 4.28.3–4, 5.1.2; Procop. *Anecd.* 22.7–9; cf. A. H. M. Jones 1964, 390–96, with T. D. Barnes, "A Law of Julian," *CP* 69 (1970): 288–91 on *CTh* 2.29.1.

98. *OLD* s.v. 4.

99. Guyot 1980, 140; W. Enßlin, "Praepositus sacri cubiculi," *RE* Suppl. 8 (1956): 562; Dunlap 1924, 200. A partial exception may have been authority over appeals from within the Eastern crown lands, in Cappadocia: this territory was transferred to the purview of the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* some time between 390 and 414 (A. H. M. Jones 1964, 425–26), and it suits Eutropius's unique power in office that he should have instituted the change (Dunlap 1924, 188).

100. Respectively, Flavius Saturninus 10, *PLRE* 1.807–8; Procopius 9, *PLRE* 1.744. Bargus, *PLRE* 2.210–11. Timasius, *PLRE* 1.914–15.

low rank that roused objection, as Zosimus states, than Eutropius's close, extralegal, and notoriously malicious interest in the case. Zosimus observes almost as a matter of course that just as Eutropius "held supremacy over all the royal apartments, he was the master of all [Arcadius's] verdict." Claudian passes over Eutropius's persecution of Timasius, but all the judicial atrocities he ascribes to Eutropius prompt the same kind of resentment.¹⁰¹

In many of his poems Claudian makes use of the idea that the brother emperors of East and West ideally ruled in harmony a united empire; conversely, he charges enemies with encouraging disharmony.¹⁰² Concord, virtue, loyalty, piety, and justice are the blessings sown by Theodosius that make Allecto want to overturn the world (*Ruf.* 1.52–53, 57); stirring up Rufinus, who could divide Theseus from Pirithous, Pylades from Orestes, or Pollux from his brother Castor (*Ruf.* 1.107–8), appears a more effective alternative. Perversely swearing to Arcadius "through your brother's royal splendor," Rufinus claims that Stilicho's campaign against Alaric constitutes a conspiracy of Gaul against himself. He threatens civil mayhem if Arcadius does not block it by recalling the Eastern army.¹⁰³ Stilicho loyally obeys, though obedience dooms Greece (*Ruf.* 2.197–219). The army, loyally unified under him, recognizes their division as the true "specter of civil war" (*Ruf.* 2.236; cf. *Stil.* 2.95–97, *Get.* 516–17), which Rufinus has roused, and vows revenge.

In Gildonem plays the proper fraternal unity of Honorius and Arcadius against the fratricidal rivalry of Gildo and Mascezel. The noun "brother" is used fourteen times in the single book, more than in any other work of Claudian.¹⁰⁴ The proem proclaims "the concord of the brothers returns in full," now that Gildo is dead (*Gild.* 4–5). Theodosius the Great, appearing in a dream, rebukes Arcadius for allowing Gildo to engender "discord" between himself and Honorius and Stilicho (*Gild.* 236), so that Arcadius treats his brother worse than an enemy; Arcadius immediately protests affection for "my kinsman Stilicho" and wishes "Africa to return now more secure to my brother" (*Gild.* 323–24).

Among the incentives that should urge Theodorus to accept the consulate,

101. Informal influence: Guyot 1980, 145–57; Hopkins 1978, 172–96.

102. Some of the relevant passages were discussed by Alan Cameron 1970, 51–54 (Gnilka 1977, 34–35, however, stressed the vague and conventional nature of Claudian's wishes for "similar marriage-torches" for Stilicho's younger daughter Thermantia), 97, 102–3, 110–12. The ideal of fraternal harmony among emperors is earlier upheld by, e.g., *Pan. Lat.* 10[2].9, 11[3].7 (Maximian and Diocletian); 3[11].27.5 (Julian's bearing toward Constantius, despite civil war; cf. *ibid.* 3.1, 5.2, where the term "brother" accentuates Constantius's unfraternal jealousy).

