

Class 8a

REAL (CHRISTIAN) MEN: AN OXYMORON?

Outline

- Revisiting the Roman Masculine Ideal
- How Christian Men Measured Up
 - Research Cluster Presentations
 - Transgressing *and* Maintaining the Masculine Ideal
 - Men as Brides of Christ?
 - Desert Warfare: Hermits & Their Foes
 - Summary: How Christian Men Crossed Gender Lines

REVISITING THE ROMAN MASCULINE IDEAL

Revisiting the Roman Masculine Ideal



1. Confident public speaker
2. Pietas
3. Self-control (enkrateia)
4. Control of others

HOW CHRISTIAN MEN MEASURED UP

How Christian Men Measured Up

Transgressing *and* Maintaining the Masculine Ideal



- ✓ 1. Confident public speaker
•
- ✓ 2. Pietas
•
- ✓ 3. Self-control (enkrateia)
•
- ~ 4. Control of others
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How Christian Men Measured Up Transgressing *and* Maintaining the Masculine Ideal



4. Control of others

for Roman men, this meant

- participation in war
- leadership in politics
- dominance of the family
- power, wealth, social distinction

Christian men changed the meaning:

They rejected the roles... ...but embraced the goals

How Christian Men Measured Up Men as Brides of Christ?



Paulinus of Nola, *Epistle* 41.1-2

[Like the virgin who] awaits the arrival of the bridegroom,
[I pray that my] mind may be fruitful for God and that my
spirit be virgin, despoiled by no attractions of this world
and remaining unstained by any vice.



Augustine, *Confessions* 1.13.21

I did not love you [God]; and committed fornication against
you... For the friendship of this world is fornication against you.



Jerome, *Epistle* 22.7

I used to lie at Jesus' feet; I bathed them with my tears, I
wiped them with my hair. I do not blush at my unhappiness.



Desert Warfare: Hermits & Their Foes

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- how were they fathers?
-
- authority?

Jerome, *Epistle* 125.17

Go then and so live in your
monastery, free from all stain of
defilement, that you may come forth
to Christ's altar as a virgin
steps from her bower.





Desert Warfare: Hermits & Their Foes

Jerome, 14.10
Are you frightened by the thought of toil? No athlete gains his crown without sweat. Are you thinking about food? Faith feels not hunger. Do you dread bruising your limbs worn away with fasting on the bare ground? The Lord lies by your side. Is your rough head bristling with uncombed hair? Your head is Christ. Does the infinite vastness of the desert seem terrible? In spirit you may always stroll in paradise.... Is your skin rough and scurfy without baths? He who has once washed in Christ needs not to wash again.





How Christian Men Crossed Gender Lines

*The effects of these symbolic "transgressions" were the same:
to maintain the superiority of men and the virtues construed as masculine*
