Another one bites the [sands of the arena]: An analysis of the Roman munera in a Gallic provincial context

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List of Abbreviations

AÉ: L'Année Épigraphique (periodical)

CIL: Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum

ILGN: Inscriptions Latines de Gaule Narbonnaise

ILTG: Inscriptions Latines des Trois Gaules

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ABSTRACTS

Extrait en français

Les combats de gladiateurs et les chasses présentés dans les amphithéâtres romains sont bien connus. Cette étude examine le rôle de ces mêmes jeux dans un contexte provincial gaulois. Cette institution, dans ce nouveau contexte, reste Romaine. Toutefois, de nombreux processus qui permettent sa présentation sont adaptés à la Gaule, où ils semblent être populaires. Cela permet aux dirigeants locaux de les utiliser à des fins politiques et afin de promouvoir la suprématie et les valeurs de l'empire. Les chasses, en particulier, mettent en lumière la dualité de cette société provinciale. Elles permettent d'abord aux élites de trouver une place dans la culture romaine. Elles rappellent aussi à la population générale leurs racines gauloises.

English abstract

The Gladiatorial combats and fictitious hunts presented within the Roman arena were quite famous. However, they did not just happen in the metropolis. This study examines de role of the munera in a Gallic provincial context. Far away from Rome, this institution in many ways stays Roman, but many processes which permit its presentation are adapted to local context. The games seem to have been popular in Gaul, which permits the elite to use them for political gains, as vessels to highlight the societal hierarchy, and the importance of following Roman sets of values. The hunts (venationes), for their part, highlight the duality of this provincial society. For one, they allowed the elites to engage with Roman elite culture and try to cement their belonging within it. However, the local particularities of the hunts reminded the "common" spectators of the Gallic roots of their society.

INTRODUCTION/LITERATURE REVIEW

Merciless executions, barbarous crowds clamouring for gladiators to satisfy their bloodlust, and exotic animals fighting for their lives. Arena games (*munera*, sing. *munus)* occupy a significant place in the popular imagination of the ancient Roman Empire, mainly due to this kind of entertainment being so far from our perceived notion of both civilization and modernity. Contemporary media such as Ridley Scott's *Gladiator* (2007) has contributed to the furthering of this rather simplistic view. While violence was undoubtedly present during the *munera*, it was not only the Romans' bloodlust which rendered this kind of entertainment significant. Multiple scholars have attempted to understand the popularity of this institution in Rome,[1] and recent studies have highlighted its importance to Roman society. While the geographical origin of the games is still uncertain,[2] it is clear that the Romans themselves saw gladiators as "integral and even integrated with[in] [the] day-to-day functioning [of Roman society]".[3] The massive Flavian amphitheatre, with its nearly fifty-thousand seating capacity, attests to the popularity of the events it hosted from 80 C.E. onwards. While the Coliseum is the most famous arena of its kind, it is certainly not the only one. The institution seems to have followed the Roman armies wherever

[1] See, for example, Garrett G. Fagan. *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) ; Eric Gunderson. "The Ideology of the Arena." *Classical Antiquity* 15, no. 1 (April 1996): 113-151. Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)

[2] For the hypotheses on the origins of the games, see Katherine E. Welch. *The Roman Amphitheatre: From its Origin to the Colosseum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11-14.

[3] Valerie M. Hope. "Gladiators as a Class" in *The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, ed. Alison Futrell and Thomas Francis Scanlon (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021), 558.

they conquered, from Britain to modern-day Tunisia and the Middle East. In its most basic sense, this thesis, focused on Roman Gaul, engages the following questions: What was the role of the *munera* in Gallic society? In what ways did it stay the same as in Rome? In what ways was the institution adapted to the local context? A deep dive into the institution in its Gallic context is the only way to answer these questions, specifically interrogating its local context. Chronologically, I focus on the first four centuries of the common era.

The first chapter will focus on the ways in which the popularity of the *munera* in Gaul made it an inherently political institution. Expanding on this notion, the second chapter of the study will highlight the ways in which the arena games served as an efficient diffusor of Roman values to the general population. Switching gears, the third chapter will focus exclusively on the Gallic *venationes*. It will challenge the idea that this kind of entertainment was not possible or popular in Gaul, emphasising how Gallic context influenced the way in which they unfolded as well as their significance for different strata of the population. Through these various angles, I aim to clarify the picture of the role *munera* played in Gallic society and the ways in which they were remodelled (or not) by the Gallic context. Importantly, this study will draw its conclusions from two important settlements of Gallia Narbonensis, Nemausus (Nîmes) and Arelate (Arles), and the city of Lugdunum (Lyon), in Gallia Lugdunensis. the *munera* of the city of Narbo Martius, (Narbonne) will also be subject to analysis. These sites have been chosen for the significant amount of data (archaeological, artwork, epigraphic) linked to gladiatorial games found in their vicinity. What is more, permanent amphitheatres were erected in all of these settlements, two of which (Arles and Nîmes) are nearly intact today. For these reasons, these cities are the best options to conduct an in-depth study of the Gallic iteration of the *munera*.

Munera were seen as inherently Roman. However, as will be emphasised throughout, the appearance of this institution in conquered territories such as Gaul does not mean that they surely unfolded in the same way as those in the metropolis. The metropolitan context must therefore serve as my starting point, as a "control group" of sorts, as well as a comparable case, for my study of this institution in Gaul.

The Importance of Arena Games in Rome

The *munera* was not simply cruel entertainment befitting the violent society that was Rome. Instead, recent scholarship attributes to the institution of arena games a significant place within the Roman state. Scholars have argued that the arena was a setting where politics, hierarchy, propaganda, and religion all came together to form a microcosm of Roman society.[4]

The Roman *munera* were intensely religio-political happenings, even if the nature of politics in the arena changed over the centuries. Golvin and Landes argue based on ancient literature (including Tertullian's *De Spectaculis)* that the first gladiatorial combats, dated back to 264 BCE, were introduced as a part of funerary games for members of prominent Roman families and that, without being overtly political in nature, they certainly highlighted the different families' importance.[5] Whether the association between *munera* and funerary games continued for a long of time is still debated.[6] It is however clear that these events remained politically motivated. By the end of the third century BCE, political ambition had clearly become the chief motivator behind the

[4] Jonathan C. Edmonson, "Dynamic Arenas: Gladiatorial Presentations in the City of Rome and the Construction of Roman Society during the Early Empire" in *Roman Theatre and Society*, ed. William J. Slater. (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1996), 81-82.
[5] Jean Claude Golvin and Christian Landes. *Amphithéâtres et Gladiateurs.* (Presses du CNRS, 1990), 25.
[6] See Katherine. Dunbabin. *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History*.

organisation of *munera*.[7] However, Holleran argues that, until the political turmoil of the late republican period, the games were still in essence state-controlled to avoid the possibility that private individuals would "ingratiate themselves with the assembled people" and become too influential as individuals, upsetting the republican balance of powers.[8] Interestingly, even if the games were held in the name of Roman authorities, we still have records which indicate the names of the republican aediles who put together the games when the events were particularly appreciated.[9] This points to the possibility of individual political advancement through the games during the republican period of Rome's history, as well as their popularity throughout this time period

The advent of the principate at the turn of the common era changed many aspects of Roman society, most of all its government. Even if the *princeps* was now the new head of the government, Beacham assesses that it took until the Domitianic period (80's CE) to earmark officially the *munera* as exclusive imperial business. This meant that all the large-scale games put on across the empire were explicitly identified as being organised according to the emperor's will.[10] Both before and after this edict, the games seem to have been significant tools for the emperors, who attended the games put on in the city of Rome most of the time. Keith Hopkins, focusing on the relationship between the emperor and the crowds during the *munera*, argues that the event was an especially good opportunity for emperors to make a demonstration of their power and generosity to the Roman population in order to curry its favour. This was often done through the giving of gifts as

[7] Alison Futrell. *The Roman Games: A Source Book.* (Blackwell Publishing: Malden;Oxford, 2006), 11.
[8] Claire Holleran. "The Development of Public Entertainment Venues in Rome and Italy." in *Bread and Circuses: Euergetism and Municipal Patronage in Roman Italy*, eds. Kathryn Lomas and Tim Cornell. (London and New York: Routledge Publishing, 2003.) p. 51.
[9] Golvin and Christian Landes. *Amphithéâtres et Gladiateurs*, 33.
[10] Richard Beacham. "Theatre of Cruelty: Games of the Flavian Emperors" in *The Oxford Handbook Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, Edited by Thomas F. Scanlon and Alison Futrell. (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2021). p. 157.

well as of splendid and expensive shows featuring impressive amounts of performers and exotic animals. The wide-reaching influence of the emperor was thus emphasised.[11]

The games were however not only of political significance for the Roman rulers. As one of the few places where Romans came into contact with the emperor, "the amphitheatre was their parliament", a place where they could make their opinions known.[12] This idea is expanded upon by Jerry Toner, who asserts that the shows' spectators could signal their approval of the emperor by cheering loudly, and their scorn by remaining silent.[13] De Wiedemann points to emperor Tiberius' refusal to attend the games for fear of facing the wrath of the people as a marker of the efficiency of such methods.[14] The author continues by arguing that the opinion of the people at the games was also significant in that those who were considered "bad" emperors were often not deified nor worshipped after their death, an honour which was attributed to those seen as "good" emperors.[15] In these ways, the political importance of the games, both for the ruling classes and the general population, is highlighted. The latter section of the population certainly was not the mindless rabble often depicted in popular media.

There was a significant propagandistic element to the games. Garrett Fagan, examining the crowd dynamics at the games, has asserted that by presenting the populace in attendance with foreign prisoners from subjugated areas to be executed, as well as a large variety of exotic beasts, Roman authorities projected the extent of Roman power and the geographical scope of the empire itself.[16] The arena is also argued to have been a setting for the symbolic elimination of threats to

[11]Keith Hopkins. *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1983.12.
[12] *Ibid*, 16.
[13] Jerry P. Toner. *The Day Commodus Killed a Rhino: Understanding the Roman Games.* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), p. 70.
[14] Thomas E. J. De Wiedemann. *Emperors and Gladiators*. (London ; New York : Routledge, 1995.) p.168.
[15] De Wiedemann. *Emperors and Gladiators*. p. 171.
[16]Fagan. *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games*, 18.

Roman society, showcasing once again the superiority of the empire. The unlucky people who were brought to be executed were all, to some degree, seen as a threat to the Roman social order. Fagan asserts that war captives, criminals, and religious dissidents, among others, were presented as *others* and executed during the *munera* in order to establish publicly the primacy of Rome. This also served as a warning as it showed what would happen to those who went against the Roman order.[17] The presence of wild animals, tamed or to be hunted, within the arena showcased Rome's control over nature and the animals which threatened the general populace's livelihood.[18] For Beacham, the games were all about eliciting certain reactions and emotions in the crowd that would, in time, benefit the Roman polity.

Finally, it has been highlighted that the games were a physical representation of Roman values to their audience. The gladiators, although virtual pariahs outside of the arena, were revered within it for their courage and martial abilities. The public highlighting of these values was significant. Hopkins has argued that they were put forward as a reminder that these were qualities necessary for Roman society to endure. It was indeed thanks to its fearsome soldiers' qualities that the influence of the metropolis had grown over the last centuries.[19] This will to showcase the *virtus* exhibited by the gladiators as something to emulate is moreover underlined by the fact that the most successful gladiators, so those who exhibited Roman qualities martial in the best ways, could in essence become celebrities, without, of course, losing the *infamia* which plagued them.[20] The link to Rome's past conquests was furthered by some of the combatants' equipment, which often represented Rome's foes. The *Samnite*, *Thracian*, and *Gallic* armatures are examples of such representations. While gladiators were supposed to represent core Roman values, there was no

[17]Fagan, 164-67.
[18] Beacham, 157.
[19] Hopkins. *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History*, 29.
[20]Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History*, 29.

known gladiator type whose equipment mirrored that of a typical Roman soldier. David Potter has pointed out that given the propagandistic nature of the arena, it would have been unwise to put on a show where a gladiator "representing" Rome possibly could be defeated.[21] In these ways, the games in Rome highlighted Roman values and offered a symbolic yet physical confrontation between the empire and the peoples that lived beyond its frontiers. The elements highlighted above were all extremely important in order to maintain a sense of cohesion in Roman society. The games were seen as so significant that they were implanted (nearly) wherever the Romans went. The following will establish a theoretical framework for the study of Roman arena games in the context of Gaul.

Framing the Study of Provincial Arena Games

Penelope Goodman's study of urbanisation in Roman Gaul provides a useful theoretical framework to study the establishment of the *munera* in a provincial context. The author points out that "[m]ost of the empire was divided up into […] semi-autonomous civic communit[ies]",[22] and the fact that these communities shared the same Roman organisation does not mean that they were uniform. Goodman highlights that local context was a determinant factor in the functioning of these urban settlements; "the laws governing individual Roman civic communities varied according to their status, their cultural background and the period when they had come under Roman influence".[23] Thus, she sees Roman urban development as following the same general guidelines but still differing according to context. This can be applied to the ways in which the *munera* unfolded in provincial settings. Although a Roman institution, one cannot assume that the

[21] David Potter. *The Victor's Crown : A History of Ancient Sport from Homer to Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 126.
[22] Penelope J. Goodman. *The Roman city and its periphery : from Rome to Gaul*. (London: Routledge Publishing, 2007), 8
[23] Goodman. *The Roman city and its periphery*, 9.

games evolved in the same way everywhere. Rather, we must insist that local investigations are the starting point for a broader history and understanding of the games as they spread across the empire. As shall be discussed in the next section, scholars have questioned the possibility of a single, "provincial" iteration of the games. Then, my study will explore the role and significance of the *munera* in given societies through specific local case studies. I conclude that the provincial games remained Roman in many ways and often had similar purposes than the ones in Rome, but their study in specific settings emphasises local particularities.

The Romanisation paradigm can possibly also be used to some degree to frame this study. It is focused on the changes societies were subjected to when they were conquered by the Romans and on markers of indigenous assimilation into the Roman way of life, such as changes in cultural practices or consumption patterns.[24] It is however a problematic concept in some ways. According to Richard Hingley, the paradigm has its roots in British imperial propaganda of the early twentieth century and its "civilising ethos".[25] Although it has evolved over the last century, the framework often leads to a simplification of the ways in which Roman control shaped societies. A Romano-centric approach is often adopted. Clifford Ando, for example, highlights a singular set of experiences which, due to the efficiency of Roman bureaucracy and propaganda, was present throughout the empire, creating a semi-unified whole rather than an amalgamation of different cultures.[26] What is more, in his study, Greg Woolf highlights a set of elite Roman values, the *humanitas*, which could change over time, but were more or less homogeneous throughout Roman

[24] Patrick Le Roux "La Romanisation en Question," *Annales HSS* no. 2 (March- April 2004): 287-288.
[25] Richard Hingley. *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology*. (London; New York: Routledge Publishing, 2000), 128. Three foundational works in the study of this concept include Francis Haverfield. *The Romanization of Roman Britain.* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1923;1979).; Robin G. Collingwood. "The Archaeology of Roman Britain" (London: Methuen Publishing, 1930).; Albert Lionel Frederick Rivet. *Town and country in Roman Britain*. (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1966).
[26] Clifford Ando. *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 406-412.

territory.[27] The idea of homogeneity has been challenged by the likes of David Mattingly and Michael Dietler, who argue for the multiplicity of responses to Roman control.[28] Importantly for this study, Mattingly emphasises the crucial impact of status in shaping one's reaction to Roman culture, power and control.[29] Romanisation is a paradigm which focuses on elite reactions to Roman culture, often by default since it is the perspective most readily available to us.[30] For this reason, the common people are often left out of discussions of Romanisation.[31]

The *munus* was an event where people of all classes assembled, and there was a clear intent at influencing the population through the *munera* (as explored in Chapter 2 of this study). This analysis of the games, due to the nature of the *munera* as an institution, cannot work with evidence only pertaining to the elite and hope to achieve an understanding of the common peoples' reaction to the spectacles. However, the limited nature of the sources makes it challenging to gauge the response which the spectators might have had at these attempts. Determining whether the spectators were "romanised" by the *munera* is thus extremely difficult in the context of Gaul. The spectators of the *munera* did not "become Roman " simply because they attended gladiatorial contests. Yet, the experience probably changed their outlook in very real ways. Unfortunately, the accessible evidence in Gaul does not allow for a real discussion of what these changes were. This

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[27] Greg Woolf. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 16

[28] Michael Dietler. *Archaeologies of Colonialism : Consumption, Entanglement, and Violence in Ancient Mediterranean France.* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 2010); David J. Mattingly. *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire.* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011). Mattingly proposes an alternative to the romanisation paradigm, focusing on the ever-changing identity of the conquered. This leads to distancing of the Romano-centric approach that has been at the centre of this kind of study for decades. The author argues, through the concept of "discrepent identities", that provincial cultures and individual identities, as well as societies' reaction to Roman control, far from becoming homogeneous, remained "multifaceted and dynamic" (213). Louise Revell, *Roman Imperialism and Local Identities*, (Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2009), 191, is also a proponent of this point of view, stressing that "romanized" cultures were borne out of a dialogue between the natives and conquerors, and could thus be shifting depending on the time and place.

[29] Mattingly. *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*, 217.

[30] Woolf. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*., 162.

[31] See Jane Webster. "Creolizing the Roman Provinces" in *American Journal of Archaeology* 105, no. 2 (Apr., 2001).

study therefore will focus on the way in which Gallic context shaped the unfolding of the *munera*, not on the ways the general population did or responded by being subjected to the *romanitas* linked to the arena games. Possible popular response to the games will however be hypothesised.

While it is difficult to use romanization as a paradigm to reconstruct the common peoples' viewpoint, it can still be useful in examining provincial elites' relationship with Rome. While we do have material culture, the lack of consistency in findspots prevents us from drawing general conclusions concerning the "common" spectators' individual responses.[32] For the elites, this is quite different. While there are questions concerning the applicability of his concept of *humanitas* throughout the empire, Woolf's view of the romanisation of Gallic elites is useful. He sees it not as simply emulating Rome, but "as participating in a cultural system structured by systematic differences, differences that both sustained and were a product of Roman power".[33] According to the author, engaging with this Roman culture very possibly was a way for the elites to climb the social ladder. Their display of *humanitas* would render them more trustworthy to Roman authorities and more likely to advance in society.[34] This framing of the polemical romanisation paradigm is useful because, as will be explored, different aspects of the *munera* can be argued to have been used by the elites to engage with the Roman cultural package, presumably to benefit from it. In this way, the study of the *munera* through the lens of romanisation can be useful, but only for a very specific portion of the population.

For multiple reasons, it is very difficult to produce a comprehensive analysis of *munera* as they were presented in the provinces of the Roman Empire. For one, primary literature concerning

[32] Artwork highlights a few important possibilities concerning collective identity and the popularity of the games, as shall be explored in Chapter 3.
[33] Woolf. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, 242. This set of practices and values is called "*humanitas*" by Woolf.
[34] *Ibid*, 239; 63; 170.

the games, such as those of Suetonius, Juvenal, Cassius Dio, and Cicero, are mostly focused on their unfolding in the city of Rome itself. While there are provincial accounts of the games, some issues arise. One might think that the third century account of the games by North-African writer Tertullian could shed light on the proceedings in this particular province. However, due to his Christian faith, the author has an extremely pessimistic and moralistic view of these "games [put on] in honour of heathen gods and of dead men".[35]The excessive rarity of complete testimonies regarding the provincial *munera* means that scholars have to rely mostly on local inscriptions, artwork and archaeology in their attempt to reconstruct the events. Most importantly, however, is the fact that there was not a single way to react to Roman influence.[36] This also means that the impact of amphitheatres and *munera* was not the same across the Roman empire. Even if Tertullian's account depicted the events from his North-African perspective in an unbiased fashion, one could not simply apply this information, for instance, to the Greek *munus*, without question.

Thus, a comprehensive analysis of provincial arena games and their impact on local populations can most efficiently be achieved through case studies which evaluate the games in particular contexts, which in turn can be compared to other context-based case studies. This present study will thus be useful in adding to the corpus of secondary literature on provincial arena games, and its particular focus will be helpful, through comparison, in creating a clearer picture of the different iterations of provincial *munera*.

