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## VIII

CHRISTOPHER JONES

### THE ORGANIZATION OF SPECTACLE IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Symmachus, the paladin of the pagan cause at Rome in the last decades of the fourth century, twice in his final years organized games on behalf of his son, Memmius. In 393, when Memmius was only ten years old, the occasion was his quaestorship. His father encountered several disappointments. He had hoped to obtain African lions, but had to be content with what he calls “a few bear-cubs worn out with hunger and fatigue”. Another disappointment was a group of Saxon prisoners-of-war that the usurper Eugenius had given him: these inconsiderately committed suicide on the very day they were to appear. Then there was the expense of the silk-robés to be distributed to the winners, and presents to be given as mementos to the more distinguished spectators, an ivory diptych and a silver basket.<sup>1</sup> Even more elaborate preparations were necessary in 401 when Memmius, now eighteen, was to be praetor. On this occasion Symmachus’ main concern was to get enough Spanish horses for the chariot-races, and he writes to no fewer than eight persons asking for their help. Here too he had bad luck: one friend sent four sets of four horses, but only eleven of the sixteen survived the journey, and more died on their arrival. He got permission from the great Stilicho to flood the

<sup>1</sup> Bear-cubs: SYMM. *Epist.* 2, 76, 2. Saxons: 2, 46, 2. Silk robes as *praemia*: 5, 20, 2. Diptychs: 7, 76. A full listing of Symmachus’ letters on Memmius’ games of 393 and 401 in *PLRE* I 869.

amphitheater with water in order to exhibit the necessary crocodiles, but all the crocodiles except two died. Another object of his concern was the bears that had to be imported from Dalmatia. He had also to obtain charioteers and scenic artists from abroad, and anxiously awaited the news of their safe arrival in Campania. A contemporary source says that these games cost Symmachus two thousand pounds of gold.<sup>2</sup>

We might seem to be at the end of an era, in a pagan world clinging to the elaborate rituals of the Republican and imperial periods. That impression is reinforced by our knowledge that the failure of Eugenius' revolt in 394 dealt a crushing blow to the cause of western paganism, and that the influence of great churchmen like Ambrose in the West and John Chrysostom in the East could now equal or surpass that of a mere senator. Yet many of the traditional forms of spectacle — charioteers, *venatores*, pantomimes, mimes — survived, though in changed form and with different systems of presentation and organization. In this paper I want to consider what did survive and why, and what these new systems were.

I begin with some definitions. What counts as a "spectacle" in this age when Christianity occupied the highest ranks of society and exercised so strong an influence on public life? Here I will define "spectacle" as a visual event, primarily aimed at impressing public spectators, and organized by one or more persons, who may or may not be thought of as "benefactors". Taking my starting point as 395, the year in which the sons of Theodosius divided the empire into eastern and western parts, I will begin with the demise of the traditional contests (*agônes*). I shall then discuss the evolution of organized athletics and of mime and pantomime, which had been admitted to the traditional *agônes* only under the High Empire, but survived triumphantly into Late Antiquity. I then move to chariot-races,

<sup>2</sup> Horses: details in J.-P. CALLU, *Symmaque: Lettres, Tome II (Livres III-V)* (Paris 1982), 138 n. 2. Deaths: SYMM. *Epist.* 5, 56. Actors and charioteers: 6, 33; 6, 42. Stilicho: 4, 8. Crocodiles: 6, 43; 9, 41; 9, 151. Bears: 7, 121; 9, 132, 135, 137, 142. Final cost: OLYMP. HIST. fr. 44 (*FHG* IV 67-68).

which, though part of the traditional *agônes*, took a new form in Late Antiquity, particularly with the appearance in the East of the Roman-style “factions”. Next I take up the subject of gladiators (*gladiatores, monomachoi*) and their cousins, the fighters against wild animals called “hunters” (*venatores, kynêgoi*). I end with some forms of spectacle that are not entertainments, but rather spectacles in the literal sense by which the emperor is less a benefactor than the primary focus of interest, implied or actual, in a public display. I exclude another form of spectacle, extremely important but too remote from our subject here, that of ecclesiastical spectacle such as the enthronement of bishops or the consecration of churches, since in these the element of display, however ‘spectacular’, is secondary to other functions.

Most of the traditional *agônes* of the ‘period’, the Olympia, Pythia, Isthmia and Nemea, and the newcomers to the ‘period’ such as the Capitolia, do not seem to have survived long past the reign of Constantine. The oldest of them all, the Olympia of Elis, was terminated by one of the Theodosii, probably the second.<sup>3</sup> But many cities had long since instituted Olympics of their own, often borrowing details from the archetype such as the Hellenodikai, and at least one of these secondary Olympics, the Antiochene, persisted into the sixth century.<sup>4</sup> Constantine abolished those of Chalcedon, no doubt not wishing an idolatrous event to be held so near his Christian capital. Under Theodosius II, the prefect of the city, Leontios, who may have been a pagan, tried to re-institute them, an attempt that raised the ire of the monk Hypatios, who went to the bishop and demanded that he intervene; when he proved hesitant, Hypatios and his monks shamed Leontios into abandoning his project.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> I. WEILER, “Theodosius I. und die Olympischen Spiele”, in *Nikephoros* 17 (2004), 53-75.

<sup>4</sup> For late imitations of the Olympics, S. REMIJSSEN, “The *alytarches*, an Olympic *agonothetes*”, in *Nikephoros* 22 (2009), 129-143.

<sup>5</sup> CALLINIC. V. *Hypatii* 33 (Sources Chrétiennes 177, 214-219); *PLRE* II 669, Leontius 9.

Most of our information concerns the Olympics of Antioch. In Libanius' day these still involved athletes, but the main attractions were the chariot-races and *venationes*. A law of the emperor Leo, dated to the year 465, forbade members of the curial order to preside over them, and entrusted them to the Count of the Orient; in 521 Justin terminated them altogether. Curiously, Christian writers often refer to "the Olympics" when devising metaphors of the Christian's struggle for the eternal crown, but that does not imply that they were familiar with them in reality.<sup>6</sup>

The decline and disappearance of organized *agônes* of the pagan type did not put an end to public athletics. A.H.M. Jones found no mention of athletic contests after 400, but argued that there must still have been athletic victors in the sixth century, since a constitution in Justinian's code, originally issued by Diocletian, gives prize-winning athletes immunity from civic obligations. The constitution in question refers not only to civic obligations, but requires that the athletes should have won in "sacred games" held at Rome and elsewhere: and yet there is no evidence that any of the "sacred games" of earlier centuries lasted so late as the reign of Justinian. The answer is perhaps that descendants of famous prize-winners could claim immunity, and the emperor is allowing such claims to be put forward if any such descendants are still living in his own day. A papyrus from Hermopolis shows the emperor Gallienus granting full exemption from liturgies to an orphan boy, descended from ancestors "famous in athletics".<sup>7</sup>

A poem preserved in the Planudean Appendix seems to imply the existence of traditional athletics and honorific statues for victors even in sixth-century Byzantium. This is an elegant

<sup>6</sup> Leo I: *Cod. Iust.* 1, 36. Justin I: JOH. MAL. 17, 13. Metaphorical language: C.P. JONES, "Imaginary Athletics in Two Followers of John Chrysostom", in *HSPh* 106, forthcoming.

