

THE LURE OF THE ARENA
Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games

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spectators' attentions across the ages. Indeed, stressing the uniqueness of the arena provides a comforting distance between us and the Romans in their arena seats. An emphasis on the historically contingent and culturally specific aspects of Roman gladiatorial spectacles allows us to turn away, secure in our confidence that we are nothing like that.¹³ Appreciation of the psychological dynamics that coursed through those far-away spectators leads to the rather more unsettling realization that the lure of the brutalities staged in the Roman arena may well lie closer to home than many of us might like to think.

¹³ See, e.g., Edwards, *Death*, 77: "It is hard for the modern reader not to be alienated by the idea that the sight of a man struggling against the pain of a fatal wound can constitute a source of edification and indeed visual joy"; Kanz and Grossschmidt, "Head Injuries," 216: "The brutality of this ancient spectacle still remains incomprehensible to today's socialized humans"; E. Köhne, "Bread and Circuses: The Politics of Entertainment," in Köhne and Ewigleben (eds.), *Gladiators and Caesars*, 8–30, esp. 12: "Roman civilization and culture is never so utterly remote from our understanding as in the matter of these life-and-death games"; Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion*, 124–34, esp. 124: "We may gather to watch sports events and be temporarily transformed by the crowd enthusiasm. . . . But we do not go to such displays to watch people die." Note also Coleman's assessment ("Launching into History," 49) that the Romans exhibited a different *mentalité* "which is largely alien to our modern outlook: a passion for novel and elaborate ways of mounting spectacle" (the annually increasing scale of death and destruction in summer blockbuster movies rather suggests otherwise).

Appendix: select literary and epigraphic testimonia for arena crowd behavior and related issues

Entries are listed alphabetically by author's name. Literary (entries marked with "L") and epigraphic (entries marked with "I") *testimonia* are listed separately. The texts are drawn from Teubner editions, where available. All translations are the author's, unless otherwise indicated. Very useful also is the collection of sources at the Spectatores website (www-gewi.uni-graz.at/spectatores), on which see W. Petermandl, "Zuschauer der Geschichte: Ein Internet-Archiv zum Publikum im Altertum," *Nikephoros* 19 (2006), 45–56.

SECTION A: LITERARY TEXTS

I.I Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* 4.13–14

[13] Ibi famam celebrem super quodam Demochare munus edituro gladiatorium deprehendimus. Nam vir et genere primarius et opibus plurimus et liberalitate praecipuus digno fortunae suae splendore publicas voluptates instruebat. Quis tantus ingenii, quis facundiae, qui singulas species apparatus multiuigi verbis idoneis posset explicare? Gladiatores isti famosas manus, venatores illi probatae pernicitatis, alibi noxii perdita securitate suis epulis bestiarum saginas instruentes; confixilis machinae publicae turres structae tabularum nexibus ad instar circumforaneae domus, floridae picturae, decora futurae venationis receptacula. Qui praeterea numerus, quae facies ferarum! Nam praecipuo studio foris etiam advexerat generosa illa damnatorum capitum funera. Sed praeter ceteram speciosi muneris supellectilem totis utcumque patrimonii viribus immanis ursae comparabat numerum copiosum. Nam praeter domesticis venationibus captas, praeter largis emptionibus partas, amicorum etiam donationibus variis certatim oblatas tutela sumptuosa sollicitate nutrebat.

[14] Nec ille tam clarus tamque splendidus publicae voluptatis apparatus Invidiae noxios effugit oculos. Nam diutina captivitate fatigatae simul et aestiva flagrantia maceratae, pigra etiam sessione languidae, repentina correptae pestilentia paene ad nullum redivere numerum. Passim per plateas

plurimas cerneres iacere semivivorum corporum ferina naufragia. Tunc vulgus ignobile, quos inculta pauperies sine dilectu ciborum tenuato ventri cogit sordentia supplementa et dapes gratuitas conquirere, passim iacentes epulas accurrunt.

[13] [*Speaker is a bandit*] "There [Plataea] we caught wind of a widespread rumor about a certain Demochares, who was about to put on a gladiatorial show. A man of high birth, very great wealth, and outstanding liberality, he was providing public entertainments with a splendor worthy of his fortune. Who has enough talent, enough eloquence as to describe with appropriate words the individual elements of the show's complex equipment? The gladiators were of renowned valor, the huntsmen of proven agility, and condemned criminals too, their safety lost, providing fattening food for the beasts in a banquet of themselves. There was a wooden pile construction, towers erected with fastenings of boards fashioned like an itinerant house, pretty pictures, and fine cages for the hunt to come. And besides, how many and how impressive the wild beasts! For with outstanding effort he had brought even from abroad those generous tombs for the condemned. But aside from the rest of the paraphernalia for a splendid show, using the entire wealth of his inheritance he assembled an ample troop of huge bears. Besides bears captured in hunts conducted by his own servants or those acquired in costly purchases, there were those provided by his friends, as they vied with each other with varied gifts. These animals he carefully fed and maintained at great expense.

[14] But such brilliant and splendid gear for a public show did not escape the malignant eyes of Envy. For the bears, worn out by their protracted captivity, weakened by the intense summer heat, and made limp from idly sitting about, were attacked by a sudden illness and their numbers were reduced to almost nothing. You could see the wreckage of the animals, their half-alive bodies, lying about in most of the town's streets. Then the common mob, driven by raw poverty without choice in their foodstuffs to seek out vile supplements and free meals for their emaciated bellies, ran to the banquets-lying around all over the place."

