

and Claudian could be seen as trying to accommodate it to his theme as best he can.⁵ Alternatively, he may have taken his inspiration from his own reading of Virgil. At the very least the association of Octavian with Orestes in the later poet makes the conscious use of the idea in the first Georgic likelier: typically what is made explicit by Claudian is merely suggested by Virgil.

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⁵ If so, it may have left a trace in Lucan too. At *De Bello Civili* 7.777f., during the night after Pharsalus, Caesar is tormented by the ghosts of his slain fellow-citizens, and is compared to Orestes hounded by the Furies: 'haud alios nondum Scythica purgatus in ara / Eumenidum vidit voltus Pelopeus Orestes.' Claudian's contemporary Prudentius similarly manifests considerable hostility to Augustus on the grounds of sexual immorality (something of an obsession for Prudentius) at *c. Symm.* 1.245–61.

THE FALL OF EUTROPIUS

concidit *exiguae* dementia vulnere *chartae*;
confecit saevum *littera* Martis opus,

(Claudian, *In Eutropium* 2.*Praef.* 19f.)

The eunuch Eutropius began his ascendancy over Arcadius, Emperor of the East, in late 395, following the murder of the Praetorian Prefect Rufinus. Eutropius, despite his physical shortcomings, 'sullied the Fasti'¹ by holding the consulate in 399. By the end of that same year, however, collusion between the barbarian general Gainas and Tribigild, leader of a rebellion of Ostrogoths in Asia Minor, resulted in Eutropius' fall from power. He was exiled to Cyprus and executed shortly afterwards.²

Not only did Eutropius, in the view of his enemies, disgrace the Roman state by his consulship, but he also earned himself the political enmity of the western court by opposing Stilicho's claims to be the legal regent for *both* Honorius, Emperor of the West, and his elder brother Arcadius. This opposition was not limited to a war of words: Eutropius encouraged Gildo, Count of Africa, to revolt, and even had Stilicho declared *hostis publicus*.³ Stilicho accordingly put his propagandist Claudian to work and the poet produced a two-volume invective *In Eutropium*. The preface to the second volume of this work joyfully announces the eunuch's deposition and exile.

What, though, is the *exigua charta* that is said to have hurled Eutropius down from his fortress in the women's quarters of the palace?⁴ One possibility is the letter which was sent to Arcadius by Gainas, on behalf of Tribigild, and which demanded the removal of Eutropius from office. Another is a letter in which Stilicho supposedly answered Eutropius' plea for help. As Cameron shows, the latter hypothesis rests on the assumption that Stilicho was deeply involved in the fall of Eutropius, 'yet Claudian, the decisive witness on such a matter, lends no support to it',⁵ and Gainas would appear to have been working not for Stilicho but for himself. Similarly, it is unlikely that Claudian is referring to Gainas' own letter. For all Gainas' crucial importance in the affair, Claudian does not 'either name or even allude indirectly to

¹ *In Eutr.* 1.1–23, esp. 9f., 'trabeata per urbes / ostentatur anus titulumque effeminat anni', 26.

² *In Eutr.* 2.*Praef.* 10 'annus qui trabeas hic dedit exilium'. For a general account of Eutropius' rise and fall see J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (repr. New York, 1958), i. 115ff., 126, and A. Cameron, *Claudian. Poetry and Propaganda at the Court of Honorius* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 124–55.

³ The decree was promulgated in the summer of 397; see Cameron, *op. cit.*, pp. 86, 93, 124.

⁴ *In Eutr.* 2.*Praef.* 21f. 'mollis feminea detruditur arce tyrannus / et thalamo pulsus perdidit imperium.'

⁵ Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

[him]’,⁶ preferring to pass him over in complete silence. It may even be that Claudian had not yet learned of Gainas’ letter when he composed the preface to the second book of the *In Eutropium*.⁷ Alternatively, Stilicho may have seen Gainas as a rival and preferred for propaganda purposes to attribute the deposition of the eunuch consul to an act of will on the part of the emperor Arcadius himself.

On close inspection, then, as Cameron shows, the historical evidence points to the *exigua charta* being Arcadius’ decree. Seeck argued that Claudian could not have referred so slightly to an Imperial decree, but the point is of course the contrast between so great a thing as the ousting of a consul *should* be – a war might have been expected – and the small piece of paper that was, in the event, all that was necessary.⁸ The decree, after all, is naturally quite literally ‘small’ – a little under two hundred words.⁹

All this, moreover, is confirmed by the realization that Claudian is imitating, or rather alluding to, a very famous passage in an earlier poet who enjoyed a great revival of popularity in Claudian’s own day.¹⁰ That passage is Juvenal 10.69–72, where two Roman men of rank discuss the recent news that Aelius Sejanus has fallen from grace and been executed. Like Eutropius, Sejanus was overthrown while at the height of his power and in the very year of his consulship (*A.D.* 31). The instrument was a letter to the Senate from the emperor:

‘sed quo cecidit sub crimine? quisnam
delator quibus indicibus, quo teste probavit?’
‘nil horum; verbosa et grandis epistula venit
a Capreis.’¹¹

One might have thought a great legal fuss necessary to remove Sejanus: in fact a mere letter, albeit a long and wordy one, did the trick.