<sup>7</sup> A.H.M. JONES, *The Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1964), II 1018, III 337 n. 69, citing *Cod. Iust.* 10, 54, 1; J.H. OLIVER, *Greek Constitutions of Early Roman Emperors from Inscriptions and Papyri* (Philadelphia 1989), no. 289.

epigram on a boy runner written by Macedonius, a consul and poet under Justinian.<sup>8</sup>

“By this statue (is honored) Thyonichos, not so that you may see how beautiful he is from the radiance of this monument, but that when you learn the race that he won by his effort, my good friend, you may emulate the same frenzy. This (boy) did not bend his leg in fatigue, but defeated everyone in the contest, contemporary, younger, (or) older.”

This is perhaps archaizing and pseudo-pagan fantasy. Yet there were still athletic spectacles, if not traditional contests. A remarkable papyrus from Oxyrhynchus, dated to the sixth century, is called by the editor a “circus programme”. Headed with a Christogram, it contains a list of chariot-races interspersed with “singing rope-dancers”, “gazelle and hounds”, “mimes”, and “a troupe of athletes” (*xystos*).<sup>9</sup> The fact that athletes are on the same level with rope-dancers and mimes suggests that they had become part of the show, like trapeze-artists in the modern circus, and no longer competed for prizes. Charlotte Roueché has published an inscription from Aphrodisias, perhaps as late as the sixth century and mentioning a Christian boxer; she aptly recalls Theodore of Sykeon’s healing of a wrestler (*louktatōr*) in the reign of Maurice. In her words, “all this is evidence not for the continuation of athletic contests in their earlier form..., but for demonstrations of athletic skills as a form of entertainment”.<sup>10</sup>

To move to the subject of ‘theatrical’ entertainments and their organization, the old view that mime and pantomime had completely replaced traditional tragedy and comedy — a view going back at least to Edward Gibbon — is an exaggeration: a

<sup>8</sup> *Anth. Plan.* 51 = J.A. MADDEN, *Macedonius Consul. The Epigrams* (Hildesheim-Zürich-New York 1995), no. 41.

<sup>9</sup> *P.Oxy.* 2707 (and possibly *P.Bingen* 128 and *P.Harrauer* 56); cf. A. CAMERON, *Circus Factions. Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford 1976), 213-214.

<sup>10</sup> CH. ROUECHÉ, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and Late Roman Periods* (London 1993), no. 87 (= *IAph2007*, 2.313), citing A.-J. FESTUGIÈRE (éd.), *Vie de Théodore de Sykéon* (Bruxelles 1970), ch. 88.

leaf of the diptych of Anastasius, consul in 517, shows a mime in the left portion of the lowest register and a tragedy in the right (Pl. 8.1).<sup>11</sup> The juxtaposition suggests that traditional drama survived at least in Constantinople, but had to compete with other entertainments, principally mime. This continued to enjoy a tremendous vogue, despite the denunciations of the clergy and the occasional intervention of the secular authorities. At an uncertain date in the first decades of the sixth century, Choricius of Gaza composed a *Defense of the Mimes* that is one of the very few works surviving from antiquity to have the theater as their subject. It is entirely pagan in its frame of reference, and ends with a short encomium of Dionysus as a benefactor of mankind; it might therefore seem so anachronistic as to say little about mime in the sixth century. Yet it is precisely Choricius' claims for the morality of the mime, or at least its moral harmlessness, that gives it its contemporary resonance.<sup>12</sup> The pressure against theatrical performances came as much from ecclesiastical as from secular authorities (and secular authorities probably tended to act when they themselves came under pressure from the Church); hence a leading sophist of Gaza, on excellent terms with the ecclesiastical and secular powers, had to defend this form of popular theater as a harmless amusement if he was not to offend its critics. Choricius' defense and the attacks of churchmen surely indicate that not all performances of mime were under state-patronage. If there is any truth in Procopius' account of them, the empress Theodora's

<sup>11</sup> R. DELBRUECK, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin-Leipzig 1929), no. 21 (Paris, Cabinet des Médailles); CH. ROUECHÉ, *op. cit.* (n. 10), 25. *PLRE* II 82-83, Anastasius 17. In general, W. PUCHNER, "Acting in the Byzantine Theatre. Evidence and Problems", in *Greek and Roman Actors. Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, ed. by P. EASTERLING and E. HALL (Cambridge, U.K.-New York 2002), 304-324.

<sup>12</sup> CHORIC. *Apol. Mim.*, no. 32 Foerster-Richtsteig. On this work, T.D. BARNES, "Christians and the Theater", in *Roman Theater and Society. E. Togo Salmon Papers*, I, ed. by W.J. SLATER (Ann Arbor 1996), 178-180; V. MALINEAU, "L'apport de l'*Apologie des Mimes* de Chorikios de Gaza à la connaissance du théâtre du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle", in *Gaza dans l'Antiquité tardive*, éd. par C. SALIOU (Salerno 2005), 149-169; G.W. BOWERSOCK, *Mosaics as History* (Cambridge, Mass. 2006), 62-63.

notorious stage-performances took place in the capital itself.<sup>13</sup> Procopius' approximate contemporary, the Syriac historian John of Ephesos, gives a marvelous account of a Christian couple, married but living in chastity, who posed as mimes in the city of Amida. "They used to go about the city in disguise," says John, "and they used constantly to perform drolleries (*paignia*) and buffooneries, being constantly in the courts of the church like strangers, jesting at the clergymen and everyone, and being boxed on their heads by every one as mime-actors (*mimoi*), while at all hours of the day a large number of people surrounded them chiefly on account of their marvelous appearance and the comeliness of their faces, joking and playing with them and giving them slaps on their heads".<sup>14</sup>

As an example of the freedom with which such mime-troupes operated, we may consider Malalas' account of a mime-actor who became a saint. Appropriately named Gelasinos, he was performing in Syrian Heliopolis (Baalbek), a notoriously pagan city and a very plausible setting for such a story.<sup>15</sup>

"[Gelasinos] was a second mime, and came on in a scene. It was during a holiday, and while the people watched, (the actors) put him into a big bath full of warm water, making fun of Christian doctrine and of holy baptism. But this same Gelasinos the mime, after having been baptized, emerged from the bath, put on white clothing, and was no longer willing to perform, saying in front of the people, 'I am a Christian, for I saw the mighty power of God while I was being baptized in the bath, and I will die a Christian'. When the people who were spectators in the theater heard this, they became completely enraged. Swarming onto the stage from their seats, they took hold of him, dragged him out of the theater in his white clothing, and killed him by stoning, and thus the righteous man was martyred."

<sup>13</sup> PROCP. *Anecd.* 9, 13-14.

<sup>14</sup> JOH. EPHE., *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, III, ed. by E.W. BROOKS (Paris 1925), 166-167 = 512-513. I am grateful to R. Webb for this reference.

