

1) *Historiae Augusta*, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus = Caracalla 1.5: *Denique, si quando feris obiectos damnatos vidit, flevit aut oculos avertit, **quod populo plus quam amabile fuit.***

In fact, if he ever saw the convicts thrown to the wild beasts, he wept or turned away his eyes, **an action which the people deemed more than worthy of their affection.**

2) Tacitus, *Annales* 14.17: *Sub idem tempus levi initio atrox caedes orta inter colonos Nucerinus 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 e Nucerinis trunco per vulnera corpore, ac **plerique liberorum aut parentum mortes deflebant.** ...*

About the same time, a violent massacre arose from a slight beginning among the inhabitants of Nuceria and Pompeii at a gladiatorial show, exhibited by Livineius Regulus, whose removal from the senate I have related. As one might expect, with the hooliganism of country towns they attacked each other in turns with insults, then rocks, and finally took up weapons. The population of Pompeii got the advantage, because the show was being exhibited at their city. Consequently many of the Nucerians were transported to Rome, their bodies mangled by wounds, and **very many people wept over the deaths of their children or parents.** ...

3) Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 44.1-3: [1] *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 spectaculi usquam publice ederetur, primus subselliorum ordo vacaret senatoribus, Romae legatos liberarum sociarumque gentium vetuit in orchestra sedere, cum quosdam etiam libertini generis mitti deprendisset.* [2] *Militem secrevit a populo. Maritis e plebe proprios ordines assignavit, **praetextatis cuneum suum, et proximum paedagogis,** sanxitque ne quis pullatorum media cavea sederet. Feminis ne gladiatores quidem, quos promiscue spectari sollemne olim erat, nisi ex superiore loco spectare concessit.* [3] *Solis virginibus Vestalibus locum in theatro separatim et contra praetoris tribunal dedit. Athletarum vero spectaculo muliebri secus omne adeo summovit, ut pontificalibus ludis pugilum par postulatum distulerit in insequentis diei matutinum tempus edixeritque mulieres ante horam quintam venire in theatrum non placere.*

[1] He brought order to and regulated the very disordered and lax manner in which people watched shows – moved by an affront to a senator for whom during most solemn games at Puteoli no one had made room in the packed seating. Therefore the senate passed a decree that at any state-sponsored spectacles anywhere, the first row of seats were to be left vacant for senators. At Rome he did not permit the ambassadors of free nations and of our allies to sit in the orchestra, since he had learned that some men of even freedman origin were being sent as ambassadors. [2] He separated those in military service from the civilian population. To married men from the common folk he assigned their own rows; **to boys wearing the toga praetexta, their own wedge of seats and the wedge of seats immediately next to theirs to their pedagogues.** And he decreed that no one dressed in black could sit in the middle of the seating area. He did not yield to females the right to watch even gladiators except from the upper tier of seats, although it had formerly been established custom for them to watch intermixed with the rest of the spectators. [3] To the Vestal Virgins alone he gave separate seating,

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<sup>1</sup> Translations are my own.

opposite the praetor's tribunal. However from athletic shows he completely removed the entire female sex with the result that during his games in celebration of his accession to the office of *pontifex maximus* he put off a pair of boxers, demanded by the crowd, until the early morning of the following day and proclaimed that it did not please him for women to come to the theatre before the fifth hour.

4) *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* 3.22: Οἱ δὲ παῖδες καὶ αἱ παρθένοι ἤνεγκαν ξύλα καὶ χόρτον ἵνα θέκλα κατακαῖ. And **the boys and the virgins** brought firewood and hay in order that Thecla might be burned alive.

Sozomon, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.10: ἐσπουδάζετο δὲ τὸ δρᾶμα ἀνδράσι καὶ γυναῖξι, καὶ πάσῃ ἡλικίᾳ μετὰ προθυμίας καὶ ὀργῆς· ὡς καὶ σπαρτίοις λεπτοῖς τὰ ὄττα αὐτοῦ διατεμεῖν· παῖδες δὲ εἰς διδασκάλους φοιτῶντες, παίγνιον ἐποιοῦντο τὸ πρᾶγμα· καὶ μετεωρίζοντες αὐτὸν, καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν κυλίοντες, ἀντέπεμπόν τε καὶ ἀνεδέχοντο ταῖς γραφίσι, καὶ ἀφειδῶς κατεκέντουν.

