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III

CHRISTINA KOKKINIA

GAMES VS. BUILDINGS AS EUERGETIC CHOICES

A disproportionately large amount of the existing evidence for civic euergetism in the Roman Empire consists of honorary inscriptions for benefactors. As is to be expected, they present the donors' motives as purely selfless and their donations as essential, and they allow only rarely if ever a look behind the scenes of civic euergetism. These documents, our main sources for the role of euergetism, are biased in favour of euergetism's importance for the cities rather than for the benefactors. However, just as it benefited a city, the donor's generosity bought honour, and therefore a form of power, for the donor himself and his family, and this transaction could involve negotiations between benefactor and *polis*.[1]

[1] Deals struck between benefactors and cities could be challenged even many years later, as is demonstrated in the case of Iulius Piso, mentioned by Pliny the Younger as having been asked to return to the city of Amisos a sum he had received two decades earlier. Piso claimed that he received the money in thanks for his many donations: PLIN. *Epist.* 10, 110-111. Opinions in the cities could differ on the matter of how much should be spent on what. See Pliny's various complaints about buildings left unfinished and about others poorly executed: *Epist.* 10, 37-38 (aqueducts left unfinished); 39 (a theatre too expensive and poorly executed). On negotiations between city, donor, and sometimes third parties: G.M. ROGERS, "Demosthenes of Oenoanda and Models of Euergetism", in *JRS* 81 (1991), 91-100 on Demosthenes' festival at Oinoanda (ed. Wörrle 1988). More generally on such negotiations: W. ECK, "Der Euergetismus im Funktionszusammenhang der kaiserzeitlichen Städte", in *Actes du Xe Congrès international d'épigraphie grecque et latine, Nîmes, 4-9 octobre 1992*, éd. par M. CHRISTOL et O. MASSON (Paris 1997), 305-331; ID., "Administrative Dokumente. Publikation und Mittel der Selbstdarstellung", in W. ECK, *Die*

If a donor was asked to give something more and did so, that detail may have been deemed suitable for inclusion in an honorary decree.[2] But, supposing a donor had been asked to give something other than what he had proposed, the fact that his initial offer had not been welcomed unconditionally was unlikely to find mention in an honorary document. The purpose of this paper is to investigate what may have contributed to a benefactor's preference for one form of euergetism over another, particularly between the alternatives of games and buildings.

It is a common perception, both ancient and modern, that the mounting of spectacles could mean the sponsor's financial ruin. To sponsor the construction of buildings, of course, could be financially ruinous as well, and, according to Plutarch, the triumvir and real estate magnate Licinius Crassus, who never built anything himself other than his own house, used to say that those who loved to build (τοὺς φιλοικοδόμους) brought financial ruin onto themselves even without help from their competitors.[3] Obviously either of the choices could involve considerable financial risk, and our evidence suggests that the cost of mounting spectacles and of financing building projects could be unpredictable. Whether donors chose one or the other form of euergetism is likely to have depended very much on local conditions and private circumstances, on practical considerations and strategies of commemoration. While we have no evidence that, on an official level, Roman state officials explicitly

Verwaltung des römischen Reiches in der hohen Kaiserzeit 2 (Basel 1998), 359-385, esp. 370. Honour as a form of power: J.E. LENDON, *Empire of Honour. The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford 1997).

[2] Opramoas of Rhodiapolis on one occasion promised the Lycian confederacy 5,000 denars but ended up donating 55,000 (*TAM* II, 905, doc. 18, ll. V E 5-9 = C. KOKKINIA, *Die Opramoas-Inschrift von Rhodiapolis. Euergetismus und soziale Elite in Lykien* [Bonn 2000], doc. 19, ll. V E 5-9, p. 29; cf. p. 138). For Opramoas' building projects at Myra and Patara, see below (n. 7).

[3] *Crass.* 2, 6: τοσούτους δὲ κεκτημένος τεχνίτας, οὐδὲν ᾠκοδόμησεν αὐτὸς ἢ τὴν ἰδίαν οἰκίαν, ἀλλ' ἔλεγε τοὺς φιλοικοδόμους αὐτοὺς ὑφ' ἑαυτῶν καταλύεσθαι χωρὶς ἀνταγωνιστῶν. Cf. below.

recommended buildings as euergetic choices over athletic and musical events, these authorities, like other members of the Graeco-Roman elite, sometimes expressed disdain towards *munera*, and there are signs that official rhetoric implicitly favoured buildings. Public statements that reflected these ideas were likely to influence donors' decisions. However, as I hope to show, Antoninus Pius' letter to the Ephesians, containing the best-known example of such interference from above, is likely to have been a much more general statement than is usually assumed. And what we know to have been a clear and direct intervention on the part of the Roman state in the mounting of spectacles, the *s.c.* of 177 CE, seems intended to make their cost more predictable rather than to restrict their appeal.

Long-range and immediate concerns

There can be no doubt that pursuit of honour played a role when donors chose among forms of euergetism. While games involved crowds and, ideally, enthusiastic ones cheering the benefactor, buildings were made to last, potentially preserving the donor's memory for generations.[4] But there were also ways of combining the momentary honour and pleasure generated by appreciative crowds with more permanent indicators of status. One who could afford to contribute significantly to the construction of a theatre or lecture hall could secure the applause of crowds on many occasions during his lifetime, as well as the most prominent locations for placing his statues in or near the building. Similarly, if a donor could sponsor the founding of a contest and festival, the periodic repetitions of the festival would preserve the memory of the donor's name and fame for posterity. Moreover, notable one-off events such

[4] Buildings named after their donor: L. ROBERT, *Études anatoliennes* (Paris 1937), 542 with n. 2; ID., "Un édifice du sanctuaire de l'Isthme dans une inscription de Corinthe", in *Hellenica* I (Paris 1940), 43-53, esp. 51f.

as big gladiatorial shows could be recalled in the sculptural decoration of impressive funerary monuments, as in a number of relief friezes found at Aphrodisias and Kibyra.[5] Other media, too, could provide lasting visual representation of such an event: a mosaic in Africa, for example, that is preserved to the present day, depicts the crowd's acclamations of Magerius at a *venatio* that he had sponsored.[6]

Given such combinations, spectacles could have afforded their sponsor a distinction that was more than short-lived, and the decision to sponsor building projects could have depended on a variety of long-term and short-term considerations. What is more, it was difficult to predict a building's final cost, and buildings often required contributions from more than one donor.[7] Even when a building's construction was sponsored by one person alone, those who undertook subsequent additions

[5] Aphrodisias: A. HRYCHUK KONTOKOSTA, "Gladiatorial Reliefs and Élite Funerary Monuments", in *Aphrodisias Papers 4. New Research on the City and its Monuments*, ed. by C. RATTÉ and R.R.R. SMITH (Portsmouth, RI 2008), 190-230; Kibyra: C. BERNS, forthcoming. In contrast to modern funerary practice, such monuments were often built during the tomb owner's lifetime: P. ZANKER, "Bürgerliche Selbstdarstellung am Grab im römischen Kaiserreich", in *Die römische Stadt im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr. Der Funktionswandel des öffentlichen Raumes. Kolloquium in Xanten vom 2. bis 4. Mai 1990*, hrsg. von H.J. SCHALLES *et al.* (Bonn 1992), 339-358; cf. C. KOKKINIA, "Junge Honoratioren in Lykien und eine neue Ehreninschrift aus Bubon", in *Griechische Epigraphik in Lykien. Eine Zwischenbilanz. Akten des internationalen Kolloquiums München, 24.–26. Februar 2005*, hrsg. von C. SCHULER (Wien 2007), 165-174, esp. 171.

[6] A. BESCHAOUCH, "La mosaïque de chasse à l'amphithéâtre découverte à Smirat en Tunisie", in *CRAI* 110 (1966), 134-157 (cf. *AE* 1967, 549); a recent discussion: D. BOMGARDNER, "The Magerius Mosaic Revisited", in *Roman Amphitheatres and Spectacula. A 21st-Century Perspective. Papers from an International Conference held at Chester, 16th-18th February 2007*, ed. by T. WILMOTT (Oxford 2009), 165-177.

[7] The benefactions of Opramoas provide two examples of final costs exceeding the donor's initial offer: when he had promised the city of Myra help to repair buildings after an earthquake, he was subsequently asked to offer a larger sum and to supervise the works himself: C. KOKKINIA, *op. cit.* (n. 2), ll. XIII D 5-9 (= *TAM* II, 905, ll. XIII D 5-9); and when he had offered Patara a sum for a stoa, he was asked to pay for the entire building (ll. XVII E 14-XVII F 4). The phenomenon of multiple sponsors is represented in the construction of the aqueduct at Aphrodisias (on which, see below).

and embellishments could appropriate credit from the original donor, at least in the epigraphic record.[8] Even the expectation that a donated building would provide a permanent, highly visible public platform for sculptural representations of the donor and his family might go unfulfilled, since a donor's wishes were not always respected after his death. Heirs are sometimes depicted as unreliable in wills and in funerary inscriptions, both directly and indirectly, and civic politics could also influence the implementation of a donor's plans.