<sup>15</sup> JOH. MAL. 12, 50; W. WEISMANN, "Gelasinos von Heliopolis, ein Schauspieler-Märtyrer", in *AB* 93 (1975), 39-66. T.D. BARNES, *art. cit.* (n. 12), 164 n. 9, considers all such hagiographical accounts of mime-martyrs "bogus and fictitious".

Malalas goes on to describe how Gelasinos' relatives recovered his remains, took them to the village Mariamne, and constructed a martyr-chapel in his memory. Even if the story is imaginary rather than historical, Malalas or his source is unlikely to have invented it unless some mime-troupes were known to operate free of official supervision. In 546, Justinian banned men and women, but especially theatrical performers, from dressing as monks or nuns, and from making jokes at their expense: we might guess that ecclesiastical authorities had brought the abuse to his attention.<sup>16</sup> In the *Secret History*, Procopius alleges that Justinian's reign saw the general closure of "theaters, race-courses, and hunting-arenas (*kynēgesia*)", and that "he ordered these spectacles to close in Byzantium too, so that the public chest might not have to give the usual subsidies to the many, virtually innumerable, persons who gained their living in this way". But this appears to be an exaggeration: there may have been temporary bans or restrictions, but mimes at least were too popular ever to vanish. As late as 691, the Trullan Council was still trying to end stage-diversions (*thymelika paignia*), but our sources continue to mention mimes at Byzantium until the late Middle Ages.<sup>17</sup>

The situation of pantomime was different. The circus program of Oxyrhynchus intersperses chariot-races with "singing rope-dancers", "gazelles and hounds", "mimes", and "a troupe of athletes", but not with pantomimes. This art required the actor to have the training and the suppleness of the modern ballet-dancer, and in addition it called for a large back-up of orchestra and chorus. To judge by Lucian's account, it also depended on the audience's appreciating its highly allusive references to Greek myth. A mosaic from Zeugma, dated to the early third century, refers to a story preserved for us only by the mythographer Hyginus, though one suspects that it was

<sup>16</sup> *Nov.* 123, 44 (p. 624 Kroll).

<sup>17</sup> PROCP. *Anec.* 26, 8-9; F. TINNEFELD, "Zum Profanen Mimus in Byzanz nach dem Verdikt des Trullanums (691)", in *Vyzantina* 6 (1974), 323-343.

known from some lost drama.<sup>18</sup> In Justinianic Byzantium, pantomime was linked to the circus-factions, and it could well have persisted in the capital and in such sophisticated centers as Aphrodisias while disappearing from provincial towns such as Oxyrhynchus. In 579, when Gregory, the Chalcedonian bishop of Antioch, was named in a scandal of alleged paganism, a hostile source reports that he saved his position in part by promising to build a hippodrome and importing a troop of pantomimes from the capital; it may be that he wanted a more stellar troupe than he could find locally, but it may rather be that there was no local troupe to be found at all.<sup>19</sup> By a curious coincidence, Gregory of Tours reports that the Frankish king Chilperic began to build circuses in Soissons and Paris just about this time, “providing a spectacle for the populace” (*populis spectaculum praebens*).<sup>20</sup>

In the Oxyrhynchus program charioteers are the main event, and ample evidence, for example Symmachus’ frantic search for Spanish race-horses, confirms the ever increasing popularity of chariot-races. The most spectacular visual record of a victorious charioteer in the Byzantine period is the early sixth-century Porphyrius-monument so brilliantly published by Alan Cameron in 1973. In his companion volume, *Circus Factions*, Cameron argues that Greek-style chariot-races, in which the owner rather than the driver was the dominant figure and won all the credit for the victory, had never become widespread outside the great festivals of the “circuit” (Olympia, Pythia, Isthmia and Nemea) and a few others. Roman-style races, in which the driver and not

<sup>18</sup> K.M.D. DUNBABIN, “The Pantomime Theonoe on a Mosaic from Zeugma”, in *JRA* 23 (2010), 413-426.

<sup>19</sup> Aphrodisias: e.g. CH. ROUECHÉ, *op. cit.* (n. 10), no. 12 (from the stage of the Odeon; I continue to think that the subject is a pantomime). Cf. CH. ROUECHÉ, *op. cit.* (n. 10), 25-28, concluding: “The forms of entertainment that demanded space, scenery, and musical support, such as the pantomime, appear to have withered away after the end of the sixth century”. Gregory of Antioch: JOH. EPH., *Hist. Eccles.* 5, 17 (*Corp. Scr. Chr. Or.* 106 [Paris 1936], 225-226).

<sup>20</sup> *Hist. Franc.* 5, 17, *MGH, Scr. Rer. Merov.*, I.1 p. 216. I owe this reference to Peter Brown.

the owner won the crown, were excluded from the traditional *agônes*, and became popular in the East only from about 400. Cameron's explanation is that the traditional Greek gymnasium disappeared just at this time, and was soon followed by the disappearance of gladiatorial contests, though not of *venationes*. This left "a gap in the social life of the cities" so that "precisely in the decades immediately following... we begin to find evidence of chariot-racing as a sport in its own right in eastern cities". Behind this spread of Roman-style chariot-racing, he argued, lies imperial patronage: as the emperors built more and more hippodromes in provincial capitals, the new style caught hold, and with it there came Roman-style *factiones*; these were not just fan-clubs, but corporations headed by charioteers such as Porphyrius, and responsible for maintaining stables and supplying equipment for shows. As these corporations came under the control of the state, they were fused into one organization with simultaneous responsibility for theatrical displays and for chariot-racing, so that, to quote Cameron again, "by the fifth or sixth century public entertainments were largely if not entirely financed out of public funds all over the eastern provinces" (by "public" Cameron clearly means state-funds, not local ones).<sup>21</sup>

This is a bold and ingenious attempt to account for all the evidence for the rise of circus-factions and their characteristic colors in the East, and also for the presence of Green and Blue mimes and pantomimes. It also accounts for much that is otherwise puzzling, such as the late appearance in the *pars Graeca* of the Roman circus-colors. Yet it is difficult to avoid a feeling that this comprehensive explanation puts too much emphasis on state-control; it turns the factions into entertainment agencies, with the difference from their modern counterparts that the factions served as a conduit for state-funds.<sup>22</sup> This may have happened in the capital and in major cities such as Antioch, but

<sup>21</sup> A. CAMERON, *op. cit.* (n. 9), ch. 8, "Circus Factions and Theatre Factions", especially 214-222.

<sup>22</sup> For similar doubts, CH. ROUECHÉ, *op. cit.* (n. 10), 46.

it is hard to imagine state funds trickling down to a minor Egyptian town such as Oxyrhynchus. The Apiones, great land-owners at Oxyrhynchus and elsewhere, and also prominent in the high politics of the sixth century, appear in papyri as benefactors of both Blues and Greens; a papyrus of 565 shows them making payments to two *ergastēria* of mimes, perhaps "studios" that hired out their members. It seems more likely that the Apiones were imitating the emperors as patrons of local entertainments, rather than passing on funds sent from above.<sup>23</sup> Those who organized the already mentioned program of spectacles at Oxyrhynchus, which included charioteers along with musical performers and athletes, probably drew on similar pools of local talent, financed by local grandees rather than by the emperor.