103. *Ruf.* 2.144–68; Theodosius had led the army west against Eugenius in 394 (cf. *Socr. HE* 6.1.4, *Soz. HE* 8.1.3).

104. *Frater* seven times, and *fraternus* once, in Theodosius's and Arcadius's scene alone, *Gild.* 235–324: Christiansen 1988 s.vv. Cf. Olechowska 1978, 8–10.

Iustitia alludes to this restoration of concord on Gildo's defeat when she mentions "Pietas embracing the serene brothers," Perfidia grieving over broken arms, and Fides rejoicing with Pax (*M. Theod.* 166–72).¹⁰⁵ Claudian catalogs Stilicho's services to Arcadius as well as to Honorius in his second book of panegyric for his consulate in 400 (*Stil.* 2.50–99). He praises him for "not ascribing to the youth anything that an unmoving and undutiful throng might dare, using the royal name as a screen for its own madness" (*iners atque impia turba . . . furori*, *Stil.* 2.79–81). "Undutiful" and "madness" allude to disharmony between the brothers and friction between their parts of the empire,¹⁰⁶ as "discord," "illicit war," "civil arms," "loyalty in the midst of quarrels of rash men at court," and "the veneration of brothers" in the next lines bear out. Hostile courtiers of Arcadius are responsible for the ills of the realm, not Stilicho.

The unity of the emperors was affirmed by monuments acclaiming both emperors for victories won by the generals of either one: even after the defeat of Gildo, for example, Roman inscriptions honor Arcadius as well as Honorius.¹⁰⁷ In the letter in which as *princeps senatus* Symmachus reports the Senate's declaration of war against Gildo on receipt of Honorius's letter about the uprising, he tells Stilicho "you will find that I have observed the justice of this fact too and have urged the cause of public harmony before our lord Arcadius" (*Symm. Ep.* 4.5.3). Participants stressed the idea of concord, exactly while events most strained it. Concord was the rule in lesser and more pacific matters as well. For example, the Senate's request to erect a statue of Claudian officially was granted by both Arcadius and Honorius.¹⁰⁸

Such gestures indicate that the ideal of imperial unity was strongly asserted.

105. Simon 1975, 204–8, gave literary references but did not remark on the historical implications of the personifications and their actions. Pietas obviously embodies the family loyalty of Arcadius and Honorius. Serenity, as Simon noted, was claimed as a peculiar imperial title. Fides and Pax are generalized over the empire. Perfidia attaches to Gildo in conformity with *Gild.*

106. *Impius* ("undutiful" or even "sacrilegious") specifically fraternal, *TLL* 7, 1 s.v. 621.29–36; specifically civil, 622.3–17; cf. generally and s.v. *impietas* (esp. civil, 613.9–16; entries for *pietas*, *pious* not yet available). *Furor* referring specifically to civil war or sedition, *TLL* 6, 1 s.v. 1631.24–31, but also, little less clearly, e.g., *Cic. Cat.* 1.1, 15, 31; 2.25; 4.11.

107. *CIL* 6.1187, 6.31256, 9.4051 = *ILS* 795. For discussion of these and related examples, see Mazzarino 1942, 80–91, or 1990, 60–66; McCormick 1986, 111–19.

108. *CIL* 6.1710. Alan Cameron 1970, 249, doubted whether Arcadius was actually consulted (probably rightly: Honorius obviously was not consulted on the weightier matter of Arcadius's proclaiming his wife Augusta in 404, *Ep. Imp. Pont. Al.* 38): conventionally, consent was assumed. The same rule applied even in the appointment of officials in territory definitely within the control of one or the other: Symmachus wrote letters thanking both Valentinian II and Theodosius for his appointment as urban prefect of Rome in 384, for example (*Symm. Rel.* 1, 2).