Some donors chose to involve the Roman authorities in carrying out their plans for the afterlife, not in all cases with those authorities' full consent: Pliny the Younger, for example, as governor of *Pontus et Bithynia* found himself in the position of executor of the will of a Pontic man whom he did not know, as he confessed to Trajan. Apart from a sum that he would be awarded if he accepted the job, the inheritance was to be divided between two Pontic *poleis* and the role of the governor would be to decide between the options of erecting buildings or founding contests there — in either event in the emperor's honour, as Pliny makes clear. Apparently apprehensive about the prospect of conducting lengthy negotiations with the two cities, Pliny tried to induce Trajan to make the choice between buildings and games. But, in a brief epistle, the emperor turned the decision back to his governor, remarking that the task had to do with memorializing the testator (more than with honouring the emperor, despite Pliny's claims).[9] While we do not know what Pliny finally chose to do, the episode indicates some potential complexities in donors' strategies of commemoration.

[8] *Dig.* 50, 10, 7, 1: *Si quis opus ab alio factum adornare marmoribus vel alio quo modo ex voluntate populi facturum se pollicitus sit, nominis proprii titulo scribendo: manentibus priorum titulis, qui ea opera fecissent, id fieri debere senatus censuit*; cf. E. THOMAS and C. WITSCHEL, "Constructing Reconstruction. Claim and Reality of Roman Rebuilding Inscriptions from the Latin West", in *PBSR* 60 (1992), 135-177.

[9] *Epist.* 10, 75-76.

Strategies of commemoration that directly invited the participation of the emperor, instead of his governor, were not guaranteed success either, a point illustrated in another of Pliny's letters to Trajan.[10] In this instance, Claudius Polyaenus had bequeathed a building in the centre of Prusa to the emperor Claudius on condition that a chapel for the deceased be included inside the building's peristyle.[11] The rest of the house was to be rented. Although at the time of Pliny, more than half a century later, the estate still belonged to the emperor, the donor's interests in the upkeep of the chapel had been disregarded. It appears that the building had been taken care of as long as the proceeds from the rent had generated income for the city of Prusa, but the property was thereafter partly plundered and partly neglected, and the building fell into ruin. When planning for the afterlife, putting your money into the construction of buildings was not always the safe choice it might at first have appeared to be.

Much as a donor might wish to secure himself a place in posterity, more immediate concerns could decisively influence his choice between buildings and spectacles. To carry out a building project would have required, for example, the acquisition of suitable land, which could be expected to involve cumbersome negotiations. Proposals to change the use of existing buildings or lots in a civic environment were likely to provoke reactions, as Dio Chrysostom found when he removed older structures to build new shops in Prusa: neither his money nor his immense rhetorical skill spared him from accusations.[12] It is not surprising that donors could be suspected of promoting their own interests when they offered to erect a new building instead of repairing an old one. But selfish motives, and any direct or indirect compensations that donors might receive for

[10] *Epist.* 10, 70.

[11] Cf. E. CHAMPLIN, *Final Judgments. Duty and Emotion in Roman Wills: 200 B.C. - A.D. 250* (Berkeley-Los Angeles 1991), 26-27, 173 on an anonymous Gallo-Roman aristocrat's will containing detailed instructions for a chapel for himself (*testamentum Lingonis*, *CIL* XIII 5708).

[12] *Or.* 46, 9.

their outlay, were not likely to be widely broadcast, and particularly not in honorific documents.[13]

Though there can be little doubt that the building trade was an important branch of the economy in the cities,[14] connections between the building trade and the sponsors of buildings are difficult to confirm. Evidence is scarce on both the extent and nature of elite individuals' involvement in that trade.[15] While we know of some instances where members of the elite were accused of profiteering in connection with trade in foodstuffs, we hear of no similar instances in connection with buildings. Plutarch's report on the size of Crassus' construction business (and on his less than savoury tactics) has no parallel in imperial times, although it is possible that Plutarch indirectly alludes to such parallels.[16] The

[13] See C. KOKKINIA, "The Role of Individuals in Inscribing Roman State Documents. Governors' Letters and Edicts", in *Selbstdarstellung und Kommunikation. Die Veröffentlichung staatlicher Urkunden auf Stein und Bronze in der römischen Welt*, hrsg. von R. HAENSCH (München 2009), 200-201, for Licinius Priscus Juventianus in Corinth, who proposed to use the lot and the building material of an old colonnade to construct new shops, which he would make available as lodgings for the athletes during the Isthmia. We are not told but can safely assume that, apart from the days when the Isthmia, and possibly other games, were held, the new shops would house the economic activities of their owner.

[14] P. BARRESI, "Architettura pubblica e munificenza in Asia Minore. Ricchezza, costruzioni e marmi nelle province anatoliche dell'Impero", in *MediterrAnt* 3 (2000), 309-368 on materials, labour, financing etc. of public buildings in Asia Minor; A. KOLB, "Das Bauhandwerk in den Städten der römischen Provinzen. Strukturen und Bedeutung", in *Tyche* 23 (2008), 101-115, discusses the building trade in the western provinces in more general terms.

[15] A. KOLB, *art. cit.* (n. 14), 110, with previous literature. The amount of evidence connecting elite individuals with associations of builders and related workers is insignificant: C. ZIMMERMANN, *Handwerkervereine im griechischen Osten des Imperium Romanum* (Mainz 2002); O.M. VAN NIJF, *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East* (Amsterdam 1997).

[16] PLUT. *Crass.* 2, 5-6. W. AMELING, "Plutarch, *Perikles* 12-14", in *Historia* 34 (1985), 47-63, argues that Plutarch's account of the Athenian politician Perikles' building policy was anachronistic, intended to make a covert statement about his own time. From Pliny, we hear of charges brought against Dio Chrysostom for having made unauthorized changes to a public building constructed under his supervision. It appears, though, that the charges did not concern financial profits or underhanded dealings in relation to that building project, but had to do with his exploiting his position to secure a prominent spot for a family grave: PLIN. *Epist.* 10, 81-82.

sort of involvement with the building trade that Crassus had pursued may have been too obviously incompatible with the landowner-gentleman ideal to be openly displayed by most prominent citizens.[17]

It is easier in the case of festivals to surmise how the donors' own economic interests might have played a role in their decisions: an owner of gladiators, for example, might have opted to stage gladiatorial games, and someone who engaged in the trade of goods normally connected with festivals might have opted for games (*munera* or other) in the hope of gaining greater profits through any immunities granted to those markets. Such markets would have intersected with the economic interests of large-scale traders, as well as those of some small merchants and peasants who sold their own produce. In many ways, the founder of a contest was indirectly a benefactor of all those who participated in the activities on any of the new market days.

Festivals and the contests connected with them must have been organizational nightmares, or Hadrian's list of problems needing to be solved in connection with them in the recently published documents from Alexandria Troas, to be discussed more fully below, would likely be shorter.[18] Among other prerequisites, festivals required permission from the Roman authorities and a means of attracting participants and visitors.

[17] Brickmaking, which was associated with agriculture, is an exception. Senators did not hesitate to record their names on bricks and tiles. See T. FRANK, *An Economic History of Rome* (Baltimore-London ²1927; repr. Kitchener 2004), 123 and most recently A. KLINGENBERG, *Sozialer Abstieg in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Paderborn 2011), 52, with previous literature. Nonetheless, we would have known nothing of the concentration of the production of bricks and tiles in Rome in the hands of female members of Marcus Aurelius' family, for example, if it were not for our knowledge and study of the stamps on the bricks and tiles themselves; see A. BUONOPANE and F. CHAUSSON, "Una fonte della ricchezza delle *Augustae* - Le *figlinae* urbane", in *Augustae. Machtbewusste Frauen am römischen Kaiserhof?*, hrsg. von A. KOLB (Berlin 2010), 91-110.

[18] G. PETZL und E. SCHWERTHEIM, *Hadrian und die dionysischen Künstler. Drei in Alexandria Troas neugefundene Briefe des Kaisers an die Künstler-Vereinigung* (Bonn 2006) (*SEG* 56, 1359).

The constituting of new market days, alone, would have involved potentially difficult negotiations with the Roman authorities and with other communities.[19] An example of such negotiations is provided in a letter to the city of Sardis from the patron of a village in Sardis' territory, which reveals that the city had stopped participating in religious celebrations held at the village after the villagers had successfully petitioned the Roman authorities to allow them to add a market day to those celebrations without first securing Sardis' assent.[20] There are indications that even a large and powerful city might have anticipated some opposition to modifications of its games, as Ephesos did when it decided to expand its Artemisia.[21]

Ideological considerations: provincial elites and Roman "precepts of statecraft"

In short, various factors, including financial and organizational concerns, influenced a donor's decision between being a sponsor of spectacles or of building projects. As we have seen above, the expectation of securing long-term or short-term fame by supporting one sort of benefaction rather than another was not clear-cut, and it remains uncertain how much that

[19] J. NOLLÉ, Nundinas instituere et habere. *Epigraphische Zeugnisse zur Einrichtung und Gestaltung von ländlichen Märkten in Afrika und in der Provinz Asia* (Hildesheim 1982), *passim*; ID., "Marktrechte außerhalb der Stadt. Lokale Autonomie zwischen Statthalter und Zentralort", in *Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserzeitlichen Provinzen vom 1. bis 3. Jahrhundert*, hrsg. von W. ECK und E. MÜLLER-LUCKNER (München 1999), 93-113.