Though I therefore share the doubts that have been expressed by others about Alan Cameron's hypothesis, it is fair to note recent discoveries in the stadium of Aphrodisias, which certainly underwent a major architectural change in Late Antiquity. This was built in the Julio-Claudian period for athletic events of all types, and had also accommodated gladiatorial combats and *venationes*, but not chariot-races; Katherine Welch has argued from the width of the tracks that these took place in some open area outside the walls. At a date not later than the early sixth century, the east end of the stadium was remodeled so as to form a small arena for *venationes* and other entertainments, and only at this end do inscriptions mentioning the Blues and Greens appear.<sup>24</sup>

I move to two forms of spectacle that were not included in the traditional Greek games, gladiatorial combats (*munera gladiatoria, monomachiai*) and staged hunts (*venationes, kynēgia*). These were usually special shows put on by wealthy citizens, *munera*, though the letters of Libanius reveal a late development

<sup>23</sup> E.R. HARDY, *The Large Estates of Byzantine Egypt* (New York 1931), 136, "The Apion family's interest in the hippodrome at Oxyrhynchus was probably both a natural consequence of their position in the city and a means of maintaining it". *Ergastēria: P.Oxy.* 2480, 43.

<sup>24</sup> K. WELCH, "The Stadium at Aphrodisias", in *AJA* 102 (1998), 547-569.

whereby *venationes* had come to be included in the Olympia of Antioch.<sup>25</sup> The destinies of these two types of spectacle were quite different in Late Antiquity. Eusebius asserts that after the council of Nicaea in 325 Constantine “forbade the cities to be polluted by murderous gladiators”, and yet an inscription from Hispellum in Umbria shows him permitting the city to honor his family with “a spectacle both of theatrical shows (*scaenici ludi*) and of a gladiatorial exhibition (*munus gladiatorium*)”; his only concern is that nothing occur that smacks of “contagious superstition”. In Rome, where senatorial paganism persisted well into the fifth century, gladiatorial combat lived on at least into the reign of Honorius. I have already mentioned Symmachus’ disappointment when his carefully-assembled troop of Saxon prisoners-of-war committed suicide. A constitution of Honorius dated to 397 imposes penalties on those who transfer out of gladiatorial schools to the personal service of senators, and only a few years later Prudentius denounces gladiatorial combat in his *Contra Symmachum*. A commemorative medallion, or so-called ‘contorniate’, that shows such combat used to be dated to the 430s, but now turns out to have been re-cut; the only authentic one with this subject is from about 410, so that it may have been Honorius who gave the *coup de grâce* in the West. In his long attack on the emperor Julian, usually dated about 440, Cyril of Alexandria speaks of gladiatorial games as a thing of the past.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> L. ROBERT, *Les gladiateurs dans l’Orient grec* (Paris 1940), 267-268. Antioch: G. DOWNEY, “The Olympic Games of Antioch in the Fourth Century A.D.”, in *TAPhA* 70 (1939), 428-438.

<sup>26</sup> On the decline of gladiatorial combats in general, G. VILLE, “Les jeux de gladiateurs dans l’Empire chrétien”, in *MEFR* 72 (1960), 273-335; W. WEISMANN, “Gladiator”, in *RLAC* 11, Lg. 81 (1979), 23-45: 27-28. Constantine: D.S. POTTER, “Constantine and the Gladiators” (giving the relevant texts, and arguing that the emperor only banned *damnatio ad ludum*), in *CQ* 60 (2010), 596-606. SYMM. *Epist.* 2, 46, 2. Honorius: *Cod. Theod.* 15, 12, 3. PRUD. *Contra Symm.* 1, 379-405; 2, 1091-1132. Contorniate: A. ALFÖLDI and E. ALFÖLDI-ROSENBAUM, *Die Kontorniat-Medaillons, Teil 2: Text* (Berlin-New York 1990), 215-216, no. 205. Cyril: *PG* 76, 698 B; on the date, M.P. ÉVIEUX, *Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Contre Julien*, t. I (Paris 1985), 10-15.

By contrast, *venationes* remained popular in the eastern empire and (at Rome at least) even under Theoderic. Unlike gladiatorial combats, they appear on many 'contorniates' of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Ivory diptychs give an even more vivid impression, as for instance a diptych of the consul Areobindus, precisely dated to 506 (Pl. 8.2).<sup>27</sup> Such displays were not confined to the capitals. A celebrated mosaic of the fifth century from Yakto, a village near Daphne, has a border showing buildings of Antioch, among them the stadium with its local name of "Olympiakon". The center of the mosaic consists of a roundel showing the personified Munificence (*Megalopsychia*). In her left hand she holds a basket full of coins, and in her upraised right more coins, which she is about to throw (these were at first taken to be flowers). The surrounding panel shows scenes of huntsmen confronting animals, or animals fighting one another; the six huntsman are named starting clockwise from top right in the following order: Hippolytus, Actaeon, Teiresias, Narcissos, Adonis and Meleager. A long discussion followed the initial publication in 1934: was this a representation of a *venatio*, as the image of Munificence throwing out coins would seem to suggest? If so, then the mythological names of the fighters would be professional names such as entertainers often took: pantomimes become "Paris", gladiators become "Achilles", and so on.<sup>28</sup> A very fragmentary tapestry in the Abegg Collection might counsel a doubt, since it shows Artemis juxtaposed with four of the same figures as at Yakto — Actaeon, Meleager, Adonis, and Narcissos. Yet it seems clear from the presence of *Megalopsychia* at Yakto, and from the contemporary dress of the 'hunters', that the mosaic commemorates one or more real-life *venationes*; the donor was presumably the wealthy owner of the house in which the mosaic was

<sup>27</sup> Areobindus diptych: R. DELBRUECK, *op. cit.* (n. 11) no. 11 (Paris, Musée de Cluny). For Areobindus, *PLRE* II 143-144, Areobindus 1.

<sup>28</sup> Standard publication: D. LEVI, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements I: Text* (Princeton-London-The Hague 1947), 326-337 (border), 337-345 (central panel).

found.<sup>29</sup> As we saw, the emperor Leo about this time excluded private citizens from presiding over the Antiochene Olympia, but that would not have prevented a rich benefactor from offering a *munus* from his own funds.

So far I have discussed spectacles having a set organization and a defined audience. The donor might be the emperor himself, even if the factions supplied the performers and equipment, and the audience could include the high society of Byzantium as well as the commoners in the upper tiers of the hippodrome. I have also argued that there was still room for private enterprise, for traveling mime-troupes or local companies willing to put on chariot-races or bands of musicians. I turn now to what can be called "punitive" spectacles, for instance throwing condemned criminals to the beasts (*damnatio ad bestias*) and parading malefactors through the streets, not necessarily on the way to execution.