[35] Tert. *De Spectaculis*, VI. Translated by T. R. Glover, Gerald H. Rendall.

[36] This is highlighted especially in David J. Mattingly. *Imperialism, Power and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire,* 213. The author proposes an alternative to the romanisation paradigm, focusing on the ever-changing identity of the conquered. This leads to distancing of the Romano-centric approach that has been at the centre of this kind of study for decades. The author argues, through the concept of "discrepant identities", that provincial cultures and individual identities, as well as societies' reaction to Roman control, far from becoming homogeneous, remained "multifaceted and dynamic".

Adeline Pichot's work on the urban landscape of Roman Mauretania an example of a study showcasing the relevance of case studies in the analysis of provincial *munera*. Pichot's study explores different phases of North-Africa's urban development in its pre-Roman and Roman periods, discussing the impact of local history and context in Roman Mauretania in influencing decisions surrounding urban planning in the province. By doing this, the author highlights the different ways in which local specificities influence the way in which Roman institutions function. For example, Pichot points out that the amphitheatre in the city of Lixus was deeper than traditional amphitheatres, resembling a pit in order to welcome ferocious local animals in the context of *venationes*.[37] This emphasises the idea that there was not *one way* for the *munera* to be conducted, or amphitheatres built, in a provincial context.

Local particularities regarding the implantation of the *munera* in provincial contexts are also discussed through Christian Mann's study of gladiatorial games in certain Roman-controlled Greek settlements, which highlights important differences between the arena games and their *culture* in Rome and in Greece. For one, Mann argues based on funerary stelae that gladiators were not relegated to the very bottom of the Greek social hierarchy as carriers of pollution, as they seemingly were in Rome and many other regions of the empire. Instead, they compared themselves to popular heroes from Greek mythology.[38] Mann argues that amphitheatres were not as common as in the western provinces. While major cities such as Ephesus and Miletus were not equipped with amphitheatres, *munera* were still held, only in modified theatres instead of classical arenas.[39]

[37] Adeline Pichot. "Théâtres et amphithéâtres : outils de romanisation en Maurétanie?" *Études de lettres* 1-2 (2011) 182.
[38] Christian Mann. "Gladiators in the Greek East: A Case study in Romanization," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no 2 (January 2009): 288.
[39] Mann. "Gladiators in the Greek East: A Case study in Romanization," 280.

The differences, highlighted by Mann and Pichot, in the practical application of the same institution are significant. They highlight the fact that, while a lot of the broad strokes of the *munera* can be identified as more or less consistent throughout Roman territory, existing local distinctions underline case studies as particularly useful in depicting provincial *munera* accurately. While "the success of Roman arms and politics was a condition for the spread of [arena games]"[40] in the provinces, the institution was not simply replicated in all its forms. The study of the games in a specific context is thus crucial in order to get a deeper understanding of the ways they were shaped by local context or remained the same as they were in Rome.

In light of what has been exposed throughout the work, it is clear that one can only get a true understanding of the impact of the games at a local level through the use of case studies. The *munus* has been studied extensively in Greek/Eastern,[41] North African,[42] and Italian[43] contexts. Georges Ville's study on the games' iteration in the Western provinces is comprehensive, but, due to its large scope, is not immune to some of the issues regarding local particularities highlighted throughout this text.[44] This study will focus on the *munera*, its importance, as well as its local particularities, in the province(s) of Gaul, with most of the data originating from the region of *Gallia Narbonensis*, in the south of modern-day France. There are some recent studies which highlight the importance of the *munera* in the region. Kevin-Alexandre Kazek's work on the Gallic games through the lens of *terra sigillata* is the most comprehensive of those, and extremely enlightening. However, it lacks some depth regarding the reasoning behind the games' unfolding

[40] Mann. 2009. "Gladiators in the Greek East: A Case study in Romanization," 287.
[41] Mann 2009; Louis Robert. *Les Gladiateurs dans l'Orient Grec* (Amsterdam: A.M Hakkert Publishing, 1971.)
[42] Pichot 2011; Dunbabin 1978; François Kayser. *"*La gladiature en Egypte,*" Revue des Études Anciennes*. 102 nos.3-4 (2000).
[43] Luciana Jacobelli. *Gladiators at Pompeii.* (Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider Publishing, 2003.)
[44] Georges Ville. *La Gladiature en Occident des Origines à la mort de Domitien*. (Paris: École Française de Rome 1981.)

in Gaul. Nonetheless, it will be used throughout this thesis due to its impressive corpus of Gallic artwork related to the *munera*. Penelope Goodman's work on the peri-urban organisation of Gaul is certainly interesting for its discussion on the urban placement of certain Gallic amphitheatres. Due to its focus on urbanisation, the study does not emphasise the implementation and particularities of the Gallic *munera*.[45] D.L. Bomgardner,'s chapters on the amphitheatres of Nemausus and Arles, are also useful, but the author's focus on amphitheatres as a whole throughout his work leaves something to be desired regarding the specific context of Gaul.[46]

Through this thesis, I want to bring secondary sources, archaeological reports, inscriptions, and local artwork together in order to create a more complete picture of the games in this region of the empire. It is significant to do so for a few reasons. Firstly, it will shed more light on the games in Gaul, as well as the distinctive characteristics that made them Gallo-Roman in nature. Secondly, the analysis of the Gallic iteration of the *munera* will also be significant in underscoring the relevant function of certain settlements of Gaul, as spaces of social and political exchange. Finally, the exploration of this very Roman institution in a foreign context will highlight some of the reasons which explain why it followed the Romans wherever they went. While this study is local in scope, it contributes as well to our understanding of Roman imperialism and foreign control via cultural institutions. An analysis of the Gallic *munera*, then, is crucial in furthering our understanding not only of the institution itself, but also of the multiplicity of political and social processes linked to it.

[45] Penelope J.Goodman. *The Roman city and its periphery : from Rome to Gaul*.(London: Routledge Publishing, 2007).
[46] David Lee Bomgardner. *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2021.)

CHAPTER 1

Entertainment for the Sake of Politics: The Popularity of the Munera in Gaul and its Correlated Political Constituents

The success and societal significance of any spectacle depends on its popularity. The present chapter will establish the popularity of the *munera* in Roman Gaul and, in turn, link the popularity of the institution to political processes such as euergetism, hierarchy confirmation, and political dialogue within the arena. The construction of amphitheatres, as well as the organisation of the events which took place within them, were expensive. If, then, they were approved by and funded by elites, we might begin from the supposition that they were also popular and useful in these societies. In the case of Gallia Narbonensis, establishing the popularity of the *munera* in Gaul through the scale of certain amphitheatres and the cost associated with their construction is essential to this study as it is this exact popularity which allows for the multiple political and propagandic dimensions of the Gallic *munera* to unfold with any efficiency. While the presence of amphitheatres in provincial settings is often seen as inexorably linked to "romanisation", this chapter will highlight that the construction of these kinds of structures was not a given in provincial settlements. I argue that the popularity of the games in this region made them intrinsically linked

to local euergetism, as their organisation or the financing of amphitheatres was seen as a significant benefaction worthy of being rewarded with honours bestowed in a local context.

As I underscore in this chapter, these games were far from mere entertainment. Rather, the political dimension of the *munera* persisted as the spectators hit their seats, as Gallo-Roman hierarchy suffused itself in this space. The exploration of the political dimensions of the games is therefore crucial in highlighting the significant space which the institution of the *munera* took in Narbonensis.

What material impact and transformation did the institution of the arena games bring to Gallia Narbonensis? Starting in the Augustan Age, the first major period of large-scale monumental building in Gaul, the amphitheatre project in Lugdunum stands out, especially because dedicated amphitheatre structures were very few at this point outside Italy.[47] For instance, Rome did not yet have its own permanent amphitheatre. At Lugdunum, one can pinpoint the arena's original construction date surely, due to a dedicatory inscription to federal priest Gaius Julius Rufus, dated to 19 C.E., on the podium of the amphitheatre. This was also the period that produced now-famous monuments; the temple that would become the "Maison Carré" of Nemausus and the Gallo-Roman theatre of Arelate.[48] For these reasons, scholars have long believed that the two famous amphitheatres of Nemausus and Arelate were built during the Augustan period, as extensions of the widespread building projects of the time. However, the construction of the stone amphitheatres in these towns does not seem to have been a part of this

[47] According to Katherine E. Welch. *The Roman Amphitheatre: From its Origin to the Colosseum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 252-263, only three permanent amphitheatres of various sizes were built outside Italy during the late republican period. The number is much higher within Italy. It goes up to 16. (189-250).
[48] Pierre Wuilleumier. *Inscriptions Latines des Trois Gaules* (France: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1963), Entry 217.; James C. Anderson Jr. "Anachronism in the Roman Architecture of Gaul: The Date of the Maison Carrée at Nemausus." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* Vol. 60, No. 1 (Mar., 2001): 77.; Eric Teyssier. *Arles, la Romaine.* (Nemausus: Alcide Publishing, 2016), 92-93.

large-scale enterprise, even if the contrary was a common belief until the last few decades.[49] Instead, it is now widely believed that these amphitheatres emerged after Rome's itself was dedicated in 80 C.E.. Clearly conceived with the architectural aesthetic of the Flavian amphitheatre in mind, it has recently been argued by Myriam Fincker that the Arlesian arena provided in turn a model for the Nîmoise one, built a few years after its neighbour.[50] This would firmly date the amphitheatres of Nemausus and Arelate to the late-eighties and early nineties C.E., well after the presupposed Augustan date originally identified for the structures. It would be about 50 years later that Lugdunum's structure was updated, evidence of consistent attention to this brand of infrastructure in the province. Originally intended to welcome a relatively small number of Gallic delegates, the seating of the amphitheatre of the Three Gauls was expanded to fit more people, it has been argued, between 130 and 136.[51] This architectural history, aligned with the height of the empire's prosperity and in response to monumentality at Rome, forms one important thread in tracing the popularity of the *munera* in Gaul and provides a starting point to assess the social and political role of these events in Gallo-Roman culture.

Multiple scholars have asserted that before the respective amphitheatres of the cities were built over the course of the first century C.E., the fora of Gallic settlements were used as a setting for gladiatorial contests, where temporary wooden structures would have been erected.[52] This phenomenon is well documented in Italy itself.[53] For example, Augustus, in his *Res Gestae,* alludes to the multiple *munera* he organised at great cost. The significance of this expense was amplified

[49] Bomgardner, *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 116.
[50] Myriam Fincker. "L'amphithéâtre de Nemausus. Remarques à propos de sa date, sa place, son image." *Pallas* 40 (1994): 189.
[51] Amable Audin and Marcel Leglay. "L'amphithéâtre des Trois-Gaules à Lyon: première campagne de fouilles." *Gallia* 28, no 1 (1970): 68.
[52] Christine Imbert. Les Spectacles à Nemausus et en Gaule Romaine: *: Ier et IIième siècle après Jésus-Christ* (Nîme: Lacour, 1988), 17.
[53] Goodman. *The Roman city and its periphery: from Rome to Gaul* (London: Routledge Publishing, 2007), 146.

by the fact that temporary amphitheatres had to be erected for these games to take place.[54] Pliny the Elder alludes to the large amount of resources allocated for the building of this type of temporary structure in Rome during this period. A large *temporary* auditorium fit for eighty thousand spectators is said to have cost thirty million sesterces, more than a lot of permanent structures, according to Pliny.[55] The Roman elite of both the Republican and early imperial period were willing to pay for temporary structures of such great appearance and cost of materials. This points to some of them surely seeing the benefit of these games. Supporting this assertion, the ancient author highlights that this kind of lavish public entertainment were put together "[with] the aim […] to win favour" among the general population.[56] It is likely that the same sort of process took place in Gaul. Permanent amphitheatres were not built at the very beginning of Roman occupation in the territory. *Munera* probably took place in temporary structures while the institution entrenched itself within Gallic society. Amphitheatres were built when they were seen as a worthy investment. All in all, nearly forty amphitheatres of various sizes were erected in Gaul.[57]In fact, it has been found that a quarter of the empire's amphitheatres were built within Gallic boundaries.[58]

While many authors have argued that the construction of amphitheatres was an integral component of Roman provincial control and the "romanisation" of societies, local context very much dictated whether permanent amphitheatres were built. Illustrating the scale of this commitment, Fincker has argued that the construction site of the amphitheatre in Nemausus was

[54] *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 22.
[55] Plin. *H.N.*, 36.115
[56] Plin. *H.N.*, 36.120. Translated by D. E. Eichholz.
[57]Goodman. *The Roman city and its periphery: from Rome to Gaul*, 143.
[58] Imbert. *Les Spectacles à Nemausus et en Gaule Romaine: : Ier et IIième siècle après Jésus-Christ*,10.

the most busy corner of the city for at least a decade.[59] More than that, this kind of project probably monopolised resources, such as the stone reserves which originated from the quarry close to the settlement.[60] The costly nature of these buildings is also highlighted by the Arlesian amphitheatre, where dedicatory inscriptions credit Caius Junius Priscus with financing the podium and the gates of the amphitheatre, as well as a lost silver statue of Neptune, which was supposedly fixed on the podium of the structure.[61] It is not known how the rest of the amphitheatre was paid for, but Jules Formigé has hypothesised that the imperial treasury could have funded at least some of the expense, although there is no hard evidence of this in Gaul.[62] The same goes for the previously mentioned arena at Lugdunum, where Gaius Rufus is credited with paying for the podium of the structure, but there is no surviving information concerning the financing of the standing walls, seating, and other architectural features of the arena. It is possible that heretofore unnamed local elites could have funded the remaining components of these Gallic amphitheatres. Regardless, the piecemeal record of financing that comes down to us demonstrates that the construction of amphitheatres was clearly complex and very expensive. This means that for this kind of project to go through, it likely required multiple wealthy citizens to contribute funds, and therefore acknowledge the benefits of these projects.

The building of permanent stone amphitheatres was an immensely expensive project for societal elites. There had to be benefits to their construction. Vespasian, for example, planned the construction of the Flavian amphitheatre (on the site of Nero's infamous Golden House) in order to clearly demarcate the beginning of a new era for Rome and to begin consolidating the power of

[59] Myriam Fincker. "L'amphithéâtre de Nemausus. Remarques à propos de sa date, sa place, son image." *Pallas* 40 (1994): 204.
[60] Auguste Pelet. *Description de l'Amphithéâtre de Nîmes*. (Nîmes: Roger et Laporte, 1866), 118.
[61] Émile Espérandieu. *Inscriptions Latines de Gaule Narbonnaise*, (Paris: Institut de France, 1929), 35-36, entry #109.
[62] Jules Formigé. "L'Amphithéâtre d'Arles" *Revue Archéologique* 2 (July-December 1964): 40.

his new dynasty.[63] Following this line of thought, the permanent amphitheatres in Gaul, although smaller in scale, were probably also built with an ulterior motive.

While the French arenas cannot be compared to the Flavian amphitheatre of Rome in terms of dimensions, they are still massive architectural creations. In Nemausus, the structure stands at 130 m by 101 m, while in Arelate, it boasts 136.15 m in length and 107.62 m at its widest point.[64] Both amphitheatres had 34 rows of seating. With the width of the individual seats being uniformly measured at approximately 0,40 metres, the total capacity of both arenas has been estimated to be around twenty-four thousand spectators.[65] While it is impossible to say whether every one of these seats was occupied in every instance, the infrastructure communicated broad use for gathering the community.[66]

For the reasons highlighted above, large amphitheatres *could not* logically be provided to settlements unless there were incentives to do so, as the building process was a colossal one which required huge amounts of economic, natural, and human resources. As we see through evidence from the late republican period, the absence of amphitheatres did not mean the total absence of

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[63] David L. Bomgardner, *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 2-3. There are no precise figures concerning the costs associated with the erection of permanent Gallic amphitheatres One thus has to turn to the Flavian amphitheatre to illustrate the scale of the economic commitment linked to the building of these structures. Gaza Alfoeldy has reconstructed an inscription on the structure which highlights that it was built using spoils from a conflict; See Alfoeldy, "Eine Bauinschrift aus dem Colosseum," in *Zeitschrift fur Papyrologie and Epigraphik* 109 (1995): pp. 195-226. He argues that the inscription proceeds as follows: I[MP(ERATOR)] T(ITVS) CAES(AR) VESPASI[ANVS AVG(VSTVS)] / AMPHITHEATRV[M NOVVM?] / [EX] MANVBI(I)S (vacat) [FIERI IVSSIT. Following this inscription, it has been argued that the Flavian amphitheatre was erected by both Vespasian and Titus using the spoils gathered through the squashing of the Jewish Revolt and the sack of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. See Louis H. Feldman "Financing the Colosseum." *Biblical Archaeology Review* 27, no. 4 (Jul, 2001): 20-31. For this argument. We do not have precise numbers highlighting the amount of riches brought back from Judea. Feldman however emphasises the immense amount of riches found in especially the temple of Jerusalem, which the Romans famously looted (30). The Colosseum would not have been the only thing financed with the spoils from Judea (Feldman, 30). However, the building of such an impressive structure would have presumably required a sizeable chunk of it.

[64] James C. Anderson. *Roman Architecture in Provence*, 163.

[65] See Teyssier. Arles, la Romaine, 199. & Teyssier. Nemausus, la Romaine, 183.

[66] The question of the communal reach of the urban amphitheatres of Narbonensis will be expanded upon in the second chapter of this study.

munera in a given society. If permanent structures were not erected, gladiatorial contests could still take place. The idea that amphitheatres were integral to the Roman provincial landscape can thus be challenged. I argue that, rather than their construction being a given in conquered settlements, large-scale amphitheatres were a marker of the popularity of the *munera* in these regions. The large amphitheatres built in settlements such as Nemausus and Arelate attest not to an attempt at "romanisation", but to the degree of popularity of the *munera* in this corner of Europe. Due to a lack of evidence, it is very difficult to study gladiatorial games in Gaul before the advent of amphitheatres. For this reason, this study will draw most of its archaeological data from Gallic cities where permanent structures are known to have been built, such as that of Arelate, Nemausus, and Lugdunum.

While the mere presence of large, permanent amphitheatres is a crucial marker of the material investment of these communities in the *munera*, further concrete evidence exists. Representations of gladiatorial combats and beast hunts were a widespread motif in Gallic art during the period which is the focus of this study. Complex mosaics representing the games are often found in Roman elite houses.[67] The same is true of elite Gallo-Roman households. In Nemausus, multiple paintings thematically linked to gladiatorial games have been found within large *villae*.[68] Kevin-Alexandre Kazek argues that the artwork excavated in a similar setting in Gaul probably reflects the Gallo-Roman elites' desire to imitate and come in contact with the tastes of the "true" Roman elite.[69] However, this trend went beyond dialogue between elites. Although it is true that images of the *munus* were found to be present in an impressive quantity of Southern

[67] See Anne Hrychuk Kontokosta. "Contests in Context: Gladiatorial Inscriptions and Graffiti" in *The Oxford Handbook Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, Edited by Thomas F. Scanlon and Alison Futrell.(Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2021.)
[68] See Maryse Sabrié, Raymond Sabrié and Michel Piskorz."Les peintures murales de «Villa Roma » à Nîmes(Gard)" *Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise* 31, (1998): pp. 13-71.
[69] Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule,* 293.

Gallic paintings, mosaics and stone reliefs, they were also represented on everyday objects such as medallions, lamps, and kitchen wares.[70] Kazek, in his comprehensive study of the representations of arena games in Gallic *terra sigillata* lamps, reliefs and stamps, compiles nearly four hundred different images alone on this handheld material culture.[71] Although it is possible that some of these goods were imported, a significant quantity was produced locally. For example, many pieces of artwork linked to the *munera* were found in workshops such as that of La Graufesenque, a major producer of *terra sigilatta* and pottery of Gallia Narbonensis.[72] While we do not always know where these objects were supposed to end up, the fact that objects sporting this kind of iconography were manufactured in Gaul is a possible, although not definite, marker of the place arena games took within Southern Gallic society.