[20] J. NOLLÉ, *art. cit.* (n. 19), 104. The Roman governor and soon-to-be emperor Boeonius Antoninus extended an invitation to anyone who objected to the adding of the new market day to step forward within a certain time limit (ll. b 10-14, d 12-16). The village's patron, Asinius Rufus, attempts to settle the matter amicably, but we do not know the outcome of his intervention; W. ECK and J. NOLLÉ, "Der Brief des Asinius Rufus an die Magistrate von Sardeis. Zum Marktrechtsprivileg für die Gemeinde der Arillenoi", in *Chiron* 26 (1996), 267-273, esp. 273; C. KOKKINIA, *art. cit.* (n. 13), 203-204.

[21] C. KOKKINIA, *art. cit.* (n. 13), 195-198.

concern might have influenced a donor. Of course, choices are often rationalized rather than rational. Both consciously and unconsciously, benefactors might have rejected an option that was more convenient, or one that was more likely to earn them the widest possible approval, in favour of what they or their peers thought was a better choice in moral and philosophical terms. It has been proposed that Greek-style festivals eventually replaced buildings as indicators of status within and between cities in the third century, and that this change took place because the festivals better reflected the highly stratified social and political structures in the Roman empire of the time.[22] It can be objected, however, that although a significant slowdown in building activity is attested in the archaeological record of the third century CE, neither highly stratified societies nor festivals are particular to that time. If indeed the flourishing of games in contrast to buildings is largely to be traced to a change in euergetic preferences,[23] the cause of this change still remains unexplained. The fluctuations in building activity could represent stages in a boom and bust cycle, a period of rapid growth in the second century having been followed by a contraction of building activity in the urban centres of the third century; over the course of that period, buildings as euergetic choices could for a variety of reasons have gone out of fashion. In other words, the contraction in building activity in the third century may represent a return to normal building activity after a period of excesses in the previous century.

We do gain some evidence from the literary tradition of contemporary intellectuals having expressed disdain for certain categories of spectacle, and the epigraphic record preserves evidence that representatives of the Roman state may at times

[22] G.M. ROGERS, *art. cit.* (n. 1), 100.

[23] S. MITCHELL, "Festivals, Games, and Civic Life in Roman Asia Minor", review article of M. WÖRRLE, *Stadt und Fest im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien* (München 1988), and R. ZIEGLER, *Städtisches Prestige und kaiserliche Politik. Studien zum Festwesen in Ostkilikien im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Düsseldorf 1985), in *JRS* 80 (1990), 183-193, esp. 190.

have publicly endorsed one form of euergetism over the other. If, as it has commonly been interpreted, Antoninus Pius in a letter to Ephesos expressly favoured buildings over spectacles, his stated preference might have had a hand in the building boom of the second century. I will return to Antoninus' letter to Ephesos after discussing two other imperial letters, both issued by the emperor Hadrian, that have been eternalized in stone in the cities of the empire.

In a recently published and already widely discussed epigraphic dossier of imperial letters from Alexandria Troas, Hadrian issues an order to the cities: they are not to divert funds away from musical and athletic contests to other purposes, except for the purpose of alleviating a food shortage, and even then they need to first secure the emperor's consent.[24] Hadrian's order was conveyed in the opening lines of a letter to a group that stood to lose if funds were diverted away from games, the union of artists associated with Dionysus. The emperor's stern tone would presumably have been welcome to his immediate addressees, even as it was unpleasant for the cities concerned. The terms of the order might be taken as evidence

[24] Petzl and Schwertheim's text (*op. cit.* n. 18), ll. 8-13, except in l. 11, where I follow a reading suggested by C. Jones (C.P. JONES, "Three New Letters of the Emperor Hadrian", in *ZPE* 161 [2007], 145-156): τοὺς ἀγῶνας πάντας ἄγεσθαι κελεύω καὶ μὴ ἐξεῖναι πόλει πόρους ἀγῶνος κατὰ νόμον ἢ ψήφισ|[9]μα ἢ διαθήκας ἀγομένου{ς} μετενενκεῖν εἰς ἄλλα δαπανήματα οὐδὲ εἰς ἔργου κατασκευὴν ἐφίημι |[10] χρήσασθαι ἀργυρίῳ, ἐξ οὗ ἆθλα τίθεται ἀγωνισταῖς ἢ συντάξεις δίδονται τοῖς νε[ι]κήσασιν· εἰ δέ ποτε ἐπείξαι |[11] πόλιν οὐκ εἰς τρυφὴν καὶ πολυτέλειαν, ἀλλ' ὡς πυρὸν ἐν σειτοδείᾳ παρεσκευάσα<ι> πόρον τινὰ ἐξευρεῖν |[12] τότε μοι γραφέσθω. Ἄνευ δε ἐμῆς συνχωρήσεως μηδὲν πρὸς τὸ τοιοῦτό τι ἐξέστω λαμβάνειν τάδε |[13] εἰς τοὺς ἀγῶνας ἀποτεταγμένα χρήματα. Jones' translation: "I order that all the contests be held, and that it not be permitted for a city to divert funds (destined for) a contest held according to law, | decree or will to other expenses, nor do I permit to be used on the construction of a building | money from which prizes are offered to contestants or (from which) contributions are given to victors. If it should ever be urgent | that a city find some source (of revenue), not for the purpose of luxury and extravagance, but in order to procure wheat in a (time of) shortage, then let me be written to. But without my permission let no one be permitted to take these funds earmarked for the contests for anything (i.e. any purpose) of this kind".

that one or more cities had previously reallocated such funds for various purposes. Only one such purpose is mentioned explicitly, however: that of constructing a building (l. 9; cf. l. 17), and it seems reasonable to deduce from the emperor's explicit disallowing of these funds for this specific purpose that he anticipated that they might be put to that use.

The text of another major epigraphic monument makes it clear that the repurposing of funds from games to other activities did take place in the empire, and it also suggests that construction projects were favoured to receive those reallocations. This monument, found in Aphrodisias, includes a letter in which Hadrian permits the Aphrodisians to accept cash, in lieu of gladiatorial games, from priests of the imperial cult. What is more, Hadrian emphatically praises the Aphrodisians' intention to do so. In a passage that comes next in the letter, a reference to curators of an aqueduct allows the inference that the Aphrodisians intended to use this money for some unspecified activity related to an aqueduct.[25] Given that the provincials would be certain to refer to the emperor any proposal to divert money from games in his honour to another purpose, there is nothing surprising about this part of the exchange between Hadrian and the Aphrodisians. But an explanation for Hadrian's response is less obvious, and it might be instructive to look more closely at what his decision might have entailed for the Roman state.

Considering his role as the leader of the empire's intellectual elite, whose members often condemned the arena, a Roman emperor would probably have surprised no one by publicly appearing indifferent to gladiatorial shows (the more so an Antonine emperor).[26] But, considering his role as the head of the Roman state and owner of the fiscus, it is not self-evident,

[25] J. REYNOLDS, "New Letters from Hadrian to Aphrodisias. Trials, Taxes, Gladiators and an Aqueduct", in *JRA* 13 (2000), 5-20; K.M. COLEMAN, "Exchanging Gladiators for an Aqueduct at Aphrodisias (*SEG* 50.1096)", in *AClass* 51 (2008), 31-46.

[26] T. WIEDEMANN, *Emperors and Gladiators* (London 1992), 142-144.

at least from our point of view, that the emperor would favour a reduction in spectacles. As an owner of gladiatorial schools all around the empire, a Roman emperor made money from the gladiatorial business,[27] and the fiscus probably collected a substantial tax on the sale and purchase of gladiators (a point to which I will return). Was Hadrian's decision to permit the diversion of money at Aphrodisias away from gladiatorial games, then, based entirely on moral considerations? We cannot be sure. It is possibly relevant, in this context, that Aphrodisians also paid the Romans a tax on nails.[28] Whatever the precise terms of this tax, the revenue that it generated for the state presumably increased with every project of construction or significant reconstruction that the Aphrodisians undertook. Since the precise circumstances that prompted the imperial letter escape us, we can only guess at the importance of such considerations for Hadrian's decision. What seems clear is that the Aphrodisians' exchange of "gladiators for an aqueduct"[29] had both ideological and fiscal implications that would have needed to be carefully balanced in their ambassadors' speeches. To have extracted from the emperor both permission and praise was probably an ideal outcome of a not so simple diplomatic endeavour. And this outcome was chosen to be recorded on stone, providing, for the purposes of our enquiry, an emperor's monumental endorsement of other projects, apparently construction works, over spectacles as euergetic choices. Hadrian's words, however, by no means constitute a statement against

[27] F. MILLAR, *The Emperor in the Roman World (31 BC-AD 337)* (Ithaca-London 1977), 195; B. MEISSNER, "*Meris VI ad Ludum Neronianum*. Beobachtungen und Überlegungen zu einer Inschrift des Katasters von Orange", in *ZPE* 90 (1992), 167-191, esp. 174-176.