T.2 Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* 10.18, 23, 28-9, 34-5

[18] Thiasus – hoc enim nomine meus nuncupabatur dominus – oriundus patria Corintho, quod caput est totius Achaiae provinciae, ut eius prosapia atque dignitas postulabat, gradatim permensis honoribus quinquennali magistratui fuerat destinatus, et ut splendori capessendorum responderet fascium, munus gladiatorum triduanum spectaculi pollicitus

latius munificentiam suam porrigebat. Denique gloriae publicae studio tunc Thessaliam etiam accesserat nobilissimas feras et famosos inde gladiatores comparaturus, iamque ex arbitrio dispositis coemptisque omnibus domuitionem parabat . . .

[23] Nec gravate magister meus voluptates ex eius arbitrio largiebatur, partim mercedes amplissimas acceptando, partim novum spectaculum domino praeparando. Incunctanter ei denique libidinis nostrae totam detegit scaenam. At ille liberto magnifice munerato destinat me spectaculo publico. Et quoniam neque egregia illa uxor mea propter dignitatem neque prorsus ulla alis inveniri potuerat grandi praemio, quae mecum incoram publicans pudicitiam populi caveam frequentaret. Eius poenae talem cognoveram fabulam . . .

[28] . . . atque illam, minus quidem quam merebatur, sed quod dignus cruciatus alius excogitari non poterat, certe bestiis obiciendam pronuntiavit.

[29] Talis mulieris publicitus matrimonium confarreaturus ingentique angore oppido suspensus exspectabam diem muneris, saepius quidem mortem mihimet volens consciscere, priusquam scelerosae mulieris contagio macularer vel infamia publici spectaculi depudescerem . . . Dies ecce muneri destinatus aderat. Ad consaepum caveae prosequente populo pompatico favore deducor. Ad dum ludicris scaenicorum choreis primitiae spectaculi dedicantur . . .

[34] Ecce quidam miles per mediam plateam dirigit cursum petiturus iam populo postulante illam de publico carcere mulierem, quam dixi propter multiforme scelus bestis esse damnatam meisque praeclaris nuptiis destinatam. Et iam torus genialis scilicet noster futurus accuratissime disternebatur lectus Indica testudine perlucidus, plumea congerie tumidus, veste serica floridus. At ego praeter pudorem obeundi publice concubitus, praeter contagium scelestae pollutaeque feminae, metu iam mortis maxime cruciabar, sic ipse mecum reputans, quod in amplexu Venerio scilicet nobis cohaerentibus, quaecumque ad exitium mulieris bestia fuisset immissa, non adeo vel prudentia sollers vel artificio docta vel absistentia frugi posset provenire, ut adiacentem lateri meo laceraret mulierem, mihi vero quasi indemnato et innoxio parceret.

[35] Ergo igitur non de pudore iam, sed de salute ipsa sollicitus, dum magister meus lectulos probe coaptando districtus inseruit, et tota familia partim ministerio venationis occupata partim voluptario spectaculo adtonita meis cogitationibus liberum tribuebatur arbitrium, nec magnoque quisquam custodiendum tam mansuetum putabat asinum, paulatim furtivum pedem

proferens portam quae proxima est potitus, iam cursu memet celerrimo proripio, Cenchreas pervado, quod oppidum audit quidem nobilissimae coloniae Corinthiensium, alluitur autem Aegaeo et Saronico mari.

[18] Thiasus – for my master was announced [in public] under this name – came from Corinth, the capital of the entire province of Achaea. As his lineage and position demanded, he had advanced through the grades of local office and had been elected to the five-yearly magistracy, and to respond to the distinction of gaining the fasces, he had promised a three-day gladiatorial spectacle and was offering his munificence quite expansively. In his enthusiasm for public glory he had even gone to Thessaly to collect there the most celebrated wild beasts and famed gladiators. Now after he arranged and bought everything according to plan, he was readying to come home . . . [*the journey back is described; Lucius' fame as a gifted ass spreads in Corinth; a local woman of standing falls in love with him and he sleeps with her; the unusual coupling is reported to Thiasus, who decides to include it in his forthcoming spectacle*] . . .

[23] My trainer was not reluctant to bestow these pleasures on her whenever she wished, partly because he was getting a very large fee, and partly because he was readying a new spectacle for his master. He didn't hesitate to expose the entire drama of our lust to him. The master rewarded his freedman lavishly and slated me to appear in his public spectacle. And since that outstanding wife of mine could not appear on account of her social position, and nor could any other woman be found even for a high price, a worthless nobody was acquired, one sentenced to the beasts on the governor's order, who would prostitute her virtue with me and throng the stands with people. I learned the following tale of her conviction . . . [*the story of the multiple-murdering woman is told, as is her denunciation to the governor at his house*] . . .

[28] . . . Although it was less than she deserved, but because no other fitting torture could be devised, he [the governor] condemned her to the beasts at least.

[29] Such was the woman I was to celebrate a public wedding with, and I waited for the day of the show with great anxiety and extreme suspense. Very often I wanted to take my own life before being besmirched by that wicked woman's pollution or shamed by the disgrace of a public spectacle . . . And so the appointed day of the show arrived. I was led to the adjacent precinct of the venue, with the people following along in an enthusiastic procession. The opening phases of the spectacle were given over to theatrical stage dancers . . . [*a lengthy description of an intricate dance show follows, and of a*

re-enactment of the Judgment of Paris staged on a wooden mountain complete with bushes and trees, an artificial river, and grazing goats] . . .

[34] As the people were now demanding her, a soldier made straight across the performance area to fetch from the public jail the woman who, as I've said, had been condemned to the beasts on account of her diverse crimes and was slated for a splendid marriage to me. Now a couch – clearly meant to be our conjugal bed – was being meticulously laid out, shining with Indian tortoise-shell, fat with a feathered mattress, bright with silken covers. But I, besides the shame of sleeping with this woman in public, besides the infection of this wicked and polluted woman, was racked especially by a fear of death and thought to myself that, when indeed we were joined together in Venus' embrace, whatever beast was let into the arena to make an end of the woman could not possibly be so skilled in intelligence, learned in its trade, or honest in its moderation as to tear the woman lying beside me but spare me, on the grounds that had I not been convicted and was innocent.

