

From Soldiers to Women: Using Dress to transform Body and Behavior

In this paper I focus on clothing's ability to alter the gender of its wearer and display the wearer's transgressive behavior. I focus specifically on three instances of soldiers forced to dress as women: the first occurs in a law attributed to Charondas in the writing of Diodorus Siculus (12.16.1). The next two accounts are Julian's punishment of deserters in Zosimus's narrative (3.3.5) and the punishment of Sergius and Bacchus by the emperor Galerius (*Acta Sanctorum* October 7, 864.7-8). In the first two accounts, soldiers who abandon their post are forced to dress as women. Their bodies and gender are transformed through their clothing, resulting in their ridicule and desire to prove their bravery in coming battles. In the final example, a refusal of the soldiers to sacrifice to pagan gods results in their female attire and statement that they are brides to Christ. In each case, a change in clothing alters its wearer.

Connection between these narratives has been made only twice in the past. Woods is the first to draw a parallel between the punishments inflicted by Julian and Galerius. In a brief footnote, Tommasi further connects these two fifth century CE accounts to the earlier law of Charondas. I draw on both of their scholarship alongside the works of Butler, Cavallaro, Warwick, and Entwistle, to stress the connection between dress and the body, and their role in transformation as punishment.

I argue in this paper that clothing serves an important function in each of these narratives as a means of transforming the body in two ways: a means of matching gender with actions, and of punishing gender transgressors. I first examine the ability of clothing to reflect gender and transform the body, then look at the role of clothing and the body in the punishment of deserters.