Images and locally produced artwork are far from the only pieces of evidence highlighting the prevalence of the *munera* in Gaul. Actual gladiators fought and possibly died in the amphitheatres of Narbonensis. In Nemausus, fourteen tombstones were identified as belonging to different types of gladiators, and a possible trainer (*lanista*) has been hinted at by inscriptions.[73] It is not necessarily surprising to find funerary stelae linked to gladiators in a settlement boasting a large permanent amphitheatre like that at Nemausus. However, the information found on the tombstones is crucial in establishing the prominence of the games in the region. First of all, engraved on the *stelae* is not only their gladiatorial armature, but also their territory of origin. While some of them are local, such as Columbus, who supposedly originated from the

[70] Jean Claude Golvin and Christian Landes. *Amphithéâtres et Gladiateurs.* (Presses du CNRS, 1990), 218.
[71] Kévin-Alexandre Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), 317-357.
[72] See Kazek, *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, 317-357.; and Golvin and Landes, *Amphithéâtres et Gladiateurs*, 52.
[73] See Valerie M. Hope. "Negotiating Identity and Status: The Gladiators of Roman Nîmes." In *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*, edited by Ray Laurence and Joanne Berry,. (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 179-195.

neighbouring tribal territory of the Aedui,[74] others hail from much farther afield. Festus, an Arabian slave turned gladiator, supposedly won more than three dozen combats as a chariot-fighter (*essedarius*) before being set free.[75] The epitaphs also highlight the Greek origin of two gladiators, and the Asiatic birthplace of another.[76] One can argue that, based on their final resting place, it is likely that these gladiators fought in Gaul or even at Nemausus itself. It is however important to note that gladiatorial troops are hypothesised to have been "nomadic", in that they performed not in a singular venue but across the empire.[77] The settlement of Nemausus was significant to the gladiators who were buried there. Due to the mention of a *lanista* on the epitaphs, scholars have asserted that an important gladiatorial *ludus* (barrack, training school) was very possibly instituted in the city, and that, along with Narbo, Nemausus was the gladiatorial headquarters of Gallia Narbonensis. It is thus likely that Nemausus served as a base of operation for gladiators, even those who are buried just outside the city's walls.[78] The evidence that these men were memorialised by certain women, who name themselves as *coniux* or *conturbernal* might be evidence that they had set down roots in the community.[79] The price to train or purchase gladiators could be extremely high. According to estimates, the price stabilised around twelve to fifteen thousand sesterces each, but could have been much higher before it was more or less homogenised by Marcus Aurelius and Commodus in the mid-to-late second century C.E..[80] The amount of money required for the "leasing" of foreign gladiators for a few shows, albeit way less expensive than permanent

[74] Bomgardner, *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 115.
[75] Bomgardner, *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 115-116.
[76] *Ibid*, 115-116.
[77] Anne Hrychuk Kontokosta. "Contests in Context: Gladiatorial Inscriptions and Graffiti", 336.
[78] Bomgardner, *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*.114-115.
[79] CIL XII, 3325; MVR COLVMBUS SERENIANUS XXV NAT AEDVS HIC ADQVIESCIT SPERATA **CONIVNX**; CIL XII 3329: TR APTVS. NAT ALEXKSAND ANVS XXXVII OPTATA DE SVO; ILGN. 435. TR ORPHEVS HIC CONDITVS EST IVLIA FVS **CONTVBERNALI SVO BENEMERITO** P O S.
[80] Michael J. Carter. "Gladiators" in T*he Oxford Handbook Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, p. 235.

"purchases", was still no negligeable disbursement.[81] Considering that some Gallic shows are recorded to have boasted up to thirty pairs of gladiators,[82] the presentation of games in Gaul probably necessitated a heavy allocation of economic resources. Not only was the construction of amphitheatres expensive, but so was outfitting for performances which would please spectators. We don't know if the foreign gladiators identified in Nemausus were "bought", or "leased". Whatever their background, one thing is clear; their involvement in Gallic games came at a high price. What is more, if the interpretation of the presence of a *lanista* at Nemausus is right, it is evidence that local elites did not stop at acquiring gladiators from outside sources. Large amounts of resources were allocated for the creation of a local gladiatorial school which would supply gladiators for the Gallic *munera*, and in turn allow *munerarii* to produce repeatedly lavish shows.

This evidence demonstrates that the elites of settlements such as Nemausus, Arelate, and Narbo Martius (Narbonne) went to extreme lengths in order to provide their population with *munera* of quality. This would not have been done if (1) the games were not significant to the functioning of Gallo-Roman settlements and (2) if the elites who funded the construction of amphitheatres and the organisation of lavish games did not see benefits coming out of it. On the other hand, they might have been required to. According to the *lex Coloniae Genetivae*, a charter given to the Spanish colony of Urso upon its foundation by Gaius Julius Caesar in 44 B.C.E., it was an important duty of provincial officials to put together gladiatorial shows for the enjoyment

[81] *Ibid*, 235.

[82] AÉ. Henri Desaye, 2014. 319-320, inscription 745. [Hic mercatus ut mercat]ura dig[nior esset, seuiris Aug]ustalib(us) | [legaui in mune]re gladiato[rio cum centesimis ? usu]ris sestertium trecenties quater ? milia, | [et in prae]dicati mercatus [ornamentis a Fadio Syntr]opho patre p[romis|sis tot per me Fadium Syntro]phum quot ipse per aeta[tem dedit, dum ex usur]is dies na[talis] |5 meus [--- idem de]mum cum Fadio Syntroph[o celebraretur in perpet]uum ce[rto die, | **et gladiatorum] triginta missus per magistr[os eius corporis ederentur iisdem c]opi[is, ita | ut, si f]ieri posset altero quoq[ue die haec celebratio,** tamen | ea] pecunia in alium usum [ne conuerteretur a seuirum augustalium | o]rdine ; quod si omissa es[set neque insumpta esset ea pecunia |10 iis]dem condicionibus ad c[elebrandum munus gladiatorum ac supra|script]is, in petenda ea cessa(ui)sset tu[m legatum ---]

of their local population.[83]It was required for them by the charter to disburse at least two thousand sesterces, however, they could also spend more. With all the expenditure highlighted above, the *munera* put together in Gaul potentially cost a lot more than the minimum required by the Urso Charter. While it is possible that the requirements surrounding the organisation of the provincial *munus* changed over time (especially with the advent of the principate), this liberal spending on the part of the elites prompts the question: Why were so many resources spent on the *munera* in Gallic society? I argue in the next section that the elites used the popularity of the games to further their own political agenda. On the one hand, they were honoured by the general population for their benefaction (which took the form of the organisation of *munera* or the financing of permanent amphitheatres). On the other, the institution in many ways reaffirmed the established hierarchy of Gallo-Roman society, which could only benefit those at the top of the pyramid. In what follows, I elaborate how this dual facing benefit was brought to fruition.

Hierarchy, Euergetism and the Gallic Munera

The organisation of games entrenched societal hierarchies in Gallic settlements. By financing arena games, elites in Gallic towns affirmed their high standing within society. The funds necessary to organise *munera* needed to be levied from somewhere. Right from the start of the imperial period, even if it seemingly was their duty, local magistrates could not bear all of these expenses on their own. As a result, Gallo-Roman elites (not necessarily those holding public offices) appear to have alleviated that burden through their involvement in the financing of their local *munera*.[84] The logic behind this is quite simple. It stems from the practice of euergetism.

[83] *Lex Coloniae Genetivae*, 70-71. In *Ancient Roman Statutes*: *a translation*. Translated by Allan Chester Johnson. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961, 97-104.

[84] Guy Barruol and Jacques Gascou. "Nouvelles inscriptions exhumées d'une enceinte du Bas-Empire à Nîmes" *Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise* 15 (1982): 290.

Described in its most basic sense by Paul Veyne, "euergetism means the fact that communities expected the rich to contribute from their wealth to the public expenses".[85] This often came in the form of the construction of public buildings, the organisation of festivals, and, most importantly here, the gifting of arena and circus games. This was not a one-way street, however. The magnificence of the wealthy was often rewarded by the populace through honours such as ruler cults (especially during the Hellenistic period), statues, or awards for political offices.[86] Financing arena games was recognized as a benefaction by the general population, who in turn honoured elites for their involvement. As shall be highlighted, in Gaul, this often took the form of commemorative statues and inscriptions, but one cannot exclude the possibility that these honours manifested themselves through political offices and public recognition.

It can be seen in inscriptions from important Gallic settlements that individuals and families who financed arena games were indeed honoured. From these texts, we can track patterns of euergetism, and from there continue building a picture of the popularity of the arena games. We can start this analysis by pinpointing clear examples of euergetism in Narbonensis. An inscription originating from Nemausus records the donation of Attia Patercla. Interestingly, the dedication highlights that the noblewoman was awarded the title of *flaminica perpetua* by the senate of the city of Nemausus due to the liberalities of her father.[87] This is euergetism in practice in the Gallo-Roman settlement. The generosity of the father led to the honouring of members of his family through a politico-religious title. It is not the only instance of euergetism in Nemausus, as we hear

[85] Paul Veyne. *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*. (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 10.
[86] *Ibid*, 10-11.
[87] AÉ. Guy Barruol, Jacques Gascou and Jean Claude Bessac, 1984, 174-175, inscription 680. **Attiae, Lucii)filiae) Pa\terclae, flami\nicae perpetuae) gra\ tuitae decreto) or\dinis [s]a[nc]t(issimi) ob libera\liiaies [p]atri[s] eius qui,** | praeler c[e]iera, (trecenia milia) (sestertium) | reipublicae) (se)uirorum \ reliquit ad ludos se\uiral(es) in perpetuum) celebr\an dos, Daphnion \ libertus). Locus) datus) decreto) decurionum).

of Quintus Auilius Sennius Cominianus, who was also honoured by the local senate for the public gifts of his father.[88]

The financing of *munera* was clearly considered as worthy of honours and remembrance. In Narbonensis, one inscription describes the dedication of a bronze statue honouring an Arlesian noble by the colony's imperial officials due to his generous and constant financing of gladiatorial games in the central city of Arelate, as well as his restoration of a local basilica.[89] While we do not know who this particular noble is, the permanent nature of the statue as a honorific marker reflects the value placed on the gift of gladiatorial games given by this benefactor. A statue was also reportedly erected in honour of Titus Sennius Sollemnis for his time as a duumvir in the city of Lugdunum (Three Gauls).[90] As an important political figure, the games he put together are not the only thing celebrated in the statue's commemorative inscription. However, his involvement as *munerarius*, as well as the lavish nature of the games he organised (presenting up to sixty-four

[88] AÉ. Guy Barruol, Jacques Gascou and Jean Claude Bessac. 1984, 174-175, inscription 681. Ordo sandissimus) \ Quinto) Auilio, **Quinti) filio) Sennio | Palatina (tribu) Comini\ano in honorem pa\tris eius Qfuinti) Auilii) Hyacin\thi quod is, praeter libera\liiales spetaculorum quae** | sponte ededii uel postulata | non negauii, uelis nouis sum\ptu suo in theatro posiiis cum \ suis armamentis, saepe pecunia \ mutua quae a magis tratibus | petebatur data actum publicum iuuerit.

[89] AÉ. Yves Burnand and Jacques Gascou, 2005, 333, inscription 921. **[col(onia) Iul(ia) Pat(erna) Aret]ate ob \ [munificentia] eius, | [hanc aeneam st]qtuam | [cum base quam o]ptauer(at) \ [decreuit, quod m]unera \ [gladiatorum r]emiser(at) \ [atque ad repa]randam \ [nostram basilic]am (sestertium) n(ummum) sex (milia)** \ [ex quorum injeremento \ [haec restaujraretur \ [dederat, et eo]dem die \ [ab eo dec(urionibus) discu]mbentib(us) \ [diuisae sunt spo]rtulae.

[90] AÉ. Pascal Vipard, 2011, 367-68, inscription 909a). **T. Sennio Sollemni Sollem|nini fil. IIuir(o) sine sorte quater, [a]ug(uri) | [o]mnib(us) honorib(us) mun[eribus]que i[n | --- functo --- flamen] m[unera?]r[i]us in |5 [s]ua c[i]uitate eodem tem[po]re sacerdo[s] | R[om]a[e] e[t Aug(usti) ? fuit ?] et [o]mne genus spec|taculorum e[did]it. [Fu]erunt gladia[to]|r[um c]ertam(ina) n(umero) XXXII ex quibus per qua[d]|riduum [n(umero)] V[III] s[i]n[e] missione ediderս[nt.** |10 s Bal]neum quod [pop]u[lar]ibus coloniae s[uae] | pr[ofutu]rum S[ollemninus inferio?]ribus | fundam[en]tis inst[i]tut[is pae]ne [reli]querat | consumm(auit) d[e]s[tin(auitque)] dedere fructum unde | in perpetuum instauraretur. Is Sollemnis |15 amicus Tib. Claud(ii) Paulini, leg(ati) Aug(usti) propr(aetore) pro|uinc(iae) Lugd(unensis) et cliens fuit, cui postea | [l]eg(ato) Aug(usti) p(ro) p(raetore) in Brit(annia) ad legionem sext[am] | adsedit, q⁄uique ei salarium militiae | in auro aliaque munera longe pluris missi[t]. |20 Fuit cliens probatissimus Aedini Iuliani | leg(ati) Aug(usti) prou(inciae) Lugd(unensis), qui postea praef(ectus) praet(orio) | fuit, sicut epistula, quae ad latus scripta es[t] | declaratur. Adsedit etiam in prouincia Num[id(ia)], | Lambense, M. Valerio Floro trib(uno) mil(itum) leg(ionis) III Aug(ustae). |25 Iudici arcae ferrar(iarum) | Tres Prou(inciae) Gall(iae) | primo umquam in sua ciuitate posuerunt. | Locum ordo ciuitatis Viducass(ium) libera(e) dedit. | P(osita) XVII k(alendas) Ian(uarias) Pio et Proculo |30 co(n)s(ulibu

gladiators) take centre stage in this dedication. In both cases, the public honours bestowed on these figures for their involvement with the games illustrate the heavy political connotations of the organisation of the games, for which the public reward for those who financed them was warranted. In this way, the statues highlighted here demonstrate the intersection of political engagement, public giving, and social climbing in Gallic society.

Going back to the inscription honouring Attia Patercla, she is said to have made a large donation of three hundred thousand sesterces to the treasury of the *seviri augustales*.[91] According to the inscription, this was done with the sole purpose of allowing the games to be put together in perpetuity.[92] The size of the donation in itself is very telling, even if the inscription's author, Daphnion, might have exaggerated it due to his personal relationship with the subject of the dedication. He indeed identifies himself as the family's manumitted slave. It was common practice for manumitted slaves to be in close contact with their former masters, as they remained connected to their household.[93] Regardless, we are presented with a noble who gave such a large amount of money exclusively for the organisation of games, investing to entertain the populace and putting

[91] The *seviri augustales* have long been thought to have represented the imperial offices through their seeming involvement with provincial iterations of the imperial cult. However, scholarship has mostly moved away from this interpretation. Keeping in mind the scant amount of evidence highlighting their precise role, the *collegium* is now seen as an organization linked to provincial euergetism. Their main obligation seems to have been the organisation of games. (See Henrik Mouritsen. *The Freedman in the Roman World*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.), 251-267 and Ville. *La Gladiature en Occident des Origines à la mort de Domitien*, 188-93. This obligation is corroborated in Gaul where elites allocated resources to the treasury of the *seviri* for the presentation of games. We also see the mention of *ludos sevirales*, which hint at the tasks of the augustales. (See AÉ 680, quoted below). While this organisation might have been linked to the imperial cult (See James Rives. "Augustales",*Oxford Classical Dictionary.* 22 Dec. 2015), there is no concrete evidence of this in Gaul.
See Duncan Fischwick. *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: studies in the ruler cult of the western provinces of the Roman Empire.* (Leiden; Boston: Brill Publishing: 1987;2004). 610-616 for the possible role of the Augustales in the implementation of the imperial cult in provincial settlements.

[92] Année Épigraphique, 680. Attiae, Lucii) fliae) Pa\terclae, flami\nicae perpetuae) gra\ tuitae decret o) or\dinis [s]a[nc]t(issimi) ob libera\liiaies [p]atri[s] eius qui, | **praeler c[e]iera, (trecenia milia) (sestertium) | reipublicae) (se)uirorum \ reliquit ad ludos se\uiral(es) in perpetuum) celebr\an dos, Daphnion \ libertus). Locus) datus) decreto) decurionum)**

[93] For information regarding the relationship between manumitted slaves and their former masters, see Peter Hunt. *Ancient Greek and Roman slavery* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2018), 117-142.; and Henrik Mouritsen "Manumission" in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Law and society*, eds. Paul J. du Plessis, Clifford Ando, and Kaius Tuori (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 402-416. and Mouritsen. *The Freedman in the Roman World*.

the amphitheatre to use. The inscription was engraved on what seems to be a statue base, so one could infer that it was part of an honorary statue like the Arlesian noble highlighted above. Michel Christol has argued this, adding that this monument was dedicated following Attia Patercla's passing, although not in a funerary context.[94] It was likely an honorific statue which could have been placed in the forum of the city. If that is the case, the central place which was taken by her involvement in the games within the (surviving) inscription is significant, as it shows that this was something that she (and her father, who possibly commissioned it) wanted to be remembered for. This especially emphasizes the nature of the games as a prominent social event. The importance of the games in Narbonensis is corroborated by an inscription dated to 149 C.E. found in the capital city of Narbo Martius. Written in the first person in the style of a *res gestae*, the text highlights one Fadius Syntrophus' 304,000 sesterces gift to the *seviri augustales* to serve for the organisation of gladiatorial games. One notes yet again the presence of the *seviri augustales* as eurgetistic facilitators in the process. As in the case of Attia Patercla, it is heavily emphasised that the gift had to be used *exclusively* for the financing of games. A specific show is highlighted in order to prove that this was in fact the case.[95]

These two examples are less blatantly linked to processes of euergetism than the ones originating from Arelate and Lugdunum. However, the amount of money given by these rich citizens of Nemausus and Narbo Martius and the central place it took in the listing of their achievements highlights the importance of the institution in the cities, even if, as far as we know, no tangible political honours resulted from these gifts. These cases show that due to the popularity of the events, the organisation of *munera* in itself was rooted in politics for the Gallo-Roman elites;

[94] Christol Michel. "À propos d'hommages publics en Gaule Narbonnaise". *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité* 117, n°2. (2005): 566.
[95] L'Année épigraphique 2014, p. 319-320, inscription 745. *Op.cit* 82

the popularity of the games made them the perfect opportunity for political advancement. As shall be expanded upon below, the events themselves, where people of all classes gathered, also had political connotations, both for the elites and the general populace.

A Reaffirmation of Hierarchy During the Games

The appeal and pertinence of the *munera* in Roman society is made clear by Cicero. The famous orator sees these events in a positive light, stating that the arena was one of the few places where "the opinions and sympathies of the Roman people concerning public matters can be demonstrated".[96]As explored in this study's literature review, the idea of the arena as a political setting in Rome has been analysed by many scholars.[97] It is easy to assume that the political dimension of the games stretched beyond the walls of the metropolis. However, as heavily emphasised in previous research, the institution of the *munera* did not remain unchanged once it was brought to different regions of the empire.[98]One thus cannot assume that because the games were politically charged in Rome, they also were in other towns of the empire. Nevertheless, in this section, I argue, based on evidence from key Gallic settlements, that the presentation of arena games was in fact political; useful both for the general Gallic citizenry as well as Roman and local elites. While Cicero's argument about the utility of the games can in many ways be applied to Gaul, it also needs to be interrogated to accurately represent the Gallic context. The presence of seating reserved for societal elites highlights the possibility that the arena acted as a sort of political assembly, similar to how it was described to be in Rome: both involved in reaffirming local

[96] Cic. *Pro Sestius*, 106.49
[97] See pp. 3-4.
[98] See pp. 8-11.

hierarchies and serving as a political arena. However, the case of the provincial sanctuaries at Lugdunum, closely tied to the burgeoning imperial cult, bring into question the actual impact of the presumed political discourse that took place in the stands of the Gallic arenas.