[28] Of which we are informed because the Aphrodisians asked Hadrian to exempt them from it. J. REYNOLDS, *Aphrodisias and Rome. Documents from the Excavation of the Theatre at Aphrodisias Conducted by Professor Kenan T. Erim, Together with Some Related Texts* (London 1982), docs. 15, 51; cf. C. KOKKINIA, "Making Sense of an Odd Inscription: *MAMA* VIII, 430 and the 'nail tax'", in *ZPE* 151 (2005), 259-262.

[29] K.M. COLEMAN, *art. cit.* (n. 25).

games in general. The emperor speaks of gladiatorial shows in particular and, in this instance, praises a decision to have priests sponsor another activity instead.

This praise by an emperor of one type of civic euergetism over another immediately recalls Antoninus Pius' letter to the Ephesians (*IK-Ephesos* 1491), mentioned above, to which we will now return. The letter has often been cited and discussed, but I am not persuaded that its content and implications have been fully understood. It is one of three letters of that emperor concerning Vedius Antoninus (*IK-Ephesos* 1491-1493) that were inscribed on the marble paneling of the scene wall at Ephesos' town hall. Vedius had sponsored a new sculptural program for the *bouleuterion*'s scene wall that included a portrait gallery of the Antonine dynasty, and the inscriptions of the imperial letters bear proof of his close relationship with the emperor.[30]

The letters of Antoninus in this dossier appear to be typical *martyriai*, that is to say, letters of recommendation containing praise of an individual by a higher authority.[31] In all known cases where the originator of such a letter is a representative of the Roman state, the letter conveys its author's positive response to an honorary act that had been made known to him by the party conferring the honour, usually the honorand's fellow citizens. So, too, in this case, the Ephesians had sent to Antoninus their own praise of Vedius (known to us from *IK-Ephesos* 1491, l. 9), presumably with the intention of eliciting a *martyria*. I have proposed elsewhere a restoration of l. 12 of this same document, to read οὗ[ν] instead of οὐ[κ], on the basis that Antoninus' response is unlikely to have contained a reproach of the Ephesians,[32] both because such a reproach would be highly

[30] For the building see L. BIER, *The Bouleuterion at Ephesos* (Wien 2011).

[31] *IK-Ephesos* 1491-1493; see C. KOKKINIA, "Letters of Roman Authorities on Local Dignitaries. The Case of Vedius Antoninus", in *ZPE* 142 (2003), 197-213.

[32] Interpretation of the text as a reproach is accepted by A. KALINOWSKI, "The Vedii Antonini. Aspects of Patronage and Benefaction in Second-Century Ephesos", in *Phoenix* 56 (2002), 109-149, among many others (cf. C. KOKKINIA, *art. cit.* [n. 31]).

unexpected in this category of document and because the emperor indicates his agreement with the Ephesians' actions by asserting, in the immediately subsequent clause, that he had joined the Ephesians in their approval of Vedius: κἀγώ … ἀπεδεξάμην ("and I gave [or "so did I give"] my approval").[33]

Particularly relevant to the present investigation are ll. 13-18 of Antoninus' first letter (*IK-Ephesos* 1491), which clearly express support for one type of euergetic activity and disapproval of another.[34] An obstacle arises in identifying exactly which group of *euergetai* and which types of donations the emperor disapproves of. I hope to show that there are convincing alternatives to some of the traditional restorations of these lines. On the basis of photographs of the fragments and details of the Vienna squeezes of the texts, and on a close study of the other two imperial letters of the dossier, I propose the following new readings.[35]

[33] Nor is there convincing evidence that the Ephesians, or a faction among them, had been engaged in a quarrel with Vedius. The emperor's statement in *IK-Ephesos* 1491, ll. 7-9 does not constitute such evidence. In those lines, by saying that Vedius' activities were known to him more from his own correspondence with Vedius than from the Ephesians' letters, the emperor was repeating a theme known from other *martyriai* and was honouring Vedius by acknowledging the directness of his ties with the imperial centre. To be sure, quarrels between individual citizens and between factions are well known from imperial Greek *poleis*. Were the traditional restorations of this letter correct, however, we would see the emperor taking sides with an individual against the entire citizenry of a *polis*, and making insulting remarks about the *polis*, in a letter cut in stone on a public monument displayed in the *polis* itself. Such behaviour seems very unlikely. (Cf. M. STESKAL und M. LA TORRE, *Das Vediusgymnasium in Ephesos. Archäologie und Baubefund. Textband* [Wien 2008], 306-308.) While the wording of the first letter (*IK-Ephesos* 1491) could conceivably have been interpreted as an acknowledgment that the Ephesians were tardy in endorsing Vedius the *euergetês* and in sending proof of their recognition to the emperor, even this interpretation was more likely to be viewed as honorific rhetoric rather than substantive criticism of the city.

[34] On this same evidence, S. Cramme has recently proposed that Vedius' alleged conflict with his fellow Ephesians was prompted by his wish to replace games with buildings in the expenditures normally connected with certain offices (S. CRAMME, *Die Bedeutung des Euergetismus für die Finanzierung städtischer Aufgaben in der Provinz Asia* [Köln 2001], 192).

[35] I thank Prof. Hans Täuber of the University of Vienna and the staff of the British Museum for generously providing photographs of the fragments, and Prof. Täuber for kindly checking details on the Vienna squeezes.

In l. 13 the reading συ[νέπραξα? α]ὐτῷ [εἰ]ς is preferable to the *IK* reading συ[νεχώρησα α]ὐτῷ []ς. While συ[νεχώρησα] leaves the sigma at the end of the line unexplained, συνέπραξα is compatible with [εἰ]ς, which in turn is compatible with the accusative ἅ at the beginning of l. 14. Συνέπραξα also mirrors what Antoninus writes about Vedius to the Hellenes of Asia in the third letter of the same dossier (*IK-Ephesos* 1493, ll. 14-15).[36] In that letter, the emperor does Vedius the great honour of stating his endorsement of Vedius' activities in terms of partnership; more than merely sanctioning Vedius' building projects, the emperor claimed that he "worked in partnership" with Vedius in those projects. This claim of Antoninus is possibly corroborated by a statement of his in the second letter of the dossier (*IK-Ephesos* 1492, ll. 13-15): that Vedius had received imperial grants and had spent them on embellishment of the city.[37] At least in a financial sense, then, Antoninus had in fact joined forces with Vedius.

In *IK-Ephesos* 1491, l. 14, according to the traditional restoration, the emperor censures the ways of "the many", a reference to the multitude (or the majority) of office

[36] In the beginning of l. 15 of *IK-Ephesos* 1493, after approximately 3 lost characters, a fragment contains the letters ΕΠΡΑΞ and, following that, part of the oblique stroke of the letter Α or Λ. Another fragment contains the letters ΑΥΤ and, after a lacuna of ca. 5-6 letters, a third fragment preserves the upper right oblique stroke of Υ and the letters ΝΕΛΑ. The position of all three fragments in the text appear to be secure, and the traditional restoration [κ]αὶ ἐ[γὼ | συν]έπραξα αὐτ[ῷ καὶ σ]υνέλα[βον] is hence very compelling. Cf. the photograph in L. BIER, *op. cit.* (n. 30), pl. 65.1.

[37] *IK-Ephesos* 1492, ll. 13-15: ὅ[ς] γε κα[ὶ τὰ]ς παρ' ἐμοῦ χάριτας εἰς τὸν [κόσ]μον α[ὐτῆς] τῆς πόλεως [κα]τέθετο. For χάρις in the sense of (imperial) grant see *LSJ*, s.v. χάρις A.III.b. In the first letter of the dossier (*IK-Ephesos* 1491, ll. 9-11), Antoninus' statement that Vedius had asked for his help with the embellishment of the works that Vedius had promised (βουλόμενος γὰρ παρ' ἐμοῦ τυχεῖν βοηθείας [εἰς τὸ]ν κόσμον τῶν ἔργων ὧν ὑμεῖν ἐπηνγείλατο...) might provide additional evidence that Vedius had requested and received a financial contribution from Antoninus. The emperor's wording in all three of the cited passages implies — perhaps not entirely truthfully — that Vedius was free to use the money as he pleased. Vedius presumably used the funds from the imperial grants for the new portraits of the Antonine dynasty in the *bouleuterion* and perhaps for other embellishments as well.

holders:[38] [οὐ] τὸν π̣[ολλῶν τῶ]ν πο|λειτευομένων τρόπον. But the restoration τὸν π̣[ολλῶν τῶ]ν produces a syntactically awkward phrase, containing an article in the accusative singular followed immediately by an adjective in the genitive plural (τὸν πολλῶν). The restoration proposed by Dittenberger in *Syll.*[3] 850, [οὐ] τὸν σ̣[υνήθη τῶ]ν πο|λειτευομένων τρόπον, which is far better Greek, unfortunately does not appear to agree with what is on the stone.[39] It is worth considering, instead, that the missing word might be εἰθισμένον, a synonym of συνήθης and an adjective attested in accompaniment with τρόπος: [οὐ] τὸν ε̣[ἰθισμένον τῶ]ν πο|λειτευομένων τρόπον. In the absence of a secure restoration, it remains far from certain whether Antoninus addresses his criticism towards "many" (πολλοί) men in public life, as is commonly assumed, towards an "accustomed" (εἰθισμένος) mode of conduct, or towards another object. In short, it is not certain that he expresses disapproval of the way most dignitaries behaved, and therefore of the ways of most *poleis* and of Ephesos in particular.