It made fomenting discord a useful accusation with which to slander an enemy. A fragment of Eunapius gives an instance: in about 405 Arcadius's general Fravitta answers the accusations of the *comes sacrarum largitionum* John and his tool Hierax with the counteraccusation:¹⁰⁹

But it is you who are the cause of all the evils, dividing the emperors by your own conspiracy, undermining and shaking this most heavenly and divine work with your devices, and destroying it. It is an all-blessed marvel, an invincible and adamantine bulwark, when emperors in two separate bodies hold a single empire.

After rapprochement between the Eastern and Western courts from 401 to 403, relations had again deteriorated.¹¹⁰ The fragment shows that even internal rivalries of a single court might find ammunition in the condition of the empire as a whole.

Claudian however preferred to blame an antagonist in the other court. It is Eutropius who “divides a twin court and tries to commit loyal [*pious*] brothers to hatred.” Claudian ironically recalls Eutropius's former pandering, telling him “if you look to your old trade, the decent thing is to bring them together” (1.281–84). At one level he rebukes Eutropius for falling below his own morally dubious standard: even a pander ought to do something better for the empire than Eutropius is doing. But, more important, Claudian thus reactivates his earlier allegations and again implies that so debased and immoral a creature as Eutropius has no business meddling in politics at all.

Book 2 develops the idea of Eutropius's political evildoing yet further. Aurora, entreating Stilicho to redeem her, evokes the sale of offices again with a new twist (2.585–90). Because Tribigild's forces are destroying parts of the empire, Eutropius has divided in two the provinces that remain, “lest the vendor lose anything, when his scope has been trimmed back [*orbe reciso*].” His mercenary concern stands out against the general terrors of war the poem describes. It falls far short of the selfless care for his people that ancient theory expected of a ruler.¹¹¹ Lactantius similarly describes Diocletian's division of

109. Eunap. fr. 71.3 Blockley. Fravitta, *PLRE* 1.372–73; John, *PLRE* 2.593 (Ioannes 1); Hierax, *PLRE* 2.556. See further Alan Cameron and Long 1993, 236–52.

110. The consulate is a convenient index of official positions: the West did not recognize Eutropius in 399 or Aurelian in 400, did recognize Fravitta in 401, Arcadius in 402 (joint consulate with Honorius), and Theodosius II in 403, and did not recognize Aristaenetus in 404 or Anthemius in 405 (*CLRE* s.aa.). Another valuable document is Honorius's letter to Arcadius of about June 404, *Ep. Imp. Pont. Al.* 38, at 85–88, protesting three specific grievances: the proclamation of Eudoxia as Augusta, the lack of official notice of Alaric's devastation of Illyricum in 403–4, and the arrest of clergy in the controversy storming about John Chrysostom.

111. E.g., Syn. *Reg.* 30C; compare the synthetic sketches of Lester K. Born, “The Perfect Prince according to the Latin Panegyrists,” *AJP* 55 (1934): 20–35, and Seager 1983.

provinces as an act of rapacious brutality (*Mort. Pers.* 7.4).¹¹² “Lest the vendor lose anything” implies that it is Eutropius’s own revenues that concern him. Personal greed joins cynicism and corruption in the accusation.¹¹³ Claudian personalizes his charge still more by describing the reduced sphere Eutropius afflicts as “trimmed-back,” a term that recalls his own castration (cf. 1.47–48, *recisos . . . mares*).

Aurora observes that the palace is indifferent so long as its amusements are not curtailed (2.584–85). She refers to events like the vacations in Ancyra that prompt Mars’s outrage (2.95–110), but more particularly to the “choruses and banquets” that define the competence of Eutropius’s court in the council (2.584, 2.322–401). The scene follows the broad structure of Domitian’s Council of the Fish in Juvenal’s *Satire* 4. It varies it by the facts that this council is called to address a serious question, not a portentously absurd one, and that the councillors are incapable even of aping dignity. Juvenal enumerates his nobles from the relatively respectable ones to the more pungent criminals (Juv. 4.72–118).¹¹⁴ Claudian’s are a baseborn mass, some plebeian, some former slaves still scarred from fetters and their masters’ marks (*Eutr.* 2.342–45). The scars evidence not merely slavery, but criminal punishments they have suffered and presumably deserved; implicitly the marks deny their fitness now to “regulate the laws” as they do.¹¹⁵ All also are exquisite gourmands. Their tastes in impossibly rare foods and diaphanous garments recall satirical targets of Horace,¹¹⁶ Petronius,¹¹⁷ Juvenal,¹¹⁸ Ammianus,¹¹⁹ and Pacatus;¹²⁰ Eunapius too similarly maligns courtiers of Rufinus as a canaille now reveling in undeserved