[35] And so worried not only for my self-respect but also for my very life, while my trainer was focusing on fitting the couch together properly, and the entire slave workforce was occupied, some with readying the hunt, others astonished at the sensual spectacle, free rein was accorded to my designs. Nobody thought particularly that so tame an ass had to be guarded, so gradually by furtive steps I reached the nearest gate, and hurled myself with the fastest sprint and reached Cenchreae, which one hears is a town in the most renowned territory of Corinth and is lapped by the waters of the Aegean and Saronic seas.

T.3 Augustine, *Confessiones* 6.13

Romam praecesserat [sc. Atypius] ut ius disceret, et ibi gladiatorii spectaculi hiatu incredibili et incredibiliter abreptus est. cum enim aversaretur et detestaretur talia, quidam eius amici et condiscipuli, cum forte de prandio redeuntibus pervium esset, recusantem vehementer et resistentem familiari violentia duxerunt in amphitheatrum crudelium et funestorum ludorum diebus, haec dicentem: "si corpus meum in locum illum trahitis, numquid et animum et oculos meos in illa spectacula potestis intendere? adero itaque absens, ac sic et vos et illa superabo." quibus auditis illi nihilo setius eum adduxerunt secum, id ipsum forte explorare cupientes, utrum posset efficere. quo ubi ventum est et sedibus quibus potuerunt locati sunt, fervebant omnia immanissimis voluptatibus. ille clausis foribus oculorum interdixit animo ne in tanta mala procederet. atque utinam et aures opturasset! nam quodam pugnae casu, cum clamor ingens totius populi vehementer eum

pulsasset, curiositate victus et quasi paratus, quidquid illud esset, etiam visum contemnere et vincere, aperuit oculos, et percussus est graviore vulnere in anima quam ille in corpore quem cernere concupivit, ceciditque miserabilius quam ille quo cadente factus est clamor: qui per eius aures intravit et reseravit eius lumina, ut esset, qua feriretur et deiceretur audax adhuc potius quam fortis animus, et eo infirmior, quo de se praesumpserat, qui debuit de te. ut enim vidit illum sanguinem, immanitatem simul ebibit et non se avertit sed fixit aspectum et hauriebat furias et nesciebat, et delectabatur scelere certaminis et cruenta voluptate inebriabatur. et non erat iam ille, qui venerat, sed unus de turba, ad quam venerat, et verus eorum socius, a quibus adductus erat. quid plura? spectavit, clamavit, exarsit abstulit inde secum insaniam qua stimularetur redire non tantum cum illis a quibus prius abstractus est, sed etiam prae illis et alios trahens.

He [Alypius] had gone to Rome to study the law and there he was carried away to an extraordinary extent by an incredible yearning for gladiatorial games. For although he avoided and detested such spectacles, certain friends and fellow students of his brought him with lighthearted force (since he was objecting fiercely and resisting) to the amphitheatre on days of cruel funeral games. He said, "Even if you drag my body to that place, can you direct my mind and eyes to the spectacle? I will be present while absent, and so defeat both you and the show." When they heard this, they dragged him in with them nevertheless, perhaps wanting to find out whether he could do it. When they arrived there and had gotten what seats they could, the whole place seethed with its monstrous pleasures. Alypius closed the doors of his eyes and forbade his soul to engage in such evils. If only he had shut his ears too! But at a certain fall in the fight, when a huge roar from the entire crowd struck him powerfully, he was overcome by curiosity and, telling himself he was ready to condemn the sight, whatever it might be, and to rise above it, he opened his eyes. And so he was struck with a more serious wound in his soul than was he, whom he wanted to see, in his body, and he fell more pitifully than he whose fall had generated the roar. That roar entered through his ears and unlocked the sight by which his soul, daring rather than brave up to this point, was flogged and cast down. And he was all the weaker for having presumed about himself when he ought to have relied on you. For when he saw the blood, he drank in the savagery and did not turn away but fixed his gaze on it. Unaware of what he was doing, he devoured the mayhem and was delighted by the wicked contest and drunk on its cruel pleasure. He was no longer the man who had come to the show, but one of the crowd he had come to, and a true partner of those who had brought him along. Why say more? He looked,

he shouted, he was fired up, and he carried away with him the madness that would goad him to return, not only with his original companions but even as their leader dragging others along.

T.4 Cicero, *Pro Milone* 92

Etenim si in gladiatoriiis pugnis et infimi generis hominum condicione atque fortuna timidos atque supplices et ut vivere liceat obsecrantis etiam odisse solemus, fortis atque animosos et se acriter ipsos morti offerentis servare cupimus, eorumque nos magis miseret, qui nostram misericordiam non requirunt, quam qui illam efflagitant, quanto hoc magis fortissimis civibus facere debemus?

For if in gladiatorial bouts, where the fate of the lowest class of mankind is concerned, we usually loathe the cowardly suppliants who beg to be allowed to live, while we want to spare the brave and vigorous ones who enthusiastically expose themselves to death, and feel more pity for those who do not seek our pity than those who importune us for it, then how much the more ought we do this in the case of our bravest citizens?

T.5 Cicero, *Disputationes Tusculanae* 2.41

Gladiatores, aut perditii homines aut barbari, quas plagas perferunt! quo modo illi, qui bene instituti sunt, accipere plagam malunt quam turpiter vitare! . . . quis cum decubisset, ferrum recipere iussus collum contraxit? . . . crudele gladiatorum spectaculum et inhumanum non nullis videri solet, et haud scio an ita sit, ut nunc fit: cum vero sontes ferro depugnabant, auribus fortasse multae, oculis quidem nulla poterat esse fortior contra dolorem et mortem disciplina.

