

Catullus (D.C. Feeney, 'Shall I compare thee...?: Catullus 68B and the limits of analogy', 33-44), Lucretius (T.P. Wiseman, 'Atoms and elephants: Lucretius 2.522-40', 45-51), Propertius (Ian M. Le M. Duquesnay, '*In memoriam Galli*: Propertius 1.21', 52-83), Horace (Francis Cairns, 'The power of implication: Horace's invitation to Maecenas (*Odes* 1.20)', 84-109), Virgil (G.P. Goold, 'The voice of Virgil: The pageant of Rome in *Aeneid* 6', 110-123), Ovid (D.E. Hill, 'From Orpheus to ass's ears: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.1-11.193', 124-137), Seneca (Gordon Williams, 'Poet and audience in Senecan tragedy: *Phaedra* 358-430', 138-149), Persius (J.G.F. Powell, 'Persius' first satire: A re-examination', 150-172), Tacitus (Tony Woodman, 'Nero's alien capital: Tacitus as paradoxographer (*Annals* 15.36-7)', 173-188), and the anonymous poet of the *si linguis angelicis* (P.G. Walsh, '*Amor clericalis*', 189-203). The conclusion stresses the importance of the knowledge of the specific context of a text of the past without devaluing the impact of a literary work on each individual reader.

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MAGNUS WISTRAND: *Entertainment and Violence in Ancient Rome. The attitudes of Roman writers of first century A.D.* Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia LVI. Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, Göteborg 1992. 133 p. SEK 150.

This study on Roman entertainment and violence in light of the texts of some Latin writers of first century A.D. (Juvenal, Martial, Petronius, Pliny the Younger, Seneca the Younger, Suetonius, Tacitus, Valerius Maximus and Velleius Paterculus) is intended not only for classicists but for other scholars as well: all passages are translated and Latin expressions are explained.

The first century A.D. offers material for such a study as during the regime of Augustus the number of performances increased and also simply because many texts of this period survive.

Each chapter has a summary, which makes the book easy to use also for rapid consultation. The clarity of the book is particularly emphasized in the penultimate and final chapters in which the main results of the study are discussed in their social context. The author also provides the reader with indices (topical, names, Latin words, *locorum*) and a fresh bibliography (containing many sociological studies!). The author stresses the fact that the primary sources have been generously quoted from, while references to contemporary and secondary literature have been kept to a minimum.

In general entertainment is not seen as a worthy subject for literature (except Martial). However, it is possible to gather some information on the attitudes of the Latin

authors towards the various forms of entertainment (*arena, scaena, circus, stadium*) through their texts. Generally the attitudes seem to be neutral; if values are expressed they are negative (entertainment corrupts the morals, makes people soft and feeble; it doesn't strengthen the *virtus*, moral quality or excellence, so important in Rome, etc). Although the writers have uniform views of the negative effect of entertainment on the whole, some characteristics of various authors can be found: the historians (Valerius Maximus, Velleius Paterculus and Suetonius) provide many facts about entertainment, but very seldom reveal their personal opinion. Martial with his *Liber spectaculorum* is the one most interested in games. Worth mentioning is his symbolic interpretation of *arena* shows, especially those with animals, seen as a manifestation of the emperor's force, *numen Caesaris*, which was considered even greater than that of Nature. The scale of Tacitus goes from bad to worse; his general negativism must be kept in mind when studying his attitudes. Juvenal, too, seems to take a jaundiced view of all kind of entertainment, but is he always serious, the poet of *indignatio*? In Petronius, gladiators, actors and charioteers have an important role while athletes are absent. Nevertheless, what he really thinks of various forms of entertainment is difficult to discover. Pliny is not totally negative towards the idea of entertainment. He describes the edifying quality of *arena* sports (which at best incite the spectators, among other things, to *pulchra vulnera* and *contemptum mortis*). Interesting is Seneca's view of entertainment: on the one hand, he condemns it as a harmful waste of time (draws people away from better occupations, such as philosophy), on the other hand he gathers examples from the world of entertainment. Athletes and athletics play (surprisingly?) a more important role in Seneca than one could expect (here Seneca follows his Greek models).

For a modern reader it is perhaps astonishing to notice that the shows in the *arena* were regarded as good thing, while the theatre was considered the worst of all forms of entertainment (scale from best to worst could be: *Arena, circus, stadium, scaena*). This problem, among others, is discussed in the final chapter of the book where the author concludes that violent entertainment was preferred because it was thought to strengthen the *virtus*. People may also have felt that it was necessary to punish criminals in public to uphold law and order and furthermore that this was essential for the survival of Rome. According to Wistrand the Roman writers did not condemn the gruesome shows since they themselves were part of the ruling élite who regarded entertainment, even the theatre (which was tolerated because of its function as a so-called safety valve), as necessary to keep the people under control. In a pre-mass media society the shows also offered good occasions for propaganda.

This detailed, though somewhat pedantic, study on violence and entertainment in Rome is an interesting addition to the literature on Roman society.

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