112. Charlotte Roueché, “Rome, Asia and Aphrodisias in the Third Century,” *JRS* 71 (1981): 103–20, redated some divisions from Diocletian’s reign to the middle of the third century, but many remain Diocletian’s doing; cf. A. H. M. Jones 1964, 42–43, with her modifications.

113. *Eutr.* 2pr.49–50 similarly contrasts true personal greed and alleged public interest.

114. As Mayor 1901, 1.230, and Courtney 1980, 216, noted, Juvenal calls Pegasus “bailiff [*vilicus*] for the city” rather than “prefect” (4.77–78) with thoughts of the condition of the state under Domitian; it is not a personal slur based on class or occupation.

115. Birt 1892, 109, and Fargues, *Invectives* 119, compared Ov. *Am.* 2.2.47, *conpedibus liventia crura gerentem* (“a man bearing shins livid from their fetters”). Claudian, expanding, juxtaposes “black” to “livid” for greater pictorial vividness: *pars compede suras / cruraque signati nigro liventia ferro* (“part marked on their calves by the fetter, and shins livid from black iron,” *Eutr.* 2.342–43).

116. E.g., Hor. *Serm.* 2.4, 2.8.

117. Petron. 33–36, 40, 49, 60, 65, 66, 69–70.

118. Juv. 2.64–78; 4.11–33 (besides the Council itself; for related censures compare especially items cited by Mayor 1901, 220 ad 15 *mullum*; 221 ad 26); 6.259–60. Cf. Alan Cameron 1965b for a similar remark in Jer. *Ep.* 66.13 (not 66.15 as printed).

119. Amm. 14.6.9, 28.4.19.

120. *Pan. Lat.* 2[12].33.4.

luxury.¹²¹ According to Claudian, Eutropius's cronies continually recur to the fantasies of the theater, unable to comprehend the real dangers they face.¹²²

Claudian emphasizes food for the immediate purpose of stigmatizing the courtiers' characters with satirical concreteness and detail, but the topic also prefaces the particular skills of Hosius, an estate-born slave and Eutropius's *magister officiorum*. Hosius had been a cook, and Claudian characterizes his administrative qualities with a string of appropriate puns (*Eutr.* 2.347–49):

dulcior hic sane cunctis prudensque movendi
iuris et admoto qui temperet omnia fumo,
fervidus, accensam sed qui bene decoquat iram.

He is sweeter than all of them, for sure, and expert at stirring up
law-broth, one to mellow everything by putting it on the smoker,
a hot one, but good at rendering down wrath flambé.

Dulcior and *accendere* are commonly used of personalities and emotions as well as literally of foods and cooking techniques.¹²³ *Ius* is a homonym I have already discussed;¹²⁴ *movere* can mean either to rouse to action or to upset.¹²⁵ Fargues supposed that *fumo* was used by metonymy for *flamma*, but smoking is well attested as an ancient culinary technique, particularly for seasoning certain kinds of wine; “smoke” is also a common ancient metaphor for something worthless.¹²⁶ In late antiquity, “to sell smoke” came to designate effective or fraudulent influence-peddling.¹²⁷ For the metaphor of “reducing” anger by culinary means Birt and Fargues adduced Homer and Catullus.¹²⁸ Not only is

121. Eunap. fr. 63 M = 62.2 Blockley.

122. *Eutr.* 2.338–41, 354–64, 402–5. Compare 2.86–87 of Eutropius: the courtiers' irresponsibility echoes his, even though he takes the role of the harsh taskmistress at the meeting.