Gladiators, whether ruined men or barbarians, what wounds they endure! See how the well trained prefer to accept a wound rather than disgracefully avoid it! . . . Who, when he has fallen, stretches out his neck when ordered to accept the sword? . . . A gladiatorial spectacle usually appears cruel and inhuman to some and I am inclined to agree, as they are now staged. But when condemned men fought with swords, there could be no sturdier training for the eye against pain and death, though perhaps there were many for the ear.

T.6 Dio 39.38.1-5

Κάν ταῖς αὐταῖς ἡμέραις ὁ Πομπήιος τὸ θέατρον, ᾧ καὶ νῦν λαμπρυνόμεθα, καθιέρωσε, καὶ ἐν τε ἐκείνῳ θέαν καὶ μουσικῆς καὶ ἀγῶνος γυμνικοῦ κἀν τῷ ἵπποδρόμῳ καὶ ἵππων ἀμιλλαν καὶ θηρίων πολλῶν

deinde saepius dando et modo volneribus tenuis, modo sine missione, etiam [et] familiare oculis gratumque id spectaculum fecit, et armorum studium plerisque iuvenum accendit. [13] itaque qui primo ab Roma magnis pretiis paratos gladiatores accersere solitus erat, iam suo . . . <vacat>

He [*sc* Antiochus] gave a gladiatorial show after the Roman fashion, at first to the greater terror than pleasure of people who were unused to such sights. [12] Then by successive iterations, initially limiting the action to wounds and then not sparing the defeated, he made the sight familiar and pleasing, and stirred a zeal for arms in most of the young men. [3] In this way he who had at first usually imported his trained gladiators from Rome at great expense, now with his own . . . <text breaks off>

T.10 Lucilius 4.155–60K = 4.153–8M = Cic. *Tusc.* 4.48

(Part of a discussion about philosophical concepts of distress and disorder)

An vero vir fortis, nisi stomachari coepit, non potest fortis esse? Gladiatorium id quidem. Quamquam in eis ipsis videmus saepe constantiam:

Conlocuntur, congregiuntur, quaerunt aliquid, postulant, ut magis placati quam irati esse videantur. Sed in illo genere sit sane Pacideianus aliquis hoc animo, ut narrat Lucilius:

“Occidam illum equidem et vincam, si id quaeritis,” inquit,
 “Verum illud credo fore: in os prius accipiam ipse
 Quam gladium in stomacho spurci ac pulmonibus sisto.
 Odi hominem, iratus pugno, nec longius quicquam
 Nobis, quam dextrae gladium dum accommodet alter;
 Usque adeo studio atque odio illius eferor ira.”

Or is it that a truly brave man cannot be brave unless he becomes enraged? It seems so with gladiators. Although in these very same men we often see equanimity:

They converse, meet, ask something, make demands so that they seem more calm than angry. But there may be in that class of person someone quite like Pacideianus, with a spirit such as Lucilius tells us about:

“I will kill him, oh yes I will, and win, if you ask it,” he says,
 “But I think it will be like this: I will get one in the face
 Before I plant my sword in that swine’s belly or chest.
 I hate the fellow, I fight angry, nor do we wait any longer
 Than for each of us to fit the sword into our right hands;
 I am transported by my anger to such a passionate hatred for him.”

T.11 Martial, *Epigrams* 5.24

Hermes Martia saeculi voluptas,
 Hermes omnibus eruditus armis,
 Hermes et gladiator et magister,
 Hermes turbo sui tremorque ludi
 5 Hermes, quem timet Helius, sed unum,
 Hermes, cui cadit Advolans, sed uni,
 Hermes vincere nec ferire doctus,
 Hermes suppositicius sibi ipse,
 Hermes divitiae locariorum,
 10 Hermes cura laborque ludiarum,
 Hermes belligera superbus hasta,
 Hermes aequoreo minax tridente,
 Hermes casside languida timendus,
 Hermes gloria Martis universi,
 15 Hermes omnia solus et ter unus.

Hermes the martial delight of the age,
 Hermes skilled in all arms,
 Hermes, both gladiator and trainer,
 Hermes, whirlwind and tremor of his school,
 Hermes, whom Helius fears, him alone,
 Hermes, before whom Advolans falls, before him alone,
 Hermes, trained to win but not to harm,
 Hermes, himself his own substitute,
 Hermes, the riches of the ticket touts,
 Hermes, the love and labor of gladiators’ women,
 Hermes, proud with warlike spear,
 Hermes, threatening with marine trident,
 Hermes, fearful with drooping helmet,
 Hermes, the glory of Mars universal,
 Hermes, all things at once and three times unique.

T.12 Petronius, *Satyricon* 45.4–13

Tu si aliubi fueris, dices hic porcos coctos ambulare. Et ecce habituri sumus munus eccellente in triduo die festa; familia non lanistica, sed plurimi liberti. [5] Et Titus noster magnum animum habet, et est caldicerebrius. Aut hoc aut illud, erit quid utique. Nam illi domesticus sum, non est mixcix. [6] Ferrum optimum daturus est, sine fuga, carnarium in medio, ut amphitheater videat. Et habet unde. Relictum est illi sestertium tricenties: decessit illius pater †male† ut quadringenta impendat, non sentiet patrimonium illius, et sempiterno nominabitur. [7] Iam nannos aliquot habet