To start with, the architecture of the amphitheatres in Narbonensis suggests that the *munus* could occasion discourse between the societal elites and the general Gallo-Roman population. The arena, even if it seemingly welcomed people from all walks of life, was organized hierarchically. Evidence shows that the seats were assigned according to one's social standing. The closer one was to the action, the higher they were in the social ladder. In Nemausus and Arelate, the first four rows of stands, organised in loges, were reserved for the elites and official figures of society. In Nîmes, inscriptions possibly identifying the seats as honorific ones are highlighted by Pelet.[99] In Rome, these people were the reigning emperor, consuls and senators. In Gaul, as in most provincial settlements, they were the decurions, Gallo-Roman elites who conducted proceedings on a city-wide level.[100] An Arlesian inscription speaks of 110 members of the city's *ordo decurionum*, and according to Formigé, this is exactly the number of places in the loges of the arena.[101] At both Arelate and Nemausus, those responsible for the organisation of the games were seated in *pulpita* which were separated from the rest of the stands.[102] Aside from the seating reserved for the elites, seating was assigned according to class. Like in Rome, those of equestrian standing were closer to the sands of the arena than the plebeians, and members of the general population, in turn, were seated in the highest stands.[103] Starting with Augustus' reign, Roman women were relegated to the furthest, the highest seats, a clear indication of the gender laws enacted by the first *princeps* in his

[99] Pelet. *Description de l'Amphithéâtre de Nîmes,* 81-83.
[100] Jules Formigé. "L'Amphithéâtre d'Arles (suite et fin, 3e série)"in *Revue Archéologique* 1 (Janvier Juin 1965): 5.
[101] *Ibid*, 42.
[102] Bomgardner, 181.
[103] Suet. Aug., 44.

effort to restore traditional Roman "virtue".[104] Although this separation is not made explicit in Gaul, it is certainly possible that it was indeed there. After all, if we are to trust archaeological trends, the amphitheatres at Arelate and Nemausus were modelled after the Flavian amphitheatre, where these divisions were very real.

Through its separation of spectators according to class and sex, the Gallic arena was a physical representation of the establishment of Roman hierarchy in Gallic settlements. It was visually apparent who the powerful and lowly people were, and everyone in between. The representation of social hierarchy, according to Dunbabin, was one of the central purposes of Roman *munera*,[105] and as can be read on the arena spaces discussed here, this was very clearly the case in Gaul as well. In some respects, the hierarchical setting of the arena might have worked in the favour of those Gallo-Roman elites in positions of power who wanted the general population to know that they were indeed on a higher wrung of the social ladder.

Interestingly, in a context meant for hierarchy reaffirmation, the elites of society also probably attended and showed interest in the games to show the general population that they were "one of them". Roman Emperors were praised for their relative appreciation of the *munera*. As one of the few occasions they were presented to the common peoples, it showed that they were in touch with them.[106] The amphitheatre was a space where public opinions were formed, by showing that they cared about the people's "pastime", emperors would ameliorate their chances to be seen as "good" emperors and thus be divinized at the end of their lives.[107] This dynamic could be applied

[104] Shelby Brown. "Combat Sports and Gladiatorial Combat in Greek and Roman Private Art" in T*he Oxford Handbook Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World* , eds Thomas F. Scanlon and Alison Futrell. (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2021), 445.
[105]Katherine Dunbabin. *Theater and Spectacle in the Art of the Roman Empire*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 171.
[106] Keith Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 19.
[107] De Wiedemann. *Emperors and Gladiators*. p. 171.

to the Gallic games. It is likely that the *decuriones*, *munerarii*, and members of the local senates would have ingratiated themselves with the general population by at least appearing to care about the games unfolding in front of them. This would reinforce the assertion that the games had a major political dimension, as officials could possibly gain political points with the population by doing this. There is no evidence of this happening in Gaul, but given the Roman precedent, it is certainly a possibility. Regardless, this remained a clearly hierarchical setting.

It has been hypothesised in the past that the imperial cult played a significant role in the unfolding of provincial *munera*. In the specific context of Gaul, according to Chamberland, the association between the amphitheatres at Narbo Martius and Lugdunum and their respective provincial and federal sanctuaries highlights a link between the imperial cult and the institution of the *munera* in Gaul.[108]While it is a possibility, there is no other hard evidence which hints at the celebration of the imperial cult during Gallic *munera*. The opposite was believed until recently, as the *seviri augustales* were thought to have been an imperial organisation whose main duty was the organisation of ceremonies linked to the cult of the emperor(s).[109] Their heavy link to the games in Gaul, established through epigraphy in an earlier section of this chapter, was thus seen as proof that the games were influenced by the imperial cult. This has since been challenged, and the *seviri augustales* are now mostly seen as an organisation connected to provincial euergetism.[110] Still, the proximity of select Gallic amphitheatres to sanctuaries linked to the imperial cult might hint at a link between the two institutions. If politico-religious ceremonies linked to the worship of emperors, were celebrated during the games, they might have been a way to allude to the emperor's

[108] Guy Chamberland. "Imperial Spectacles in the Roman Provinces" in *The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World,* edited by Alison Futrell and Thomas Francis Scanlon. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021),384.
[109] Fischwick. *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West,* 610-616.
[110] Mouritsen. *The Freedman in the Roman World,* 251-67.

place at the top of the hierarchy, even in a provincial setting. Whether this was the case or not, the popular *munera* were the perfect occasions to reaffirm Gallo-Roman and (possibly) imperial hierarchies. It was one of the few instances where people gathered in large numbers. These messages, crucial to the adequate functioning of provincial societies, thus could travel efficiently.[111]

Political Dialogue in the Gallic Arena

The clear identification of every spectator's social rank in Gallic arenas was not only useful as a representation of Roman hierarchy. For the general population, the amphitheatre seems to have been first and foremost a place of entertainment. It could be more than that, however. As highlighted earlier, the games in Rome were an opportunity for the lower classes to engage in political discourse with the ruling class.[112] Spectators could show their approval for elites through loud acclamations, and their disdain through silence.[113] Cassius Dio highlights this possibility in his description of a *munus* given by Caligula, where it was "plainly in evidence […] [that there was] an angry ruler on one side, and a hostile people on the other".[114] In this way, people could make political statements during the *munera.* Unsurprisingly, there are no literary records which describe this kind of process in Gallic arenas either, but it does not mean that it did not happen. Due to there being clearly identified loges and *pulpita* reserved for the decurions, and *munerarii,* we know that these official figures were actually present during the games. Identifiable due to their seating, it was easy for the crowd to know exactly where to direct praise or criticism regarding both the quality of the spectacle and political as well as administrative issues.

[111] The propagandic nature of the Gallic games is the subject of the second chapter of this study.
[112] See p. 4.
[113] Cic. *Pro Sest*. 124-7.
[114] Cass. Dio. 59.13.3. Translated by Earnest Cary, Herbert B. Foster.

Arena games were one of the few times where people came in contact with the elite strata of society, and their positive reception could very much make an individual's career.[115] Ironically, in this way, the very hierarchical arena could reverse societal roles, as it was the elites who were at the mercy of the opinions of the crowd. Even if we do not know for certain that it happened, the Gallic amphitheatres could theoretically provide spectators with an outlet for their frustrations. In practice, however, their cries might have been dismissed, or simply not heard.

While all the variables which could turn the Gallic arenas into "[the people's] parliament"[116] were present, it is also possible that the opinions affirmed by the spectators never led to tangible changes. This is shown by the purpose of the amphitheatre of the Three Gauls in Lugdunum. Originally constructed at the beginning of the reign of Tiberius, the amphitheatre, at this point, was quite different from those built later at Arelate and Nemausus, in that it was a lot smaller. The structure was meant as a religious and imperial sanctuary where, on the first of August every year, delegates from all the Gallic tribes would be called to gather.[117] During the ensuing ceremonies, they would officially reiterate their unwavering allegiance to Rome.[118] More concretely, they were summoned to report any trouble or disaffection towards Rome within their spheres of influence. This was very likely the way in which Gallic leaders would prove their loyalty to the established Roman order.[119]

On the surface, an assembly composed of native Gallic leaders seems like a powerful political tool for them due to its potentially unifying character. While A.J. Christopherson alludes to the possibility of this context being used as an actual political assembly where Gallic leaders

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[115] Golvin and Landes, *Amphitéâtre et Gladiateurs*, 33.
[116] Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History*, 16.
[117] Audin and Leglay. "L'amphithéâtre des Trois-Gaules à Lyon: première campagne de fouilles." 79.
[118] Golvin and Landes, *Amphitéâtre et Gladiateurs*, 90.
[119] A.J. Christopherson. "The Provincial Assembly of the Three Gauls in the Julio-Claudian Period" in *Historia*: *Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichtev* 17, n3 (1968): 354

could make demands, he is pessimistic in regard to the actual political agency of Gallic leaders in this particular context. The author states that this was "an artificial arrangement which denied the Gauls any real political power [...] [aimed at] stimulat[ing] a feeling of national union under its patronage [...] without uniting the Gauls on an effective political foundation".[120] One could apply this argument to other arenas throughout Gaul. The Gallo-Roman spectators of Arelate and Nemausus were seemingly given an opportunity to air their grievances to the elites of their settlements. However, it is probable that while their concerns were voiced, the actual impact of the political dialogue which took place in the Gallic arena was superficial.

The idea that Gallic amphitheatres served as the people's parliament as did the Roman arenas is certainly worth being entertained. After all, the *munera* put people of all classes in the same setting and clearly highlighted who the decision-makers were through seating. This has all the ingredients for a rather explosive cocktail. However, the possibility that it was all a smokescreen which would allow the spectators to believe that their opinions were of concern while they actually were not, as it is hypothesised to have been in Lugdunum, certainly puts a damper on the conversation. What is more, as Keith Hopkins states, "the dangers of political confrontation were lessened by the crowd's lack of coherence, by its own volatility, and by the absence of an ideology which could bind it together."[121] The spectators were not of one mind, and this probably hindered the success of any dialogue to be had. Nevertheless, being one of the few instances where people actually encountered their political elites, it is likely that some appeals were made, and issues brought to light. Whether the revendications led to concrete action, though, has been lost to history. In addition to being a political setting for the elite, the arena was, in theory, also politically significant for the masses.

[120] *Ibid*, 365.
[121] Hopkins, *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History*, 18-19.

The *munus* was the perfect institution to further political enterprises in Gaul. This chapter has expanded on both the popularity of the *munera* and its inherent political dimensions. The fact that this institution was popular that allowed it to become so significant in Gallia Narbonensis. The success of euergetistic practices in Gaul and the reaffirmation of social hierarchies in the arena were born of a process: the transfer of the games from Rome, willing investors in the *munus* among the Gallic elite, responsible for supporting and sustaining these events, and the popularity among the masses that grew with each successive performance. If the games were an afterthought for the general population, the elites of Gaul could not have used them for political gain, simply because their organisation would not have been considered worthy of the honours they were given. What is more, the various processes which reaffirmed social hierarchy within the arena would not have been as efficient as they presumably were if people did not go to the events. The established popularity of the games will continue to be significant in the next chapter, which is concerned with the diffusion of Roman values through the *munera*. In the same way as the social hierarchies, the arena was chosen as a setting to promulgate Roman values *because* the events which took place in them were popular and large amounts of people were massed within the arena.

CHAPTER 2

Do as You're Told, or Else: The Gallic Munera *as a Tool for the Widespread Diffusion of Roman Values and Reaffirmation of Roman Power*

There are a few possible origins to the *munera* and its relevant place in Roman life. Livy alludes to a mythical origin for this entertainment type. Indeed, the famous episode of the "Rape of the Sabines" supposedly happened while the Roman population was preparing to go to the circus.[122] It is likely that this is merely an injection of contemporary Roman society into its mythical past. Still, it is interesting that these kinds of games (although not explicitly *munera*) were seen as inextricably linked to Roman identity through their connection with such a formative episode of the polity's history. Jumping to the historical past, Christian author Tertullian states that the events started as parts of funeral games for elite members of Roman society.[123] The first recorded *munus* is indeed dated to 264 B.C.E. in the context of funeral games honouring Decimus Junius Brutus.[124] Georges Ville traces these origins even farther in the past, asserting the likely link between ancient Campanian funeral games and early iterations of gladiatorial combat.[125] An

[122] Plutarch. *Rom.*14.4.
[123] Tert. De Spect. 12
[124] Liv. *Per*. 16.6.
[125] Ville. *La gladiature en occident: des origines jusqu'à la mort de Domitien*, 19-42.

early fourth century Osco-Samnite origin has also been advanced. Importantly, though, the games were not seen as uniquely Roman in character until decades, if not centuries, later.[126] Indeed, while other societies engaged in blood sport, the *munera* was considered as inherently Roman.[127] While *munera* started to be presented in the mid third century B.C.E, it was not before another century and a half that they were made an official Roman institution by the Senate in 105 BCE. Originally, Golvin and Landes argue, this was done to counter the rise in popularity of Greek games and culture within Roman society. Kyle states that the *munera* were prioritised over Greek games in Rome because they emphasised military preparedness and skill, qualities which were seen as inherent to Roman society. In contrast, Greek athletics often lacked these components, which led to them being portrayed as unserious.[128] The highlighting of the *munera* as a purely Roman institution thus contrasted directly the foreign Greek games and culture, both elements famously thought to have aided in the corruption of austere Roman society.[129]The games might have garnered growing popularity in the culmination of the debate over whether the Romans had erred in welcoming, and at times revering, Greek culture.

More than entertainment, however, the games are thought to have been extremely important in another way: they were a vessel to send messages to their audience. Scholars have argued that the *munera* served as a microcosm of Roman society which helped in the diffusion of purely Roman values.[130] In the words of Valerie M. Hope, "this was not just entertainment, but a violent enactment of Roman values, ideals, and power".[131] This section will attempt to shed light

[126] Donald G. Kyle. *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*. (Malden; Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 313-314.
[127] Futrell, *The Roman Games: Historical Sources in Translation*, 6.
[128] Kyle. *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World*, 316.
[129] Golvin and Landes. *Amphithéâtres et Gladiateurs*,27.
[130] Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, 277.
[131] Hope "Gladiators as a Class*"*, 564.

on the ways in which this statement can, or cannot, be applied to a Roman provincial context. To achieve this, I will explicate how the munus served to transmit Roman values in important Gallo-Roman settlements. I argue that the Gallic *munera* were structured as extremely propagandic events aimed at the widespread diffusion of Roman values and at the representation of Roman dominance over all aspects of Gallic society. The Roman and non-Roman worlds were opposed in the arena in order to clearly highlight to spectators which qualities and ways of life should be emulated, and which ones avoided, in order to thrive in a Gallic society which now existed within the Roman world. This was a show of force with clearly threatening undertones which reaffirmed Roman power over the entirety of Gallic society. In many ways, the *munus* was an imperial institution transferred to provincial context with the express goal to influence local ways of life. While it cannot be known for certain whether this propaganda actually worked in changing the Gallo-Romans' alliegances, there is no mistaking that the intent of the games was exactly so. The efficiency of this process was presumably amplified by the popularity of arena games in Gaul, established in the previous chapter. Thousands of people from major cities and their neighbouring *oppida* would indeed come to watch these momentous events. Thus, the *munera*, masquerading as popular entertainment, worked in fact as a far-reaching indoctrination apparatus.

Gaul, and especially Southern Gaul, is often described as a very "Roman" territory.[132] The province's geographical proximity to Italy and the fact that it was brought into the Roman fold relatively early compared to some of other territorial conquests contributes to this line of thinking. It is clear that a substantial stratum of the population of Galia Narbonensis was Roman in character. Indeed, as highlighted earlier, Roman military veterans were given plots of Gallic land following the Caesarian Gallic campaign and the Augustan victory at Actium. The influence of the latter

[132] Michel Christol. "L'épigraphie et les débuts du culte impérial dans les colonies de vétérans en Narbonnaise," *Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise 32 (*1999): 12

event on the city of Nemausus is highlighted by the excavation in the settlement of many coins which depict a crocodile chained to a palm tree on their obverse, with the words "Aegypto Capta" (captive Egypt) engraved on their reverse. This singular design, according to Kitchell, is representative of the Augustan victory at Actium, a battle which was fought by many of the soldiers which were now settled within the territory of Nemausus.[133] As Roman points out, findings related to this coin design are not limited to Nemausus and its surroundings. Instead, according to the author, this kind of iconography was linked to a larger Augustan propagandistic venture.[134] However, it is still interesting that these coins were found close to a settlement where it is known that Roman veterans who had participated in the famous final showdown between Octavian and Marc Antony were settled. They seem to maintain the material culture linked to a prominent moment of their lives.

Due to the installation of Roman veterans in the region, Narbonensis undoubtedly had Roman currents. Indigenous elites, however, still held significant influence. Their lands were not ceded to the thousands of Roman veterans settled, and a lot of the indigenous ruling families kept their high standing within their communities.[135] Multiple processes were introduced in order to gain the loyalty of this indigenous elite following the conquest of the territory. Communities like Nemausus were given Latin rights, and others, like Arelate and Narbo Martius, were given Roman rights. In this way, Roman authorities ensured the loyalty of local elites, as it could help the latter gain the envious status of Roman citizen.[136] What is more, young Gallic nobles were temporarily

[133] Kenneth F. Kitchell. *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z*. (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2014), 40.
[134] Danièle Roman. "Apollon, Auguste et Nîmes." *Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise* 14 no.1 (1981): 214.
[135] Teyssier. *Nîmes, la Romaine* 79.
[136] Teyssier. *Nîmes, la Romaine* 77-79.. For more on the different types of rights allocated and the privileges that come with them, see Anna Dolganov, 'Documenting Roman Citizenship', in Myles Lavan, and Clifford Ando (eds), *Roman and Local Citizenship in the Long Second Century CE* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2022), 185-228. ; Arnaud Besson. "Fifty Years Before the Antonine Constitution: Access to Roman Citizenship and Exclusive

"given" to Roman families to learn Roman ways. These future leaders thus came back to their communities presumably having more training in Roman ways than Gallic ones.[137] It is very difficult to know whether these practices altered the way in which the now Gallo-Roman elites thought of themselves. However, they highlight a clear attempt on the part of Roman authorities to gain both the loyalty of the contemporary and future generations of elites after the conquest of Gallic territory. Due to the establishment of these processes, the "romanisation" of the Gallic elites would only become more complete over the subsequent generations.

There was, in all logic, a crucial limit to these processes of "romanisation". Indeed, they could only be applied to a very limited portion of the population. Roman citizenship, for example, was a privilege that would lose its prestige if it was handed out to everyone. In fact, the advent in 212 of the Edict of Caracalla, which gave Roman citizenship to every free man within the empire, marked the start of a very difficult period for Gallic cities such as Arelate and Nemausus. Indeed, it led to a significant upset in the social organisation of the cities.[138] Roman authorities thus had to find another way to both gain their Gallic subjects' loyalty and diffuse the values of Roman society. This, I argue, is where arena games were useful. They were, as established in the first chapter of this study, very popular events where people of all classes gathered. Local arena games were thus the perfect setting to broadcast propagandic messages *en masse* to the Gallo-Roman population. The Gallic games thus became physical representations of the primacy of Roman values, and of the power of the imperial apparatus. While it is impossible to say whether this attempt to "romanise" the spectators of the games was successful, the evidence shows that there is a very

Rights" in *Citizens in the Graeco-Roman World : Aspects of Citizenship from the Archaic Period to AD 212*, (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2017), 199-220.

[137] Teyssier. *Nîmes, la Romaine*, 77.

[138] Teyssier. *Nîmes, la Romaine*, 226.

clear intent to transform local society and its sense of belonging. The next sections will explore in depth how these attempts manifested themselves within the Gallic *munera*.

The Establishment of Munera as Purely Roman

To start with, it is very clear that, even in Gaul, the institution of the *munera* was intrinsically linked to Roman civilisation. This connection is especially highlighted through artwork etched within the facade of the amphitheatres at both Arelate and Nemausus. At Nemausus, a frieze at the main entrance of the structure illustrates the story of Rome's mythical founders, Romulus and Remus, by illustrating them as toddlers with Lupa, the wolf who supposedly nursed them after they were exposed in the wild. While a lot of the artwork which adorned the Arlesian amphitheatre has been lost to time, a similar portrait of the mythical twins was found in its ancient store room upon excavation.[139] What is more, the contours of an animal carving can still be seen above one of the doors of the southern entrance of the structure. While one can no longer make out exactly what type of animal is represented, Formigé asserts that it might have been the mythical Roman she-wolf.[140] It is thus possible that this foundational scene of Roman mythology was also presented to spectators entering the Arlesian arena.