123. *OLD* s.vv. (and so for all terms discussed here, with additional references as noted). For puns on the double sense of *dulcis*, cf. Plaut. *As.* 614; Ov. *Met.* 13.795. Such passages confirm for Latin the modern sense of a “sweet” personality, for its obligingness; Alan Cameron 1968a, 409, however, preferred to see the result of Hosius's obliging corruption, his popularity (Cameron discussed the other puns of the passage as well; more limited discussions also by Birt 1888, 45 n. 1; Andrews 1931 ad loc.; Schweckendiek 1992, 144).

124. In connection with the hypothesis of Birt 1888 that Claudian in *Eutr.* imitates Lucilius; see Chap. 2.

125. Specifically of political unrest, *OLD* s.v. 11.

126. Fargues, *Invectives* 119; *TLL* 6, 1 s.v. I.B.4 of domestic use (1543.43–63), B metaphorically (1544.3–28; cf. LSJ s.v. *καπνός* and Ar. *Vesp.* 143–46).

127. Cf. *HA Ant. Pius* 11.1 (cf. 6.4); *HA Heliog.* 10.3; *HA Alex. Sev.* 23.8, 36.2; and *TLL* s.v. *fumus* as noted previously.

128. Birt 1892, 109; Fargues, *Invectives* 121: *Il.* 1.81 *χόλον καταπέπτειν*; Cat. 68.139 *concoquit iram* (a generally preferred emendation for *cotidiana* / *quotidiana iram* of the manuscripts, but many others have been proposed).

this concoction of punning terms skillfully served up, pungent and funny in itself, but it also identifies Hosius irretrievably with his former lowly profession. Applying the skills he learned then to political life produces only corruption.

Claudian's technique is the same as in the obscene puns with which a "racier" wit praises Eutropius's administration in book 1 (1.358–70). Cicero makes similar use of alleged popular opinion, complete with puns, in his second oration against Verres (Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.121, discussed previously).¹²⁹ Practically every word in the speech Claudian concocts bears a double meaning:

miraris? nihil est, quod non in pectore magnum
 concipit Eutropius. semper nova, grandia semper
 diligit et celeri degustat singula sensu.
 nil timet a tergo; vigilantibus undique curis
 nocte dieque patet; lenis facilisque moveri
 supplicibus mediaque tamen mollissimus ira
 nil negat et sese vel non poscentibus offert;
 quidlibet ingenio, subigit traditque fruendum;
 quidquid amas, dabit illa manus; communiter omni
 fungitur officio gaudetque potentia flecti.
 hoc quoque conciliis peperit meritoque laborum,
 accipit et trabeas argutae praemia dextrae.

Do you marvel? There is nothing big that Eutropius does not take to himself
 in his heart. Always new things, always grand things
 does he love, and taste individually with a swift sense.
 He fears nothing from the rear; to cares standing watch on all sides
 he is open, night and day. He is smooth and easy for suppliants
 to move, and in the middle of a passion he is nonetheless very soft.
 He denies nothing and offers himself even to those who don't ask.
 Whatever the spirit desires he cultivates and hands over to be enjoyed;
 whatever you love, that hand will give. In common to everyone
 he performs his service, and his might delights to be bent.
 This too he has brought to birth by his plans and the desert of his labors,
 He accepts the consular robes too as rewards of his clever right hand.