A common theme in moral essays contrasts men whose actions aim merely to please the multitude with those who base

[38] Or, more generally, those who perform public services without holding office; πολιτευόμενος had a wide meaning (C. KOKKINIA, "Opramoas' Citizenships. The Lycian *politeuomenos*-formula", in *Patrie d'origine et patries électives. Les citoyennetés multiples dans le monde grec d'époque romaine*, éd. par A. HELLER et A.-V. PONT [Bordeaux 2012], 327-340). S. MITCHELL, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 190 translates πολιτευόμενοι here with "men in public life". S. CRAMME, *op. cit.* (n. 34), 192: "those who are active in the community" (*die im Gemeinwesen Tätigen*).

[39] A sigma before the lacuna does not seem possible. On a squeeze in Vienna, H. Täuber reads here the lower part of a vertical stroke without a horizontal extension. However, a squeeze might not document a horizontal extension when the stone is damaged, as it is here, so close to the vertical stroke. To judge by the photographs, in which the vertical stroke is also recognizable, an epsilon may be possible. If pi is possible before the lacuna, one might consider π̣[ρὸς χάρι]ν or π̣[ρὸς δόξα]ν or maybe π̣[ρὸς ὄχλο]ν. The occurrence of the word χάριν in ll. 15-16 does not speak against the restoration of πρὸς χάριν in l. 14, since repetition was clearly not avoided in this letter: cf. φιλοτιμίαν ἣν φιλοτιμεῖται in l. 7.

their politics on high moral principles and pursue worthier goals.[40] A statement of Antoninus in *IK-Ephesos* 1491, l. 15, which contains a reference to instant success ([παρ]αχρῆμ[α εὐδοκιμ]εῖν; we might say "instant gratification"), is possibly a variation on that theme. Supposing an Ephesian nobleman had recently spent money on public spectacles, he would no doubt have been made uncomfortable by an imperial, and therefore "divine", precept of statecraft that said that he should not have done so. But the text does not support the usual assumption that Antoninus is here expressing specific points of criticism rather than a general philosophical and political principle, nor that he has aimed his censure at the Ephesians or a smaller group among them.[41]

The types of euergetic activities that the emperor contrasts with building projects in this document are not entirely clear. In l. 16 he clearly speaks of "shows" and "distributions". But "shows" (θέαι) could designate any sort of spectacle or performance, either Greek or Roman. Given that they appear to be named in this context as one of several objectionable targets of donations, θέαι might here have the narrower sense of theatrical shows and, more precisely, perhaps the wildly popular pantomimes that were scorned by traditionalists.[42] "Distributions"

[40] Plutarch discourses on this moral obligation for politicians in his *Precepts of Statecraft*, and the theme is also present in his *Lives*: *Them.* 3, 3 γὰρ ὢν φύσει καὶ καλοκαγαθικὸς τὸν τρόπον ὁ Ἀριστείδης, καὶ πολιτευόμενος οὐ πρὸς χάριν οὐδὲ πρὸς δόξαν, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ βελτίστου μετ' ἀσφαλείας καὶ δικαιοσύνης ...; cf. *Agis et Cleom.* 1, 3-4: τοῦτ' ἀληθῶς οἱ πρὸς ἐπιθυμίας ὄχλων καὶ ὁρμὰς πολιτευόμενοι πάσχουσι, δουλεύοντες καὶ ἀκολουθοῦντες, ἵνα δημαγωγοὶ καὶ ἄρχοντες ὀνομάζωνται. καθάπερ γὰρ οἱ πρωρεῖς, τὰ ἔμπροσθεν προορώμενοι τῶν κυβερνητῶν, ἀφορῶσι πρὸς ἐκείνους καὶ τὸ προστασσόμενον ὑπ' ἐκείνων ποιοῦσιν, οὕτως οἱ πολιτευόμενοι καὶ πρὸς δόξαν ὁρῶντες ὑπηρέται μὲν τῶν πολλῶν εἰσιν, ὄνομα δ' ἀρχόντων ἔχουσιν.

[41] A group among them: M.D. CAMPANILE, "Contese civiche ad Efeso in età imperiale", in *SCO* 42 (1992), 215-223.

[42] Traditionalists as, for example, Kraton in Lucian's defence of the genre (Περί Ὀρχήσεως). On the innovations introduced in pantomimes and their transformation of traditional themes see *Greek and Roman Actors. Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, ed. by P. EASTERLING and E. HALL (Cambridge 2002), 27-30. Pantomimes did not become part of thymelic competitions in the eastern part of

(διανομαί), mentioned next in l. 16, had in other instances aroused suspicion among Roman authorities, as is clearly implied in one of Trajan's letters to Pliny the Younger, and particularly when the distributions were extended to the entire membership of a club.[43]

A third category of donation appears to have been mentioned at the end of l. 16, but this is now lost. The traditional restoration of ll. 16-17, τὰ τῶ[ν ἀγώνων θέματα? δαπαν]ῶ[σιν?] | [τὴ]ν φι[λοτιμ]ίαν is only tentative. "Contests" (ἀγῶνες) included athletic and musical events, and it would be surprising to hear an Antonine emperor express criticism of those. Gladiatorial games, on the other hand, if they were not already included in the term θέαι, can be expected to have been included in this third category of donations, having been the target of criticism and imperial regulations since the time of Augustus. I will return to the subject of imperial intervention in the organization of *munera* after proposing one further change to the traditional readings of this document: in l. 12, the conjunction ὡς fits in the small lacuna after πόλ[ει] and before [ὑμ]εῖς, and makes sense in the light of other *martyriai* of Roman functionaries who say that "they too" congratulate the honorand, etc.

Allowing for these several suggested restorations, I propose the following translation of *IK-Ephesos* 1491, ll. 7-18, adapted from that of S. Mitchell (1990):

> "I have been informed about Vedius Antoninus' generosity towards you not so much from your letters as from his; for, wishing to receive help from me [for] the embellishment of the works that he has promised you, he has declared to me [the number] and the size of the buildings he adds to the city. [As] you therefore rightly congratulate him, I too cooperated with

the Roman empire until early in the reign of Commodus (L. ROBERT, "Pantomimen im griechischen Orient", in *Hermes* 65 [1930], 106-122, esp. 121) or possibly in the last years of Marcus Aurelius (G.W. BOWERSOCK, "Aristides and the Pantomimes", in *Aelius Aristides between Greece, Rome, and the Gods*, ed. by W.V. HARRIS and B. HOLMES [Leiden 2008], 69-77).

[43] PLIN. *Epist.* 10, 117.

him in the things he asked and congratulated him because he did [not] choose the [usual?] way of men in public life who in order to be instantly successful spend (or: waste) their generosity on shows and distributions and [.....], but (he chose instead the way) by which he [hopes?] to make the city more distinguished [in the future?]."

The emperor praises Vedius and, with him, those who spend their money on embellishing their cities instead of pursuing instant popularity ([παρ]αχρῆμ[α εὐδοκιμ]εῖν) for themselves by offering cash distributions, performances of some types (other than traditional ones, most likely), and a third type of euergetic donation, now lost from the text.

Do these passages constitute reliable evidence that Antoninus Pius generally supported buildings vs. spectacles? Not necessarily. Documents that justify the use of funds for a building had a relatively high chance of being chosen for epigraphic display on or near that building, and they had a relatively high chance of surviving as long as the building remained in use. Given those circumstances, documents preserved on stone that directly concern reallocation of funds to construction projects, such as the letter from Aphrodisias discussed above, or that praise the decision to erect or embellish a building, such as the letter of Antoninus to Ephesos, might lead us to overstate the preference of cities or emperors for buildings over other forms of euergetism. We must bear in mind that, although spectacles provided the occasion for some inscriptions and apparently many more reliefs and mosaics, buildings were more likely than spectacles to be the cause for the inscribing and preservation of monumental inscriptions.[44]

Antoninus' letter to Ephesos, then, is neither as remarkable as it is often thought to be nor does it provide independent proof that emperors prompted cities and *euergetai* to prefer buildings to spectacles in any particular instance. Combined

[44] For inscriptions related to spectacles, see L. ROBERT, *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec* (Paris 1940), esp. 53f. and 283f., and above (reliefs).

with other evidence from the first and second centuries, however, it does seem to document a certain tendency towards favouring buildings. As mentioned above, a passing reference to construction projects in the epigraphic dossier from Alexandria Troas suggests that the construction of buildings was a preferred use of redirected funds. And from Lycia there is evidence of Rome showing appreciation for such redirecting of funds. The Lycian league, after repeatedly sending to Antoninus Pius decrees in honour of Opramoas of Rhodiapolis, apparently did not receive the imperial *martyriai*, the letters of recommendation that it hoped for, until after 141 CE, when Opramoas first began to extend donations to the cities for the purpose of rebuilding after an earthquake. There is no evidence that his earlier donations, which were for games and distributions, had earned him recognition at Rome.