The presence of this scene in both amphitheatres (more certain in Nemausus) is significant, especially because it is one that is not linked beyond measure to the events that took place in the arena or the values they represented. Although the foundation myth in itself is linked to civilization-making through warfare, Lupa's involvement with the twins is not. It is thus highly unlikely that this particular scene was illustrated in this context to highlight the martial values put forward by gladiatorial games. Instead, the etching of this very famous Roman origin story at the

[139] Bomgardner, *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 113.
[140] Jules Formigé. "L'Amphithéâtre d'Arles (suite)" in *Revue Archéologique* 2 (July-December 1964):143.

entrance of Gallic amphitheatres, I argue, shows that Roman officials wanted to highlight to the spectators entering the arena that, despite any possible local particularities in the unfolding of the *munus*, this was a purely Roman space. This is an especially marked statement in a provincial setting away from Rome, as this was also a physical representation of the reach of Roman civilization, which had enough influence to bring a Roman institution to foreign contexts. As shall be explored below, this was just the start, as the supremacy of Rome was highlighted in other ways within the arena.

The Elimination of Threats

The arena was an especially good setting for the highlighting of Roman values. It was a context where organised society came into confrontation with the external, un-Roman world. Through this process, Roman identity was represented. Garrett Fagan argues in his study on the social psychology of the crowd at Roman gladiatorial games that the categorization of people between "in group" (The Roman crowd) and "out group" (those fighting and being executed within the arena) was crucial for the diffusion of Roman identity to be efficient. Indeed, this confrontation between the "Roman" and "un-Roman", according to Fagan, was significant in the creation of an "us versus them" mentality which reinforced membership in the crowd and, by extension, Roman society.[141] Through this argument, the author highlights the importance of the arena in the formation of Roman identity and unity. The games were thus a good opportunity to highlight exactly what "being Roman" meant at a specific period. To apply this theory to the games in Rome is one thing, but to do it in the context of provincial games is quite another because another element is brought to the table; this was not a purely Roman crowd. I argue that, in a provincial context, Roman authorities used the games, and more specifically the executions, as a warning to those

[141] See Fagan. *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games*, 121-147.

who behaved in a non-Roman way or were potential threats to the empire's control over the territory. Examples from Lugdunum hint at the possibility that the un-Roman characteristics of those condemned to death were especially represented within the arena. By emphasising exactly what made the condemned un-Roman during their punishment, Roman values were highlighted, and the behaviours to avoid were highlighted.

There are not a lot of practices which show an entity's complete control over a given society more efficiently than public executions. While beast hunts and especially gladiatorial games are what attracted spectators to arenas, the execution of those deemed as undesirable or as threatening the societal order was also part of the program of the *munera*, a program which was homogenised by Augustus during his reign. These public extinguishing of threats, it has been argued in previous research, were used as a definite show of force by Roman authorities.[142] This was true of the unfolding of the games in the metropolis, but a couple of episodes highlighted in literary sources also hint at the games being used in this propagandic way in Gaul as well. What is more, the executions had a widely different tone to them in this non-Roman setting.

The case of Gallic rebellion leader Maricus highlights this component of the *munera* in Gaul. According to historian Tacitus, Maricus, originating from the tribe of the Boii, began plotting a rebellion against the Roman government of Gaul. However, before his plan could come to fruition, he "was taken prisoner [...], later [...] exposed to the beasts [...] [and] executed before the eyes of Vitellius.".[143] According to Kazek, the execution took place at the Lugdunum amphitheatre.[144] This episode showcases the propagandic nature of the Gallic arena. Here, the public execution of Maricus was used in two main ways. First, it served as a physical representation

[142] See Literature review, 5.
[143] Tac. *Hist.* 2.61. Translated by Clifford H. Moore.
[144] Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, Chap. 1 Par. 7.

of Roman power in Gaul. The arena was a place to extinguish threats to Roman order, and Maricus' rebellion was exactly that. By publicly executing him through an official institution, the Roman officials were signalling to the population that *they* were responsible for the squashing of this threat, emphasising their influence on the territory and their willingness (and ability) to "protect" the population from these dangers. Very clearly, however, this execution also served as a warning to all those who were thinking about opposing Roman rule. : a similar fate would be waiting for them when they were caught. This was not a Roman or Italian setting, and thus public executions, as a show of force, very possibly had this kind of threatening *double entendre* that was less present in a purely Roman context.

Tacitus' account, and the language he uses, might also shed light on who came to see these representations in the first century C.E. The author highlights the presence of the "stupid rabble" who, when wild beasts refused to kill Maricus right away, "believed him inviolable".[145] This is an interesting passage, as it hints at a possible alternate use of the Lugdunum amphitheatre at this point of its history. As has been expanded upon earlier, this structure was used as an assembly where Gallic leaders would gather to profess their loyalty to the *princeps* and empire. If we are to trust the archaeological records, the amphitheatre was not restructured to welcome significant quantities of spectators until the early second century C.E.[146] The alleged presence of short-lived emperor Vittelius at the execution sets this episode firmly in 69 C.E., as he was one of the four emperors who contend with each other in the political vacuum following the death of Nero. Tacitus' mention of "common" attendees to Maricus' execution thus might hint at an expanded use of the Lugdunum amphitheatre in the first century, which could have welcomed more people than simply the delegates of Gallic tribes. Since the ceremony linked to the reaffirmation of Gallic

[145] Tac. *Hist.* 2.61.
[146] Chapt. 1, 15

loyalty only took place once a year, it is likely that "ordinary" *munera* took place in the Lugdunum amphitheatre, as highlighted by this episode.

What is more, I argue that Tacitus' account possibly points to the presence of not only "common" spectators, but *Gallic* ones, at arena games. Maricus, according to the author, styled himself as an "authority of heaven [...] liberator of the Gallic provinces ".[147] Tacitus highlights that some of the spectators believed the leader's divine origin due to their call for Maricus' invulnerability in the face of disinterested beasts. This is significant, because it points to the eventuality that Gallic spectators who saw Maricus as a divine leader were present at the games. Tacitus' description of the spectators as "stupid" might hint at their barbarity in a Roman context, but it is also possible that this was just a derogatory comment aimed at the "commons". Regardless, the presence of Gallic spectators at the games was always very likely, as the indigenous populations were not pushed away from their territory when the Romans took over, but it is still significant that literary sources possibly support this assertion. More importantly in the context of this argument, the purpose of the games as a warning to possible insurgents becomes extremely significant here. By brutally executing the "invulnerable" Maricus in front of some of his supporters, the Roman authorities sent them an important message; authorities were powerful enough to squash down any rebellion in Gaul, and insurgents would be executed without fail.

The presence of Vitellius at this execution is also significant. Given that the figure of the emperor was a physical representation of Roman power, it is possible that his presence at the execution of a popular dissident was meant as a further representation of Rome's all-encompassing power over Gallic society. Given that, as is the argument of this chapter, one of the main purposes of *munera* was propaganda, this dimension to Vitellius' appearance in Gaul would not be

[147] Tac. *Hist.* 2.61.

surprising. Even though his rule as emperor was very short lived and in the context of a very tumultuous period for Roman politics he is not described as a usurper by Tacitus. Although the author highlights that "his passion for elaborate banquets was shameful and insatiate"[148] he does not seem to challenge the ruler's legitimacy as emperor. In fact, it is highlighted that the Roman senate "voted for Vitellius all the honours that had been devised during the long reigns of other emperors".[149] He was thus the rightful representative of Roman power, and would have presumably been presented as such to the Gallic crowds on the day of Maricus' execution. The presence of a *legitimate* representative of Roman power in Gaul would have reinforced propagandistic ideas regarding the extent of Roman power over the territory.

To continue, like the Marricus episode, the unfolding of Blandina's execution and martyrdom in Lugdunum (177 C.E.) illustrates well the propagandic function of the Gallic games, as well as its purpose as a threat. This episode was recorded by Eusebius of Caesarea, a fourth century Christian author far-removed from this event. Although Eusebius' Christian bias is evident in his description of the event, his account is still useful in shedding light on the ways in which Roman authorities used the representations in the arena to emphasise "Roman" values. Eusebius states that Blandina was tortured by being " hung on a stake [...] seem[ing] to be hanging in the shape of a cross".[150] Throughout her torment, she was also seemingly "forced to swear by the idols".[151] Blandina eventually died of her wounds.[152] These two passages show the ways in which condemned people could be presented to large crowds, examples of non-Roman behaviour, and thus deserving of the punishment they faced. Here, it is the Christian faith of Blandina that is put

[148] Tac. *Hist.* 2.62.
[149] *Ibid*, 2.55.
[150] Eusebius. *Hist. Eccl*, 5.1. 41. Translated by Kirsopp Lake.
[151] Ibid, 5.1. 53
[152] Ibid, 5.1. 56.

to the forefront of her torture. For one, she is publicly decried as refusing to adhere to "pagan" religious practices, choosing to reaffirm her fate in the Christian god multiple times instead, even when faced with the worse type of public torture.[153] What is more, if we are to believe Eusebius, the torture itself "mocked" the martyr's faith as she was tied to a stake which resembled a Christian cross. Clearly, Blandina's religion is identified as the reason for her condemnation.

At this point in Roman history, monotheistic religions such as Christianity were seen as un-Roman, because, for one, they did not allow for the acceptance of the divine nature of the *princeps*, which was a crime in itself.[154]Arguably more important than that, though, is the fact that Christians were considered a threat to the established Roman order and society. Indeed, as Futrell highlights, the "traditional" Roman set of religious belief was based on orthopraxy, and so, as long as one did the rituals that they were expected to and honoured the gods in the agreed-upon way, society was safe of the divinities' wrath. The monotheistic Christians who, even if part of Roman society, did not want to incorporate "pagan" gods in their religious practices, were therefore seen as intense threats to the Roman way of life. Their persecution and subsequent execution were thus "warranted".[155] Following this logic, the identification of Blandina's faith as the reason for her torture and eventual execution is not surprising. It depicted her not only as "un-Roman", but as a threat which had to be extinguished for the good of society. What is more, the clarity of her depiction as an "other", and the brutality of her execution certainly served, like in the case of the Maricus episode, as a warning to those who would follow in her footsteps.[156] It is also possible

[153] One simply cannot ignore the Christian nature of Eusebius' text here. The author might have also exaggerated or even invented this scene to show the extent of Blandina's faith and her resilience (and through it, Christianity's) in the face of Roman persecution and torture.
[154] Golvin and Christian Landes. *Amphithéâtres et Gladiateurs*, 93.
[155] Futrell, *The Roman Games: Historical Sources in Translation*, 162.
[156] Eusebius states that "[n]ever before [...] had a woman suffered so much and so long." (*Hist. Eccl*, 5.56). Although this is surely an exaggeration on the part of the author, the brutality of the execution is highlighted by its description.

that in a provincial setting, these types of demonstration would be done to reaffirm the supremacy of Roman society, its values, and its way of life. While one cannot know if the representations of Roman values and power through dramatic executions *actually* "romanised" the spectators, we see through these two episodes that there was a clear attempt to put these concepts on the forefront of the event by the Roman state.

The games in Gaul were meant as a symbolic confrontation between the established social order and the forces that threatened it. The location of amphitheatres in the settlements might have reinforced this idea. While a lot of amphitheatres were built within the boundaries of urban centres, they were often at their edges, close to the walls of the cities. This, as Goodman asserts, could have helped reinforce a certain "us versus them" mentality. The amphitheatres were built "at the point where [the enclosed urban settlement] confronted the external world", a confrontation which was a purpose of the games in itself.[157] Interestingly, this theory can be applied to the Gallic settlements which are of interest to this study. According to recreations of the layout of the ancient cities of Arelate and Nemausus, both of their amphitheatres were at the edge of the settlements, close to their protective walls.[158] This might have been one more way to represent the confrontation between the established order and the numerous things that threatened it. I have already explored the possibilities for traitorous Gauls. Another possibility would be the threat of the surrounding "nature", as expressed by wild animals. The importance of *venationes* as propagandic happenings demonstrated the extent of Roman power over the natural world and acted as symbolic elimination of more general threats to the settlement and community. I explore them more specifically in a later section, which will focus solely on the significance of the *venationes* in Gallic society and its *munera*.

[157] Goodman. *The Roman city and its periphery : from Rome to Gaul*, 146
[158] See Teyssier. *Nîmes, la Romaine*, 88.. and Teyssier. *Arles, la Romaine*, 113.

The construction of amphitheatres in these locations might have had a much more practical purpose, however. Penelope G. Goodman argues that amphitheatres were built close to the edge of towns to facilitate their access. Indeed, it is very likely that a lot of people came to see the games from outside the city, given the different colonies' territorial reach.[159] The city of Nemausus, for example, controlled a territory which encompassed ten thousand square kilometres[160] and, according to geographer Strabo, neighboured on more than two dozen smaller settlements by the Augustan period.[161] Both Nemausus and Arelate controlled smaller *oppida* within their own territory, and it is likely that the inhabitants of these secondary settlements would have travelled to the larger cities to conduct business and attend different celebrations.[162] Inscriptions within the amphitheatre of Nemausus point to the possibility that inhabitants of neighbouring settlements would have attended the *munera*. Scores of seats are highlighted as being reserved for the *nautis* conducting business on different neighbouring rivers, such as the Rhône and the Saône.[163] While anecdotal, this shows that people did come from neighbouring settlements to attend the games. During the Augustan period, roads connecting Nemausus to secondary settlements were constructed. These infrastructures surely greatly simplified the travel from one *oppida* to the other. People could come to Nemausus, either to conduct business, or fulfil religious obligations, or to possibly attend the *munera* in their mother city's large amphitheatre.[164]

The size of the amphitheatre also hints at the fact that people from the outside of Nemausus would attend the *munera*. The population of the city of Nemausus at the turn of the second century

[159] Goodman. *The Roman city and its periphery,* 144-46.
[160] Teyssier. *Nîmes, la Romaine,* 79.
[161] Strabo. *Geo*. IV, 1.
[162] Teyssier. *Nîmes, la Romaine,* 83-84.
[163] *CIL XII,* 3316.
[164] Teyssier. *Nîmes, la Romaine,* 84.

has been estimated to have been 17 491.[165] The nearly twenty-four thousand seats in the arena could not have been completely occupied if the whole city had attended the games. Why, then, was such a big amphitheatre built, considering the extremely large expenses which necessitated its construction?[166] The presence of at least some non-Nîmois people at the games has already been established through inscriptions above, and this possibly hints at a larger trend. I theorise that the amphitheatre was erected with the knowledge that people would make the trip from neighbouring settlements to watch the games in Nemausus. According to Jules Formigé, this is also true of other large settlements like Arelate.[167] Therefore, the concomitant effects of these games would have stretched beyond the single town alone, encouraging the attendance of nearby communities, not different from the coordination of small town amphitheatres (like Pompeii for instance) in Italy, closer to Rome. This catchment to provide entertainment to a greater, even if extra-urban population, would have only amplified the reach of Roman propaganda in this region.

Munera As Highlighting the importance of Virtus Romana

While the *munera* emphasised Rome's relationship with the "un-Roman", it also highlighted the qualities that were to be emulated if one was to succeed under Roman order. The idea of *virtus* is especially important here. The word can be translated as "manliness", as its etymology is linked to the word describing a man, *vir*. More precisely, it is "the ideal behavio[u]r of a man".[168] This was an extremely important concept in Rome, to the degree that the personification of *virtus* was offered a state-cult in Rome as of the third century BCE, a cult which

[165] Dominique Lacroix. "Paroisses et Communes de France: Gard." *in Dictionnaire d'histoire administrative et démographique.* (Presses du CNRS,1986), 288.
[166] See Chapter 1.
[167] Formigé. "L'Amphithéâtre d'Arles (suite et fin, 3e série)", 10-11.
[168] Myles McDonnell. *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.2.

was only reinforced by Augustan religious reforms at the outset of the Common Era.[169] According to orator Cicero, the ideal that is meant by *virtus* often materialised through martial abilities. He states that a man who exhibits *virtus* feels "great scorn for both death and pain",[170] citing those participating in gladiatorial combats as being embodiments of the quality.[171]Roman soldiers are even said to have emulated gladiators' fighting techniques.[172]Gladiatorial games and *venationes* were linked to the celebration of martial values in Gallic society, and the gladiators were the arena's legionnaires.[173] During their contests, gladiators performed the martial qualities which had been instrumental in Rome's ascent to superpower status within the Mediterranean basin.[174] Thus, the diffusion of these qualities was crucial to the perpetuation of the empire. I argue, based on evidence from the gladiatorial tombstones found in Nemausus, that the games in Gaul were very used to highlight the importance of *virtus* within a Roman-controlled society.

What jumps out immediately from this group of funerary steles is the information that seems to be prioritised. The name of the gladiators is not engraved first, their gladiatorial armature is. To name only a few, Columbus Serenianus' career as a murmillo is highlighted by the letters MVR,[175]and Aptus' armature is identified by the letters TR (thraex).[176] This prioritisation of the gladiators' armature over anything else is found on the majority of the fourteen steles excavated in this area.[177] The individuals' identities as gladiators were extremely important for them or to those who dedicated these funerary monuments, more important than even their names. More than

[169] McDonnell. *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic.* 90.
[170] Cic. *Tusc*. 2.43.
[171] *Ibid*, 4.64.
[172] Amm. Marc. *Res Gestae.*16.12.49.
[173] Kazek, *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, 277.
[174] See Literature review, 6. Hopkins. *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History,* 29.
[175] *CIL XII,* 3325. **MVR** COLVMBUS SERENIANUS XXV NAT AEDVS HIC ADQVIESCIT SPERATA CONIVNX.
[176]*CIL XII,*3329. **TR** APTVS. NAT ALEXKSAND ANVS XXXVII OPTATA COIVX DE SVO
[177] See Valerie M. Hope. "Negotiating Identity and Status: The Gladiators of Roman Nîmes.",179-195.

that, it was seemingly important for these individuals to highlight their link to martial values and through it, *virtus romana*. Another possibility here is that the majority of these people were slaves and thus defined by their identity as gladiators. Regardless, the identification of the deceased individuals as gladiators before anything else is significant in highlighting the very important link between the games and martial values. The prevalence of this emphasis put on the deceased's occupation is also highlighted through the epitaphs of some Nîmois *seviri augustales*. Their link to the imperial office of the *augustales* is also the first piece of information found on the stelae.[178] It was common practice for Roman citizens to heavily emphasise the occupation of the deceased on funerary epitaphs.[179] Both gladiators and *seviri augustales* took up Roman commemorative customs in the organisation of language on their tombstones. For gladiators, it is their martial qualities that take precedence.