The remarks begin close to praise; indeed Claudian in an apparently straightforward consular panegyric calls Stilicho "upright and ardent to undertake

129. Tacitus is fond of voicing political judgments through anonymous commentators, e.g., *Ann.* 1.4, 9–10. Auson. *Cent. Nupt.* brilliantly demonstrates how fertilely obscene puns can be derived from alien contexts.

nothing small" (*Stil.* 1.41–42). But the train of the speaker's remarks through the rest of this speech suggests that Eutropius's love for new things and grand pertains to male lovers. He is voracious. His "tasting" suggests fellatio. "Fearing nothing from the rear" but rather "being open" implies that he enjoys anal penetration. "Care" (*cura*) often bears erotic connotations in elegy.¹³⁰ *Mollis* ("soft") and its cognates provided standard Roman expressions for effeminacy as well as complaisance, which also suits this context. *Ira* is wrath but also any sort of passion, including erotic; Claudian includes "passions easy to bend" among Venus's court in his *Epithalamium* for Honorius and Maria (*Epith.* 79).¹³¹ The concluding lines are still blunter. Eutropius not only grants every solicitation but even offers himself unsolicited. Repeated references to his hand intimate that he masturbates clients. The whole passage recurs to Claudian's earlier picture of Eutropius's sexual career and casts his political administration in the same terms. Finally it confronts Eutropius's consulate with his degraded sexuality as effect and cause. The puns glove with wit a final blow that must shock.

The third victim to be mocked by the terminology of his past career, the general and former weaver Leo, condemns himself out of his own mouth. As mention of the courtiers' gourmandise thematically introduces Hosius, so does the comparison of them and Eutropius to a group of poor girls and the "hated nurse" who bids them "seek their feed in common from the loom" introduce Leo's profession. In the council, he takes the role of Juvenal's Montanus by making a bold proposal to resolve the crisis. Like Montanus's, it is bathetically obvious: make a larger dish; march out on campaign. Like Montanus, he sports an immense paunch, which Claudian says substitutes for the sevenfold oxhide shield which as an Ajax he should bear.¹³² The comparison holds up the epic grandeur proper to a literary account of the dire predicament of the East, only to deflate it abruptly, along with any other pretensions to grandeur that Leo might attempt. The images Leo chooses in order to exhort the other councillors inadvertently reveal his equally unheroic training as a

130. E.g., Sulpicia, [Tib.] 3.18 = 4.12.1; Ov. *Am.* 1.3.16, *AA* 2.746.

131. See also A. Ernout, "*Ira* = ὀργή," in *Omagiul lui Alexandru Rosetti*, ed. Iorgu Jordan (Bucharest: Academia Republicii Socialiste Româno, 1965), 205–7.

132. "Then he was Eutropius's Ajax and widely he roared, not brandishing seven bullocks with a vast shield-boss but that which he had made heavy by perpetual banquets and a sluggish seat among the old women and among the distaffs: his belly" (*non septem vasto quatiens umbone iuencos, sed . . . alvum*, *Eutr.* 2.386–89); "and Montanus's stomach is present, slowed down by its paunch" (*Montani quoque venter adest abdomine tardus*, *Juv.* 4.107). Birt 1892, 110, and Fargues, *Invectives* 122, compared *Juv.* 7.115 for "Ajax rose up" (*adsurgit*, so also Andrews 1931, 118) and *Il.* 7.219–20 for the association of such a shield with Ajax; compare also Ov. *Met.* 13.2, "Ajax rose to them, master of the sevenfold shield" (*surgit ad hos clypei dominus septemplicis Ajax*, cited by Mayor 1901, 1.297, and Courtney 1980, 364 ad *Juv.* 7.115).

weaver (2.391–401).¹³³ He demands how long they will sit “shut in feminine chambers”; when *thalami* are spoken of in connection with Eutropius, they refer to the eunuch’s ordinary duties as chamberlain, but here they suggest the place where the women of Homeric epic sit and weave while men fight and adventure.¹³⁴ Leo warns the courtiers that “a crowd of graver evils is being woven [*textitur*]” while they waste time. He continues, “This sweat seeks me. Never is my right hand slow to the iron” (*me petit hic sudor. numquam mea dextera segnis ad ferrum*). Sweat can be banausic as well as military, and line 385 shortly above shows that “iron” can refer to woolworking tools as well as to the sword.¹³⁵ Calling upon Minerva, Leo boasts that he will make Tribigild and the threat he poses lighter than wool, slaughter the Gruthungi like sheep, and restore the Phrygian women to their spinning.