No sooner is the parallel between the fate of Eutropius and that of Sejanus drawn than the change from a *verbosa et grandis epistula* to an *exigua charta*, a mere *littera*, points the differences. Sejanus at least was a man, indeed a soldier and a strong and formidable one at that.¹² Eutropius on the other hand is a eunuch, a half-man,¹³ servile by nature¹⁴ and effeminate.¹⁵ The goddess Roma, when spurring Stilicho to action, tells him war is hardly needed. If he but crack the whip, Eutropius will return to his servile condition:

non est iaculis hastisve petendus
conscia succumbent audito verberare terga.

(*In Eutr.* 1.506f.)

So redoubtable a creature as Sejanus might have been expected to prove difficult to

⁶ Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁷ Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

⁸ O. Seeck, *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* v (Berlin, 1913), p. 565, and Cameron, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

⁹ It is preserved at *Cod. Theod.* 9.40.17.

¹⁰ For Juvenal’s popularity in late antiquity, see Cameron, *op. cit.*, pp. 315, 328, and ‘Literary Allusions in the *Historia Augusta*’, *Hermes* 92 (1964), 363–77, p. 369.

¹¹ Cf. Dio Cassius 58.10 *κάν τοῦτω ἡ ἐπιστολή ἀνεγνώσθη. ἦν δὲ μακρά.*

¹² See e.g. Tac. *Ann.* 4.1 ‘corpus illi laborum tolerans’, and also the anecdote at 4.59 which tells how Sejanus showed his strength by shielding Tiberius during a rock-fall in a grotto in Campania.

¹³ He is a ‘semivir’ at *In Eutr.* 1.171.

¹⁴ *In Eutr.* 1.26f., 176f. ‘alteque tumescunt / serviles animi’, 181ff.

¹⁵ *In Eutr.* 1.252 ‘quid enim servum mollemque pudebit?’, 271ff., 320ff., *Praef.* 2.21 ‘mollis... tyrannus’, 2.112f. ‘necdum mollitiae, necdum, germana, mederi / possumus Eoae?’

depose, but in the event a letter was enough. Yet Tiberius had to take him seriously, and the fatal letter was itself a thing of weight. Eutropius, however, is in his person and his powers a perversion of nature, but also a great absurdity, a ludicrous sight in his consular robes.¹⁶ However offensive he may be, the briefest of peremptory commands will suffice to rid the world of his odious presence.¹⁷

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¹⁶ *In Eutr.* 1.300ff.: Eutropius looks like an ape comically clothed in fine clothes, but with its hind quarters left exposed.

¹⁷ Though the description of Sejanus' abrupt fall from power to disgrace is clearly Claudian's primary model here, the apparently insignificant instrument of great events or reversals is found elsewhere in Juvenal: cf. 4.110 '*tenui iugulos aperire susurro*' and especially 10.164-6 '*ille / Cannarum vindex et tanti sanguinis ultor / anulus*'. No doubt such reversals appealed to Juvenal's taste for both irony and rhetorical paradox. Cf. also Virg. *G.* 4.86f. '*hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta / pulveris exigui iactu compressa quiescent*.'

JULIUS VALERIUS 1.36 AND AUXILIARY *HABEO*

In the *Res Gestae Alexandri* of Julius Valerius, the manuscripts at 1.36 read *Tyrum enim proteri mox pedibus haberi principis respondere*. The use of *habeo* with an infinitive as a virtual equivalent of the future tense is common in late Latin.¹ Thielmann² emended our text to read *habere* and is followed by the standard critical edition³ and by *TLL*.⁴ Can *haberi* be defended? We ought to remember that auxiliary verbs are often 'attracted' into the passive when the dependent infinitive is passive, in the case of some verbs regularly, with others occasionally (consider *coepi*, *incipio*, *possum*, *desino*).⁵ It is not impossible to believe that the text at hand reflects the same phenomenon.

Why then are scholars so reluctant to accept the MSS. reading (Thielmann wrote, 'natürlich *habere* zu schreiben ist'), although an appropriate analogy is readily available? The reason is undoubtedly that among the numerous examples of *habere* with the infinitive to indicate the future, including many with a dependent passive infinitive, they can find none in which *habere* is itself in the passive. This is not unreasonable grounds for their conclusion. Consequently, it is worth citing an example. In the work attributed to Philo known as the *Antiquitates Biblicae*,⁶ we read at 18.4 Balaam's words to God, *scis quae fieri habentur in saeculo* ('You know what is going to happen in the world').⁷ The date of this Latin text is not certain, but it could well be more or less contemporaneous with Julius Valerius. At all events, it is probably enough to give us second thoughts about emending the latter's text.

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¹ See e.g. *TLL* s.v. *habeo*, vol. 6, col. 2455, lines 65ff.; Ph. Thielmann, *ALL* 2 (1885), 157ff.; M. Leumann, *MH* 19 (1962), 65-71.

² Thielmann, op. cit. 175.

³ B. Kübler (Teubner: Leipzig, 1888).

⁴ s.v. *habeo*, vol. 6, col. 2457, lines 41-2.

⁵ See e.g. Leumann-Hofmann-Szantyr, p. 288.

⁶ For editions of the text, see G. Kisch, *Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (Notre Dame, 1949); D. J. Harrington, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques* (Paris, 1976: *Sources Chrétiennes*, vol. 229).

⁷ This is the text of the so-called π tradition. Of the eighteen complete manuscripts of the *Antiquitates Biblicae*, sixteen belong to this tradition, including several of the earliest and best. There is no reason to doubt the validity of its reading here.