The games' purpose in communicating to their audiences that *virtus* was a behaviour to emulate is shown through the information found on the rest of the engraved steles. Indeed, not only are the individuals' armatures engraved on the monuments, but a summary of their careers is also highlighted. From them, we know that Faustus, a slave turned gladiator from Arabia, won thirty-seven combats before gaining his freedom during the games.[180] Another, the Greek Berryllus, supposedly had to succeed twenty times before he received his freedom.[181] The fact that these gladiators publicly received their freedom because of their success in the arena is significant. In a Roman context, freedom would only have been given to enslaved individuals who had

[178] Hope. "Negotiating Identity and Status: The Gladiators of Roman *Nîme*s", 189; See *CIL XII*, 3251. VIR AVG C MARCVS PHILOLOGVS.
[179] For more information on Roman commemoration of the dead, **s**ee Barbara Borg. *Roman tombs and the art of commemoration : contextual approaches to funerary customs in the second century CE.* (Cambridge ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2019.)
[180] *CIL XII,* 3324. "**MVNER C POMP MART ESSE LIB FAVSTUS** XXXVII N. ARABUS"
[181] *CIL XII,* 3323. **BERYLLVS ESSE LIB**.XX NAT GRAECVS ANN XXV NOMAS CONIVNX VIR B MER

deserved it through hard work and exemplary behaviour.[182] Thus, through this public manumission of gladiators, authorities would signal to the public that the now ex-slave had acted in a way (i.e. with *virtus*) that deserved to be rewarded. Public ceremonies of manumission are well attested in Greco-Roman societies. For example, the Athenians of the Classical period often performed them before theatrical representations. More importantly in our context, there is precedence for gladiators and other enslaved entertainers being freed during shows. Hopkins highlights that emperors did sometimes free gladiators when the crowds requested it through applause.[183]This would only happen once the owner of the slave had agreed.[184] In our Gallic case, it is thus possible (if Roman customs were followed) that Caius Pompeius Martialis, the *munerarius* who freed Faustus, did so at the behest of the gladiator's (unknown) owner. The elite owner of Faustus would thus have agreed to make the gladiator's gain of freedom a spectacle in itself. We do not know how prevalent this would have been in Gaul. The popularity of the process seems to be emphasised by Marcus Aurelius' decision to make it illegal during his reign. Keith Hokpins however hypothesises that, away from Rome, manumission during public shows continued more or less unimpeded.[185]With this in mind, I argue that Gallo-Roman authorities manumitted gladiators in a public setting to show to spectators that the perfect emulation of *virtus romana* exhibited was to be celebrated and, more importantly, rewarded. By doing this, the importance of martial values within Roman-controlled territories was impressed upon the audience of the *munera*. The successful gladiators' celebrity status could have the same effect. While most of Gaul's gladiators were probably servile in origin,[186] Imbert alludes to the possibility that free men could indeed

[182] Peter Hunt. *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery*. (Newark: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 120.
[183] Hopkins. *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History,* 24.
[184] Cass. Dio. 57.11; 69.16.
[185] Hopkins. *Death and Renewal: Sociological Studies in Roman History,* 24.
[186] Tac. *Ann.*3.43.

choose to be gladiators, attracted by the promise of riches and fortune (however short-lived).[187] This possibly hints at the success of the Roman propagandistic apparatus. By publicly rewarding gladiators and showering them with fame, the organiser of games could in fact encourage the emulation of crucial Roman values such as *virtus*.

The funerary steles also highlight an important paradox linked to gladiators as individuals. Valerie Hope, who has studied the "gladiatorial cemetery" of Nemausus in much detail, argues that the grouping of the gladiator's gravesites as well as the cemetery's isolation from not only the rest of the "normal" graves but from the city of Nemausus itself is significant. Indeed, according to the author, it points to their social standing (or lack thereof) as gladiators. As emphasised earlier, gladiators in Rome were seen as being riddled with *infamia*, which prevented them from being included in Roman society.[188] However, this was not a uniform practice across all the Roman empire, as Greek gladiators were seemingly not subjected to the same segregation.[189]

Following Hope's argument, however, it is likely that Gallic gladiators were in fact considered to be carriers of *infamia*, even in death. The paradoxical thing here is that gladiators could very much gain celebrity-status if they were successful in the arena. This is exemplified in Gaul by the multiple allusions to the gladiator Petraites (mentioned most famously in Petronius's *Satyricon*[190]) in local inscriptions.[191] Gladiators were the lowest of the low, but there is a clear indication that those who were successful could become revered. When they were on the arena floor, inside this purely Roman setting and emulating crucial Roman values, they could be revered.

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[187] Imbert. *Les Spectacles à Nîmes et en Gaule Romaine:Ier et IIième siècle après Jésus-Christ,* 36.
[188] See Literature review, 11.
[189] See Literature review, 16.
[190] Petr. *Sat*. 52.
[191] AÉ. Christian Landes, Jocelyne Nélis-Clement and Anne Hochuli-Gysel. 2001, 329, inscription 885. "Spiculus Columb[us] Petrait[es]."; AÉ. Bénédicte Grosjean and Jocelyne Nélis-Clement. 2001, 336, inscription 905. " Gamus Calamus Tetraites Spiculus." Fallen gladiator. According to the authors of the notice, this name is a variant of the name Petraite.

Outside of this setting, if we follow Hope' argument and the Roman model, they no longer represented these distinctly Roman characters and were relegated to the very bottom of the social ladder. Their only trait worthy of praise was their emulation of Roman qualities like *virtus*. They served a very important purpose for Roman authorities; if not much more, gladiators were vessels of propaganda for the games' organisers. The rewarding of those who exhibited Roman martial values to perfection (and possibly the occasional execution of those who did not) symbolically showed to Gallic spectators that the emulation of Roman values could lead to their own advancement within Gallo-Roman society.

It would be unfair to argue that the Gauls *needed* the Romans to highlight for them the importance of martial abilities; as early as in the first century B.C.E, Caesar hints at the important place of war within Gallic society.[192] Throughout his narrative of his conquest of the territory, the famous general continuous alludes to Gallic warriors' martial skill and courage in the face of danger.[193] Interestingly, these are the exact qualities which are praised in gladiators. One cannot use Julius Caesar's account alone in asserting that the Gauls were a warlike people. Other historical events and narratives though, seem to confirm this. The city of Rome itself is said to have been sacked and taken by Gallic invaders in 390 B.C.E.[194] This episode, while probably having been exaggerated by the likes of Livy, clearly left the Romans traumatised. This trauma would only retract once the Gauls were brought into the Roman fold by Julius Caesar in the first century B.C.E.[195] Potter argues that it manifests itself through the creation of a "Gallic" type of gladiator during the republican period, once again highlighting these peoples' fearsome warlike

[192] Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, 1. 17-18.
[193] *Ibid*, 4.33; 2.10.
[194] For the narrative of this episode, see Liv. *Ab Urbe Condita*, 6.32-55.
[195] Jeremy Armstrong. *Early Roman Warfare : From the Regal Period to the First Punic War* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Publishing: 2016), 89-90.

tendencies.[196] The Gauls were famously engaged in armed conflict with the Romans for many years before their different territories were finally brought within the Roman fold over the course of the second and first centuries B.C.E.. What is more, Celtic warriors supposedly very much favoured the practice of single combat.[197] This type of combat resembles the one practised by gladiators in the arena. This likely entrenchment of martial values in Gaul is one of the many reasons which explain the popularity of the institution in this part of the Roman sphere of influence. The Gauls saw their own values and practices in this violent enactment of Roman values. Therefore, one cannot argue that the *munera* brought a whole new value set to the Gallic provinces. In fact, the *munera* possibly was popular especially *because* these were not unknown values. However, it is clear that the martial ability of gladiators and *venatores* (as will be highlighted in Chapter 3) were still celebrated. Many elements of the "gladiator cemetery" found on the outskirts of the city of Nemausus highlight not only emphasise the gladiators' martial abilities, but also the rewards, however meagre, which their emulation of *virtus* brought for them.

It is very difficult to assert whether the *munera* "romanized" their Gallic spectators, as it is near-impossible to "measure" ancient identities, even with the help of material remains. What has been asserted here, however, is that the Gallic arena games were used by authorities as a means to the diffusion of Roman values and were thus extremely propagandistic in nature. The events acted as a reminder of Roman control and power, while the physical layout of the arena and its placement at the edge of large Gallic cities could symbolically represent the confrontation between the urban (and markedly Roman) "civilised" space, and the dangerous and barbarous exterior. Linked to this,

[196] Potter. *The Victor's Crown : A History of Ancient Sport from Homer to Byzantium*, 126. According to Kazek (243), the "Gallic" gladiatorial panoply disappears from the record sometime in the first century C.E. This means that the Gauls would not have seen "one of their own" lose a match in the arena, which, as in Rome, could have been problematic.

[197] Philip Freeman. *The Philosopher and the Druids: A Journey Among the Ancient Celts (*New York : Simon & Schuster Publishing, 2006), 149.

the Gallic arena, through executions, moreover served as a setting meant for the symbolic and dramatised elimination of threats. The clear highlighting of the condemned as non-Romans worked both as a representation of what being Roman actually entailed, and as a warning to those who would dare challenge Roman control. Gladiators themselves, even if riddled with *infamia*, also furthered the diffusion of Roman values, as part of a Roman-curated and approved spectacle. Their martial prowess, and its public rewarding, symbolically highlighted the importance of martial values within Roman society. The *munera* were events where tens of thousands of people were massed within a single space. It is also likely that spectators came from neighbouring settlements to see the gladiators and *venatores* in action. Disguised as entertainment, spectacles were the perfect setting for the efficient communication of important propagandic messages to a large number of Gallo-Romans. When it came to methods of "romanisation", the elites were sent to Roman families to learn proper Roman ways, and the common people, to the amphitheatre.

An important question remains. Who decided that the games were to act as a representation of Roman values? The games' organisers were often local elites and, on the surface, emphasising Roman values would not necessarily have been useful to them. However, based on Greg Woolf's theory of the *humanitas*, engaging with and furthering Roman values could actually benefit local elites in their quest to gain (and retain) advantageous social positions.[198] It is thus possible that elites framed the *munera* in these ways to show that they did indeed engage with Roman culture, and acknowledged its primacy. In this way, one could say they were "romanised" to some degree. In a Gallic context, the emphasis put on martial values by the *munera* (through the public manumission of gladiators, for example), makes me believe that at least some dimensions of the games were resultant of imperial policy. The Gallo-Romans did not *need* martial values to be

[198] Woolf. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul,* 239; 63; 170.

emphasised as much as it was through the *munera*; these qualities were intrinsic parts of their pre-Roman identities! One can thus assert that some parts of the *munera* might not have been dependent on local context. However, to find a real answer to this question, one would have to examine the patterns in other provincial contexts. In Gaul, however, one thing is clear: there was a real intent at provincial "romanisation" through the presentation of *munera*. Due to the fact that this was done in the form of a very popular form of entertainment, did the spectators even realise they were being influenced?

CHAPTER 3

Animals in the Gallic Arena: The Presence and Dual Nature of Venationes Within a Provincial Setting

While gladiatorial games are often the first things that come to mind when one thinks of the Roman *munus*, animals were also crucial to the unfolding of a successful day at the arena. In Rome, they were often an integral part of the executions of the *noxii* (plur. of *noxius*, condemned) and were pitted against gladiators, who specialised in fighting them (the *bestiarii*, plur. of *bestiarius)*. Most famously, however, the animal hunts (*venationes*), were very important in the unfolding of the games, and identified as so by Augustus' homogenization of the games during his long reign as Rome's first *princeps*.[199] Many literary accounts highlight the effort put into the presentation of animals in the Roman arena. For the grand opening of the Flavian amphitheatre, five thousand wild animals were supposedly slaughtered in a single day.[200] Symbolically linked to the territorial expansion of Rome, exotic animals were without a doubt presented.[201] To name a few, we hear of big cats like lions and panthers, as well as crocodiles, hippopotami, rhinoceri, and even elephants and giraffes.[202] Locally sourced or tamed animals were also part of these

[199] Alison Futrell. *The Roman Games: A Source Book.* (Blackwell Publishing: Malden;Oxford, 2006), 84.
[200] Suet. *Tit*. 7. This number is likely an exaggeration, but still points to the lavishness and scale of these shows.
[201] Futrell. *The Roman Games: A Source Book*, 7.
[202] Cic. *Ad.Fam*. 7.1.; Plin. *H.N*. 8.7.20. Cass. Dio. 51.22.; Suet. *Jul*. 39. Mart. *Epi*. Lib. Spect. 11;20;21;26.

spectacles.[203] Large scale venationes required a copious amount of organisation. Hunting parties travelled to the edges of the empire to procure rare animals,[204]and structures such as the Flavian amphitheatre had integrated structures which would permit the presentation of dangerous animals without endangering the spectators close to the sands of the arena.[205] After all, they were often the elites of the population.[206] The great expenses which came with the organisation of *venationes* in Rome can be linked to the popularity of the event in the metropolis. What about the Roman provincial context? Due to the abundance of art relating to the events which included animals in Gaul, it is possible to explore their involvement in the Gallic iteration of the *munera*.

As highlighted throughout the previous sections, gladiatorial combats have been well attested in Gaul. There was never really any doubt that the amphitheatres of this set of provinces were used for gladiatorial combats, like they were in Rome and throughout the empire. After all, the purpose of the territory's arenas as venues for violent combat between warriors is made extremely explicit by the artwork surrounding it. One of the facades of the Nemausus amphitheatre is decorated with a scene depicting two gladiators engaged in a fight, one of them defeated and cowering before his approaching foe. On the contrary, there have been contradicting scholarly opinions concerning whether animals, and especially *venationes*, were actually an integral part of the Gallic *munus*. For example, David Lee Bomgardner asserts that there is not enough evidence to establish the unfolding of beast hunts in Gallic amphitheatres. He points out that the structures of Arelate and Nemausus were not built to welcome large quantities of animals in the context of *venationes*. According to the author, the *venationes* were mostly only popular in other regions of

[203] Calpurnius, *Eclogues*, 7.24.
[204] See Michael Mackinnon. "Supplying Exotic Animals for the Roman Amphitheatre Games: New Reconstructions Combining Archaeological, Ancient Textual, Historical and Ethnographic Data." In *Mouseion: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada* 6, no 2 (2006): 137-151.
[205] David Lee Bomgardner. *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 115.
[206] See Chapter 1.

the Roman empire, such as North Africa and the Near East.[207] The veracity of Bomgardner's argument regarding Gallic structures lack of structures permitting larger-scale beast-hunts is likely. However, the total absence of this event in Gaul is less so. Based on the amphitheatres' archaeological records and inscriptions, as well as Gallic artwork, I argue that not only did *venationes* take place within the important venues of Narbonensis, but they were also extremely significant for both the Gallo-Roman elites and to the indigenous population. The Gallic *venationes,* were events where the duality of Gallo-Roman society was reaffirmed. The territory was now controlled by Rome, and it was important, especially for elites, to gesture to this, but the Gallic origins of a significant part of the population, and thus of the games' spectators was also highlighted during the events. The unfolding and structure of *venationes* gestured towards Roman values and power, while the actual hunts were a reminder of the general population's roots.

Establishing the Unfolding of Venationes in Gaul

To start with, one must establish the presence of animals in general within the Gallic *munera*. It is important to highlight that, as of the Augustan period, the structure of the *munus* was standardised. A day at the arena included *venationes* in the morning, the less popular executions during midday, and the main event, gladiatorial games, in the afternoon.[208]While it is difficult to know whether this formula was applied without fault throughout the empire, it is possible that the provincial games, heavily tied to the imperial office (especially from the Domitianic period onwards[209]) had to present *venationes* to fall in line with the structure put forth by Augustus, no matter their scale.

[207] Bomgardner. *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre,*115.
[208] Jean Claude Golvin and Christian Landes. *Amphithéâtres et Gladiateurs.* (Presses du CNRS, 1990), 75.
[209] See Literature review, 3.

Arelate

There exists, however, more concrete evidence of the *venatio*'s presence in Narbonensis. The remains of the territory's amphitheatres, in many ways, hint at the possibility that *venationes* did indeed take place within the arenas. The most straightforward piece of evidence supporting this assertion is the dedicatory inscription of the Arlesian amphitheatre. As has been explored earlier, this text, engraved on the podium of the structure, honours Caius Junius Priscus for his sizable donation which helped finance the building of some of the amphitheatre's structural components. This text is not only significant in emphasising the importance of euergetism for the *munera* to function adequately within provincial settings.[210] Indeed, inscribed on the podium of the structure, it also highlights that Priscus financed the presentation of a *venatio* within the amphitheatre.[211] One must account for the possibility that this *very* public inscription was merely a piece of propaganda meant to show the amphitheatre's donator in a positive light. However, the public nature of the dedication also means that it could also be easily proven as false by common people and other elites alike. Therefore, one can argue based on this piece of evidence that *at least* one *venatio* was presented in the Arlesian amphitheatre. The prevalence of the *venationes* in Arelate is also supported by the excavation of multiple boar tusks within the sands of the arena. Jules Formigé, who has worked extensively on the Arlesian amphitheatre and its excavation thus hypotheses that they were once hunted there in the context of *venationes*.[212] As shall be expanded upon later, it is very likely that boars were heavily used in the context of Gallic beast hunts.

[210] See Chapt 1.
[211] Émile Espérandieu. *Inscriptions Latines de Gaule Narbonnaise*, 25, entry #109.
[212] Jules Formigé. "L'Amphithéâtre d'Arles (suite et fin, 3e série)" Revue Archéologique 1 (January-June 1965): 12.

Lugdunum

The evidence supporting the presentation of *venationes* in Gallic amphitheatres outside Arelate leaves more space for interpretation; the Arlesian inscription supporting the presentation of *venatio* is one of a kind. That does not mean, however, that *venationes* did not take place within the other Gallic arenas. Tacitus and Eusebius' account of Maricus and Blandina' executions, respectively, analysed at length in the previous chapter, might hint at the fact that beast hunts could be presented within the amphitheatre of the Three Gauls. According to the authors' accounts, both the Gallic leader and the Christian martyr were meant to be exposed to *damnationes ad bestias* (simply put, execution by beasts). Blandina supposedly died from the wounds inflicted to her by a bull, and Maricus was executed in a more traditional way when the animals sent to maul him did not accomplish their task.[213] While they do not concern *venationes*, these accounts seem to support the assertion that entertainment involving wild animals could be presented to the Gallic crowds, and thus one could presume that beast hunts were indeed put together in Lugdunum.

There are a few factors which could potentially undermine the veracity of this hypothesis. First of all, a *damnatio ad bestias* is logistically different than a *venatio*. The fighting surface of the arena at Lugdunum (fourty-seven by twenty-nine metres) is smaller than that of Arelate (approximately sixty-nine by thirty-nine metres) and Nemausus (sixty-nine by thirty-eight metres).[214] It is possible that the smaller scale of the Lugdunum amphitheatre allowed the authorities to present animals in the context of executions, but less so when it came to *venationes*.

[213] See chapter 2.

[214] Audin and Leglay. "L'amphithéâtre des Trois Gaules à Lyon. Nouvelles campagnes de fouilles (1971-1972, 1976-1978)", 98.

Their goal was to recreate real-life hunting scenarios within the confined space of the arena,[215] and it could have been very difficult to do this in an arena on the smaller side.

More importantly, though, one must acknowledge the limitations of the written sources. Both Tacitus and Eusebius are writing decades after the events they describe took place, so could obviously be mistaken in their account. Also worth mentioning is the possible geographical bias held by the authors. Tacitus writes from a Roman perspective, and Eusebius from a North-African and Middle-Eastern one. According to Bomgardner, entertainment involving animals, including *venationes* and *damnationem ad bestias*, was extremely prevalent and popular in both these settings.[216] Thus, it is possible that the authors applied their own experience of criminal executions within the arena to the context of Gaul. Eusebius' description of a bull's involvement in the execution might point to the authentic description of the account, as this animal is extremely prevalently depicted in artistic illustrations of scenes relating to the *venatio*[217] and *damnatio ad bestias*[218] found in Gallia Narbonensis. The possible discrepancy between the Gallic depictions of the *venatio* and their actual unfolding will be the subject of a later section of this chapter. Literary sources for Gallic arena games are far from perfect, and their biases might lead one to erroneous conclusions regarding the way in which the events were presented. The amphitheatre in Lugdunum might have welcomed animals in the context of executions. Even if the authors accurately depict these episodes of brutal executions, one cannot ignore the possibility that while *damnationes ad bestias* did take place in Lugdunum, *venationes* did not. It comes down to whether efforts were

[215] Shelby Brown."Death as Decoration: Scenes from the Arena on Roman Domestic Mosaics" in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed. Amy Richlin (New York : Oxford University Press, 1992), 184.
[216]Bomgardner. *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 115.
[217] Kévin-Alexandre Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, figures 6; S31;S32;S34;S36;S37.
[218] *Ibid*, figure S54.

made to amplify the entertainment. No evidence of this kind of amplification comes down to us in the case of Lugdunum.

Nemausus

Contrary to the two sites discussed above, there are neither archaeological nor written records which clearly highlight the unfolding of *venationes* in Nemausus. However, the artwork in the area, which often depicts scenes related to hunts, mythical and inspired from real life, hints at the possible popularity of this kind of entertainment in this important settlement of Narbonensis. The representation of animals within the Nemausus amphitheatre was also used as a tool which sent symbolic messages to both the spectators and the entertainers who saw them. The most famous of these representations are the bull heads which adorn the north entrance of the city's amphitheatre. Their exact meaning is still debated, and rendered even more confusing by the appearance of the same motif on the "Porte d'Auguste", not far away from the arena.[219] The association of the bull with the city of Nemausus is interesting, because it has long been believed that the crocodile, not the bull, was the emblematic animal of the city.[220] While the presence of carved bulls on the amphitheatre far from confirms the unfolding of *venationes* within it, it could still be significant in the context of gladiatorial combats. Indeed, representations and visions of cattle were meant to represent good luck and death.[221] Both components seem to embody the vicissitudes of the arena games. Consequently, I hypothesise that these reliefs were used to highlight the violent nature of the entertainment which the spectators who most likely entered the arena from the northern entrance of the amphitheatre,[222] were about to witness. The iconography of the bull is important here, as it is directly linked to a possible local iteration of the *venatio*.