et mulierem essedariam et dispensatorem Glyconis, qui deprehensus est cum dominam suam delectaretur. Videbis populi rixam inter zelotypos et amasiunculos. [8] Glyco autem, sestertarius homo, dispensatorem ad bestias dedit. Hoc est se ipsum traducere. Quid servus peccavit, qui coactus est facere? Magis illa matella digna fuit quam taurus iactaret. Sed qui asinum non potest, stratum caedit. [9] Quid autem Glyco putabat Hermogenis filicem unquam bonum exitum facturam? Ille miluo volanti poterat ungues resecare; colubra restem non parit. Glyco, Glyco dedit suas; itaque quamdiu vixerit, habebit stigmam, nec illam nisi Orcus delebit. [10] Sed sibi quisque peccat. Sed subolfacio quia nobis epulum daturus est Mammea, binos denarios mihi et meis. Quod si hoc fecerit, eripiat Norbano totum favorem. [11] Scias oportet plenis velis hunc vinciturum. Et revera, quid ille nobis boni fecit? Dedit gladiatores sestertarios iam decrepitos, quos si sufflasses, cecidissent; iam meliores bestiarios vidi. Occidit de lucerna equites; putares eos gallos gallinaceos: alter burdubasta, alter loripes, tertarius mortuus pro mortuo, qui habe<ba>t nervia praecisa. [12] Unus alicuius flaturae fuit Thraex, qui et ipse ad dictata pugnavit. Ad summam, omnes postea secti sunt; adeo de magna turba 'Adhibete' acceperant: plane fugae merae. 'Munus tamen,' inquit, 'tibi dedi': et ego tibi plodo. [13] Computa, et tibi plus do quam accepi. Manus manum lavat.

[Freedman Echion speaking] "If you lived somewhere else, you'd say roast pork walks the streets. In any case, we're about to have an excellent show on the holiday, three days away. No gladiator troop from the training school, but most of them freedmen. [5] Our Titus is ambitious – he's a real hot-head too. One way or another, there'll be something worthwhile. I'm a close friend of his, and he's not a man for half measures. [6] He'll give us the best fighting, with no running away, a butcher's shop in the middle, so the amphitheater can see it. And he has the means. Thirty million sesterces was left to him: his father died, sadly, so that he spends 400,000 without his estate feeling the pinch. His name will be forever remembered. [7] He has some dwarves, a female *essedaria*, and Glyco's head accountant, who was caught pleasuring the mistress of the house. You'll see the people arguing, jealous husbands against loverboys. [8] But Glyco, that cheapskate, has given his accountant to the beasts. That's the same as giving himself over to them. What transgression did a slave commit, who was forced to do it? That piss-pot wife of his is more deserving to be thrown by the bull. But he who can't lash the donkey, lashes the saddle blanket. [9] Why did Glyco think that worthless daughter of Hermogenes would turn out well? He

could cut the claws off a flying kite; a snake doesn't father rope. Glyco, O Glyco, he's paid the penalty himself. As long as he lives, he'll carry a stigma that only death can erase. [10] But we all sin against ourselves. But I catch a whiff that Mammea will put on a banquet for us, two *denarii* for me and mine. If he does that, he may strip Norbanus of his popularity entirely. [11] I'm sure you know he'll have plain sailing to victory. In fact, what good has Norbanus ever done us? He gave a show of two-bit gladiators, already decrepit, who'd have fallen over if you blew on 'em. I've seen better beastmen. He killed pint-sized knights – you'd have thought them farmyard cocks. One was thin as a rake, another bandy-legged, and the reserve was a corpse substituting for a corpse – hamstrung in advance. [12] Only one showed any fighting spirit, a Thracian, but even he fought by the book. In short, they all had their throats cut afterwards, for they'd had shouts of 'Get to it!' from the large crowd. It was a total shambles. 'But I gave you a show,' he says. And I applaud you. Do the math; and I'm giving you more than I got from you. One hand washes the other.

T.13 Philostratus, *Vita Apolloni* 4.22

οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ξυνιόντες ἐς θέατρον τὸ ὑπὸ τῆ ἀκροπόλει προσεῖχον σφαγαῖς ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἐσπουδάζετο ταῦτα ἐκεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν Κορίνθῳ νῦν, χρημάτων τε μεγάλων ἐωνημένοι ἤγοντο μοιχοὶ καὶ πόρνοι καὶ τοιχωρῦχοι καὶ βαλαντιοτόμοι καὶ ἀνδραποδισταὶ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἔθνη, οἱ δ' ὦπλιζον αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐκέλευον ξυμπίπτειν. ἐλάβετο δὲ καὶ τοῦτων ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος, καὶ καλούντων αὐτὸν ἐς ἐκκλησίαν Ἀθηναίων οὐκ ἂν ἔφη παρελθεῖν ἐς χωρίον ἀκάθαρτον καὶ λύθρου μεστόν. ἔλεγε δὲ ταῦτα ἐν ἐπιστολῇ. καὶ θαυμάζειν ἔλεγεν "ὅπως ἡ θεὸς οὐ καὶ τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἤδη ἐκλείπτει τοιοῦτον αἷμα ὑμῶν ἐκχεόντων αὐτῇ . . .".

(Loeb trans.) The Athenians ran in crowds to the theater beneath the acropolis to witness human slaughter, and the passion for such sports was stronger there than it is in Corinth today; for they would buy for large sums adulterers and fornicators and burglars and cut-purses and kidnappers and suchlike rabble, and then they took and armed them and set them to fight with one another. Apollonius then attacked these practices, and when the Athenians invited him to attend their assembly, he refused to enter a place so impure and reeking with gore. And this he said in an epistle to them, that he was surprised "the the goddess had not already fled the Acropolis when you shed such blood under her eyes . . .".

T.14 Pliny, *Historiae Naturales* 8.20-1

Pompei quoque altero consulatu, dedicatione templi Veneris Victricis, viginti pugnare in circo aut, ut quidam tradunt, xvii, Gaetulis ex adverso iaculantibus, mirabili unius dimicatione, qui pedibus confossis repsit genibus in catervas, abrepta scuta iaciens in sublime, quae decidentia voluptati spectantibus erant in orbem circumacta, velut arte, non furore belvae, iacerentur. magnum et in altero miraculum fuit uno ictu occiso; pilum autem sub oculo adactum in vitalia capitis venerat. [21] universi eruptionem temptare, non sine vexatione populi, circumdatis claustris ferreis. qua de causa Caesar dictator postea simile spectaculum editurus euripis harenam circumdedit, quos Nero princeps sustulit equiti loca addens. sed Pompeiani amissa fugae spe misericordiam vulgi inenarrabili habitu quaerentes supplicare quadam sese lamentatione conplorantes, tanto populi dolore, ut oblitus imperatoris ac munificentiae honori suo exquisitae flens universus consurgeret dirasque Pompeio, quas ille mox luit, inprecaretur.