But Minerva favors Leo only in woolwork, not in war. His army is dissolute, leaderless, and lost. They resemble a horse without its rider, a ship wrecked because it does not have its master, or a whale that having lost its pilot fish strands itself on the reefs (2.423–31); the contrast with their former tautness under Stilicho is absolute.¹³⁶ Tribigild leads them on with pretended flight, then attacks when they are all sluggish from banqueting. Leo flies, but his bulk sinks him in a swamp. Claudian compares his panicked squeals to those of a

133. Christiansen 1969, 99–100, noted the preponderance of weaving terms and puns in Leo’s martial language. On the late antique cloth industry, A. H. M. Jones, “The Cloth Industry under the Roman Empire,” *Econ. Hist. Rev.* 2nd ser. 13 (1960): 183–92. In *HA Tyr. Trig.* 8, the usurper and former ironworker Marius boldly proclaims his “steely” resolve, but is undercut by the chapter’s introductory note that he reigned for only three days (numismatic evidence suggests a longer sway; *PLRE* 1.562, M. Aurelius Marius 4). Compare too the puns on Regalianus’s name, which are said to have won him his proclamation as emperor, *HA Tyr. Trig.* 10.3–7; *PLRE* 1.762, P. C. Regalianus.

134. *Eutr.* 1.99, 130, 156, 473; 2pr.22; 2.553; *Il.* 3.125–28; 6.490–93; *Od.* 1.356–59; 2.93–110; 19.137–61; 24.129–50; cf. also Claud. *CM* 46.12–15.

135. Noted by Fargues, *Invectives* 123, and Andrews 1931, 118. Also in Lucr. 5.1350–60 (where it is averred that men began to weave before women, being naturally superior, but later agreed to leave weaving to women when they went on to harder labors: thus weaving itself constitutes evidence of slackness; cf. *Juv.* 2.57 of male spinning and my remarks in Chap. 2; Roma proposes male spinning as one impossible inversion of roles that might as well follow from permitting eunuchs to govern, *Eutr.* 1.496–98); *Juv.* 7.224 (Mayor 1901, 462 ad loc. adds technical references; Courtney 1980, 378).

136. N.b. *Eutr.* 2.412–14. Christiansen 1969, 100, remarked that “he pictures the Westerners as hunters, sailors, and burden bearers, but the Easterners as blind directionless animals.” *Priori* however implies, and “their strength changed along with their leader” confirms, that Claudian is contrasting the condition of the Eastern army while it served under Stilicho before Rufinus forced him to return them; they were unwilling to go then (cf. *Ruf.* 2.237–47, 257–77), but now the influence of their present masters has corrupted them. Fargues, *Invectives* 124, noted that Claudian often describes Stilicho’s winter campaigns with similar imagery, citing 3 *Cons.* 150, *Stil.* 1.122–37, *Get.* 348–63.

sow Hosius might contemplate butchering, then dissolves the simile in a puff of fragrant steam (2.445–51).

Lighter yet comes Leo's death (2.452–55): a breeze (*levis aura*) strikes the leaves behind him. Leo assumes it is a javelin, and dies of fright.¹³⁷ Fittingly, the words "he breathes out his life" (*vitam . . . efflat*) end the passage. It is all air. The fragility of defense under Eutropius's direction could not be more tellingly imaged.

Claudian devotes a last paragraph to recrimination (2.456–61). Leo should never have traded his comb for swords. A weaver's comb and swords are the two items suggested by "iron" in his bold speech before the council: the pun turns back on him. He takes up the challenge as if his ability in one side of the double world they sketch qualified him equally in the other. The event proves that he is fatally limited. "While you avoid your wools," as Claudian chides him, calling attention to the transition, Leo loses both. A final irony is added by the allusion to the Parcae. They are woolworkers too, in their proper sphere, and they have spun Leo's final threads. Claudian stresses Leo's own fault in addressing him as "degenerate": had he not deserted his "ancestral chair" where he used to praise the weavers' threads, he would not have lost its safety.