Buildings vs. *munera*

Under normal circumstances, that is without an earthquake making construction projects a priority, there is evidence of the central government favouring buildings vs. *munera*, if not favouring buildings vs. games in general. As mentioned above, when Trajan was asked to help Pliny in his decision to put a testator's money into buildings or into penteteric games, the emperor remained neutral.[45] The word that Pliny uses to refer to the games in that instance is the Greek *agônes*, hence Greek-style games, either athletic or musical. Trajan does not express a preference for buildings over those games. In contrast, there had been a long tradition in the Roman Empire, starting with Augustus and Tiberius, of setting limits on expenses for gladiatorial games, in particular.[46] According to Tacitus, the emperor Nero

[45] PLIN. *Epist.* 10, 75; see above.

[46] DIO CASS. 54, 2, 4 (Augustus) and SUET. *Tib.* 34 (Tiberius); J.H. OLIVER and R.E.A. PALMER, "Minutes of an Act of the Roman Senate", in *Hesperia* 24 (1955), 320-349, esp. 322-323.

"issued an edict that no magistrate or procurator should, in the province for which he was responsible, exhibit a gladiatorial spectacle, a display of wild beasts, or any other entertainment. Previously, a subject community suffered as much from the spurious liberality as from the rapacity of its governors, screening as they did by corruption the offences they had committed in wantonness (Trans. J. Jackson, *LCL* [London 1969])".[47] On the evidence of Tacitus, then, rogue provincial governors and procurators had offered gladiatorial games and spectacles in their provinces for corrupt purposes. By forbidding Roman officials to continue these practices, this measure aimed at protecting the subjects, or at least it is so presented by Tacitus.

Under either Hadrian or Antoninus Pius, the Senate issued a ruling explicitly directed against the staging of *venationes* and *spectacula*: when testamentary funds were bequeathed for such events, the cities were ordered to disregard the testator's intent. The money was to be channeled instead to what the cities deemed to be their most urgent needs.[48]

[47] TAC. *Ann.* 13, 31: *et edixit Caesar, ne quis magistratus aut procurator in provincia, quam obtineret, spectaculum gladiatorum aut ferarum aut quod aliud ludicrum ederet. Nam ante non minus tali largitione quam corripiendis pecuniis subiectos adfligebant, dum, quae libidine deliquerant, ambitu propugnant.*

[48] *Dig.* 50, 8, 6: *sed municipio pecuniam legatam, ut ex reditu eius venatio aut spectacula edantur, senatus in eas causas erogare vetuit: et pecuniam eo legatam in id, quod maxime necessarium municipibus videatur, conferre permittitur, ut in eo munificentia eius qui legavit inscriptione notetur* "Where, however, money was bequeathed in order that its income may be used for hunting, or for exhibitions, the Senate forbade it to be used for such purposes, and permitted the legacy to be expended upon what was most needed by the city, and to recognize the munificence of the person who made the bequest, authorized that the fact should be commemorated by an inscription" (trans. S.P. SCOTT, *The Civil Law,* XI [Cincinnati 1932]). The ruling was included in Valens' *Fideicommissa.* L. Fulvius Aburnius Valens is attested from Hadrian to Antoninus Pius (*RE*, I A, 1894, 127, s.v. Aburnius 2). See P.M. NIGDELIS and G.A. SOURIS, *Ανθύπατος λέγει. Ένα διάταγμα των αυτοκρατορικών χρόνων για το γυμνάσιο της Βέροιας* (Thessalonike 2005) (cf. K.M. COLEMAN, *art. cit.* [n. 25], 35) for the edict of a provincial governor who assumes a proactive role in reallocating funds for the upkeep of the city's gymnasium at Beroia (the provincial governor L. Memmius Rufus, governor of Macedonia in the first to second centuries CE; P.M. NIGDELIS and G.A. SOURIS, *op. cit.*, 106-108).

Among the most informative attestations of state intervention in connection with the staging of *munera* is the *s.c. de sumptibus ludorum gladiatorum minuendis* of 177 CE.[49] Details of the text are known primarily from the famous bronze tablet found at Italica in Baetica (thus *Aes Italicense*) that contains part of a speech, its original length unknown.[50] Enough of the speech survives to enable its identification as a piece of public rhetoric of some ambition, presenting two main purposes in the surviving, middle part of the speech: first, to thank the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus for having issued regulations aimed at controlling the costs of gladiators, and, second, to propose some amendments and additions to the new imperial legislation. Making allowances for the rhetoric of the speaker, it seems that the new legislation was welcomed by the priests of the imperial cult, while it resulted in the loss of a source of state revenue for Rome.

The cause of this loss of revenue appears to have been the abolition of a tax paid by the *lanistae*, the professionals involved with the trade in gladiators and with their training.[51] Some

[49] *CIL* II 6278 = *ILS* 5163 = *Epigrafia anfiteatrale dell'Occidente romano* VII 3.

[50] That notable was most likely the senator delivering the *sententia prima* after the oration of the emperors had been read, as was assumed by TH. MOMMSEN, "Senatus consultum de sumptibus ludorum gladiatoriorum minuendis factum a. p. C. 176/7", in *Gesammelte Schriften* 8 (Berlin 1913), 499-531, esp. 506, among others (i.e. J.H. OLIVER and R.E.A. PALMER, *art. cit.* [n. 46], 327); cf. J.L. GÓMEZ-PANTOJA, *EAOR* VII (Roma 2009), 52-53, who suggests that the speaker may have been one of the consuls of the years 176-178 CE. A different interpretation was proposed by T. WIEDEMANN, *op. cit.* (n. 26), 134-135, who thought that the text formed part of the minutes of "a debate apparently held at Lyon, the centre of the imperial cult for the three Gallic provinces".

[51] Mommsen's proposal that a tax was abolished has been generally accepted but was challenged by F. MILLAR, *op. cit.* (n. 27), 195, who argued that the establishment of fixed prices for gladiators in itself would have caused loss of revenue for the state, since the state supplied gladiators from imperial schools of gladiators (called *ludi*). Procurators of imperial *ludi* are attested in the provinces, East and West, though there is less evidence for their existence in the East; L. ROBERT, *op. cit.* (n. 44), 267-268 n. 1. B. MEISSNER, *art. cit.* (n. 27), 174 n. 26 challenges Robert on the attestation of *procuratores ludi* in Ankyra and Thessalonike, but Meissner seems to misunderstand the point made by Robert, who merely suggests that, if it is connected to *munera*, λούδων (ἐπίτροπος λούδων)

criticism of the Roman administration of the past can be detected in the speech, as when the speaker says that the fiscus would abstain in future from a source of dirty money, but the role of the villain is clearly reserved for the *lanistae*. As presented by the speaker, an important consequence of the senatorial edict was a limiting of the *lanistae*'s freedom of action. From the viewpoint of the provincial aristocracy, the speaker seems to imply, the *lanistae* had received state support for their activities because they had functioned as tax-collectors for the state, a position that would have given them room for profiteering. By the terms of the *s.c.*, the Roman state withdrew that support.[52]

It is apparent from a passage in which the *lanistae* are described as "the wicked who have made themselves actually indispensable" that the *lanistae* performed a crucial role in the mounting of *munera*.[53] It looks very much as if profiteering by

must be understood as the Greek rendering of Latin *ludus* in the sense of gladiatorial barracks, not in the sense of scenic and circus games.

[52] And gave the *lanistae* a compensatory gift of cancelling their debts. In ll. 56-58, the text has been thought to provide information about a new source of revenue for the state, the selling of convicts for games in Gaul, but J.L. GÓMEZ-PANTOJA, *op. cit.* (n. 50), 61-64, argues persuasively in favour of a reading of l. 56 that does not support this conclusion; cf. review by J. EDMONDSON, in *JRA* 24 (2011), 738-744: 744.

[53] *CIL* II 6278, l. 12: *malis consulunt qui se etiam necessarios fecerint*. Ll. 9-12, text and translation Oliver and Palmer, *art. cit.* (n. 46), 330-331 and 340: *Quin etiam, ex reliquis lanistarum quae HS quingenties supra sunt, pars lanistis condonetur. Ob quae, oro vos, merita? Nulla sane, inquiunt, merita, s[e]t prohibiti talibus grassaturis solacium ferant et in posterum tanto pretio invitentur ad opsequium humanitatis. (vacat) O magni impp(eratores), qui scitis altius fundari remedia quae etiam malis consulunt qui se etiam necessarios fecerint*! "Let even a part be cut from the back debts owed by lanistae, which come to more than five million sesterces, as a free gift to the lanistae." "For what deserts, I respectfully ask you?" "Of course," the emperors say, "for no deserts, but since they have been forbidden to engage in the disorderly conduct of their old life, let them have this consolation, and in the future let them be invited to serve the public at a fixed rate." "Oh, great Emperors, who know that remedies which allow for the interests even of the wicked who have made themselves actually indispensable are set on deeper foundations, the harvest of your great foresight will indeed come forth."