*Damnatio ad bestias* is a form of punishment with a long history, and its various forms in the imperial period have been excellently discussed not least by one of our own organizers: I would also mention the several treatments by Louis Robert.<sup>30</sup> At first sight it seems surprising that this form of punishment continued into the Byzantine period, since it seems so obviously at variance with the condemnation of gladiatorial contests expressed by Christian preachers and emperors; as we have seen, this aversion to public cruelty led to the demise of such contests even at Rome early in the fifth century. Several sources refer to some kind of ban in the reign of the emperor Anastasius. The

<sup>29</sup> F. BARATTE, "Héros et chasseurs. La tenture d'Artémis de la Fondation Abegg à Riggisberg", in *MMAI* 67 (1985), 31-76. Cf. K.M.D. DUNBAIN, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge, U.K.-New York 1999), 181: "The hunters bear mythological names... but they wear contemporary costume, and are clearly amphitheatre *venatores*".

<sup>30</sup> K.M. COLEMAN, "Fatal Charades: Roman Executions Staged as Mythological Enactments", in *JRS* 80 (1990), 44-73; L. ROBERT, e.g. *Les gladiateurs dans l'Orient grec* (Paris 1940), 351 s.v. "condamnés"; "Une vision de Perpétue martyre", in *CRAI* 126 (1982), 228-276 = *Opera Minora Selecta*, V (Amsterdam 1989), 791-839.

Syriac historian Joshua the Stylite mentions an edict of Anastasius of 499 ordering that “the fights of wild beasts in the *kynēgion* be suppressed in all cities of the Greek empire”, which sounds like the regular *venatio*: yet two panegyrists of Anastasius, Procopius of Gaza and Priscian of Caesarea, seem to refer to *damnatio ad bestias*. In Procopius’ words, “Formerly the cities put on inhumane spectacles; for unhappy men were delivered to the beasts in the midst of the people, though they had as spectators those who shared the bond of nature, and somehow or other a man took pleasure in seeing a man torn apart and his body not even receiving burial, but filling the bellies of animals in place of a tomb”. Joshua the Stylite partially confirms Procopius; he mentions an edict of Anastasius of 499 ordering that “the fights of wild beasts in the *kynēgion* be suppressed in all cities of the Greek empire”. Yet consular diptychs of 508 and 517 clearly depict *venationes*. Either then the ban soon lapsed, or else, if the reference to “cities” in both Procopius and Joshua is significant, Anastasius may have forbidden city-magistrates from using *damnatio* as a punishment, perhaps suspecting local dignitaries of perverting the course of justice in order to create human fodder for the people’s amusement.<sup>31</sup> After Anastasius the only references to this practice concern Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, and in each case it is the emperor or his agent who administers the punishment. To give only one example, about 579 the governor of Osrhoene, Anatolius, was accused of paganism and magical practices. After being tried and found guilty in Antioch, he was sent up to Constantinople to be tried again by his peers, and on being found guilty a second time was “thrown to the beasts” and crucified.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> JOSH. STYL. 23 (ed. W. Wright); PROCOP. *Paneg. Anast.* 15 (p. 96 ed. Amato); PRISC. *Paneg. Anast.* 220-227 (p. 65 ed. Chauvot). Cf. CH. ROUECHÉ, *op. cit.* (n. 10), 77-78; C. EPPLITT, “Anastasius and the *Venationes*”, in *Nikephoros* 17 (2004), 221-230.

<sup>32</sup> Sources in *PLRE* III 72-73, Anatolius 8; cf. A.D. LEE, “Episcopal Power and Perils in the Late Sixth Century. The Case of Gregory of Antioch”, in J. DRINKWATER and B. SALWAY (ed.), *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected* (London 2007), 103-104.

It is time to look briefly at the West, for which we have much less evidence than for the East. It might be supposed that the end of the Roman Empire, customarily associated with the deposition of Romulus Augustulus in 476, brought the end of public spectacles in their Greco-Roman form. But this is certainly not true of Ostrogothic Italy under Theoderic (493-526), for which Cassiodorus' *Variae* are a rich source of information. In reading them, we have to remember that the decisions are the king's, but since he was illiterate the words are Cassiodorus', and the senator misses no opportunity to display his own erudition.<sup>33</sup>

Ruling from Ravenna, but concerned to support the dignity of the western Rome, the *Variae* show Theoderic eager to maintain the public life of the old city, including its musical and sporting spectacles, and they show that fights between supporters of the Blues and Greens and other aspects of the spectacle in Late Antiquity were as prevalent in the old Rome as in the New. The king directs a letter concerning the Theater of Pompey to the patrician Symmachus, a descendant of the orator and father-in-law of Boethius; having heard that it has fallen into disrepair, he promises to supply the necessary funds from the treasury. Cassiodorus takes the opportunity to lend the king some of his own learning, and gives etymologies for the words "theater", "tragedy", and "comedy"; he goes on to explain the origin of "dance", that is pantomime, invented by the muse Polyhymnia, and of mime, "which is now regarded only as mockery" (*tantummodo derisui habetur*), though the inventor, Philistio, had higher ambitions.<sup>34</sup> On another occasion the king has learned from a petition submitted by the

<sup>33</sup> Cassiodorus: TH. MOMMSEN (ed.), *MGH, Auct. Ant.* 12 (Berolini 1894). Theoderic illiterate: J.B. BURY, *History of the Later Roman Empire* (London 1923), I 467.

<sup>34</sup> *Var.* 4, 51, pp. 138-139 Momm.; text, translation and discussion in V. FAUVINET-RANSON, *Decor civitatis, decor Italiae. Monuments, travaux publics et spectacles au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle d'après les Variae de Cassiodore* (Bari 2006), 348-356. Symmachus: *PLRE* II 1044-1046, Symmachus 9.

Greens that rioting has broken out over the selection of a Green pantomime. He orders two patricians, hereditary patrons of the Greens, to select the worthier candidate by conducting a popularity test: when the spectators are assembled (*convocatis spectatoribus*) in the theater, the patricians are to select the winning candidate, and in that way “we may appear to have given the payment that we make for the city’s spectacle to persons duly elected”. As in his letter concerning the Theater of Pompey, Cassiodorus gives the king an erudite explanation of the word “pantomime”: “with his mouth closed he speaks with his hands, and by certain gestures he causes that to be understood which could scarcely be conveyed by a speaking tongue or a written text”.<sup>35</sup> Like the emperor in Constantinople, the king funds the spectacles of the capital, though the factions do not control the selection of their own pantomime; that task is left to a commission of senators and to the verdict of the people.

Rome of the same period also had imperially-subsidized charioteers and *venatores*, though not gladiators, to judge by the silence of Cassiodorus. In one letter the king notes that a certain Thomas, a charioteer from the East (*ex Orientis partibus*) with a worldwide reputation, has elected to make his career in Italy; accordingly the Praetorian Prefect is ordered to pay him a monthly salary in order to retain his services. After having dispatched the essential business, Cassiodorus cannot refrain from giving a complete history of chariot-racing, from the time of Oenomaus onwards, and an allegorical interpretation of the colors, the chariots, and so on. The letter ends with a resigned confession that such spectacles, however unworthy, are necessary for the satisfaction of the people.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Var.* 1, 20, p. 25 Momm.; V. FAUVINET-RANSON, *op. cit.* (n. 34), 303-306. On this event see R. LIM, “The Roman Pantomime Riot of AD 509”, in *“Humana Sapit”*. *Études d’Antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini*, éd. par J.-M. CARRIÉ et R. LIZZI TESTA (Turnhout 2002), 35-42.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas the charioteer: *Var.* 3, 51, pp. 105-107 Momm.; V. FAUVINET-RANSON, *op. cit.* (n. 34), 329-344.