In the second consulship of Pompey, at the dedication of the temple of Venus Victrix, 20 [elephants] fought in the circus or, as some report, 17 against Gaetolian javelinmen. As one animal was putting up a remarkable fight, its feet pierced through, it crawled on its knees against the mob of its attackers, snatched their shields away and threw them high into the air; as they fell back to earth the shields charted a curve, to the delight of the spectators, almost as if they had been thrown by skill [i.e., juggling] and not by the fury of a wild beast. Another marvel in a different instance was when one elephant was killed with a single wound; the javelin penetrated below the eye and reached the vitals of the head. [21] Despite an enclosure of iron fencing, the entire elephant troop attempted a break-out, which disturbed the people. For this reason, Caesar the Dictator, when he was about to stage a similar spectacle later, threw a water channel around the arena, which Nero demolished in adding seats for the Equestrian class. But Pompey's elephants, having lost hope of getting away, sought the sympathy of the mob with their indescribable posture as they begged and wailed for themselves in a sort of lamentation. So great was the grief of the people that, forgetting the general and the meticulous generosity he had staged for their honor, they all wept and stood up, invoking curses on Pompey, which he soon paid for.

T.15 Pliny, *Panegyricus* 33.1-4

... Visum est spectaculum inde non enerve nec fluxum, nec quod animos virorum molliret et frangeret, sed quod ad pulchra vulnera contemptumque

mortis accenderet, cum in servorum etiam noxiorumque corporibus amor laudis et cupido victoriae cerneretur. [2] quam deinde in edendo liberalitatem, quam iustitiam exhibuit omni adfectione aut intactus aut maior! . . . [3] iam quam libera spectantium studia, quam securus favor! Nemini impietas ut solebat obiecta, quod odisset gladiatorem; nemo e spectatore spectaculum factus miseris voluptates unco et ignibus expiavit. [4] demens ille verique honoris ignarus, qui crimina maiestatis in harena colligebat, ac se despici et contemni, nisi etiam gladiatores eius veneremur, sibi male dici in illis, suam divinitatem suum numen violari interpretabatur, cumque se idem quod deos idem gladiatores quod se putabat.

... We saw a spectacle – nothing flaccid or dissolute to soften and weaken men's spirits, but something to rouse them to accept lovely wounds and hold death in contempt, since even in the bodies of slaves and criminals was seen a love of glory and lust to win. [2] What generosity in putting on the show! What fairness he displayed, untouched by all emotion, or above it! . . . [3] How free was the enthusiasm of the spectators, how secure their support! No one was charged with disloyalty, as used to be the case, for hating a gladiator; none of the spectators was made into a spectacle, appeasing wretched pleasures with hook and flame. [4] He [Domitian] was a lunatic, ignorant of his own position, who collected charges of treason at the arena and thought himself despised and disparaged unless we also revered his gladiators, who interpreted insults against them as insults against himself and reckoned his divine spirit maligned; he thought himself equal to the gods, and his gladiators equal to himself.

T.16 Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* 2.1091-113

(Discussing and disparaging the Vestal Virgins)

inde ad consessum caveae pudor almus et expers
 sanguinis it pietas hominum visura cruentos
 congressus mortisque et vulnera vendita pastu
 spectatura sacris oculis. sedet illa verendis
 1095 vittarum insignis phaleris fruiturque lanistis.
 o tenerum mitemque animum! Consurgit ad ictus
 et quotiens victor ferrum iugulo inserit, illa
 delicias ait esse suas, pectusque iacentis
 virgo modesta iubet converso pollice rumpi,
 1100 ne latet pars ulla animae vitalibus imis,
 altius inpresso dum palpitar ense secutor.
 hoc illud meritum est, quod continuare feruntur

quod est morte gravius acerbisque, lacerari, expleri ferarum alios humanis carnibus, comedi homines cum circumstantium laetitia conspicientium voluptate, hoc est non minus paene hominum aspectibus quam bestiarum dentibus devorari.

In the first place, there is practically no crime or disgrace that is not a feature of the spectacles. Here the highest grade of pleasure is that people be killed or, what is worse and more brutal than death, that they be torn to shreds and the bellies of wild animals filled with human flesh, that people be eaten amidst the joy and delight of the onlookers standing about; that is, to have men devoured hardly any less by the eyes of people as by the teeth of beasts.

T.19 Seneca, *Controversiae* 4 praefatio 1

Quod munerarii solent facere, qui ad expectationem populi detinendam nova paria per omnes dies dispensat, ut sit quot populum et delectet et revocet, hoc ego facio...

I am doing what *munerarii* usually do when, in order to keep the anticipation of the people going, they spread new pairs across all the days of a spectacle, so that there is something both to delight the crowd and keep them coming back...