The deed was eagerly carried out **by men and by women, of all ages**, with purpose and on natural impulse. His ears were severed with thin cords. **Schoolboys** made him their plaything, lifting him up and rolling him over and over. They sent him back and they caught him with their styles and unsparingly punctured him.

5) Seneca, *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium* 70.22: *Quoniam coepi sordidis exemplis uti, perseverabo; plus enim a se quisque exigit, si viderit hanc rem etiam **a contemptissimis** posse contemni. Catones Scipionesque et alios quos audire cum admiratione consuevimus supra imitationem positos putamus: **iam ego istam virtutem habere tam multa exempla in ludo bestiarum quam in ducibus belli civilis ostendam.***

Inasmuch as I began making use of base examples, I shall persist in doing so. For each man will demand more from himself, if he has seen that this matter [i.e. death] can be despised even **by the most despised class of men**. We deem the Catos, the Scipios and other men that we are accustomed to hear with admiration as set beyond our abilities to imitate. **Now I shall show that that virtue of which I speak has as many examples in a fight with beasts as among leaders in a civil war.**

6) Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 2.41: ***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.***

A gladiatorial **show is apt to seem heart-hearted and inhuman** to some, and perhaps it is so, as now conducted. **But when criminals used to fight it out with swords**, at least for the eyes there could be no **training** more powerful against pain and death, though for the ears there perhaps could be many.

7) Pliny, *Panegyricus* 33.1: *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.*

A spectacle was seen then, not weak, nor soft, **nor the kind that tames and breaks men's courage**, but the kind that rouses them to beautiful wounds and disdain for death, when **in the bodies of slaves and even guilty criminals** is discerned love for glory and longing for victory.

8) Seneca, *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium* 7.2-5: [2] *Nihil vero tam damnosum bonis moribus quam in aliquo spectaculo desiderare; tunc enim per voluptatem facilius vitia subrepunt.* [3] *Quid me existimas dicere? avarior redeo, ambitiosior, luxuriosior, immo vero crudelior et inhumanior, quia inter homines fui. Casu in meridianum spectaculum incidi, lusus exspectans et sales et aliquid laxamenti quo hominum oculi ab humano cruore acquiescant. Contra est: quidquid ante pugnatum est misericordia fuit; nunc omissis nugis mera homicidia sunt. **Nihil habent quo tegantur; ad ictum totis corporibus expositi numquam frustra manum mittunt.*** [4] *Hoc plerique ordinariis paribus et postulaticis praeferunt. Quidni praeferant? 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 interfecturis iubent obici et victorem in aliam detinent caedem; exitus pugnantium mors est. Ferro et igne res geritur.* [5] *Haec fiunt dum vacat harena. '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'. Age, ne hoc quidem intellegitis, mala exempla in eos redundare qui faciunt? Agite dis immortalibus gratias quod **eum docetis esse crudelem** qui non potest discere.*

[2] Nothing, though, is so injurious to good character as sitting idle for a long time at some spectacle; for then vices creep in more easily through pleasure. [3] What do you think that I mean? I come home more greedy, more ambitious, more wanton – I may even say, in fact, more hard-hearted and more cruel – because I have been among human beings. By chance I stumbled upon the midday spectacle, expecting both good taste and something relaxing, at which the eyes of human beings may have respite from the shedding of human blood. It was the opposite. Whatever fighting there was beforehand was a mercy; now trifles have been put aside and it is pure murder. **They have nothing to protect themselves; they are exposed to blows throughout their whole bodies, and they do not ever strike in vain.** [4] Many people prefer this to the usual pairs and the requested bouts. Why should they not prefer them? No helmet, no blade is repelled by a shield. What need of protection? What need of skill? All those things of which I speak merely delay death. **In the early morning human beings are thrown to lions and bears, at midday to their own spectators.** They order the slayers thrown to those who will slay them in turn, and they reserve the victor for another slaughter. The outcome for the fighters is death. By the blade and fire is the matter resolved. [5] These events happen while the arena is empty. “But,” someone may retort, “he committed robbery, he killed a human being.” What of it? **Since he killed, he deserved to suffer this.** How have you deserved, o wretch, to watch this? “Kill him, lash him, burn him!” Why does he meet the blade like such a coward? Why does he kill with not enough courage? Why does he die with not enough willingness? **Drive him to wounds with lashes; let’s have them accept each other’s blows with bare and exposed chests.**” The spectacle stops for intermission: “In the meantime let’s have some throat-slitting, so that nothing is not happening.” Come now, don’t you understand this at least – that bad examples redound on those who make them? Thank the immortal gods that **you are teaching one to be hard-hearted** who cannot learn.