On the subject of “hunting” (*venatio*), Cassiodorus ends his *Chronicle* with an effusive account of an event of 519, the consular games of Theoderic’s son-in-law Eutheric.

“In that year Rome saw many spectacles (*miracula*): at each of the events even Symmachus, the ambassador of the East, was amazed by the gifts given to Goths and Romans... In the games of the amphitheater, (Eutheric) exhibited wild animals of different kinds for the present age to marvel at as a novelty. For these spectacles Africa in its devotion also sent choice delights (*exquisitas voluptates*). When all was over amid extraordinary praise, he filled the citizens of Rome with such love that they were still missing his presence when he returned to Ravenna to the sight of his glorious father. There in renewed exhibitions (*editionibus*) he bestowed such gifts on Goths and Romans that only he could exceed the consulate he had celebrated at Rome.”<sup>37</sup>

Four years later Theoderic using the pen of Cassiodorus addresses a consul of the year 523.

“If those who wrestle using the well-oiled flexibility of their bodies elicit consular generosity; if sweet singing is sold for a price; what reward can be enough for a huntsman who toils with risk of death for the pleasure of the spectators?”

As he had with charioteering, Cassiodorus gives a brief history of *venatio* from its rustic beginnings to the present day. He contrasts this primitive state with a catalog of the maneuvers that the *venator* must learn in order to elude the animals: he must jump over them, hide behind a “portable wall of canes” (*gestibili muro cannarum*), roll in a wheel, and so on. Just such tricks appear in exactly contemporary diptychs. The Areobindus diptych in Paris (Pl. 8.2) shows a kind of egg-shaped cage inside which the head of the *venator* is just visible, while an angry bear leaps on it. In another diptych of the same consul (Pl. 8.3), a *venator* carries a device with vertical bars, and a pole in the middle presumably intended as a kind of

<sup>37</sup> CASSIOD. *Chron.* s.v. 519 (*MGH, Auct. Ant.* 11, 161). Eutheric: *PLRE* II 438.

pivot on which the “wall” could be rotated; a bear is trying to get round it. In the same scene a *venator* perches on the cross-bar of a kind of trestle, while a bear lunges below: the man must have teased the bear and leapt up at the last moment.<sup>38</sup> Theoderic’s letter, like his previous one, ends with a sigh of resignation: “Alas, the regrettable error of the world! If there were any consideration of equity, as much wealth should be given for the life of mortals as seems to be lavished on men’s deaths”.<sup>39</sup> Theoderic was subject to the same conflicting pressures as his eastern counterparts. The people had to be kept satisfied by constant offerings of spectacle: but the most violent of these spectacles were exactly those that disturbed the conscience of a Christian king.

With the ever increasing concentration of power in the hands of the emperor and the growing presence of Christianity in every aspect of public life, there were other events that can count as spectacles, though they are not competitive or agonistic. One such occurred in 402, the year following the praetorian games of the young Memmius Symmachus. The writer is a deacon of the church of Gaza, visiting Constantinople in the company of his bishop Porphyrius, and the occasion is the baptism of the infant heir to the throne, Theodosius II.

“The whole city was embellished and adorned with silk, gold, and every kind of adornment, so that one could not describe the adornment of the city; you could see the crowds of inhabitants like waves of the sea, dressed in every kind of colored clothing. It is not in my power to describe the brilliance of that adornment, but rather for those trained in rhetoric. When the young Theodosius had been baptized and was returning from the church to the palace, again you could observe the magnificence of the crowd of great personages and their brilliant attire, for all wore white, so that you might think that the crowd had been covered in snow. The patricians came first, the *illustres* and all the dignitaries with the army regiments, all carrying candles, so that you would think stars were shining on earth. ... The

<sup>38</sup> R. DELBREUCK, *op. cit.* (n. 11), no. 12 (St. Petersburg, Hermitage).

<sup>39</sup> *Venationes*: CASSIOD. *Var.* 5, 42, pp. 168-170 Momm.

sainted Porphyrius said to me, 'If earthly things, that soon pass away, have such glory, how much more do heavenly things for those worthy of them, which neither eye has seen nor ear heard nor heart of man perceived?'"<sup>40</sup>

A sixth-century ivory produced in Constantinople shows a reliquary being carried in procession for the dedication of a church (Pl. 8.4).<sup>41</sup>

Another kind of spectacle that now becomes prominent, though it has its antecedents in the imperial period, is the punitive parade, the public exhibition of malefactors. No doubt shaming is a large part of punishment in most societies. The United States no longer have public executions, but do have so-called "perp walks", in which the police parade suspected offenders or "perpetrators" before the public; these became a subject of heated controversy in May, 2010, when Dominique Strauss-Kahn had been subjected to just such a humiliation by the New York police. Malalas refers several times to such parades in the reign of Justinian, and we can well imagine that this strict enforcer of public morality was especially fond of this device. Soon after his accession he found out that certain bishops were guilty of homosexuality. Isaiah, bishop of Rhodes, was tortured and exiled, but Alexander bishop of Diospolis, whose offense was presumably more serious, was castrated and "paraded around on a litter". In the next year the emperor banned gambling everywhere after finding that gamblers in Constantinople had been uttering blasphemies, no doubt curses on their bad luck. These unfortunates had their hands cut off and "they were paraded around on camels". A couple of years later, after fans of the Blues and the Greens had incited riots, the city prefect found seven of them guilty of murder, and

<sup>40</sup> MARC. DIAC. *V. Porph.* 47 (pp. 39-40 ed. Grégoire-Kugener). T.D. BARNES, "The Baptism of Theodosius II", in *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989), 8-12, is mainly concerned with the chronology of the event.

<sup>41</sup> W.F. VOLBACH, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters*, 2. Aufl. (Mainz 1952), 70-71 no. 143 (Cathedral Treasury, Trier).

sentenced four of them to be beheaded and three to be impaled. Malalas continues:

“After they had been paraded through the whole city and had crossed to the other side, some of them were hanged. But two of them, one a Blue and the other a Green, fell as the scaffold (*ta xyla*) broke. The people who were standing around saw what had happened and acclaimed the emperor Justinian.”