One wonders whether the central role of the *lanistae* in mounting *munera* might account for the occasional confusion between the words *lanista* and *munerarius* in Latin texts. Attestations in *RE*, XVI. 1, 1933, 564-565, s.v. *munerarius*.

lanistae drove up the costs or made them unpredictable or, more likely, both, to the disadvantage of the imperial priests. It must have been common for the *lanistae* to manipulate gladiators' prices, since their price must have been largely a matter of negotiation prior to the legislation of 177 CE. Gladiators of course lost value by wear and tear, but they could also gain value by distinguishing themselves, and ll. 62-63 of the *Aes Italicense* provides evidence that they may have actively pursued strategies of increasing their own valuation. One effect of setting price limits on gladiators would have been to lessen the financial risk for the *munerarius*.

The regulations of the *s.c. de sumptibus ludorum* were explicitly to be applied not only in the public provinces but also in the imperial provinces and thus throughout the empire.[54] We might conjecture that the role of *lanistae* was less crucial in the East, where we have evidence of city-owned troupes being passed down from priests to their successors.[55] Assuming that priests bought gladiators to enhance a city-owned troupe and then re-sold those gladiators to their successors, such transactions would also have been affected by the new legislation.[56] There is no evidence, however, that the edict fixed the prices of gladiators at rates significantly lower than what was customary at the time of its promulgation. On the contrary, the speaker in the *Aes Italicense* notes that the fixed prices might have been too high for the less prosperous parts of the empire.[57] What was welcome to some or all of the imperial priests, then, was

[54] Though our other evidence for the *s.c. de sumptibus ludorum*, the fragmentary *Marmor Sardianum* (*CIL* III 7106 = *ILS* 9340), also originates from a place in a public province, Sardis in the Roman province of Asia. In the *tabula* from Italica in Baetica, ll. 53-55 read: *sciantque v.c. qui proconsules... [e]t ii etiam qui non sortito provincias regunt.*

[55] Cf. *CIL* II 6278 ll. 59-61 and L. ROBERT, *op. cit.* (n. 44), 284-285.

[56] On the reselling of gladiators at Rome, DIO CASS. (59, 14, 1-4) says that at the end of a series of games Caligula would sell his remaining gladiators by public auction, forcing senators and knights to buy them at high prices. See also SUET. *Calig.* 38, 4: on one occasion, a certain Saturninus dozed at an auction, nodding his head, and "bought" thirteen gladiators for 9 million HS.

[57] *CIL* II 6278 ll. 46-55.

probably the possibility of calculating costs in advance in an effort to meet those costs with adequate revenues.

The possibility of calculating these costs in advance could have provided another advantage. Civic decrees of imperial date often speak of imperial priests as having financed out of their own pockets (ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων) the games traditionally connected with the worship of the emperor. These references imply the existence of alternative modes of financing those games, modes that presumably involved public money to some degree. According to the *lex Ursonensis* of 47-44 BCE, a magistrate might receive from the city some part of the money needed to stage *ludi.*[58] While there is no evidence that, under the empire, regulations similar to those in the *lex Ursonensis* were in effect, it is possible that gladiatorial games staged in connection with important celebrations received public funds in some cases — not a detail that we should expect to find mentioned explicitly in honorific decrees. The more precisely the cost of gladiators could be determined in advance, the easier it must have been to plan such mixed financing.

Conclusions

Each of the two euergetic choices, games and buildings, clearly presented its own financial risks, the mounting of games

[58] A.C. JOHNSON *et al.*, *Ancient Roman Statutes. A Translation with Introduction, Commentary, Glossary and Index* (Austin 1961), 97-104, esp. n. 114: "(71) All aediles during their magistracy shall celebrate a gladiatorial show or dramatic spectacles to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, or whatever portion of the said shows shall be possible, during three days, for the greater part of each day, and during one day games in the circus or the forum to Venus, and on the said spectacles and the said show each of the said persons shall expend from his own money not less than 2000 sesterces, and from the public fund it shall be lawful for each several aedile to expend 1000 sesterces, and a duumvir or a prefect shall provide that the money shall be given and assigned, and it shall be lawful for the aediles to receive the same without prejudice to themselves." On the combination of public funding and private munificence in the financing of festivals in the cities of mainland Greece in Roman times, see F. CAMIA, "The Financing of Festivals in the Cities of Roman Greece", in *Tyche* 26 (2011), 41-76.

(whether Greek- or Roman-style) being likely to cause quick and spectacular damage to donors' fortunes, while the sponsoring of building projects might eat away at them slowly but surely. The donors' decisions were shaped at the same time by strategies of commemoration and by immediate concerns, such as finding land for a new building or negotiating the details of a new festival with local and provincial authorities. Moral perceptions may well have played a role in a donor's choice between buildings and spectacles. It has been argued that the reason why we have less evidence for gladiatorial shows from mainland Greece than from Asia Minor, and very little from Athens, is that Greece was poor in imperial times.[59] But it is doubtful that any of the conventional euergetic choices would have been too expensive for the Athenian-Roman magnate and intellectual Herodes Atticus. And this exceptionally rich and influential man of imperial Greece chose to donate buildings.[60]

Though Herodes was undoubtedly an *euergetes sui generis*, his passion for buildings was in accordance with the Hadrianic model of euergetism. During Hadrian's reign, Rome supported building projects in the provinces, and also intervened extensively when asked to resolve conflicts connected with Greek-style games, as is shown in the Hadrianic regulations inscribed at Alexandria Troas. There is no evidence that the Roman state at any time favoured buildings over Greek-style games. The Hadrianic regulations mentioned here were clearly intended to ensure that *agônes* that had been announced took place. In the case of *munera*, on the other hand, Roman authorities took action to control and even restrict them on more than one occasion, though the motives behind their legislation are not always discernible. In the senatorial edict *de sumptibus ludorum* in the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, an obvious,

[59] And, as stated by L. ROBERT, *op. cit.* (n. 44), 247: "Les *munera* sont coûteux."

[60] On Herodes' very distinct cultural identity see now M. GLEASON, "Making Space for Bicultural Identity. Herodes Atticus Commemorates Regilla", in *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World*, ed. by T. WHITMARSH (New York-Cambridge 2010), 125-162.

though not necessarily the sole, purpose was to enable sponsors of *munera* to estimate their costs.

This is not to say that the Roman emperors directly intervened to dictate to cities and individuals where to put their money. At least, the honorary documents that were selected for perpetuation in stone do not provide that information. The imperial subjects preferred instead an official rhetoric that drew upon ideals derived from the common Graeco-Roman *paideia* that they shared with their rulers. And rhetoric that pleased the subjects enough to be found worthy of monumental presentation was likely to influence the donors' choices. Therefore, if gladiatorial games were indeed more common in some provinces than in others, there is every justification to look for the causes of this circumstance in both the economy of those provinces and the history of morals.[61] As for athletic and musical contests, one of the reasons for the growth in their popularity throughout the first three centuries CE might be that traditionalists among the members of the Graeco-Roman elite included not only such prominent wise men as Apollonius of Tyana, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom, but also such powerful individuals as the Antonine emperors and their in-group. Since those at the top of the social and political scale can be proven to have occasionally stressed the Greek elements of a developing empire-wide cultural *koine*, we should not be surprised to see the *imitatio imperatoris* lead to more buildings, more musical and athletic contests and, eventually, to the cessation of gladiatorial combat.

[61] Against L. ROBERT, *op. cit.* (n. 44), 248: "la rareté relative des monuments de gladiateurs dans la Grèce propre est un phénomène qui ne touche guère l'histoire des moeurs et de la sensibilité, mais l'histoire économique; c'est du même ordre que la grande rareté des sénateurs romains issus de la Vieille Grèce". He concedes, however, that Rhodes was a place where games were simply not liked.

DISCUSSION

J. Nollé: Ich halte es für sehr hilfreich, dass Sie sich an eine Verbesserung der Lesungen des Vedius-Briefes gewagt haben. Meine volle Zustimmung findet es, dass Sie die Ergänzung ἀγώνων θέματα suspendiert haben: nach θέαι und διανομαί können kaum Agone erwähnt werden, eine Kategorie, die θέαι-ähnlich ist. Schwieriger erscheint mir ε[ἰθισμένον τῶν?] πολιτευομένων τρόπον. Ich erwarte nach εἰθισμένον den Dativ, also τοῖς πολιτευομένοις, so dass ich εἰθισμένον nicht für sehr wahrscheinlich halte. Auch [δαπαν]ῶ[σι τὴ]ν φι[λοτιμ]ίαν halte ich für unwahrscheinlich.

