

BILL GLADHILL : **Tiberius on Capri and the Limits of Roman Sex Culture.**

This paper examines Suetonius' representation of Tiberius and sex on Capri at *Vita Tiberii* 43-44. Many of the features of Suetonius' narrative move through normative elements of Roman sex culture: brothels and prostitutes, sex manuals, erotic paintings in domestic spaces, pederasty and elite garden spaces. But each element is reconstituted as something dehumanizing and dangerous in Suetonius' telling. Tiberius constructs a radical sexuality, in which the closer an individual orbits the emperor, the more Roman notions of sex become deconstructed, atomized and reassembled in ways that expose a destructive and dangerous pathology. Nearly every structuring category that might delineate and demarcate Roman sexuality is distorted, obscured and blurred. Bodies are controlled and transformed. New functions and constructions of human embodiment are conceived. States of being become iterative replications of images imprinted in paint or on stone. Children become "bracelet workers", little fishes or hybrid, hooved deities or woodland goddesses. Normative stages and transitions of human development are obliterated and replaced by an assemblage of activity that orbits the sexual organs of the emperor. Tiberius transforms traditional Roman sex culture and assembles an admixture of extreme and complex performances of a particularly disruptive and corrosive sexuality that confounds categories and frameworks.

Mots-clés :

Suetonius – Tiberius – Capri – sexuality – spintriae – emperor – Rome