Malalas’ account implies that the beheading took place on an elevated wooden scaffold with a crowd of bystanders looking on: the spectacle was clearly meant as an *auto da fé*, designed to impress the public with the emperor’s piety and severity. It had unintended consequences, for a few days later it sparked the famous Nika riot, in which he nearly lost his throne.<sup>42</sup>

I conclude with some general observations. It is easy to suppose that the moment when Christianity became the dominant religion of the empire, wherever we place that moment, coincided with a rupture in the culture of ancient spectacle; to put it another way, that the spectacles of Late Antiquity (again, wherever we place the onset of that period) were different in kind from what had gone before. Certainly there is evolution. Gladiatorial games fade out in the course of the fourth century; the factions that had long been familiar at Rome appear in the East in the late fifth; mime persists, but pantomime seems to fade away in the late sixth. But earlier centuries too had seen their own evolutions. Pantomimes first appear in Greek inscriptions soon after the Mithridatic Wars, but are admitted to the traditional *agônes* only at the end of the second century CE; gladiators first appear in the East in the first century CE, but (so far as our evidence shows) become part of organized games such as the Olympia of Antioch only in the fourth.<sup>43</sup> Change therefore is not new: the question is the

<sup>42</sup> JOHANNES MALALAS 18, 18 (bishops), 18, 47 (gamblers), 18, 71 (Blues and Greens).

<sup>43</sup> Pantomimes: L. ROBERT, “Pantomimen im griechischen Orient”, in *Hermes* 65 (1930), 106-122, esp. 114-117 = *Opera Minora Selecta*, I (Amsterdam

cause of the change. Some have seen the root cause in “imperialization”, a tendency of emperors to bring under their own control what had hitherto been a variety of organizations.<sup>44</sup> An allied explanation invokes economic factors. As city-magistrates and benefactors became less and less able to bear the costs of munificence, the secular authorities stepped in to replace them, and in due course the imperial treasury too was forced to withdraw as the chief sponsor. While both of these explanations have their merit, they also have weaknesses. I have tried to argue that private enterprise or local benefaction still provided much of what we might call retail spectacle well into the sixth century, and that it will not do to see all or even most entertainments, those of the theater, the arena, and the hippodrome, as constituting a single system funded by the emperors. And while the state takes over the Olympia of Antioch in the fifth century, a munificent bishop is still able to put on pantomimes and promise to build a hippodrome in the late sixth. Economic change did not move at the same speed everywhere, and did not always take a downward path: it was a surprise when late sixth-century inscriptions of Aphrodisias showed the citizens acclaiming the generosity of a great local benefactor called Albinus.<sup>45</sup>

Though economic factors may well have hastened this evolution, the effect of Christianity should not be underestimated. The Christian opposition to the taking of life without just cause, “Thou shalt not kill”, surely led to the elimination of gladiatorial contests. *Venationes* presumably survived because the *venator* had a chance of escaping, even though Christian moralists and emperors deplored the fact that he might end up

1969), 654-670, esp. 662-665; 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-Boston 2008), 74-76.

<sup>44</sup> Thus e.g. V. MALINEAU, *art. cit.* (n. 12), 152.

<sup>45</sup> CH. ROUECHÉ, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London 1989), nos. 82-84. On the date of Albinus see now ROUECHÉ, “From Aphrodisias to Staupolis”, in *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected* (above, n. 32), 184-186.

literally in the belly of the beast. A curious illustration occurs in the historian Socrates' account of Theodosius II. Listing his many Christian virtues, for example his habit of singing antiphonal hymns with his sisters every morning before breakfast, Socrates tells of an incident in the amphitheater of Constantinople. "The people clamored that one of the well-built (*euphueis*) *paraboloi* ['risk-takers' of some kind] should fight a dangerous beast. But the emperor said to them, 'Do you not know that we are accustomed to watch humanely (*philanthrōpōs theōrein*)?' And by saying this, he taught the people to be humane spectators thereafter".<sup>46</sup> As the clergy, especially the bishops, replaced the civic benefactors of previous centuries, they were ever more able to impose Christian values on their flocks, and it took all the skill of a sophist such as Choricius to defend the suspect pleasures of the people. Eventually economic and moral considerations converged: the definitive loss of the West in the later sixth century, and the growing encroachment of enemy powers in the East, caused the old Greco-Roman entertainments to vanish from many areas where they had taken root. But just as it is a mistake to see the Christianization of the empire as marking the end of traditional spectacle, so perhaps the spectacles of the early Middle Ages, if we knew more about them, were not so different from their Late Antique antecedents as we might imagine.<sup>47</sup>

## Addendum

I regret having submitted my manuscript in October, 2011, before noticing *Antiquité tardive* 15 (2007), *Jeux et spectacles dans l'Antiquité tardive*. Not all the contributions concern the

<sup>46</sup> SOCR. *Hist. Eccles.* 7, 21, 12 (p. 369 Hansen). On this passage, G.W. BOWER-SOCK, "Parabalani. A Terrorist Charity in Late Antiquity", in *Anabases* 12 (2010), 45-54: 51.

<sup>47</sup> I am very grateful to the other participants in the *Entretiens* for helpful comments and references.

period after 395, which was the main focus of my paper, but I would like to have cited E. Soler (47-58) on the way in which the state struggled to reconcile Christian disapproval of actors and actresses with the need to maintain public entertainments; Ch. Roueché (59-64) on recent archaeological discoveries relevant to spectacle in the Greek East; St. Giglio on praetorian *munera* (65-88); J.-Cl. Golvin and F. Fauquet on the later history of the hippodrome of Constantinople (181-214). On this last subject there is now the important treatment of G. Dagron, *L'hippodrome de Constantinople: jeux, peuple et politique* (Paris 2011).

## DISCUSSION

*K. Coleman:* Do you think that the figure at the bottom left on the diptych of Areobindus (Pl. 8.3) is meant to be taunting the bear? Provoking the beasts to react was obviously dangerous, and it doesn't always seem to have worked. This may be why it is one of the preoccupations in the *Liber Spectaculorum* of Martial, e.g. 22, 1 Shackleton Bailey, describing a bull *per totam flammis stimulatus harenam* ("goaded by flames all over the arena"), a method illustrated on the hunt mosaic from the Maison d'Isguntus at Hippo Regius, or 26, 1-2, *Sollicitant pavidi dum rhinocerota magistri / seque diu magnae colligit ira ferae* ("While the trainers were nervously worrying a rhinoceros and the great beast's temper was taking a long time to gather strength").

*J.-P. Thuillier:* Pour la question de l'influence du christianisme sur la fin des *munera* de gladiateurs, vous observez une position mesurée que je partage tout à fait, et vous n'éliminez pas le facteur économique. Pour respecter le commandement "Tu ne tueras pas", on aurait pu se contenter en effet de supprimer les combats *sine missione*, comme cela a été fait à d'autres périodes, et d'arrêter les duels "au premier sang"?

*R. Webb:* I agree with your point that mime performances were put on in very different contexts in Late Antiquity (and in earlier periods): that it formed part of the consular games is shown by the diptych of 517 in the Cabinet des Médailles (Pl. 8.1) and by Claudian's poem on the consulship of Manlius Theodorus in 399 (line 312). At the other extreme John of Ephesus depicts a couple of mimes, who are actually ascetics in disguise, performing in town squares (above, p. 311). I do wonder, however, whether we can really use the fact that mimes

contravened the moral standards of the state to argue that such performances must have been put on outside state control. (In this connection, I think it is important to note that the periodic bans seem to have affected pantomimes rather than mimes, leaving Justinian's legislation in *Novella* 123, 44 as the only attempt to control the content of mime performances.) Although there is likely to have been some limit to how vulgar or provocative mimes could be in particular circumstances, like consular games, one could argue that a certain degree of public mockery and derision was an integral part of the festivities with an important social function, and could be tolerated to some extent within the special context of a festival. This question matters because your argument has significant implications for our understanding of spectacle in the ancient world: can we assume that the patron (whether a representative of the state or any other person) controlled every aspect of the shows he sponsored, or was he constrained to a greater or lesser degree by the expectations of the audience whom he needed to satisfy? In the latter case, we might expect there to have been constant negotiations, of the sort that have been alluded to in other papers, about the acceptable limits for performances of various kinds, not only mime, and a constant testing of the boundaries of the acceptable that may be indirectly reflected in the stories of the martyr mimes.