C. Kokkinia: [δαπαν]ῶ[σι] übernehme ich etwas zögernd aus den früheren Ausgaben. Was die Ergänzung ε[ἰθισμένον] betrifft, wäre diese natürlich überzeugender, stünde in Z. 15 πολιτευομένοις statt πολιτευομένων. Mir scheint jedoch die Satzstellung τὸν ε[ἰθισμένον τῶν?] πολιτευομένων τρόπον auch möglich. Ich halte, wie gesagt, die Frage für nicht abschließend geklärt, wer genau vom Kaiser kritisiert wird. Solche Briefe enthalten oft stilistisch ungewöhnliche Wendungen, weshalb sie schwierig zu rekonstruieren sind. Zum Beispiel ist φιλοτιμοῦμαι φιλοτιμίαν (Z. 7: [τ]ὴν φιλοτιμίαν ἣν φιλοτιμε[ῖται]) eine denkbar bizarre Konstruktion und meines Wissens nur hier bezeugt. Trotzdem kommt man auf keinen Fall umhin, die Ergänzungen zu revidieren, wenn man Sinn und Ton des Briefes zumindest annähernd verstehen will.

C. Jones: I find particularly συνέπραξα to be an excellent improvement. I would see a continuity in the policy of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius between *SEG* 50, 1096 (Aphrodisias) and *IK-Ephesos* 1491. The Aphrodisias letter permits ἀρχιερεῖς not to honor the emperor by gladiatorial games but instead to

spend their money on an aqueduct. Pius supports Vedius Antoninus in using his own and the emperor's funds for long-lasting benefactions and not temporary entertainments. Both letters exhibit the same attitude of the πεπαιδευμένοι deploring the instant gratification of applause (especially for gladiatorial displays) in favor of useful gifts, especially buildings (cf. Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom). We might also consider the Demostheneia of Oinoanda as evidence for Hadrianic preference for educated, in this case artistic, uses of benefaction. Demosthenes conforms in his choice of program to the expectations of a cultivated class that valued literary culture above athletics, still more above crowd-pleasing events such as boxers, pancratiasts, and the like. Finally, the Alexandria Troas letter seems to me to aim above all at preserving the continuity of ἀγῶνες, and to that extent protecting the intention of benefactors. I believe that νόμος in l. 8 of that letter may include imperial constitutions: cf. the speech of Marcus Aurelius on the *certamen* of Miletus (*SEG* 38, 1212).

K. Coleman: The awkward tautological expressions that seem to crop up even in letters from emperors are possibly not a signal of any ineptitude on the part of the original scribe or the mason, but perhaps a reflex of the tendency in bureaucratic language to hammer home the same point in the same words without regard to stylistic considerations.

C. Kokkinia: I agree, and I think it would be possible to collect evidence supportive of this view. It is one among a number of reasons why such texts can be particularly elusive.

K. Coleman: Is there any evidence earlier than the *Aes Italicense* for collecting a tax on gladiators?

C. Kokkinia: Not to my knowledge. But the speaker at any rate makes it sound as if this tax had been collected for some time, as opposed to being a recent measure.

J.-P. Thuillier: Ce que vous dites à propos de la multiplicité des évergètes pour la construction de certains édifices est encore plus vrai pour un très grand et très coûteux édifice comme le *circus*, où l'on finance en général une partie du podium ou de la *cavea*. Mais apparemment cela n'empêchait pas les évergètes de se lancer dans cette opération et d'adopter cette stratégie pour séduire le peuple?

C. Kokkinia: Obviously not. Possibly, being commemorated in a theatre or circus was attractive even if one's name were to be inscribed as one among many. One might also consider the possibility that donors were then allowed, at least for a certain period, to sell a number of tickets equivalent to the number of seats that they had financed, on which see G. Chamberland, "A Gladiatorial Show Produced *in sordidam mercedem* (Tacitus *Ann.* 4.62)", in *Phoenix* 61 (2007), 136-149, at 144-145.

R. Webb: In thinking about these inscriptions, should we make a distinction between different kinds of building projects? At Aphrodisias, for example, it is an aqueduct that is paid for out of funds reserved for the shows. Arguably, the provision of water is a necessity comparable to the provision of wheat in times of famine allowed in Hadrian's letter.

C. Kokkinia: I am not sure that building an aqueduct can be compared to providing wheat. Aqueducts brought the water into a city and therefore made life easier. They provided comfort as opposed to something as essential as food. On the contrary, it may be that contributing to an aqueduct was attractive for the *euergetai* themselves, because a *euergetes* might then himself be elected, or have one of his friends or relatives elected, among the curators of the aqueduct (ἐπιμεληταὶ τοῦ ὑδραγωγίου), and could therefore control the distribution of water: see R. Taylor, "*Publici usus, Privatae voluptates*: Water and Demographics in the Ancient Metropolis", in M.R. DeMaine and R. Taylor (eds.), *Life of the Average*

Roman. A Symposium (White Bear Lake, MN 1999), 67–83; and M. Peachin, *Frontinus and the Curae of the Curator Aquarum* (Stuttgart 2004).

G. Chamberland: I believe it is important to make a distinction between "public" spectacles (including ἀγῶνες set up thanks to a private foundation, since the funds were managed by the city) on the one hand, and privately sponsored events on the other. The main common denominator of public spectacles was periodicity, while the privately-sponsored spectacles were usually one-time events. The spectacles mentioned in the inscriptions from Alexandria Troas (*SEG* 56, 1359) and Aphrodisias (*SEG* 50, 1096) belong to the first category. If I am not mistaken, Vedius' building activity (which could have been spectacles instead) falls into the category of real *euergesiai*, i.e. private outbursts of generosity (*IK-Ephesos* 1491). It seems to me that this distinction between "public" and "private" needs to be taken into consideration to understand the imperial rulings. Note expressions such as "κατὰ νόμον" in the text from Alexandria Troas. One is reminded, in this context, of Cicero's *De officiis* 2, 55, which obviously inspired Pliny, *Epist.* 1, 8, 10. In addition, and I am aware that this is not directly relevant to your argument, I find it very interesting that the Aphrodisians, by coming up with the proposal of taking money from certain high priests instead of gladiatorial shows (ἀντὶ μονομαχιῶν), basically asked Hadrian to agree that the annual gladiatorial show should in some years be cancelled in order instead to finance the restoration of the "water channels" (*SEG* 50, 1096, ll. 36–41). This is at odds with the view that such spectacles were an expression of the imperial cult. This inscription, therefore, lends support to Georges Ville's view that "les aristocrates, parvenus, à travers le sacerdoce impérial, au point le plus haut de la hiérarchie municipale, offraient ce qui était le plus haut dans la hiérarchie des spectacles: les combats de gladiateurs" (see *La gladiature en Occident des origines à la mort de Domitien* [Rome 1981], 208).

C. Kokkinia: I doubt that a clear distinction between "public" and "private" is possible or even useful in discussing ancient euergetism. The blurring of these categories lies at the heart of this phenomenon. I also disagree with your view that the Aphrodisians' proposal of taking money from some high priests instead of gladiatorial shows, and their asking Hadrian's permission to do so, uncouples these shows from the imperial cult. Georges Ville may be right, but proof for his view is lacking. I think that there is little chance that the Aphrodisians would fail to ask the emperor for his assent when they planned to make a major change in the role played by the imperial cult in the public life of their city, regardless of whether the games were thought of as directly belonging to the imperial cult or as having the highest possible standing in the hierarchy of spectacles.

J. Nelis-Clément: Votre présentation montre bien les diverses facettes des enjeux et mobiles qui pouvaient se poser à l'évergète dans son choix (attentes de la communauté locale, éventuelles retombées économiques, si difficiles à évaluer, et surtout recherche d'une reconnaissance de la part de l'empereur). Est-ce que ce dernier objectif aurait pu, selon vous, décider l'évergète à choisir d'organiser certains types de spectacles ou de jeux susceptibles d'attirer l'attention ou la faveur impériale de préférence à d'autres? Je pense par exemple aux *certamina sacra* ou à certains *ludi* dont le caractère était jugé acceptable au point que même des membres des élites romaines pouvaient être appelés à y participer sans pour autant être chargés de l'infamie qui frappait habituellement les protagonistes, comme l'a montré récemment G. Horsmann ("Public Performances by Senators and Knights and the Moral Legislation of Augustus", in *Le cirque romain et son image*, éd. par J. Nelis-Clément et J.-M. Roddaz [Bordeaux 2008], 475-480). C'est le cas tout au moins à Rome et à l'époque julio-claudienne, mais que sait-on sur ces questions pour la partie orientale du monde romain? L'inscription de Gytheion de 15 p.C., qui concerne l'organisation des *thymelikoi agônes*, en relation avec le culte impérial (*AE* 1929, 99 et

100; *SEG* 11, 923 et 922), et qui a conservé la réponse de Tibère, pourrait se révéler assez éclairante à ce titre, même si elle illustre il est vrai le rôle de l'agoranome et des éphores, plutôt que celui d'un évergète sans obligation fonctionnelle.

C. Kokkinia: C. Jones mentioned the Demostheneia at Oinoanda as possible evidence that *euergetai* might choose to support the type of games preferred by the emperors, and I think this is a distinct possibility. The inscription from Gytheion shows a city anxious to secure by law the holding of an imperial festival in the future. The details of those provisions are revealing about what could, and obviously sometimes did, go wrong. If I understand your point correctly, a festival that was tailored to fit the preferences of the current imperial ruler ran the risk of neglect or alienation from the founder's intentions, when that ruler or dynasty became a thing of the past.