T.20 Seneca, *Epistulae* 7.2-5

[7.2] Inimica est multorum conversatio; nemo aliquod nobis vitium aut commendat aut imprimit aut nescientibus adlinit. utique quo maior est populus, cui miscemur, hoc periculi plus est. Nihil vero tam damnosum bonis moribus quam in aliquo spectaculo desiderare. tunc enim per voluptatem facilius vitia subrepunt. [7.3] quid me existimas dicere? avarior redeo, ambitiosior, luxuriosior, immo vero crudelior et inhumanior, quia inter homines fui. Casu in meridianum spectaculum incidi lusus expectans et sales et aliquid laxamenti, quo hominum oculi ab humano cruore adquiescant; contra est. quicquid ante pugnatum est, misericordia fuit. nunc omissis nugis mera homicidia sunt. nihil habent quo tegantur, ad ictum totis corporibus expositi numquam frustra manum mittunt. [7.4] hoc plerique ordinariis paribus et postulaticis praefereunt. quidni praefereant? non galea, non scuto repellitur ferrum. quo munimenta? quo artes? omnia ista mortis morae sunt. mane leonibus et ursis homines, meridie spectatoribus suis obiciuntur. interfectores interfectoribus iubent obici et victorem in aliam detinent

caedem. exitus pugnantium mors est; ferro et igne res geritur. haec fiunt, dum vacat harena. [7.5] "sed latrocinium fecit aliquis, occidit hominem." quid ergo? Quia occidit ille, meruit ut hoc pateretur; tu quid meruisti miser, ut hoc spectes? "Occide, verbera, ure! quare tam timide incurrit in ferrum? quare parum audacter occidit? quare parum libenter moritur? plagis agatur in vulnera, mutuos ictus nudis et obviis pectoribus excipiant." intermissum est spectaculum: "interim iugulentur homines, ne nihil agatur."

[7.2] Associating with a crowd is harmful; there is nobody who does not recommend some vice to us, or force it on us, or smear us with it when we're not paying attention. To be sure, the larger the crowd, the greater the danger. Nothing is more damaging to good character than to languish at some spectacle. For then vice more easily creeps in under the guise of pleasure. [7.3] What do you think I'm talking about? I come home greedier, more ambitious, more wanton, even more cruel and inhumane, since I have been among humans. I happened upon a midday spectacle expecting playful humor, some respite that relieved the eye of human carnage. Quite the opposite. Whatever fighting came before was compassion itself. All trifles now set aside, it's pure murder. They have nothing to protect themselves and their entire bodies are exposed to blows, a strike is never in vain.

[7.4] Very many people prefer this to the ordinary pairings and request bouts. And why shouldn't they? No helmet, no shield deflects the steel. Where's the protection? Where's the skill? Those things just delay death. In the morning men are thrown to lions and bears, in the afternoon they are thrown to the spectators. They order the killers thrown to those who will kill them, and they keep the winner around for further butchery. Death is the exit for these fighters; fire and sword gets the job done. This goes on while the arena is empty. [7.5] "But he's a bandit, or a killer." So what? Since he has killed, he deserves to suffer; but what did you do, wretch, to deserve to watch? "Kill him! Lash him! Burn him! Why does he meet the sword so timidly? Why does he kill so lamely? Why won't he die more willingly? Drive him to his wounds with the lash; let's have each accept their blows with naked and exposed chests!" There's an intermission: "Let's have throats cut, so there's *something* happening."

T.21 Suetonius, *Augustus* 44

Spectandi confusissimum ac solutissimum morem correxit ordinavitque motus iniuria senatoris, quem Puteolis per celeberrimos ludos consessu frequenti nemo receperat. facto igitur decreto patrum ut, quotiens quid

from those already on the program, he would for trivial and sudden reasons, match some of his workmen and assistants and people of that sort, if a machine or a stageset or something of the kind had failed. He even sent in one of his pages, just as he was, in a toga.

T.24 Suetonius, *Titus* 8.2

quin et studium armaturae Thraecum prae se ferens saepe cum populo et voce et gestu ut fautor cavillatus est, verum maiestate salva nec minus aequitate.

In addition he openly preferred the Thracian-armed gladiator and often joked with the people by word and gesture as a supporter does, but he maintained his majesty no less than his sense of fairness.

T.25 Suetonius, *Domitianus* 10.1

patrem familias, quod Thraecem murmilloni parem, munerario imparem dixerat, detractum spectaculis in harenam canibus obiecit cum hoc titulo: "impie locutus parmularius."

A man who was head of his household, because he had said that a Thracian gladiator was a match for a *murmillo* but not for the giver of the games, he had dragged from the seats and thrown to dogs on the sand, with this placard: "A Thracian supporter who spoke disloyally."

T.26 Tacitus, *Annales* 14.17

sub idem tempus levi initio atrox caedes orta inter colonos Nuceros Pompeianosque gladiatorio spectaculo quod Livineius Regulus, quem motum senatu rettuli, edebat. quippe oppidana lascivia in vicem incessentes probra, dein saxa, postremo ferrum sumpsere, validiore Pompeianorum plebe, apud quos spectaculum edebatur. ergo deportati sunt in urbem multi et Nucerinis trunco per vulnera corpore, ac plerique liberorum aut parentum mortis deflebant. cuius rei iudicium princeps senatui, senatus consulibus permisit. et rursus re ad patres relata, prohibiti publice in decem annos eius modi coetu Pompeiani collegiaeque quae contra leges instituerant dissoluta; Livineius et qui alii seditionem conciverant exilio multati sunt.

About the same time, a minor incident led to serious slaughter between the colonists of Nuceria and Pompeii at a gladiator-like spectacle which Livineius Regulus, who had been expelled from the senate, put on. During an exchange of insults, typical of the petulance of country towns, they resorted to abuse, then to stones, and finally to steel; the greater strength lay with the populace of Pompeii, where the show was being exhibited. As a result, many of the Nucerians were carried maimed and wounded to the capital, while a very large number mourned the deaths of children or of parents. The trial of the affair was delegated by the emperor to the senate; by the senate to the consuls. On the case being again laid before the members, the Pompeians as a community were debarred from holding any similar assembly for ten years, and the associations which they had formed illegally dissolved. Livineius and the other fomenters of the outbreak were punished with exile.

T.27 Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 15.5

Nam et si qui modeste et probe spectaculis fruitur pro dignitatis vel aetatis vel etiam naturae suae condicione, non tamen immobilis animi est et sine tacita spiritus passione.