*O. van Nijf:* I was wondering about the effect that two of Christianity's major foundation myths, so to speak, had on the kind of spectacle that you describe: the crucifixion of Jesus, and of course the various stories about martyrdom that precisely depended on publicity, the spectacular dimension of the event. Has this in any way influenced Christian approaches to these forms of spectacle? Has it affected the attitude of Christians towards the spectacles that were being put on, or their attitude towards the commemoration/representations that were found?

*C. Jones:* We might well expect that accounts of the execution of Jesus (with its own punitive "parade", in fact the best-attested

one of all) and of the agonies of martyrdom should have affected the Christian view of such spectacles. Yet I do not in fact know of such concerns being expressed, for example of a Christian author such as Augustine deplored *venationes* on the ground that they recalled the punishments of Christians: what such authors say is that spectacles of this kind are inhumane and unnatural, in other words their arguments resemble those advanced by pagan moralists such as Plutarch.

*J. Nollé:* Bei einer Reihe von Zeugnissen über Schauspiele in der Spätantike frage ich mich, ob wir es mit Beschreibungen realer Zustände oder mit Fiktionen zu tun haben. Das scheint mir besonders im Falle des Konsuls Macedonius so zu sein. Er — vielleicht ein Bürger von Sardis — evoziert ein Bild dieser Stadt, das ganz und gar von den Traditionen “heidnischer” Lokalmythen geprägt ist. Möglicherweise ist Macedonius der heidnischen Reaktion dieser Stadt zuzurechnen. Und so bin ich nicht sicher, ob nicht auch der Laufwettbewerb in der Zeit des Justinian eine Fiktion ist, eine Art agonistischer Nostalgie, zumal sich der Name des Läufers auch also sprechender Name verstehen lässt und ich mir kaum vorstellen kann, dass er von einem Zeitgenossen des Macedonius getragen wurde. Andere Frage: Gibt es Zeugnisse dafür, dass in der Spätantike Christen den Versuch unternommen haben, so etwa wie einen christlichen Pantomimus zu schreiben und aufzuführen?

*C. Jones:* On your first point: Sardis certainly does seem to have harbored a “pagan” community into Late Antiquity, to judge by the fact that pagans were still being incarcerated there in the reign of Justinian (*I. Sardis* 19; *SEG* 44, 1761). I have wondered if the existence of vibrant Jewish communities in Sardis and also Aphrodisias might have something to do with a kind of united front of the two groups against the Christians. But Christians of this period think in two registers: compare Nonnus, who can write both the *Dionysiaca* and the *Paraphrase of John’s Gospel*. I incline to suppose that Macedonius was a

Christian writing in a pagan mode, as also in the poem on the mythical origins of Sardis to which you refer (*Anth. Pal.* 9, 645). As to the “unreality” of Thyonichos, the fact that Thyia and Thyades are associated with Dionysus (K. Preisendanz, “Thyia 1-3”, in *RE* 6 A, 1936, 679-684; “Thyiaden”, *ibid.*, 684-691), and that the verb θύω can mean “move rapidly”, certainly suggests a fictional name. I also know of no victory-statues in the sixth century of the type implied by the poem, nor of Christians either writing or performing pantomimes; I discount, of course, stories of actors being converted, of which the best known is John Chrysostom’s *Pelagia*: P. Petitmengin (éd.), *Pelagie la Pénitente. Métamorphoses d’une légende* (Paris 1981-1984).

*R. Webb:* The Theonoe mosaic is certainly very intriguing and does not conform to the regular iconography of either mime or pantomime (though there are so few examples of either that it is difficult to speak with any certainty). It may be a case of a special type of pantomime involving several actors, as in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* (10, 30-33). However, I also wonder whether the anomalies in this mosaic may be peculiar to Zeugma. The version of Menander’s *Synaristosai* from Zeugma differs from those in Mytilene and Pompeii in that the figures are not represented with typical comic masks but with very naturalistic masks that one could easily mistake for pantomime masks if one did not know that this was a scene from comedy. It could be that the artists were not familiar with traditional tragic and comic masks or chose to represent them differently, in which case Theonoe’s mask could simply indicate that this mosaic refers to the tragedy that may have been the source of Hyginus’ account of the story. This hypothesis does not explain the fact that only one character is masked while the others appear not to be.

*K. Coleman:* With reference to the question of the memory of gladiatorial *munera*, we should keep in mind that even after they had stopped being put on (if they had stopped, in fact) the artefacts, buildings, etc., that recalled them were omnipresent.

There is no evidence that, for instance, all the lamps depicting gladiatorial combat were suddenly smashed, and it is interesting to speculate about the reaction to this kind of iconography; did it seem quaint, or horrible, or what? Specifically, you have shown how Cassiodorus puts into Theoderic's mouth a lot of learned discussion about the history of various spectacle buildings at Rome and the shows put on in them. This makes it seem all the more curious that when he describes the Colosseum ("that egg-shaped building", *ovi specie: Variae 5, 42, 5*) he associates it exclusively with beast displays. Do you think that this shows that the memory of gladiatorial combat had faded by now, or that a good Christian should not mention it (even though elsewhere he mentions other types of spectacle that the Christians were not too keen on)?

*C. Jones*: It is certainly curious that the kinds of artefact you mention were not destroyed, but I suspect that the association of gladiatorial *munera* with Christian martyrdom was less strong in antiquity than we think. The Colosseum does not become associated with martyrdom until the Renaissance (M. Di Macco, *Il Colosseo. Funzione simbolica, storica, urbana* [Roma 1971], 79-81, "Il Colosseo luogo di Martirio").

*K. Coleman*: On the Megalopsychia mosaic, I wonder whether the "coins" being thrown are actually *σίμιατα* (*missilia*), tokens representing items for which the spectators could cash them in afterwards. We hear quite a lot about these in the ancient sources: Domitian had to re-do one of these distributions when the lower classes caught most of the tokens and the senators and equestrians hardly got any (Suet. *Dom.* 4, 5; cf. L. Robert, "Sur le décret d'Acraiphia pour l'Évergète Épaminondas", in *Arch. Eph.* 1969, 34-39 = *Opera Minora Selecta*, VII [Amsterdam 1990], 740-745). The mechanism for distribution — a type of pillowcase suspended from cables — is represented on a few wall-paintings from Pompeii. The conceit of Generosity herself flinging the tokens would be a nice riff on the sponsor's role.