9) Plutarch, *Moralia* 554b = *De sera numinis vindicta* 9: *ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν ἔνιοι διαφέρουσι παιδαρίων, ἃ τοὺς κακούργους ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις θεώμενα πολλάκις ἐν χιτῶνσι διαχρύσοις καὶ χλαμυδίαις ἀλουργοῖς ἐστεφανωμένους καὶ πυρριχίζοντας ἄγαται καὶ τέθηπεν ὡς μακαρίους ἄχρι οὗ κεντούμενοι καὶ μαστιγοῦμενοι καὶ πῦρ ἀνιέντες ἐκ τῆς ἀνθινῆς ἐκείνης καὶ πολυτελοῦς ἐσθῆτος ὀφθῶσιν.*

**But some people in no ways differ from little children**, who while watching criminals in arenas, that are often dressed in tunics woven with gold threads and purple cloaks, wearing crowns and performing the Pyrrhic dance, **grow jealous and amazed, thinking them happy** until the moment when, before

their eyes, the criminals are stabbed and flogged and burst into flame from out of that brightly-colored and costly garb.

10) *Historiae Augusta, Gordiani Tres* 18.1: *In studiis gravissimae opinionis fuit, forma conspicuus, memoriae singularis, **bonitatis insignis, adeo ut semper in scholis, si quis puerorum verberaretur, ille lacrimas non teneret.***

He took his studies very seriously. He had a striking appearance, extraordinary memory, and was **remarkably kind-hearted – in fact to such a degree that whenever one of the boys was flogged at school, he could not hold back his tears.**

11) *Caracalla* 1.3-4: [3] *Huius igitur **pueritia blanda**, ingeniosa, parentibus adfabilis, amicis parentum iucunda, populo accepta, grata senatui, **ipsi etiam ad amorem conciliandum salutaris fuit.** [4] *Non ille in litteris tardus, non in benevolentis segnis, non tenax in largitate, non lentus in clementia, **sed parentibus, visus.****

[3] Thus his **childhood was seductively appealing** and displayed his natural abilities: courteous to his parents, pleasing to his parents' friends, welcome to the people, procuring the gratitude of the senate, and **advantageous in winning him even affection.** [4] **He seemed** neither dim-witted in learning, nor slow in acts of kindness, nor stingy in bestowing largess, nor immovable in granting mercy – **at least while under his parents.**

12) *Caracalla* 2. 1: *Sed haec puer. Egressus vero pueritiam seu patris monitis seu calliditate ingenii sive quod se Alexandro Magno Macedoni aequandum putabat, restrictior, gravior, vultu etiam truculentior factus est, prorsus ut **eum, quem puerum scierant, multi esse non crederent.***

But all these events happened when he was a boy. In fact once he stepped out of his boyhood whether due to his father's warnings or his own innate shrewdness – or because he thought that he must act like Alexander the Great of Macedon – he became sterner, harsher, and even crueler in appearance, so much so that **many could not believe that he was the boy they had known.**

13) *Caracalla* 5.2: *Cunctis deinde turbatis, qui in Gallia res gerebant, odium tyrannicum meruit **quamvis aliquando fingeret et benignum, cum esset natura truculentus.***

Thereby [by murdering the proconsul of Narbonensis] all the people in charge of administering affairs in Gaul were thrown into confusion; he acquired the hatred reserved for tyrants **although at any moment he could pretend to be even kind, even though he was by nature cruel.**

14) *Caracalla* 11.5: ***Hic** tamen **omnium durissimus** et, ut uno complectamur verbo, parricida et incestus, patris, matris, fratris inimicus, a Macrino, qui eum occiderat, timore militum et maxime praetorianorum inter deos relatus est.*

Nonetheless, this man, **the least feeling of all men** – and to encompass him in a single phrase – a fratricide and a committer of incest, his father's, mother's, and brother's foe, was inscribed among the gods by Macrinus, the man who had killed him, due to his fear of the soldiers, especially the praetorians.

15) *Caracalla* 2.3: *Patre superbior fuit; fratrem **magna eius humilitate** despexit.*  
He was more arrogant than his father; he despised his brother **for his great modesty**.

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