[219] James C. Anderson. *Roman Architecture in Provence*,166.
[220] *Ibid*, 166.
[221] Kenneth F. Kitchell. *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z*, 36.
[222] Myriam Fincker. "L'amphithéâtre de *Nîmes*. Remarques à propos de sa date, sa place, son image."192.

Indeed, as shall be made clear later, bulls were probably a significant part of Gallic *venationes*, and to have them etched in stone at the entrance of the arena, as in this case, possibly reminded spectators of the local flavour of the games. This potentially reaffirmed to spectators that the arena was not only a Roman space (as emphasised by the Lupa scene highlighted earlier in Chapter 2), but a Gallic one as well. As will be emphasised later, this feeling might have been reinforced by the nature of the *venationes* themselves.

The presence of the symbolic bulls' heads also becomes significant when one considers the possibility that the gladiators themselves saw them before they entered the arena. Even if gladiators did not necessarily die if they lost their respective combats (especially in provincial contexts, where the supply of gladiators was lesser than in the imperial capital, even with the hypothesised presence of a gladiatorial school in Nemausus), the connotations between the violent setting that was the arena and death were presumably marked. The bulls'heads could thus serve as a warning rather than a premonition. For the condemned, it very much served as the latter.

The inauguration of each spectacle was preceded by a *pompa*. This was a ceremonial procession in which took part both the dignitaries in charge of the organisation of the games and those who would provide the entertainment; the gladiators and possibly the *noxii*.[223] According to Bomgardner, the classic Roman *pompa* would have the procession enter the arena from the eastern entrance of the amphitheatre, parade all the way to the western entrance of the major axis, exit the arena and walk to the southern entrance of the minor axis. There, the officials and "entertainers" would separate to prepare for the upcoming show, where they would hold vastly different roles.[224] If we were to follow this route for the *pompa* of Nemausus, the gladiators would not have passed through, or in front of, the northern entrance where the bulls were situated. However, an analysis

[223] Bomgardner. *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 84.
[224] *Ibid*, 84.

of the physical layout of the structure by Myriam Fincker might suggest otherwise. First, it seemed impractical to enter the arena through its southern door, as it was close to the protective walls of the city, while the northern door could be accessed more easily if one came from within the city.[225] The southern doors faced the city's exit, while the northern doors faced the interior of the settlement, making it easier for people to access the arena through the latter. More importantly, however, Fincker highlights that the "door of the bulls" (Figure 1) seems to have been built in the manner of a triumphal arch, like the ones crossed by Roman leaders and their retinue in the context of military triumphs or funerary processions. In this context, the author argues that the official members of the party would have entered the arena from this door. A gallery linked the entrance led directly to the interior of the amphitheatre, and then to their reserved seats.[226] With this in mind, I assert that their public entrance through the "triumphal arch" could have drawn comparisons to great Roman triumphs and would have sent an important political message to the crowd. This process, as many others in the arena, was useful in reaffirming societal hierarchies.

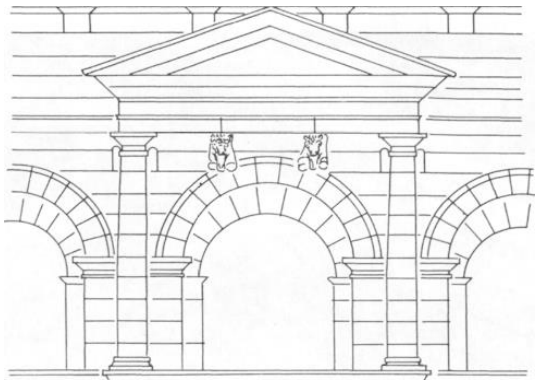


Figure 1. Fincker. "L'amphithéâtre de Nîmes. 199.

The gladiators and *noxii,* given their status as the lowest of the low, would not have been permitted to enter the arena through this "triumphal" gate. However, that does not mean that they would not have been in contact with it. If we are to follow Bomgardner's model of the *pompa*, the

[225] Bomgardner. *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 113.
[226] Myriam Fincker. "L'amphithéâtre de Nîmes. Remarques à propos de sa date, sa place, son image.", 203. Image originally engraved by A. Carrié, CRA, CNRS, Valbonne. Available online on *Persée* database.

gladiators and *noxii* would only have been separated from the governmental officials once it was time to enter the arena. Thus, if the latter group did indeed enter the amphitheatre through the "door of the bull", the decorative reliefs would have been well in view of the former before they separated. Again, the bull had a dual meaning, representing the contrasting omens of good luck and death. I argue that the placement of these sculpted animals well in view at the entrance of the amphitheatre was meant to elicit both fear and self-assurance in the combatants. It is possible that drawing out these strong emotions within the combatants would encourage them to fight better, thus providing the audience with a better show, which the political elite would ultimately profit through gains in popularity. In this way, even if live animals were not physically present in the arena, they were still significant in the form of representations.

The bulls' heads of Nîmes were used to highlight to the audience what they could expect in the arena. It is also possible that they elicited certain emotions relating to the local flavour of the games in those who were about to witness them. What is more, they potentially evoked strong emotions in the gladiators and condemned to death who would get a good look at the reliefs mere minutes before they went into the depths of the arena to prepare for the brutal entertainment that would follow. This provided a better show for the Gallic spectators and, in turn, political points for the shows' *editores*. What is more, the connection of the amphitheatre with the *venatio* is reinforced through this artwork. Significantly, bulls were also seemingly a crucial part of the Gallic *venatio.* If this type of entertainment did indeed happen in the Nîmois context, this would add a layer of explanation to the presence of this type of iconography in the amphitheatre.

One thing which might hint at the possibility that *venatio*, at least on a small scale, happened at Nemausus is the prevalence of the theme of the hunt within the artwork found in the city. Nature, animals, and hunts were very popular motifs in Nîmois art, and one can see through this thematic prevalence that the hunt elicited the passions of the population of the city. A very good example of the significance of hunts (and by extension, the *venatio*) in Nemausus is seen through a nearly complete mosaic found within the city limits in 1950. Surrounded by geometrical designs and small animals, this artwork illustrates a scene with the Greek hero Bellerophon hunting the mythical Chimera (Figure 2). According to Jacques Aymard, more than being a representation of a famous myth, it is intrinsically linked to the imperial *venatio* which often featured animals such as the lion.[227] This connection to the hunt is reinforced by the appearance on the mosaic of small game birds which have been identified as species which were indeed hunted in Narbonensis.[228] The theme of the hunt is also represented in mural paintings found in houses close to the *Augusteum* of the city.[229]

Figure 2. Aymard. "La Mosaïque de Bellérophon à Nîmes", 257.

The popularity of the theme of the hunt in Nîmois artwork by no means guarantees the unfolding of *venationes* or *damnationes ad bestias* within the city's amphitheatre. The depiction of hunts, either real or organised during the *munera*, was a popular motif in the art of the first few centuries C.E.[230] It is indeed possible that the inhabitants of the settlement were engaging in this

[227] Aymard. "La Mosaïque de Bellérophon à Nîmes", 263.
[228] *Ibid*, 266
[229] Sabrié, Sabrié and Piskorz."Les peintures murales de « Villa Roma » à Nîmes, (Gard)", 43.
[230] Dunbabin. *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*., 80.

kind of discourse. However, it might hint at the elite's desire to enter in a dialogue with "true" Roman elites. We know that hunting was a prized pastime for Roman elites for its link with discipline and *virtus*.[231] The importance of hunting as a marker of status might have been transferred to the Gallo-Roman elite. Indeed, even if not as important for subsistence, hunting was still quite popular in Gaul. For example, Kazek highlights that boar hunting within the Gallic territory *gained* popularity during the first two centuries C.E.[232] This time-period coincides with the advent of Roman control in Gaul. It thus is possible that Gallo-Roman elites became well-versed in this Roman practice as a status-affirming one and used it as a way to affirm their engagement with Roman culture. This could lead to political gains.[233] This idea is supported by the presence of artwork thematically linked to the hunt in elite Gallo-Roman households. It is fair to assume that, due to its lavish display, the mosaic of Bellerophon would also have probably been commissioned by a Nîmois elite.

The presentation of *venationes* within Gallic amphitheatres might have been used by the local *munerarii* to highlight the importance of leisure hunting for the elites of Gaul, thus entering in a dialogue with true Roman elites. This possibility might render more likely the unfolding of *venationes* within Gallic settlements, as it would benefit Gallo-Roman elites and portray them as being in touch with Roman culture. Keeping this in mind, it is likely that for the majority of the spectators, this connection was probably lost. However, for the games' organisers, this likely did not matter. This was a dialogue for elites, between elites. In this way, the *venatio* might have helped the Gallic elite to engage with Roman culture in a way that could possibly benefit them.

[231] See J. K. Anderson. *Hunting in the Ancient World*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020), 83-101.
[232] Kazek, *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, chapt. 2, par. 130.
[233] Woolf. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, 239; 63; 170.

The amphitheatre at Nemausus was not built to welcome ferocious animals like the lion symbolised in the mosaic of Bellerophon. The podium of the amphitheatre is too low and would have put the crowd in danger of being attacked by the mistreated and fearful felines.[234] For Aymard, that does not mean that there were no *venationes* at all in Nemausus. Smaller scale contests featuring boars and deer could have still taken place in the Nîmois amphitheatre.[235]It is likely that this was the case in all Gallic amphitheatres. Based on evidence from three important settlements of Gaul, it is conceivable that *venationes* did in fact take place in this region of the empire. Not only that, but they also seem to have been popular among the Gauls. Their significance in a Gallic context is thus worth exploring. While the art representing the *venatio* found in Narbonensis is extremely varied and exotic when it comes to the animals and situations it depicts, the reality of Gallic *venatio* was probably quite different. The disentanglement of the art and the reality of Gallic beast hunts is the subject of the next section.

Discrepancies between Artwork and Reality.

The *venatio* held a significant place within the imagination of the Gallic population. This is made very clear, not only through the analysis of more elite art such as mosaics and paintings, but especially since hunting scenes are very often depicted on more common appliances. The following analysis will draw its data mostly from Kevin-Alexandre Kazek's work, which has amassed hundreds of scenes relating to the *munera* in Gaul. These scenes come down to us in the form of mosaics, but also through *terra sigillata* artefacts such as stamps, lamps and reliefs. The author's work draws its evidence from a large database which can be seen as representative of Gallic representations of the *munera*. One sees different motifs that Gallic art employed in representations of the *venatio*. Beyond this, however, one has a glimpse into the types of animals

[234] Formigé. "L'Amphithéâtre d'Arles (suite et fin, 3e série)", 31.
[235] Aymard. "La Mosaïque de Bellérophon à Nîmes", 266.

which were likely presented to the crowds in the context of the Gallic *munera,* and thus understand the particularly Gallic dimension of this Roman institution.

The lion is heavily featured in Gallic artistic representations of the *venationes*. For one, the link between this feline and the Chimera in the Bellerophon mosaic described above is obvious. Yet, the work does not highlight a scene from the arena, even if there are some significant connotations between this mythical episode and what went on during the *venationes*. The appearance of the lion in artwork is not limited to mythical hunting scenes. The animal is also incorporated in scenes which are clearly meant to represent the organised *venatio.* The struggle between *venator* and lion is depicted in multiple instances on the artwork found in pottery workshops of Narbonensis such as that of La Graufesenque.[236] Faced with the prevalence of these feline representations, one is forced to ask if they were representative of reality. In answering this question, Kazek states that the feline depictions were more representative of the Gallic population's desire for exoticism than a factual representation of what happened within their local arenas.[237] Species like African and Asiatic big cats, and even monkeys,[238] possibly were exceptionally presented in the Gallic games (even though this is unlikely at Nemausus due to the closeness of the *podium* to the arena itself). However, one must see their involvement in arena as the exception rather than the rule.

One of the main goals of the *venationes*, like gladiatorial games, seems to have been propagandic in nature. By presenting exotic animals in the arena, species that the common people would never have seen, Roman authorities showed the extent of Roman power and territorial control.[239]For similar reasons as in the case of gladiatorial games, this could have been especially

[236] See for example, Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, figures S3; S4.
[237] *Ibid*, Chap. 2. par. 92.
[238] *Ibid*, Chap. 2. par. 147.
[239] Futrell. *The Roman Games: A Source Book.* (Blackwell Publishing: Malden;Oxford, 2006),7.

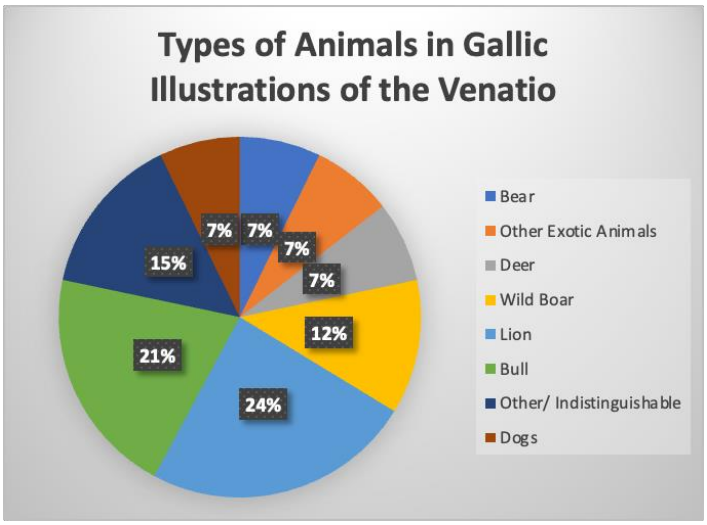
significant in a provincial context, as it would be one more way in which Roman power was physically reaffirmed. But in a Gallic context, the presentation of rare animals for propagandic ends would have been difficult.

Although it is possible that exotic animals such as the lion did *sometimes* appear in the Gallic arenas, the multiple expenses of manpower and resources related to capture might have simply been too much for the local magistrates acting as *editores* to afford and coordinate.[240] The same goes for other more exotic animals such as the rhinoceros, panther and tiger, also depicted in Gallic art.[241] The acquisition of exotic animals with the aim of presenting them at arena games was not an easy process. Specialised teams which included soldiers as well as professional hunters had to be put together. For the capture of more ferocious beasts, local guides had to be hired.[242] As Pliny the Elder emphasises, the capture of animals was done through traps and camouflaged pits.[243] The captured animals then had to be transported for weeks at a time, often both on land and on sea, to then be "stored" away" until they were to be exhibited during the games, often only to die during the proceedings.[244] This was an extremely expensive investment. A mosaic from North Africa highlights that local hunters demanded five hundred to a thousand *denarii* for the capture of a leopard.[245] Bomgardner asserts that due to inflation, during the reign of Diocletian, the cost of a single lion was six hundred thousand sesterces.[246] Needless to say, for provincial magistrates, these were exorbitant demands.[247]For these reasons, the presence of exotic animals during the

[240] For the costs linked to the supply of animals to Roman arenas, see also Bomgardner. *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 211-214.
[241] See Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, respectively figures P71, S10 and P76.
[242] Mackinnon. "Supplying Exotic Animals for the Roman Amphitheatre Games", 143.
[243] Plin. Hist. Nat. 8.5.9; 8.5.24.
[244] Mackinnon. "Supplying Exotic Animals for the Roman Amphitheatre Games", 147-156.
[245] Bomgardner. *The Story of the Roman Amphitheatre*, 139.
[246] *Ibid*,, 211.
[247] Highlighting this, Atia Patterclа's gift to the treasury of the Augustales (Chapter 1) in order for the games to be organised **in perpetuity**, was of three hundred thousand sesterces.

Gallic *munera* is doubtful. It was much easier (and cheaper) to stick with local species. It could have been problematic to capture even local predatory animals, such as wolves and bears.

What *did* the Gallic *venationes* look like? Once again, the answer might lie in artistic depictions of the events. The *venatio* is in many respects exoticised in Gallic art, but the prevalent appearance of animals which could be procured locally is significant in highlighting which animals the events more commonly included. Different species often appear within these artistic representations. First of all, the wild boar is heavily depicted in the context of struggles with the *venatores*.[248] The same is true of the deer.[249] Other than the exotic felines, bears are the only other predatory animals depicted in the artwork, even if less frequently than the other animals pinpointed here.[250] As has been hinted at earlier, the bull was also heavily featured in Gallic artistic representation of the *venationes*. The prevalence of these species in artwork pertaining to the *venatio* is significant, because these are species that would be easily accessible in a Gallic context (Figure 3, to the left, calculated by the author of this study).



We know from Strabo that the wild boar was very present within Gallic territory.[251] For their part, deer were also common to Western Europe, and *reindeer* are hinted at by Varro as

[248]Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, figures S9;S11; S13; S24.
[249] *Ibid*, figures S12;S13;S15;S41.
[250] *Ibid* figures P69; S20.
[251] Strab. Geog. 4.3.

having inhabited Gaul.[252]What is more, Renaud has pointed out that cattle made up at least forty to fifty-six percent of the meat consumed by the inhabitants of the Nîmois territory. This percentage is estimated to have possibly climbed up to eighty-eight percent within rural areas.[253] One thus can assume that domesticated bulls that could serve in the arena were also easily procurable in Narbonensis. Even though there were probably fewer bulls than cows, the males had to be kept around for breeding, and thus could also be used in the arena.[254] Brown bears roamed especially central Europe, and so could also have been encountered by the Gallo-Romans.[255] Due to their presence within Gallic territory, it would not be surprising if these animals 'depiction in art was translated into their actual involvement within local arena games. It is much more likely that these species made up most of the animals which were showcased in the arena, with those originating from territories far away from Gaul as the rare exception.

The high availability of these species in Gaul coupled with their heavy presence within artistic representations of the *venatio* makes them the most likely animals to have become staples of the Gallic *venatio*. This is also corroborated by the fact that these animals probably were presented in the Roman *venationes* themselves. In his *Eclogues,* Roman poet Calpurnius highlights what he saw as a spectator of the games "snow-white hares, [...]horned boars, [...] elk, [...] [and] [b]ulls" within the arena.[256] For one, this highlights that these were the species which were easily accessible in multiple regions of the empire. What is more, it hints at the possibility that the presentation of these animals in Gaul was meant as a conscious imitation of the Roman *venationes*.

[252] Kitchell. *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z,* 44.; Varr. *Ling.* 5.167.
[253] Audrey Renaud. "L'alimentation carnée dans la cité gallo-romaine de Nemausus (France, Gard et Hérault, IIe s. av.-IIe s. ap. J.-C.) : approche territoriale des données archéozoologiques."*Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise* 47 (2014):313.
[254] Kitchell. *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z,*, 36.
[255] *Ibid*,12.
[256] Calp. *Ecl.*,7.24.

Convenience, however, must have played a big role in this. Once again, the presence of local animals in the arena reinforced the Gallic character of these representations. This, as will be emphasised later, very likely contributed to the popularity of this type of entertainment in Gaul. At the same time, it allowed elites to reaffirm their control over Gallic territory.

The Significance of the Venatio in Gallic Society

The use of local animals during the *venationes* was significant, I argue, both for the organisers of the games and the Gallic inhabitants who spectated. It has already been highlighted that within a Roman context, the *venationes* were meant as a symbolic representation of Roman power over nature and of the empire's widespread influence.[257] I argue that, given the animals which were chosen to appear within the Gallic arenas, this propagandistic aspect of the *munera* was also present in Gaul. Presenting the wild animals of the Gallic forests in the enclosed space that was the arena, where they were at the mercy of the *bestiarii*, *venatores*, and *editores*, reaffirmed the total Roman (or at least Gallo Roman elite) control of Gallic territory. What is more, some of these animals were domesticated and, in some instances, partnered up with their handler. We see this kind of situation depicted in one Southern Gallic representation where a lion is illustrated as being coaxed to hunt down a cowering deer.[258] If this is representative of reality, it can also be seen as a thinly veiled attempt at showing the total control which the entertainers (and through them, the games' organisers) had over nature. The display of exotic beasts, if they did happen, certainly showed the influence of the *munerarii*, exactly as it did for the emperors who did the same thing (admittedly on a quite larger scale[259]) in Rome.

