

Illustrations

1.1	Magerius mosaic	50
2.1	Pompeii, interior of amphitheater	60
2.2	Tomb of Haterii relief	64
2.3	Colosseum vaulting	64
2.4	Colosseum arena	64
2.5	Puteoli, arena of amphitheater	65
2.6	Circus Maximus: view from Palatine	68
2.7	Model of Rome with Colosseum, Circus	71
2.8	Relief with Circus Maximus	72
2.9	Gallo-Roman mosaic of circus race	75
2.10	Circus beaker with race and acclamations	75
2.11	Colosseum, preserved seating	82
3.1	Mosaic from El Djem, of gladiatorial banquet	86
3.2	Grave relief of <i>munera</i> from Pompeii	87
3.3	Sollertiana Domus mosaic of execution	90
3.4	Thraex relief from Bologna	97
3.5	Relief from Scaurus' tomb at Pompeii	97
3.6	Mosaic of Astyanax vs. Kalendio combat from Madrid	98
3.7	Mosaic of combats from Verona	99
3.8	Graffito from Pompeii with Attilius and Felix	100
3.9	Symmachius mosaic from Madrid	102
3.10	Fresco of riot at Pompeii	109
4.1	Baths of Caracalla, portraits of spectacle stars	136
4.2	Pompeii, barracks of gladiators	143
4.3	Tomb monument of Danaos	152
6.1	Mosaic with charioteers of four colors	192
6.2	Mosaic with Polydus the charioteer	201
6.3	Lamp with acclaim of horse	205

Preface

The roar of the crowd, the screams of animals and victims, the smell of blood, sweat, and perfume, the flash of weapons within the last frantic, fatal movements, the colors of the charioteers glimpsed through the dust and jostling crowd as the horses round the last turn. Given the heady sensualism embedded in the original phenomenon, it is not surprising that Roman spectacle holds a prominent position in the modern imagination, becoming a site of contemporary social and political meaning. The bloody entertainments of imperial Rome are like the stereotypically luxurious bath-houses, the banquets, and the orgies, all central to the popular perception of Rome as a civilization devoted to sophisticated luxury, to personal pleasures, a civilization doomed by its decadence. It is true that the Roman world devoted an overwhelming amount of time, energy, money, and attention to spectacle, with politicians bankrupting themselves to provide games, towns giving over huge amounts of public space and public funds for the construction of venues. But this was hardly a matter of officially sanctioned hedonism, pure and simple. The games carried a complex nexus of interlocking meanings in imperial Rome; the organization, production, and presentation of these performances articulated social, political and cultural meaning and provided substance and setting for the playing out of Roman values. This book considers Roman spectacle from the perspectives of those who created, used, experienced, enjoyed, hated, respected, condemned, and found themselves in the games as an active, living institution. Rather than trying to extract The One True Meaning of the games, I have attempted to present Roman spectacle as multiple complicated experiences that touched different individuals and groups in different ways.

The ancient resources assembled here are of many different types. Typically, literary texts favor the viewpoint of the wealthy elite, those who produced and read this kind of material. Inscriptions in stone and high-quality artistic representations also tend to reflect upper-class expectations, as it required a

certain financial status to pay for such items. The wealthy elite did not speak with one voice, however, as a range of agendas, regional backgrounds, and changes over time flavor the evidence. Graffiti and curse tablets are more ephemeral media and hint at motivations driving non-elites in the Mediterranean. The lived experience of performers leaks out in dribbles from fairly limited material, represented mostly in epitaphs and the Christian martyr acts. The interests of *editores*, imperial and otherwise, can be found in law codes and painted notices for games; these different texts spoke to different target audiences, however; the one offering practical precedents for administrators and the other celebrating a gathering of a specific social network, met for the purposes of exchanging honor and pleasure. The editorial introductions for each source attempt to locate the material in the ancient context, drawing out the distinctive points of emphasis and purpose.

