

Hazel Dodge, *Spectacle in the Roman World*. London and New York: Bristol Classical Press, 2011. Pp. 99. ISBN 978-1-85399-696-2. £11.99 (pb).

Dodge's *Spectacle in the Roman World* is part of the Bristol Classical Press' *Classical World Series*. Bristol's website says that this series is "designed for students and teachers of ancient history and classical civilisation at late school and early university levels." D's small book in general serves its intended purpose very well. Chapter 1 ("Approaching Roman Spectacle") discusses the different types of evidence for the Roman spectacle: archaeological, literary, iconographic, reconstruction and re-enactment, and scientific research. Chapters 2 through 5 deal respectively with chariot racing, gladiatorial combat, animals in the arena, and staged sea battles and other aquatic displays. Chapter 6 is devoted to these spectacles in late antiquity and the Christian view of them. The final chapter "Roman Spectacle: Ancient Contexts and Modern Perceptions" is something of a grab-bag, but one of the more interesting chapters in the book. Topics treated therein are the political significance of gladiatorial combat, inscriptions (e.g., the famous one for the gladiator Exochus), the economics of gladiator shows, executions as entertainment, seating of spectators, modern echoes of Roman spectacles, and Hollywood's depiction of Rome's violent spectacles as an indication of the "uncivilized nature of Roman culture."

D. gives her readers an accurate picture of what made these spectacles so popular throughout the Roman Empire and does an excellent job of presenting essential information briefly. There is an appendix treating the five major entertainment structures: circus, theater, amphitheater, stadium, and *naumachia* (a word used both of 'a staged sea battle' and a structure devoted to its presentation). The only objection I can make to her coverage of spectacles is that theatrical presentations are given only a one-sentence mention in the appendix. Drama in various forms had a long history as a Roman spectacle, from the fourth century BC to at least the sixth century AD and was among the most popular of spectacles. Although currently writers on the Roman spectacle virtually ignore drama in favor of the competitive spectacles, the topic deserves more extensive treatment to avoid the impression that it was only a minor entertainment.

If the book has a weak point, it can be found in a number of the references to literary sources. The first hint of trouble is a minor one involving the inconsistency of references to Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. Mayhoff's Teubner text divides the text up into chapters and paragraphs. The current convention is to give book and paragraph number (most chapters contain multiple paragraphs). D. sometimes follows this convention, but more often gives just the chapter number. If the chapter number is to be included in the reference, it should be followed by the paragraph number.

Unfortunately, there are also erroneous attributions. D. gives the source for Aemilius Paulus' execution of foreign deserters as Plutarch (*Aem.* 16–23), but this

event is not to be found there (49).¹ The correct reference is Valerius Maximus (2.7.14). At the end of the same sentence, D. does give a reference to Valerius (2.7.13–14), but connects it with Scipio Aemilianus' use of this punishment, which is mentioned only in section 13. D., giving Pliny (*HN* 8.7) as a reference, claims that the first recorded fight between bears and bulls took place in the Circus Maximus (53). The fight, however, according to Pliny was between *elephants* and bulls, which in fact D. had stated correctly two pages earlier giving the same reference. Two lines later, Suetonius (*Iul.* 29) is given as a source for the first appearance of Thessalian bull-fighters at Rome, but that event is not mentioned there, but in Pliny (*HN* 8.182). D. gives Suetonius (*Tit.* 7.3) as evidence that during the inauguration of the Colosseum 9000 animals were killed over 100 days, but what the biographer actually says in this passage is that 5000 beasts of all kinds were presented in the amphitheater in one day (58). The correct reference is Cassius Dio (66.25.1; 4). The names of the two sides in Caesar's staged sea battle, "Egyptians" and "Tyrians," and the types of ships involved are not to be found in Cassius Dio (45.17), but in Suetonius (*Iul.* 39.4) (63). The reference to Ammianus Marcellinus' comment on the Circus Maximus should read 28.4.29 and not 37.4.28–31 (78).

I found only two typos, one in a reference to the *Natural History*: 18.4 should be 18.14 and the other in a reference to Cicero (*Att.* 2.29.3), which should be 2.19.3 (39; 84). In the following references, the section number should be included after a period: Sen. *Ep.* 7.4 and *Hist. Aug. Hadr.* 19.2 (60; 61).

There is a section devoted to recommendations of further reading and an index. Thirty-one well-chosen illustrations support the text.

ROGER DUNKLE
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¹ Numbers in parentheses at the end of a sentence refer to page numbers in the book under review.