[257] See p. 4
[258]Kazek. *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, chapt. 2, par. 121.
[259] Fagan. *The Lure of the Arena: Social Psychology and the Crowd at the Roman Games*, 18.

Also, the display and subsequent hunting (sometimes until death ensued) of dangerous Gallic animals such as the bear and, to some degree, the wild boar, worked in many ways like the execution of criminals. These animals could act as threats to the common people, and by "eliminating" these threats, the *editor* once again highlighted his own power. Their slaughtering, albeit in a controlled environment, Beacham argues, provided the audience with a feeling of safety. It showed, symbolically again, that the games' organisers cared about the common peoples' issues, as they were eliminating a threat or a nuisance to *them*.[260]Strabo's warning about wild boars that "it is dangerous for one unfamiliar with their ways to approach them" might hint at the possibility that they were common enough for one to accidentally run into them.[261] He states the same thing about Gallic wolves.[262] What is more, as highlighted earlier, hares were so common they were seen as a nuisance. The elimination of these animals in the context of a *venatio* would thus send a clear message of control and protection on the part of games' organisers, equating what they did with the elites of Rome who presented public games for much the same reasons.

The specific way in which hunting scenes were portrayed in artwork can also hint at one other propagandistic element of this kind of event. *Venationes* were meant to emphasise *virtus.* Even if it is not depicted in art, it is quite safe to assume that due to its commonality within the territory, the hare was also present during the *venationes*. I argue that the rodent's absence from art could be due to a desire for both heroism and exoticism to be displayed in these scenes.

[260] Beacham,p. 157.
[261] This is consistent with the identification of the wild boar as in invasive species in many regions of the world. See Lilian P. Sales et al. "Niche conservatism and the invasive potential of the wild boar" in *Journal of Animal Ecology* 86, no 5 (September 2017): 1214-1223. The others highlight that this species, due to their high fecundity, can be aggressive, extremely destructive to habitats, including crops, and are carriers of diseases that can be harmful to humans (1215-1216). See also Anneleen Rutten et al. "Agricultural and landscape factors related to increasing wild boar agricultural damage in a highly anthropogenic landscape" in *Wildlife Biology 2020*, no 1 (December 2019): 1-11. In the context of the ancient world, societies relying on localised agriculture would absolutely have seen the wild boar as a threat to their way of life.
[262] Strab. *Geog*. 4.3.

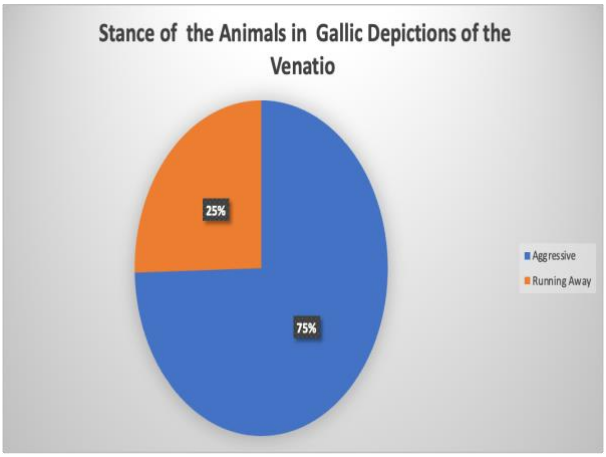
Interestingly, most of the struggles compiled by Kazek depict one *venator* or *bestiarius* against one (or more) clearly hostile animal, not one cowering before the sharp weapons pointed at it. Even the deer, which was often described and depicted as a notoriously timid animal, is often represented as facing the hunters head-on.[263] These factors might hint at the fact that, like gladiatorial games, the *venatio*, and the art attached to it, was heavily linked to the propagation of *virtus*. The men who faced the animals, much like gladiators, risked their lives and exhibited the bravery and martial skills which got them closer to embodying "the ideal behaviour of a man".[264] In this context, the depiction of hare-hunting episodes is not worth commemorating.

This theme is also certainly highlighted in the Bellerophon mosaic of Nemausus, described earlier. In his combat against the Chimera, Bellerophon acts first and foremost as a protector who displays superhuman bravery in the face of danger.[265] Like Bellerophon and other mythical heros, the beast-fighters and hunters made good use of their *virtus* to (symbolically) act as protectors of the common peoples. Just the fact that these scenes were commemorated on so many common objects and mosaics shows that these qualities were deemed worth emulating. If the Gallic *venationes* were indeed yet another propaganda tool for Roman authorities, the way in which the hunting scenes were depicted in artwork, one which emphasised *virtus*, signals that it was an efficient one (Figure 4, p.86.). In these ways, the beast hunts, like the executions and gladiatorial games, had extremely political and propagandistic undertones. In these ways, through the *venatio*, Roman elites not only engaged with Roman practices, but also emphasised Roman values to the spectators. In this way, the Roman sphere of influence within which Gaul existed, and the elites' effort to engage with its ideas, were highlighted. Again, if we are to believe Woolf's view of

[263] Kitchell. *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z,* 46 ; See Kazek, *Gladiateurs et Chasseurs en Gaule*, figures S12;513;S41;S52.
[264]McDonnell. *Roman Manliness: Virtus and the Roman Republic, 2.*
[265] Aymard. "La Mosaïque de Bellérophon à Nîmes",268.

romanisation, the elites' involvement with these Roman ways could benefit them in the long run.[266] This could explain the furthering of Roman values during the *venationes*, as during the *munera*.

Figure 4 (compiled by the author of this study)



Lastly, as much as the *venatio* was a significant propaganda tool for Gallo-Roman elites trying to engage in Roman culture and values, it was also extremely significant to the indigenous locals, as the shows recreated ancestral cultural practices. The *venatio* gestured to the Gallic roots of this now "Roman" territory. The presentation and hunting of local animals was more than simple imitation of Roman practice or borne out of convenience. The link between real-life hunts and the organised ones which took place in the arena has been heavily emphasised in the past. I argue that, in Gaul, this connection is even more crucial due to the clear association of what happened in the arena with Gallic proto-historic and contemporary hunting habits. Miranda Green asserts, based on Celtic iconography originating from central Europe, that wild boars were probably hunted in this territory during the Pre-Roman period, even if not used as a clear means of subsistence. Their possible use as a food source is still highlighted by the author.[267] Wild animals, according to Green, could be hunted sometimes for subsistence, but mostly were for their skin, and for sport.[268] When it comes to Gaul specifically, however, zooarchaeological data from the territory of

[266] Woolf. *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul*, 239; 63; 170.
[267] Miranda J. Green. *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*. (London ; New York : Routledge, 1998), 46-47.
[268] Green, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*, 55. Although these conclusions are useful to shed light on general patterns concerning Celtic habits, they are not precisely linked to the territory which is the subject of this study.

Nemausus highlights that deer were especially hunted *en masse* by proto-historic Gauls as a means of subsistence.[269] Boar remains, according to Patrice Meniel, are rare in Iron Age deposits. However, their significance to La Tène Gauls is highlighted through the prevalence of their iconographical depictions.[270] Boar tusks have also been found serving as hunting trophies, representing the bravery it took to hunt them.[271] Even if they were not hunted often, they held a significant place within Gallic imagination.

The hunting of wild game did not disappear completely in Narbonensis at the onset of the Roman period, as some smaller settlements within the Nîmoise sphere of influence did still hunt deer to feed themselves.[272] Wild boar and especially hares were also hunted as meat sources at the time, but to a lesser extent than during the pre-Roman period.[273] Indeed, with the newfound reliance on domestic animals, hunting became much more of a leisure activity in Gaul.[274] As has been highlighted earlier, wild boar hunting gained in popularity during the time, possibly due to Roman influence.

For their link with Pre-Roman hunting habits and culture, the presentation of these animals during the *venationes* is significant. Hunting was culturally significant in this region of the world, especially before the Roman conquest, but not exclusively so. This particularity certainly brings another dimension to the Gallic *venationes*, and in some ways could explain their popularity, or, at the very least, that of artistic representations of arena beast hunts, within Gallic society. The same animals which were presumably widely hunted and held as meaningful in pre-Roman times

[269] Renaud. "L'alimentation carnée dans la cité gallo-romaine de Nemausus, 310. See also Green *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*, 47-50.
[270] Patrice Méniel. "Porc et sanglier en Gaule septentrionale, entre archéozoologie et imaginaire collectif" in *Munibe Antropologia-Arkeologia* 57 (2005): 468.
[271] Méniel. "Porc et sanglier en Gaule septentrionale, entre archéozoologie et imaginaire collectif", 468.
[272] Renaud. "L'alimentation carnée dans la cité gallo-romaine de Nemausus, 310.
[273] *Ibid*, 311-312.
[274] Renaud. "L'alimentation carnée dans la cité gallo-romaine de Nemausus, 312.

were the ones displayed within the *venatio*. While the stag was indeed widely hunted during La Tène, the presence of the boar in the games acted not so much as a re-enactment of hunting practices, but as a reminder of the animal's significance in pre-Roman imaginary. The hare also was hunted throughout the proto-historical and Roman periods.[275] Whether this was intended or not by the *editores* of the games, the *venationes* could have been seen as an extension of pre-Roman practices. In this way, the purely Roman event became quite a bit Gallic in nature. What is more, these hunting habits were not totally lost, as the animals presented in the arena were still hunted during the Roman period, even if to a lesser extent for most of them. These factors might explain the widespread popularity of this kind of event in this region, a popularity exemplified by the sheer quantity of excavated artwork thematically linked to the *venatio*.

It is possible that some indigenous spectators came to the arena in the hopes of seeing their old habits reenacted. There is no real way to know with certainty how the spectators felt. However, the clear link between the animals which were hunted in Gallic prehistory and those presented during the *munera* and in artwork certainly hints at the possibility of the *venatio* being seen as a continuation of ancestral practices. Of course, there is a very real scenario where the animals presented in the arena were the same as those being hunted because they were the easily accessible ones. However, the low representation rate of predatory animals such as wolves, foxes and bears from the artwork is telling here. If they were present during the events, why not depict them more often, especially in a context where one was to prove their *virtus* by fighting dangerous animals? If we take the artwork compiled by Kazek as representative of the Gallic shows, the inclusion in the *venatio* of animals which were familiar to the Gallo-Romans– the bull, the deer, and the wild boar–- took precedence during the shows. The hare was probably also present during these

[275] Green. *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*, 50. The author argues that the hare was more hunted as a means of subsistence than were the stag and the boar.

representations. These are all animals which were hunted (or held a significant meaning) in pre-Roman times. The Gallic *venationes*, were not merely a representation of local and accessible animals. Through their presentation of particular species, the events established a clear link between the Roman institution and the protohistoric Gallic way of life. The presentation of local animals in the Gallic arena was thus probably more significant to the spectators than that of rare animals could ever be.

Animals held a significant place in the environment of the Gallic arena. While scholars have asserted that *venationes* were rare and unpopular in settlements like Arelate and Nemausus, I have argued quite the opposite. We cannot know with certainty the rate at which these organised hunts were presented during the *munera*, and there is also very limited evidence pertaining to their scale. However, I have argued that animals played a significant role within the institution of the *munera*, through *damnationes ad bestias* and *venationes*, and symbolic representations. While there are doubts concerning the actual unfolding of the events, there are none concerning their popularity in Gallia Narbonensis. This is evidenced by the amount of artwork thematically linked to especially the *venationes* which were found in this region of the Empire. Although there is a clear desire for exoticism, we can trust some of these depictions to accurately represent the contests that took place within the arena. The prevalent depiction of certain local animals might gesture to their presence in real-life *venationes* Thanks to this artwork, one can see that the hunt was significant to both the authorities who organised the shows and the Gallo-Roman population who witnessed them. The presumed beast hunts were a useful tool for elites and *editores*, as it permitted them to show off their own engagement with Roman practices. The *venatio*, structurally, also served as part of an elite propagandic apparatus intrinsically linked to the Roman one. The events highlighted the importance of values such as *virtus* and control over nature. The spectators, on

their part, might have seen their own cultural roots in the *venatio,* as I argue that the presentation of local animals conjured up connections to pre-Roman ways of life. If these interpretations are correct, it is not only possible, but very likely that *venationes* did take place in Gaul. These were events which appealed to all sections of the population. The elites, in their quest to engage with Roman elite culture and values, and the general population, who were possibly more attached to the games due to the intrinsically Gallic character of the hunts, which were tailored to their own geographical and historical context. The *venatio* thus embodied the duality between imperial and local contexts. The Gauls were part of the Roman sphere of influence, but the Gallic/Celtic roots of the territory had not disappeared. In this way, we can thus reframe the study of *venationes* within the Gallic provincial context.

CONCLUSION

The Gallic Munera: An Analysis of Blood sport, and Beyond

This study has provided an in-depth analysis of the Gallic iterations of the *munera*. The institution has long been seen as simply having been "transplanted" to the different provinces of the empire without much change. This work has emphasised both the ways in which the Gallic games resembled those in Rome, and their particularities, which were dependent on local context. In this way, it has provided a new reading of the way in which arena games functioned in the provinces. The detection of local particularities in the Gallic arena has underlined the significance of contextualised readings of the *munera*. While connections to the Roman iteration of the games were prevalent, the events were shaped by their context. Thus, one cannot get a full picture of their unfolding without in-depth analysis of precise settings. The idea that there was such a thing as a single "provincial" iteration of the *munus* has been heavily challenged by this study. Even within a specific setting such as Gaul, peoples' relationship to the games were not the same. This study has highlighted the role of class in shaping the approaches to the *munera* within Gallic society. The "elite" and the "common" people seem to have engaged with the games very differently, and one should examine these multiple points of views in order to get a real understanding of the ways in which local context shaped the institution. This complete understanding could not have been brought about without this study's engagement with information issued from artwork, epigraphy, archaeology, and literature. In this way, I reaffirm the crucial nature of interdisciplinarity within the field of ancient History.

The first chapter of this study has proposed a reading for the popularity of the *munera* in Gaul, and the ways in which this institution was employed for political ends by the elites of Gallic

settlements. Evidence highlights that the richest members of Gallo-Roman society spent a very significant amount of money on the organisation of games and the financing of permanent amphitheatres. In all likelihood, they did not do this out of the goodness of their heart; they did so because it benefited them. The games themselves were also political in nature, as the clear class demarcation between seating sections reaffirmed the hierarchy of Gallo-Roman society. While this was a clearly hierarchical setting, the games could have been an opportunity for the common people to engage in a dialogue with the elites, with whom they rarely had such public-facing contact. The real impact of this presumed dialogue is however unknown. In these ways, this section has highlighted that the popularity of the Gallic arena games made their role inherently political, as they reinforced hierarchies both through their unfolding and through the honouring of those who organised them.

Chapter two has demonstrated the ways in which the games were a tool of Roman "imperialism". The events were much more than just entertainment for the masses; in Gaul, they were a significant tool used by the Romans to retain control of foreign societies. They served as a mass indoctrination machine which spread Roman values and highlighted Roman power, all of this under the guise of spectacle. The *munera* was a popular form of entertainment where, presumably, members of both primary settlements and neighbouring *oppida* would gather. The events which unfolded within the amphitheatre were meant to pass on to a significant number of people the primacy of Roman ways of life. The games often operated through thinly veiled threats, or the possibility of rewards, to achieve their goal.

Chapter three has asserted that *venationes* were not only presented in Gaul, but that they were also very significant to the local population, both "common" and "elite". I have moved away from the representation of the *venationes* as lavish spectacles which included exotic beasts. The

Gallic *venatio* very probably featured local animals, due to economic limitations, yes, but also because it made the events more appealing for the Gallo-Roman population attending the games. Indeed, I have argued that the fictitious hunts which took place in the arena possibly reminded the spectators' the Gallic root of their society due to their links to protohistoric Gallic practices. The *venationes* were still a Roman practice, however, and I have asserted that their presentation in Gaul, and their heavy connotations with Roman values and representations of control, were also used by the elites in order to engage with elite Roman culture. Evidence tells us that many events within the Gallic *munera* were very much linked to the propagation of Roman ways of life. In this, the *venatio* is no different. These kinds of representations highlighted the dual nature of Gallic society.

After having conducted this study, the question surrounding the role of the *munera* in Gallic society can be answered. The simple answer is that its role depended on peoples' place on the social ladder. It was possibly seen as exciting entertainment by a large swath of the "common" population. For the elites, however, its significance did not stop there. The Gallic *munera* was an intrinsically political institution. The wealthy Gallo-Romans, through them, had their high standing reaffirmed. At the same time, they possibly could have been challenged by the spectators for whom they organised the games. The efforts put into representing the Roman values and power (and the negative connotations of non-Roman ways of life) during the games highlights that this was a crucial tool of Roman propaganda abroad. While we do not know how the spectators reacted to these displays of Roman primacy, there is no mistaking that the events were meant to change the spectators' outlook. The *venationes*, through their propagandic undertone and the local animals they presented, highlighted the new reality of this region of the empire: It was both Gallic and

Roman. In many ways, the games and their surrounding processes served as an encapsulation of Gallo-Roman society.

The analysis of the *munera* brings us significant knowledge concerning the functioning and particularities of Gallo-Roman society. For example, through epigraphic evidence linked to the games, we learn about the many aspects of local politics, including but not limited to the way in which the Graeco-Roman practice of euergetism was applied in a non-Roman context. What is more, by examining the hypothesised reasons behind the *munera*'s popularity in Gaul, one can get a glimpse at a possible remaining Gallic attachment to pre-Roman ways of life, and at the elites' will to engage with a Roman culture, which would grant them prestige. Provincial economic limitations are also emphasised through the study of the institution. Of course, studying its iteration of the *munera* will not tell us everything we need to know about Gallic society, nor about "provincial" *munera* as one homogeneous block. Their study, however, might hint at certain trends within this particular provincial society which are worth exploring in more detail.

For example, Roman Gaul has often been seen as one of the more "romanised" regions of the Roman empire.[276]The findings of this study, however, might challenge this notion. The Romans, as can be seen through the local Gallic iteration of the *munera*, put an immense amount of effort into changing the Gallo-Roman populations' allegiances, and reaffirming Roman hierarchies, promising both punishment and reward in order to "convince" spectators. The popularity of the *munera*, however, might have been caused by different things. The link between gladiators and Gallic martial abilities might have been important in rendering the *munera* popular in Gaul, as well as the possible connection between *venationes* and pre-Roman hunting habits. There was a clear remaining attachment to pre-Roman ways, even if its prevalence is difficult to

[276] Michel Christol. "L'épigraphie et les débuts du culte impérial dans les colonies de vétérans en Narbonnaise," *Revue archéologique de Narbonnaise 32 (*1999): 12

judge. This is not to say that Roman ways had not attached themselves to local ways of life. However, the combination of all these factors might hint to the fact that in the province of Gaul, even if it boasted Roman-style amphitheatres, temples, and altars to the imperial cult, a strong sense of indigenous customs was still present. This was supported by the games and their related imagery. Although the *munus* was a Roman event, there seems to have been considerable cultural overlap in the practice. By examining local institutions, scholars can get glimpses at possible larger trends and can question previously held beliefs.

This study has explored the different ways in which local context shaped the Gallic iteration of the *munera*, and established the importance of doing so. Future work, first of all, can examine the games in other precise provincial contexts. This would help create a corpus of knowledge on provincial gladiatorial games and provide opportunities to detect commonalities and differences in the ways in which the games were held in different contexts. As has been highlighted many times, one cannot talk of "provincial" games, simply because not enough research has been done on a localised level to establish trends. On a Gallic level, more work needs to be done relating to the popular response to the games. We are unfortunately limited by our sources in answering this question, but the significance of the event in Gaul compels us to keep looking for answers. The *munus* is the entertainment *par excellence* of the common peoples in Gaul, and they should hold a significant place in its retelling. What is more, continuing to examine the ways in which Roman and Gallic culture intersect through the games is crucial, as it will provide historians with a better understanding of Gallic society as a whole. The study of the Gallic *munera*, in this way and all the others highlighted throughout this work, is more than just that of the shock and gore of provincial blood sport.

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