The same kind of rebuke appears when Claudian tells Eutropius that he would not break up the emperors if he looked to his "old trade" (1.283), which Hall's text describes as the "ancestral work of a pimp" at 1.77.¹³⁸ Their public activities are betraying their own natures. Only disaster can be expected to result.¹³⁹ Hosius's butchery in the extended comparison that leads into Leo's death scene similarly reasserts the prevailing force of Eutropius's and his cronies' old professions. All alike, they are bound to their native, lowly trades, even when these affinities set one of them against another. Their class allegiance also degrades their present subjects. Yet more important, the unchangeable facts about their natures that class reveals and reinforces make them incapable and disastrous rulers. At the close of the book Aurora confirms what Cybele foresees when war first breaks in Phrygia, that with these leaders, the East is helpless on its own resources.

137. I discuss briefly in Chap. 2 Plutarch's similar scene of ludicrous cowardice on the part of Demosthenes at Chaeronea, *Mor.* 845F.

138. Hall accepted *avitum* of the *Isingriniana* marginalia for *acutum* of the manuscripts at *Eutr.* 1.77. The parallel of *Eutr.* 2.457 supports the reading: the epithet "ancestral" need not be literally true for either Eutropius or Leo, but in context suggests that these professions are intrinsically right for them, as opposed to the public endeavors to which they so badly transfer their inborn talents. Schweckendiek 1992, 71–72, defended *acutum* as unexceptionable, rightly enough, but *avitum* adds a second point of accusation.

139. Therefore I cannot agree with Christiansen 1969, 101, that "the effect here is more sadly ironic than satirical" or that Leo is "a man to be pitied."

CLAUDIAN SLANDERS his eunuch along three closely related lines. The first is simply that he is a eunuch. As an unnatural, ugly perversion of humanity, he instantly repels, and Claudian takes full advantage of physical description to augment the disgust.

Second are the effeminizing consequences of his castration. They encourage Claudian to apply to Eutropius feminine images with greater freedom even than in classical rhetoric: at once Eutropius is trivialized, and then still further damned when Claudian points out that even women surpass him. Childbearing justifies them against all else, but Eutropius has no such capability. Both Eutropius's sexual ambiguity and the physical deformities caused by his castration afford Claudian opportunities for pungently derisive humor; the pleasure of laughter allies the audience to him while the joke asserts that Eutropius is alien to them and their well-ordered world, as to the inappropriate roles that he plays. Finally, Claudian suggests that Eutropius's position as a castrated slave has permanently depraved him. He is inhumanly cruel and greedy, both against individuals and in public administration; slavery alone effects callousness and venality, but eunuchry makes them still worse. And again Claudian emphasizes that Eutropius's greed is fruitless because he has no family to provide for (1.222–28; 2pr.49–50). His infertility functions as a motif in every connection.

Moreover, he takes to his court men of equally low origins and even less ability. The techniques of attack Claudian practices on them derive from his attack on Eutropius, and since they are his creatures attacks on them also attack Eutropius indirectly. Even when he is no longer on the scene, both within the narrative as Leo lives up to his disastrous auspices and in the reality of which Claudian complains in the proem, that Eutropius has been exiled and yet the court is still not cleansed, Eutropius's influence lives on. He, the policies he set in motion, and the subordinates he promoted between them are destroying the state.

Claudian exploits wide-ranging ancient gender and class prejudices to deepen more ordinary complaints about corruption and incompetence that could be directed against any minister. He seasons the whole with graphic imagery and elevated, intense language in an acme of late rhetoricized style. The result is unforgettably vivid. It well deserves Alan Cameron's characterization of it as "the cruellest (and most entertaining) invective that has come down to us from the ancient world."¹⁴⁰

140. Alan Cameron 1974, 144.