For even if a man enjoys spectacles modestly and uprightly, as befits his status or age or even his natural disposition, his soul is not unstirred and he is not without a silent rousing of the spirit.

T.28 Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 19.2

bonum est cum puniuntur nocentes. qui hoc nisi tamen nocens negabit?

It's a good thing when the guilty are punished. Who will deny this, unless themselves guilty?

T.29 Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 21.2-22

[21.2] sic ergo evenit, ut, qui in publico vix necessitate vesicae tunicam levet, idem in circo aliter non exuat, nisi totum pudorem in faciem omnium intentet, ut et qui filiae virginis ab omni spurco verbo aures tuetur, ipse eam in theatrum ad illas voces gesticulationesque deducat, [3] et qui in

plateis litem manu agentem aut compescit aut detestatur, idem in stadio gravioribus pugnis suffragium ferat, et qui ad cadaver hominis communi lege defuncti exhorret, idem in amphitheatro derosa et dissipata et in suo sanguine squalentia corpora patientissimis oculis desuper incumbat, [4] immo qui propter homicidae poenam probandam ad spectaculum veniat, idem gladiatorem ad homicidium flagellis et virgis compellat invitum, et qui insigniori cuique homicidae leonem poscit, idem gladiatori atroci petat rudem et pilleum praemium conferat, illum vero confectum etiam oris spectaculo repetat, libentius recognoscens de proximo quem voluit occidere de longinquo, tanto durior, si non voluit... [22.1] quid mirum? inaequata ista hominum miscentium et commutantium statum boni et mali per inconstantiam sensus et iudicii varietatem. [2] etenim ipsi auctores et administratores spectaculorum quadrigarios scaenicos xysticos arenas illos amantissimos, quibus viri animas, feminae autem illis etiam corpora sua substernunt, propter quos se in ea committunt quae reprehendunt, ex eadem arte, qua magnificiunt, deponunt et deminunt, immo manifeste damnant ignominia et capitis minutione, arcentes curia rostris senatu equite ceterisque honoribus omnibus simul et ornamentis quibusdam. [3] quanta perversitas! amant quos multant, depretiant quos probant, artem magnificent, artificem notant. [4] quale iudicium est, ut ob ea quis offuscetur, per quae promeretur? immo quanta confessio est malae rei! cuius auctores, cum acceptissimi sint, sine nota non sunt.

[21.2] So it happens that the man who will hardly lift his tunic in public on his bladder's necessity, will take it off in the circus in such a way as to expose himself fully in the face of all; or he who shields his virginal daughter's ears from any foul language, will himself bring her to the theater, to those very utterances and gestures; or he who subdues a disagreement in the streets as it comes to blows, or expresses his detestation of it, will in the stadium approve of far more serious fights; or he who abhors the corpse of a man who died according to the shared law of humankind, will in the amphitheater stare down from above with the most tolerant eyes on chewed and ripped apart bodies, caked with their own blood; and even he who goes to the spectacle on account of his approval of punishment for murder, will drive the reluctant gladiator to murder with whips and rods; or he who demands a lion for some infamous murderer will petition for the wooden sword and cap of freedom for a brutal gladiator; indeed he will demand back the body of the dead one to gaze on his face, and more gladly

inspect from close quarters the man he wished killed from afar; and if he didn't wish it, all the more pitiless is he... [22.1] Why wonder? That is the unevenness of humankind, as it mingles and interchanges the conditions of good and evil through inconstant sentiment and variable judgment. [2] Take the very sponsors and administrators of spectacles: the charioteers, actors, athletes, and arena performers, those great lovers, to whom men surrender their souls, and women their bodies as well, on whose account they commit the sins they censure. They glorify these people for the same skill for which they degrade and diminish them; indeed, they condemn them openly to ignominy and loss of citizen rights, shut them out of the council chamber, the speaker's platform, the senate, equestrian status, all honors whatsoever, and some distinctions. [3] What towering perversity! They love whom they punish, they devalue whom they admire; the art they glorify, the artist they stigmatize. [4] What brand of judgment is it that a man be hidden out of sight for that which brings him to the fore? What a confession it is of an evil condition! Their authors, at the height of their popularity are in disgrace.

SECTION B: INSCRIPTIONS

I.1 CIL 6.2059 = 6.32363 = ILS 5049 = Henzen, *Acta Fratrum Arvalium*, 106-7 = Pasoli, *Acta Fratrum Arvalium*, 25-6 = Scheid, *Commentarii Fratrum Arvalium qui Supersunt*, 126 (#48) = EAOR 6.13 Rome, AD 80/1.

Colosseum seats assigned to the Arval Brethren. The stone was recut and corrected (badly), which renders the surviving text confused and confusing.

Loca adsignata in amphitheatro | L. Aelio Plautio Lamia, Q. Pactumeio Fr<0>nto co(n)s(ulibus) | acceptum ab Laberio Maximo, procuratore praef(ecto) annonae, | L. Ven{n}uleio Apron<i>ano mag(istro), curatore Thyrso l(iberto). | Fratibus arvalibus: maeniano (primo), cun(eo) (duodecimo), gradib(us) marm(oreis) (octo): gradu (primo) p(edes) (quinque quadrantem semunciam sicilium), | grad(u) (octavo) p(edes) (quinque quadrantem semunciam, sicilium). F(iunt) ped(es) (quadraginta duo semis). {Gradu (primo) uno ped(es) viginti duo semis}. Et m<a>eniano {summo} | (secundo), cun(eo) (sexto), grad(ibus) marm(oreis) (quattuor): gradu (primo) {uno}p(edes) viginti duo semis. Et maeniano | summo in ligneis, tab(ulatione) (quinquagesima tertia), gradibus (undecim): gradu (primo)