The original inspiration for this collection came from Thomas N. Habinek, who organized a graduate seminar on the arena at UC Berkeley in the spring semester of 1991. The participants in the course provided much stimulating discussion and provocative perspectives. My gratitude to then fellow-students Martha Jenks, Haley Way, Judy Gaughan, Matt Roller, Eric Gunderson, John Harding, Trevor Murphy, and Mark Ryerson, and to Tom Habinek, whose discussions of the project in the years since have greatly influenced its ultimate framework and emphasis. The final manuscript owes much to the diligence and care of my two research assistants, Cynthia Ann Gonzales and Julia Hudson-Richards; Julia's help with the tedious minutiae is particularly appreciated, as is her wit. Thanks also to Jodie Kreider, who made me stop fiddling at a key moment. I'm also grateful for the support of Blackwell Publishing, particularly Al Bertrand and Angela Cohen, noteworthy in their patience and understanding. As always, the faculty, staff and graduate and undergraduate students of the Department of History at the University of Arizona have provided assistance, insight, and stimulation in bringing this effort to completion. A shout out to the U. of A. Classics Department as well. Finally, I extend enormous appreciation to friends and family for their continuing efforts to encourage me and maintain balance and sanity in my life.

Acknowledgments

The editor and publisher gratefully acknowledge the permission granted to reproduce the copyright material in this book:

- 1 Plutarch, *The Fall of the Roman Republic: Six Lives*, translated by Rex Warner with introduction and notes by Robin Seager. © 1958 by Rex Warner. Introduction and notes © 1972 by Robin Seager. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.
- 2 *Lives of the Later Caesars: The first part of the Augustan History, with Lives of Nerva and Trajan*, translated by Anthony Birley. © 1976 by Anthony Birley. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.
- 3 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History: A Selection*, translated with an introduction and notes by John F. Hely. © 1991 by John F. Hely. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.
- 4 Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*, selected and translated with an introduction by Robin Campbell. © 1969 by Robin Alexander Campbell. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.
- 5 Betty Radice, *The Letters of the Younger Pliny*, translated with an introduction by Betty Radice. © 1963, 1969 by Betty Radice. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.
- 6 Petronius, *The Satyricon*, translated with an introduction and notes by J. P. Sullivan. © 1965, 1969, 1974, 1977, 1986 by J. P. Sullivan. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.
- 7 Seneca, *The Apocolocyntosis*, translated with an introduction and notes by J. P. Sullivan. © 1965, 1969, 1974, 1977, 1986 by J. P. Sullivan. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.
- 8 Juvenal, *The Sixteen Satires*, translated by Peter Green. © 1967, 1974 by Peter Green. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.
- 9 *Cassidorus: Variaie*, translated with notes by S. J. B. Barnish. © 1992 by S. J. B. Barnish. Reproduced by permission of The University of Liverpool Press.

- 10 *Acts of Christian Martyrs*, translated by Herbert Musrillo. © 1972 by Herbert Musrillo. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press.
- 11 *The Digest of Justinian*, Latin text edited by Theodor Mommsen with the aid of Paul Krueger, English translation edited by Alan Watson. © 1985 Alan Watson. Reproduced by permission of The University of Pennsylvania Press.
- 12 Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, translated by Robert Graves. © 1957 by Robert Graves. Reproduced by permission of Carnet Press Ltd.
- 13 Tacitus, *The Annals and The Histories*, edited by Moses Hadas, translated by Alfred Church and William Brodribb, 2003. Published by Random House.
- 14 Tertullian, *Apologetical Works and Minucius Felix*, translated by Rudolph Arbesmann, Sister Emily Joseph Daly and Edwin A. Quain, 1950. Reproduced by permission of The Catholic University Press of America.

Every effort has been made to trace copyright holders and to obtain their permission for the use of copyright material. The publisher apologizes for any errors or omissions in the above list and would be grateful if notified of any corrections that should be incorporated in future reprints or editions of this book.